

## 駒沢学園附属幼稚園における「英語のお遊びの時間」 に関するアンケート調査結果報告(1)

金 澤 延 美

### The Report of the Results of the Survey on “Fun Time in English” at Komazawa Kindergarten

Nobumi KANAZAWA

#### I. Introduction

The Education Ministry will introduce a new period called “general studies” for students in third grade and higher from 2002. It expects that primary school curriculum will include foreign language education in “general studies” to cope with internationalization. In 2002, all public primary schools in Japan will start providing some foreign language (English) education from the 3rd grade. To meet the needs of the times, the kindergarten affiliated to Komazawa Gakuen has started the program called “Fun Time in English” conducted by the writer since last April. This program is provided to all the 3 grades such as classes for the eldest age group (*Nencho*), intermediate (*Nencyu*), and the youngest (*Nensho*). *Nencho* children have a 20 to 25 minute-class once a week, while *Nencyu* children have a 15 minute-class once every other week and the *Nensho* children have a 10 minute-class once a semester. All through the period children sing joyfully and play some game-oriented activities in English.

When the first semester was over the writer prepared a questionnaire for the parents to get some information for the second half of the program; parents' opinions on early English education in general were questioned and the reaction of the children reported to their parents at home on the “Fun Time in English”.

In this paper, the results and the analysis of

the questionnaire will be reported. The curriculum used for the first half of the program is put in the paper as reference data.

#### II. Implementation

- Survey conducted September 1998
- Subjects are the parents of children who go to the kindergarten affiliated to Komazawa Gakuen
  - 102 parents surveyed
    - Mothers: 99
    - Fathers: 3
  - Age of those surveyed:

Parents in their 20's ...	6
30's ...	81
40's ...	14
50's ...	1
  - Children whose parents surveyed:

Girls:	50
Boys:	50
(not written):	2
Grades: <i>Nencho</i>	34
<i>Nencyu</i>	32
<i>Nensho</i>	36

### III. Curriculum

**Table 1**

Curriculum for *Nencho*

Month	Vocabularies	Music and Activities	Picture books
4	Hi, hello, goodbye jump, sing, swim, walk, freeze	“Let’s Sing Together”	
5	sleep, boy, girl, ski, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, red, brown, bear, bird, tree, big, rain, bee	“Let’s Sing Together” (a parody of this song) “Ten Little Indians”	“Hello, Goodbye!”
6	tiger, penguin, monkey, lion, gorilla, zebra, elephant, hippopotamus, dance, sit down, stand up, yes, no, what	“Let’s Sing Together” (a troll of this song) “Ten Little Indians” (a parody of this song) “One, Two, Three Song”	“What Can a Hippopotamus Be?”
7	fruit, lemon, apple, cherry, tomato, cherry tomato, peach, banana, fork, knife	The same as above plus “Happy Birthday to you!”	

**Table 2**

Curriculum for *Nencyu*

Month	Vocabularies	Songs and Activities	Picture books
6	stand up, sit down jump, run, one, two, three,	“One, Two, Three Song”	
7	bear, lion, tiger, zebra, monkey, bird, red brown, tree, rain		“Hello, Goodbye!”

**Table 3**

Curriculum for *Nensho*

Month	Vocabularies	Songs and Activities	Picture books
7	stand up, sit down jump, one, two, three, bear, tree, hello happy, birthday	“Happy Birthday to You!”	“Hello, Goodbye!”

#### IV. Results and Analysis

**Table 4** In general, what do you think of introducing English into kindergartens ?

Contents of the response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
Agree	82.4(28)	68.8(22)	83.3(30)
Disagree	0(0)	3.1(1)	5.6(2)
Undecided	11.8(4)	18.8(6)	11.1(4)
Don't know	5.9(2)	9.4(3)	0(0)

Parents in favor predominated in every class.

**Table 5** Please choose your reason for approving.

Contents of the response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
To familiarize with a sense of internationalization from childhood	35.3(12)	34.4(11)	25.0(9)
Earlier is better to learn foreign languages effectively	52.9(18)	43.8(14)	19.4 (7)
Desire my child to learn English before its introduction in primary school	2.9(1)	0(0)	5.6(2)
It would be advantageous for a child in the future	5.9(2)	3.1(1)	0(0)
My child is interested in English	14.7(5)	21.9(7)	22.2(8)
Others	2.9(1)	6.3(2)	13.9(5)

The results show the same tendency is shared in *Nencho* and *Nencyu* levels. The percentage of the parents who chose "Earlier is better to learn foreign languages effectively" is the highest of all the reasons. Then "To familiarize with a sense of internationalization from childhood" and "My child is interested in English" are followed.

The idea of "Earlier is better to learn foreign languages effectively" has been proved as an effectual method by the studies of critical period and the various kind of reports of practice. "To familiarize with a sense of internationalization from childhood" is also chosen highly. This result reveals drastically changing social conditions; such as 1. the increase number of foreign

workers around us 2. the increase number of foreign workers' children who attend the neighborhood schools, foreigners are more common place today.

Besides, "international-oriented education" has been accepted into primary school education, so that words such as "international", "internationalization", "cosmopolitan" are used in everyday life.

The third highest number chose the "Child himself/herself is interested in English". It seems the media such as TV which provides English programs especially focuses on and is a potent influence. It's interesting to see the result that this tendency shows a marked trend among *Nensho* at

kindergarten.

**Table 6** What is your reason you oppose teaching English at kindergartens?

Contents of the response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
There's a fear of making children come to dislike English	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
It would increase children's study load	0(0)	0(0)	2.8(1)
It would interfere with learning accurate Japanese	0(0)	3.1(1)	2.8(1)
It's unnatural to select English as a foreign language	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
There's no need of teaching English to every child	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Others	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Since there were only three responses of opposition, there isn't enough to draw a conclusion. However, the chosen reasons by the 3 parents match the reasons which the opponents of the early English education for young children have.

According to the survey to the parents of primary school children on early English education given in 1990<sup>(4)</sup>, some of the main reasons of

objection toward the early English education are as follows.

1. It would increase children's study load.
2. It would interfere with learning accurate Japanese.
3. There's no need of teaching English to every child, only the children who are interested in English should be taught.

**Table 7** How does your child like "Fun Time In English" at Komazawa kindergarten?

Contents of response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
Seems to enjoy it	79.4(27)	46.9(15)	22.2(8)
Seems not to enjoy it	2.9(1)	0(0)	0(0)
Uninformed yet	14.7(5)	31.3(10)	25.0(9)
Others	2.9(1)	3.1(1)	27.8(10)
No answers	0(0)	15.6(5)	25.0(9)

The result of "Fun Time in English" shows most children in every level enjoyed it except one child. *Nensho* had the class only once by the time the questionnaire was given since it's supposed to be given once a semester. It seems that's the reason why there were many "No answers", "Others" and "Uninformed yet" among the parents of the youngest children. Many of the comments seen from those marked "Others" say, "We didn't

know about the "Fun Time in English" or "My child doesn't talk much about the activities at kindergarten, so I can't tell if he/she enjoys it or not. Therefore with this limited experience it is worth notice that there are 7 children among the youngest ones who seems to enjoy "Fun Time in English"."

**Table 8** What kind of activities do you think are appropriate for “Fun Time in English”?

Contents of response	<i>Nencyo</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
Sing in English	61.8(21)	90.6(29)	75.0(27)
Play games in English	79.4(27)	59.4(19)	41.7(15)
Greet in English	76.5(26)	56.3(18)	72.2(26)
Play a drama in English	8.8(3)	9.4(3)	0(0)
Listen to English picture books	8.8(3)	12.5(4)	8.3(3)
Learn to read Alphabet	17.6(6)	6.3(2)	8.3(3)
Learn to write Alphabet	2.9(1)	6.3(2)	0(0)
Read and write names of familiar animals, etc.	32.4(11)	28.1(9)	50.0(18)
No answers	0(0)	0(0)	5.6(2)

The result shows parents of *Nencyo* and *Nencyu* children have chosen “Sing songs in English” “Play games in English” “Greet in English” as three most desired activities. On the other hand, in the case of the parents of *Nensho* children “Sing in English” came first as the most desirable activity. However, as the second, third, fourth choices are followed: 1. “Greet in English”

2. “Read and write some of the names of familiar animals, etc. in English” 3. “Play games in English”.

All the highly chosen activities are the ones which take a serious view to voice and sound. The result shows that the parents expect their children to get the instruction focused on “listening and speaking” through “Fun Time in English”.

**Table 9** Do you have your child study English at home?

Contents of response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
Yes	76.5(26)	84.4(27)	77.8(28)
No	23.5(8)	15.6(5)	22.2(8)

The result shows the percentage of “Not in particular” is much higher through all three levels. 22.6% of the eldest children, 15.6% of *Nencho* and 21.2% of *Nensho* children means

about one out of five learn some English at home. Among the three, the percentage of *Nensho* children who are learning English is the highest.

**Table 10** Those who answered “Yes” to the previous question, please mark the means of learning English.

Contents of response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
Attend English conversation school	19.2(5)	7.4(2)	0(0)
Hire tutor	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Family teach(es) English at home	7.7(2)	3.7(1)	7.1(2)
Watch English programs on TV	15.4(4)	18.5(5)	17.9(5)
Provide other means	7.7(2)	7.4(2)	14.3(4)

The result shows not so many children go to “juku” type of English language schools. In the case of *Nensho* children none goes to *juku* to learn English. The percentage gets higher as the grade becomes higher. The percentage of *Nencho* and *Nensho*’s parents who have their children watch English programs designed for young children is the highest among the three.

According to the comments from these parents,

they intentionally have their children watch more than two English programs including “Sesami Street”. Some of those who marked “Other devices” commented such as “the use of English video materials”. Through the comments some parents use audiovisual materials such as videos or music tapes for their children at home. The English learning method adopted at home is focused on the sound.

**Table 11** Which English programs for young children does your child watch?

Contents of response	<i>Nencho</i>	<i>Nencyu</i>	<i>Nensho</i>
Sesame Street	26.5(9)	37.5(12)	36.1(13)
<i>Eigo de Asoboh</i>	82.4(28)	34.4(27)	80.6(29)
<i>Ponkikies</i>	32.4(11)	3.1(11)	38.9(14)
Kids Club	2.9(1)	0(0)	0(0)
No answers	0(0)	0(0)	8.3(3)

The result shows through all the classes the percentage of children who watch “*Eigo de Asoboh*” is the highest. Since this 15 minute program is broadcast five days a week, the children listen regularly to some English everyday. The result shows the parents who marked “Yes, we have our child watch English TV programs for young children” in Question 7 marked “Sesami Street” along with “*Eigo de Asoboh*.” “Sesami Street” is an American TV program produced for

American children who are native speakers of English so no Japanese is used all in the program. In addition to that, the program has no intention of teaching English as a foreign language. For all that, the result shows the percentage of *Nensho* watching “Sesami Street” is higher than the other age groups’.

In the case of “Kids Club”, it is broadcast too early in the morning and seems a result of only one watches it.

## V. Conclusion

According to the results of the survey, 78.4% of the parents support the idea of teaching some English at kindergartens. Moreover only 3.0% of the parents are against it. None of the parents of *Nencho* children are against it. This result shows the establishment of "Fun Time in English" is supported by the parents.

The reaction of the children toward "Fun Time in English" was found as follows. 66.7% of children "seems to enjoy it", 1.3% of children (= one child) "seems not to enjoy it" and 32.0% of children are "uninformed yet".

In the case of the *Nensho* class where the class was given only once before sending this questionnaire to the parents, 77.8% of parents answered "uninformed yet" or "No answers". This caused the result of lowering the percentage of whole classes' to "Seem to enjoy 'Fun Time in English.'" However, according to the percentage by grade 79.4% of *Nencho* children and 71.4% of *Nencyu* children enjoy the class.

About the activities in "Fun Time in English", 76.0% of the parents support especially "Sing in English" "Play games in English" and "Greet in English". The parents' expectations match the actual activities focused on listening and speaking, therefore it can be said that the contents of the present activities in "Fun Time in English" are supported.

About the "Reading and writing in English" 18.1% of parents support it, however these kind of activities have not been adopted in the class.

Not very many children go to "English conversation school" or "*juku*", however there are many comments seen such as "We have our child watch English TV programs for young children." The result shows quite a few children watch such a TV program as "*Eigo de Asoboh.*" It was made known that the children contact some English daily by the media of TV and so on.

In this paper the writer reported the results and the analysis of a survey concerning the par-

ents' opinions and the children's reactions on the "Fun Time in English" at Komazawa kindergarten. The writer plans to give the same questionnaire to the parents next March to compare the results with the first one to find out how the parents and the children's attitude and reactions will be changed on "Fun Time in English". Thus this conclusion can only be tentative, and its veracity will have to be tested further.

### Note:

1) Katagiri, Taeko (1994) *On the Introduction of English Education into Public Elementary schools: Comments from Elementary School Teachers in Aichi, Shizuoka, and Gifu Prefectures* 『日本児童英語教育学会研究紀要』第13号 p.113

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Fujiwara, Kazuaki (1993), 「カリキュラム (幼稚園)」 『早期英語教育』中山兼芳 (編) (東京: ニチブン)

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Ito, Katutoshi and others (1995), *Neurolinguistic Basis for Child Nonprimary Language Acquisition*, 『日本児童英語教育学会研究紀要』第13号

Larsen Freeman, D. & Long, M. H. (1991), *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*, London: Longman.

## Appendix

A Questionnaire for the parents on early English education in general and the reaction of the children reported at home on "Fun Time in English"

### About early English education in general

- 1 In general, what do you think of introducing English into kindergartens?
  - a. Agree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Undecided
  - d. Don't know
- 2 Please choose your reason for approving.
  - a. To familiarize with a sense of internationalization from childhood.
  - b. Earlier is better to learn foreign languages effectively.
  - c. Desire my child to learn English before its introduction in primary school.
  - d. It would be advantageous for a child in the future.
  - e. My child is interested in English.
3. What is your reason you oppose teaching English at kindergartens?
  - a. There's a fear of making children come to dislike English.
  - b. It would increase children's study load.
  - c. It would interfere with learning accurate Japanese.
  - d. It's unnatural to select English as a foreign language.
  - e. There's no need of teaching English to every child.
  - f. Others

### About "Fun time in English"

4. How does your child like "Fun Time In English" at Komazawa kindergarten?
  - a. Seems to enjoy it.
  - b. Seems not to enjoy it.
  - c. Uninformed yet.
  - d. Others
  - e. No answers.

5. What kind of activities do you think are appropriate for "Fun Time in English"?
  - a. Sing in English.
  - b. Play games in English.
  - c. Greet in English.
  - d. Play a drama in English.
  - e. Listen to English Picture books.
  - f. Learn to read Alphabet.
  - g. Learn to write Alphabet.
  - h. Read and write names of familiar animals, etc.
  - i. No answers

### About your attitude toward English education at home

6. Do you have your child study English at home?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
7. Those who answered "Yes" to the previous question, please mark the means of learning English.
  - a. Attend "English conversation school"
  - b. Hire tutor
  - c. Family teach(es) English at home
  - d. Watch English programs on TV
  - e. Provide other means
8. Which English programs for young children does your child watch?
  - a. Sesame Street
  - b. *Eigo de Asoboh*
  - c. *Ponkikies*
  - d. Kids Club
  - e. No answers