

特集 英語を学ぶ視点の育成

English for Intercultural Communication

Lynne Parmenter (Waseda University)



With over 340 million first language speakers, over 500 million second language speakers and billions of foreign language speakers, English is indisputably an international language (Ethnologue). In every continent, from Canada to the Cook Islands, the USA to Uganda, Ireland to India, Belize to Brunei, Malaysia to Malta, English is spoken as a national or official language. And yet the chances of speaking English with a native or near-native speaker are much lower than the chances of speaking with a learner of English as a foreign language. There are far more learners of English as a foreign language in China than speakers of English in the UK, for example! In a business meeting between Japanese and Chinese officials, the language used is often English. In the multinational teams undertaking relief and reconstruction work in Asia after the December 2004 tsunami, the language used is often English. When Japanese tourists visit Italy or France or Thailand on holiday, the language they use is usually English.

Thinking in this way, English is less a 'foreign' language than an 'intercultural' language. English is not only a language that 'they foreigners' speak. English is so widespread that it does not 'belong' to anyone. No-one 'owns' English. It is a language that anyone can use as a means of accessing hundreds of other cultures and billions of other people. In this respect, it really is a key to the rich treasure box of the world. Approached from this

perspective, English teachers at junior high school in Japan open up the first step on the road to the world for approximately 1.2 million children every year.


In this first stage, at junior high school, motivation is extremely important. A small minority of junior high school students are naturally motivated by the challenge of learning English vocabulary and grammar, but a substantially larger number are motivated by the attraction of English as a means of communication with people of many other cultures. In the revised *New Crown* series, this natural advantage of English is maximised. Through the three textbooks, students are introduced to a variety of countries and cultures, including the USA, UK, Australia, India, China, New Zealand, Sudan, Mongolia, South Korea and Cambodia. They are given opportunities to think about and talk about intercultural communication and the similarities and differences between cultures.

As a general rule, the main countries featured in *New Crown 1* are countries in which English is a first language, such as the USA and UK. The importance of English as an international language, however, is emphasised by the introduction of conversations between non-native speakers at a very early stage (Lesson 1). *New Crown 2* begins with another country where English is a first language, Australia, but then focuses mainly on countries where English is an official language, such as India.

MORIZUMI
MAMORUTAKAHASHI
SADAOLYNNE
PARMENTERMORINAGA
MASAHARUTAKEUCHI
OSAMU

3年
LESSON 3

LESSON
3 Kumi Visits China



● What do you know about China?
● What do the signs mean?


nineteen 19

久美は朝練都市の交差点で中国の北京を訪れています。いろいろな異文化体験をしています。

①

Dear friends,
I arrived in Beijing yesterday.
I've just finished dinner. The Yang family made a lot of delicious food.
We left a little food on the plates. I've already learned that this is OK here. If you eat everything, it means you are still hungry. If you leave a little, it means you are full and happy. Like me!

Your friend,
Kumi



★ I finished dinner two hours ago.
I have just finished dinner.

CHECK IT ①聞いてみよう ②読してみよう

arrive finish delicious plate already everything still hungry leave
[arɪv] [fɪnɪʃ] [dɪləʃəs] [pleɪt] [ɔːlredɪ] [evrɪθɪŋ] [stɪl] [hʌŋgrɪ] [li:v]

I've = I have Beijing 北京 Yang 楊

20 twenty

In *New Crown 3*, countries in which English is used as a second or foreign language, such as Tanzania and China respectively, feature more prominently. In all cases, the cultural content is designed to appeal to junior high school students, to widen their horizons, and to increase their motivation for language and culture study.

At the same time as teaching about cultures of other countries, *New Crown* encourages students to make comparisons between Japan and other cultures, not for the purpose of proving 'difference' or 'uniqueness', but for the purpose of genuine intercultural learning and understanding. The textbooks also provide opportunities for students to examine various cultures within Japan, such as Okinawan and Ainu cultures. This helps to develop students' awareness that intercultural competence is not just something 'foreign', but is also relevant to Japan. The ability to 'decentre' and look at one's own culture in the same terms as one looks at another culture is important. The acquisition of this skill enables students to relativise their own culture in transcultural terms, an essential skill for

successful intercultural communication.

In this way, *New Crown* can be used to help students to acquire a broad knowledge of a variety of cultures, and to develop the skills of being able to discuss and express their opinions in English with people of different cultures. If they can simultaneously develop tolerance for other people and viewpoints, together with positive attitudes towards intercultural communication, then they will be well on the way to being competent intercultural communicators.

Junior high school English teachers have a vital role in shaping and encouraging young people's identities in the world and views about the world. If *New Crown* can be used to help young people to mature into knowledgeable, tolerant adolescents capable of understanding and analysing cultures and societies as well as communicating in English, this can only be a good thing for the future of the individuals concerned as well as society as a whole.

Reference
Ethnologue
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=ENG Accessed 10 March 2005