Popular English Software at Hiroshima University

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Abstract

This study surveyed the opinions of 39 Hiroshima University students with respect to 32 pieces of English education software. It was found that software based on TV programs were among the most popular, and that nonfiction content-based software were among the least popular. TOEIC-related software was quite popular. Bilingual software scored significantly better than English-only software (p<.05).

The most popular conversation/listening software were found to be: *Listen!* (Heinemann), *The Rosetta Stone* (Fairfield Language Technologies), and *Quick English* (INS / アイ・エヌ・エス). Students' favorite test preparation materials were all produced by ALC (アルク): TOEIC 実践模擬テスト, CD-ROM 版 TOEIC テスト スーパー模試600問, and TOEIC (R) テストパーフェクト730点. The most popular business software was *Dynamic Business English* (DynEd). The favorite story-telling software were all originally produced by Softrade: *Murder She Wrote, Beverly 90210,* and *Columbo.* The top-rated nonfiction software was *Talking About Japan in English* (NEC Interchannel and NHK Service Center).

The Study

The major part of this research involves a questionnaire which was voluntarily filled out by 39 Hiroshima University students. It was found that the students were relatively enthusiastic about evaluating the software; one of the reasons for this might have been the fact that, as compensation, each student was promised, and was later given, "a free 45-minute English conversation lesson" in the researcher's office.

Each student was asked to evaluate six pieces of software. Three of those software were chosen by the researcher, and the other three software were chosen by each student according to his or her interests. The three "assigned" software were also matched up, as much as possible, with student interests and linguistic abilities. (Before being given a questionnaire, each student was asked a bit about his or her English ability and experience abroad. Each student was also asked whether he or she was interested in English conversation software, TOEFL, TOEIC, Eiken, business, stories, or just general software.)

Thus, importantly, most of the software which students evaluated in this study were related to their personal interests. But, because the researcher assigned some software, the design also allowed for each of the software in the multimedia center to be evaluated by at least three students.

Twenty-six of the students (68%) were female. The students represented every traditional university age bracket, but 22 of them (58%) were freshmen and eight (21%) were graduate students.

Their majors varied greatly, 24 coming from the natural sciences, and 15 from the social sciences. Two of the students were native Chinese speakers, and two were native Korean speakers. Because all of the students volunteered for this study, it can be said that their English abilities were, for the most part, above average when compared to that of other Hiroshima University students. But, the large percentage of freshmen indicates that most of their abilities were not very high.

Students were asked to evaluate each software in two ways. First, they gave an overall score based on the following standards:

1 = Not useful at all. (I'll quit after doing a small part of it.)
　　全然役にたたない（最初の１・２割でやめそう）
2 = Not very useful. (I probably won't do half of it.)
　　あまり役にたたない（半分も続けられない）
3 = Useful. (I'll probably do over half of it.)
　　役にたつ（半分以上続けられそう）
4 = Very useful. (I'll do all of it, and recommend it to other people.)
　　とても役にたつ（最後まで学習が続けられそう，人にも薦められる）

Finally, students were asked to write their opinions about each software's good points and bad points. The questionnaire was written only in Japanese, and students were freely allowed to write their answers in Japanese.

It should also be stated that students chose to evaluate certain software partly as a result of good software packaging. The following software is enclosed in small, simple CD-ROM cases (in contrast to larger, colorful boxes), and so may not have been chosen very often for evaluation: *Listen!, Telephone Talk 1, 2, New Interchange for Apple Macintosh, TOEIC 入門らくらくパック*, *Learn English with Asterix, The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Kids Can Read),* and *American Heritage Talking Dictionary.*

As a minor part of this research, software usage statistics for the multimedia center were calculated. When students use the center's software, that usage is automatically recorded in a central computer. Those statistics were compiled before the current study was undertaken, and it can be assumed that those software users were most likely a different group of students than the ones who filled out the questionnaire. These usage statistics will provide independent evidence as to software popularity.

The multimedia center is operated by Hiroshima University's Institute for Foreign Language Research and Education, and is located in the West Library. It is a huge, brand-new, independent-study computer facility. It is used by about 1,000 students per week. It contains many Windows and Macintosh machines. Students use the center for many other reasons besides learning languages.

Results

According to usage statistics, *TOEIC V パック* (Ask) and *CD-ROM 版 TOEIC テストスーパー模試600問* (ALC, アルク) were the most-used software in the multimedia center during a four-month period of the year 2000. They were used 20 times and 13 times, respectively. (Of

course, this does not indicate how many different students used them; for example, one student could have used a particular software as many as 20 times.) *Beverly 90210* (Sourcenext/Softrade) was the next most-used software, at 10 times. Each other piece of software in the media center was used no more than five times.

The results of the questionnaires are listed below. When analyzing their written responses, if two or three students noted a particular "good point" or "bad point", it is mentioned below under "student comments." If four or more students made the same comment about a particular software, the number of students stating this is noted. When only one student mentioned a particular good point or bad point, due to limited space, it is not noted below.

The "teacher" is the researcher himself. (Prices may have changed from the times the CD-ROMs were first purchased.)

Conversation/Listening

Software Title Company, Year. Price, Computer compatibility.	Japanese Support?	Number of Reviewers	Mean Rating
1) *Listen!* Heinemann, 1993. ¥18,025, Macintosh only.	No	3	4.0
2) *The Rosetta Stone* Fairfield Language Technologies, 1993. ¥38,000, Macintosh only.	No*	3	3.3
3) *Quick English v2.5* INS/アイ・エヌ・エス , 1996. ¥ 9,800, Macintosh only.	Yes	14	3.0
4) *Dynamic English 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B* DynEd, 1994. ¥29,800 per disk, Windows only.	Yes	10	2.8
5) *Telephone Talk 1, 2* Libra Multimedia, 1993. ¥36,590, Macintosh only.	No*	4	2.75
6) *Learn to Speak English v. 6.02* Learning Company, 1995. ¥14,000, Windows & Mac.	No	4	2.5
7) (tie) *English Now! ver 5.0J* Transparent Language, 1997. ¥12,500, Windows & Mac.	Yes	9	2.3
7) (tie) *New Interchange* Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998. ¥9,880, Macintosh only.	No	3	2.3

*but a Japanese instruction manual is included.

1) *Listen!*

Contents: Intermediate level. Various dialogs involving topics such as careers, the beach, smugglers, and describing people. Various exercises such as listening to a story and matching pictures to what is heard. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Unlike most CD-ROMS, this contains both American and British English model sentences. Expensive and old.

Students' Comments: *Good points:* Easy to use. Quizzes with point evaluations are fun. Lots of useful expressions for daily life. (No student gave a negative comment, even though all three students were asked to do so, and did so with other software.)

2) *The Rosetta Stone*

Contents: Starts very basic (for example, students hear vocabulary such as "a girl" and "a

car," and match them with appropriate pictures). Builds to an intermediate level (for example, matching a sentence such as "the third number and the last number are "one"" with an appropriate picture).   No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Comprehensive and graded from basic to intermediate.   Not exciting. Old and expensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points* and *Bad points* varied.

3) Quick English v2.5 日常会話 1, 2

Contents: Situations involving customs, a restaurant, hotel, making phone calls, inviting someone to a movie, making a dentist appointment, etc.   Includes Japanese explanations concerning pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and culture.   Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Teacher's favorite in this group.

Students' Comments: *Good points:* There are numerous situations (5 students).   You can slow down the speed of conversations.   It seems like practical, real English.   There are vocabulary, pronunciation and culture explanations.   *Bad points:* The video picture is too small, so it's hard to see.   The CD is not so interesting overall.

4) Dynamic English 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B

Contents: Lower English level.   Daily activities, question practice and dictation.   Level 3 is slightly higher.   No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Good activities.   But CD-ROMs are a bit old, so lack of action may not interest students.   Very expensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points:* The pronunciation of the speakers is easy to understand.   Looking at a picture while listening increases comprehension.   It's easy to operate.   *Bad points:* It's generally boring for higher-level listeners (5 students).   The pictures are not so interesting.   The software is a bit hard to use at first.

5) Telephone Talk 1, 2

Contents: Numerous situations for the phone, such as taking messages, making inquiries, and describing people.   No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Fills an important role.   But software is monolingual, expensive, and a bit old.

Students' Comments: *Good point:* Useful phrases for the phone. *Bad points* varied.

6) Learn to Speak English v. 6.02

Contents: Numerous situations for travelling in America, such as immigration, changing money, using the phone, and ordering in a restaurant.   Questions include fill-in-the-blanks and word games.   Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Looks exciting and comprehensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points* and *Bad points* varied.

7) (tie) *English Now! ver5.0J*

Contents: Teaches reading in addition to speaking/listening. From beginner to advanced. Has four units, each centered on one theme: Washington D.C., the Beatles, Ball Games, and New England. Can click on a word or sentence to get translation. Can slow down the speaker's voice. Can record own intonation on a graph and compare it to that of a native speaker (but this function did not work on the computers used in this study). Fill-in-the-blank and crossword games. Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Comprehensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Can improve listening. Vocabulary and grammar explanations are detailed. Fun games. Can record own voice to match native spectrograph. *Bad Points*: Reading passages offer nothing that cannot be done on paper. A bit hard to operate.

7) (tie) *New Interchange for Apple Macintosh*

Contents: Various dialogs involving topics such as a garage sale, meeting people, and treating a cold. Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Video and comprehension questions seem interesting. Relatively new. The fact it is monolingual may be a negative for most students.

Students' Comments: *Good points and Bad points* varied.

TOEFL, TOEIC, EIKEN Test Preparation

Software Title Company, Year. Price, Computer compatibility.	Japanese Support?	Number of Reviewers	Mean Rating
1) *TOEIC 実践模擬テスト* ALC(アルク), 1996. ¥3,914. Windows & Mac.	Yes	4	3.5
2) *CD−ROM版 TOEIC テスト スーパー模試 600 問* ALC (アルク), 1998. ¥6,700. Windows & Mac.	Yes	12	3.4
3) *TOEIC (R) テストパーフェクト 730 点* ALC (アルク),1999. ¥6,600. Windows & Mac.	Yes	7	3.3
4) *TOEIC 入門らくらくパック* Ask Kodansha, 1996. ¥36,590 for 2 disks. Windows & Mac.	Yes	4	3.2
5) *CD−ROM で学ぶ TOEFL 英文法* ASCII (アスキー), 1996. ¥9,515. Windows & Mac.	Yes	4	3.0
6) *English Engine 英語検定に出る！英単語 VIP A, B, C Levels V3.0* Unicom, 1996. ¥9,064 per disk, Windows & Mac	Yes	16	2.9
7) *TOEIC V パック* Ask (アスク), 1998. ¥28,000 for 3 disks, Windows & Mac.	Yes	3	2.7
8) *やさしくリーディング激戦 2550 TOEFL テスト* ASCII (アスキー), 1997. ¥12,800, Windows & Mac.	Yes	4	2.5
9) *TOEIC MindStorm* Mindstorm, 1995. ¥15,708. Macintosh only.	Yes	4	2.2
10) *コンピュートーイック (Computoeic)* Best English Software, 1995. Price unknown. Mac only.	Yes	3	2.0

1) *TOEIC 実践模擬テスト*

Contents: Practice TOEIC questions. Scoring recorded in charts.

Teacher's Comments: Fine practice. Inexpensive. But a systematic teaching of English skills would be preferable to just practice TOEIC questions.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: "Mini-tests" allow for study in short time. Can see own score quickly. Answer explanations and examples sentences are helpful. *Bad point*: Some static was heard on the listening part.

2) *CD-ROM 版 TOEIC テスト　スーパー模試600問*

Contents: Practice TOEIC questions. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Seems too mechanical and unimaginative.

Students' Comments: *Good point*: Can have fun while improving (4 students). "Ikinuki Quiz" is enjoyable. Quality explanations to answers. Receive point scores. Different sections for different skills, so can work on weak abilites. *Bad points*: Not interesting. Once you start the listening section, you have to answer 20 questions before you stop or get feedback; would like to do one question/answer at a time.

3) *TOEIC (R) テストパーフェクト730点*

Contents: High-level TOEIC. Students can calculate their own ability, and answer questions at that level. Students can create their own dictionary. Includes video function from CNBC.

Teacher's Comments: New. Video is very interesting.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Helpful for TOEIC. Video TV commercials and news parts include questions, so it's interesting. *Bad points* varied.

4) *TOEIC 入門らくらくパック*

Contents: A listening disk and a reading disk. Vocabulary and TOEIC lessons, plus TOEIC-like questions. Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Comprehensive. Video looks interesting. But expensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Can improve TOEIC scores. Among five learning sections, can choose your favorite section and work on weak points. (Remarkably, no student gave a negative comment, even though all four students were asked to do so, and did so with other software.)

5) *CD-ROM で学ぶ TOEFL 英文法*

Contents: Teaches 1,000 grammar points, and has 1,500 TOEFL-like questions. Various levels. No video function or sound.

Teacher's Comments: Comprehensive. Grammar explanations may bore students. Questions seem good.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Can learn TOEFL-like expressions. *Bad points* varied.

6) *English Engine 英語検定に出る！ 英単語 VIP A, B, C Levels V3.0*

Contents: Designed to improve vocabulary ability. Three levels, from relatively easy

(Level C) to difficult (Level A). Systematic presentation of words. Comes with book. Students can chart their progress through the program. Students can listen to example sentences. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Very comprehensive. Various exercises include multiple choice and dictation. A weak point is that vocabulary is presented only in sentences, not in longer texts. Materials may become tedious.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Helps vocabulary learning (6 students). Can study at one's own level. A car begins at "start" and proceeds to "goal"; when you reach the goal, program encouragingly says "You got it!" and plays music. Multiple definition functions (English-Japanese, Japanese-English, English-English). Can learn pronunciation quickly. Words are in sentence contexts. Can improve reading ability. Various exercises such as fill-in-the-blank and dictation. Dictation (called "Listen and Type") helps spelling ability. *Bad points*: Tends to be boring (4 students). Level C words are too easy.

7) *TOEIC V パック*

Contents: One disk is lower level, one disk is higher level, and the third disk has TOEFL-like questions. But even the lower-level disk has rather difficult words. Fill-in-the-blank exercises. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Relatively new and exciting. Teaches as well as tests.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Explanations to answers are easy to understand. *Bad point*: May become boring.

8) やさしくリーディング激戦 *2550 TOEFL* テスト

Contents: Timed reading practice. Japanese explanations of answers. Reading passages categorized into fields such as biology, music, sociology and astronomy. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Comprehensive, but possibly boring. Will students like practicing reading on a computer screen?

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Lots of questions. Can choose favorite topics. *Bad point*: Students are asked to put in ID and password even though they don't want to.

9) *TOEIC MindStorm*

Contents: Has practice TOEIC questions, parts of world-famous speeches in video clips (followed by comprehension questions), a 3D game (testing vocabulary synonyms), and bilingual video-taped interviews of Japanese giving TOEIC advice. Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Seems exciting and motivating. But there is only one TOEFL-like test included, and the Japanese explanations for answers are quite limited.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Addresses different levels of ability. Interesting opinions of TOEIC experts and people who have done well on test. *Bad point*: Cannot skip past the already-understood directions on the listening section.

10) コンピュートーイック *(Computoeic)*

Contents: Contains only one TOEIC Test.　No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Offers nothing more than what a paper test can do.　An attached book contains explanations of the answers, but the CD-ROM does not! The company which made this does not live up to its name (Best English Software).

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Useful TOEIC questions. *Bad points* varied.

Business English

Software Title Company, Year.　Price, Computer compatibility.	Japanese Support?	Number of Reviewers	Mean Rating
1) *Dynamic Buisiness English: 1, 2, 3* DynEd, 1995.　¥19,635 for each disk.　Windows & Mac.	Yes	5	3.6
2) *Quick English v2.5 ビジネス会話 1, 2* INS（アイ・エヌ・エス）, 1996.　¥9,800 for each disk.　Macintosh only.	Yes	7	2.1

1) *Dynamic Buisiness English: 1, 2, 3*

Contents: For TOEIC level 350–500 (a relatively low level).　The three disks are entitled, respectively, "Company Profile," "Carreer Profile," and "Manufacturing and Trade." Various comprehension questions such as dictation, grammar fill-in-the-blank, and verb practice.　No video function.

Teacher's Comments: A fine and basic business CD-ROM.　Good practice questions. Very expensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points* and *Bad points* varied.

2) *Quick English v2.5 ビジネス会話 1, 2*

Contents: Business conversation lessons include topics such as introducing oneself, giving a toast, and making phone calls.　There are vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and culture explanations.　Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Excellent.　Same high standards as the *Quick English* conversation software mentioned above.　But, maybe too high-level for a lot of students.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Can learn useful business words.　Culture explanations interesting.　*Bad points*: Software difficult to operate.　Boring.

Interactive Stories / Literature

Software Title Company, Year.　Price, Computer compatibility.	Japanese Support?	Number of Reviewers	Mean Rating
1 (tie)) *Murder She Wrote*「ジェシカおばさんの事件簿シリーズ」 Three Episodes: 1: The Petrified Forest「化石の花屋」,　2: Kendo Killing「大阪の殺人事件」,　3: Fatal Paradise「楽園の罠」 ASCII/Softrade（アスキー）, 1995. ¥4,660 per disk.　Windows & Macintosh.	Yes	11	3.5
1 (tie)) *Beverly 90210.*「英語上達　ビバリーヒルズ高校白書」 Three Episodes: 1「双子の兄妹は転校生」,　2「ホロ苦い恋の味」, 3「サーファーの青春」. Sourcenext/Softrade. 1998.　¥6,800 per disk. Windows & Macintosh.	Yes	12	3.5

3) _Columbo_ 「刑事コロンボ」 Seven Episodes: 1: A Deadly State of Mind 「５時30分の目撃者」, 2: Make Me a Perfect Murder 「秒読みの殺人」, 3: Murder by the Book 「構 想の死角」, 4: The Most Crucial Game 「アリバイのダイヤル」, 5: Murder in Malibu 「マリブビーチ殺人事件」, 6: Play Back 「ビデオテープの証言」, 7: An Old Port in a Storm 「別れのワイン」. ASCII/Softrade (アスキー), 1997. ¥5,631 per disk. Windows & Macintosh.	Yes	12	3.3
4) _Dynamic Classics._ Four CD-ROMs: 1) A Christmas Carol, 2) Alice in Wonderland, 3) Robin Hood, 4) Round the World in Eighty Days. DynEd, 1996. ¥9,500 per disk. Windows & Macintosh.	Yes	8	3.1
5) _Learn English with Asterix Series_ Eurotalk. 1993. ¥30,900 for 2 disks, Macintosh only.	No	4	3.0
6) _The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Kids Can Read)_ Discis. 1993. ¥5,562, Macintosh only.	No	3	2.3
7) _BBC Shakespeare._ Three CD-ROMs: A Midsummer Night's Dream (真夏の夜の夢) , MACBETH (マクベス) , Romeo & Juliet (ロミオとジュリエット) Harper Collins, 1996. ¥21,735 per disk. Macintosh only.	No	7	2.1

1 (tie)) _Murder She Wrote_ 「ジェシカおばさんの事件簿シリーズ」

Three Episodes: 1: _The Petrified Forest_ 「化石の花屋」, 2: _Kendo Killing_ 「大阪の殺人事件」, 3: _Fatal Paradise_ 「楽園の罠」

Contents: Original sounds and still pictures from TV programs. An optional function allows for a slowed audio, read by a "teacher". Cartoon bubbles. Students can click on any word in a special dictionary, and see how it appears in the story. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Very stimulating. No comprehension questions.

Students' Comments: _Good points_: Can see English script and Japanese translations (6 students). Interesting drama makes learning fun (5 students). Can make voices go fast or slow. The fast speed seems like natural conversation speed. _Bad point_: Cannot study in a short amount of time.

1 (tie)) _Beverly 90210._ 「英語上達 ビバリーヒルズ高校白書」

Three Episodes: 1「双子の兄妹は転校生」, 2「ホロ苦い恋の味」, 3「サーファーの青春」.

Contents: Same as _Murder She Wrote_ above. But also comes with an audio CD.

Teacher's Comments: Very good, but no comprehension questions.

Students' Comments: _Good points_: Can learn English while watching an interesting story (6 students). Besides the original voice, there is also a slowed-down mode (4 students). Can listen to the same expression repeatedly. Seems like natural daily conversation. Dictionary function helpful. Vocabulary explanations. _Bad point_: Language seems too slang or casual, so hard to understand.

3) _Columbo_ 「刑事コロンボ」

Seven Episodes: 1: _A Deadly State of Mind_ 「５時30分の目撃者」, 2: _Make Me a Perfect Murder_ 「秒読みの殺人」, 3: _Murder by the Book_ 「構想の死角」, 4: _The Most Crucial Game_ 「アリバイの

ダイヤル」, 5: *Murder in Malibu*「マリブビーチ殺人事件」, 6: *Play Back*「ビデオテープの証言」, 7: *An Old Port in a Storm*「別れのワイン」.

　　　Contents: Same as *Murder She Wrote*, mentioned above.

　　　Teacher's Comments: Very good, but no comprehension questions.

　　　Students' Comments: *Good points*: Interesting story (8 students).　Can change the voice speed (5 students).　Can read text while listening.　Can listen to one utterance repeatedly. *Bad point*: Natural speed is too difficult to understand.

4) *Dynamic Classics.*

Four CD-ROMs: 1) *A Christmas Carol,* 2) *Alice in Wonderland,* 3) *Robin Hood,* 4) *Round the World in Eighty Days.*

　　　Contents: Students watch simple cartoon pictures while listening to the story, and, optionally, reading the text.　Comprehension activities/games include clicking on appropriate pictures, a narrative (in contrast to dialog) version of the story, a verb game, fill-in-the-blanks, and dictation.　No video function.

　　　Teacher's Comments: Comprehension activities are pretty interesting.　A bit expensive.

　　　Students' Comments: *Good points*: Story is interesting.　Can read English text while listening.　Training followed by comprehension questions.　Easy to operate.　*Bad point*: Too much time between utterances (4 students)

5) *Learn English with Asterix and Son; Learn English with Asterix and the Secret Weapon*

　　　Contents: Includes 2 CD-ROMs.　Mixes still comics, good accents, and humor. Vocabulary explanations in English.　Comic dialog also explained in narrative form.　Quiz at end.　Allows for recording of own voice (but function did not work on the computers in this study).　No video function.

　　　Teacher's Comments: Interesting, but monolingual, old and expensive.

　　　Students' Comments: *Good points*: Cute pictures.　Clear sound.　*Bad points* varied.

6) *The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Kids Can Read)*

　　　Contents: Originally designed for native English speakers, age 3 and up.　Audio while reading along in a book on the screen.　No video function.

　　　Teacher's Comments:　A very old and basic CD-ROM.　Alas, it contains no comprehension exercises and no vocabulary explanations.

　　　Students' Comments: *Good points* and *Bad points* varied.

7) *BBC Shakespeare.*

Three CD-ROMs: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*（真夏の夜の夢）, *MACBETH*（マクベス）, *Romeo & Juliet*（ロミオとジュリエット）

　　　Contents: Advanced English level.　Includes background information on the play, actors, etc.　Includes paperback book.　Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Quality video and audio.   Very high-level English skills required, so impossible for most students.   Very expensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Can match English text with audio to understand. *Bad points*: Do not understand anything.   Speaking is too fast.   No Japanese subtitles.

Nonfiction Content

Software Title Company, Year. Price, Computer compatibility.	Japanese Support?	Number of Reviewers	Mean Rating
1) Talking About Japan In English (日本文化を英語で語ろう) NEC Interchannel & NHK Service Center, 1996. ¥58,800 for 3 disks, Macintosh only.	Yes	5	3.0
2) Leonardo THE INVENTOR Softkey, 1996. ¥7,560, Macintosh & Windows.	No	5	2.6
3) Ancient Lands V1.0 Microsoft, 1995. ¥8,446, Macintosh only.	No	3	2.0
4) The Art of Singing Notting Hill, 1996. ¥6,425. Macintosh only.	No	3	1.7
5) American Heritage Talking Dictionary Softkey, 1994. ¥4,017. Macintosh & Windows.	No	4	1.5

1) Talking About Japan In English (日本文化を英語で語ろう)

Contents: Includes three disks, entitled: "The Japan You See Today," "Back in Time," and "Mind, Lifestyle, Aesthetics." Educational. No comprehension questions. Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Entertaining and comprehensive.   But, even though there is video, that video is suprisingly boring; it only involves a person speaking to the computer user.   Expensive.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Can learn about Japanese culture.   Can choose to study only the parts of culture that you're interested in.   Appropriate software for foreigners to use.   *Bad points* varied.

2) Leonardo THE INVENTOR 2.0

Contents: Very informative.   High level; originally created for native English-speaking teenagers or young adults. Audio narration does NOT match what is written on the screen word-for-word.   Three quiz games.   Can turn da Vinci's inventions in a 3-D way using the mouse.   Can "play" the music instruments that he invented.   Includes a small amount of video function.

Teacher's Comments: Interactive and exciting.   No Japanese support, so too difficult for a lot of students.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: Interesting moving pictures.   Explains inventions.   Narrative voice is clear.   *Bad point*: Too difficult to listen to.

3) Ancient Lands V1.0

Contents: Teaches about historic Egypt, Greece, and Rome.   High level; originally

created for native English-speaking teenagers or young adults. Many pictures, narration, and music. Audio narration does NOT match what is written on the screen word-for-word. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Very educational. Great pictures. Includes humorous narration and interesting music. Since monolingual, maybe too difficult for most students.

Students' Comments: *Good points*: If interested in classical cultures, very nice. *Bad points* varied.

4) *The Art of Singing*

Contents: Singing lessons and interviews with famous people. CD-ROM users virtually walk through different areas of a singing school. High level; originally created for native English-speaking teenagers or young adults. Includes video function.

Teacher's Comments: Interesting. But, since monolingual, maybe too difficult for most students.

Students' Comments: *Good points* and *Bad points* varied.

5) *American Heritage Talking Dictionary*

Contents: If a user types in a word, the program gives an audio pronunciation and a written definition of the word. No video function.

Teacher's Comments: Outdated and basic. This information is now available on Internet at no cost.

Students' Comments: *Good points* and *Bad points* varied.

Summary

Overall, software related to conversation, testing, business, and stories seemed equally popular, as these groupings each averaged scores of between 2.85 and 2.99. Only nonfiction content-based software were not popular, averaging just 2.16..

Overall, bilingual software were more popular than English-only software, having average scores of 2.95 and 2.50, respectively. This difference is also statistically significant $[t(30)=2.09, p<.05]$. In addition, overall, software at easier English levels tended to be rated higher than English at more difficult levels.

Story-related software based on TV programs —Murder *She Wrote, Beverly 90210,* and *Columbo*— were very popular, with mean scores of about 3.5. Also, an average of almost 12 students chose to evaluate each of these three software, compared with an average of 5.7 students for each of the other software in the multimedia center. (But, again, these three software might have been chosen partly because they come in colorful boxes and appear in series, so occupy shelf space.) Originally produced by Softrade, the three software follow a common format: 1) There are original sounds and still pictures from the TV programs. 2) There is an optional slowed-down audio mode in which the dailog is read by a teacher. 3) An optional function allows students to read the English text or the Japanese text while

listening.　4) A special dictionary function allows students to see what an English word means in Japanese, and to see how it is used in other places in the story.　These are all good characteristics.　But, the researcher felt that these three software would be better if they contained comprehension questions.

TOEIC-related software were very popular, winning the top four positions in the testing category.　Three of these software are produced by ALC (アルク).　The software tend to utilize games, and give students scores.　The usage statistics for the media center also prove that TOEIC software is popular.

In the conversation/listening category, *Listen!* (Heinemann) was the highest rated.　This relatively-old CD-ROM features many conversation situations, and seems to have fun quizzes.　But, since only three students evaluated this, its high score is not totally reliable.

Another old CD-ROM, *The Rosetta Stone* (Fairfield Language Technologies) also won praise.　It is very basic and systematic.　*Quick English v2.5* (INS / アイ・エヌ・エス) is noteable because it scored high and a lot of students chose to evaluate it.

The top-ranked business software was *Dynamic Business English 1, 2, 3* (DynEd), which averaged a remarkable score of 3.6.　It addresses a lower English level, uses video, and has many conversation situtations and different types of comprehension questions.　Alas, it is expensive.

Among nonfiction, content-based software, *Talking About Japan in English* (NEC Interchannel and NHK) did pretty well.　But it is expensive, too.

要　　約

広島大学で人気の高い英語学習ソフト

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　32種類の英語学習用コンピュータソフトに関し，広島大学の学生39人を対象にアンケートを
試みた。その結果，テレビ番組に基づいて作られたソフトはとりわけ最も人気が高く，その反対
に教育用ドキュメンタリーに基づいて作られたものは人気がないということがわかった。
TOEIC関連のソフトはかなり人気があった。また，日本語と英語の両方の説明を有するソフト
の方が，英語だけのものより統計的に見て明らかに高く評価されていた（p<.05）。
　最も人気のある会話および聞き取り用のソフトは，*Listen!* (Heinemann), *The Rosetta Stone*
(Fairfield Language Technologies), *Quick English* (INS) などであることがわかった。また，学生
に人気のある受験対策用ソフトは，「TOEIC 実践模擬テスト」（アルク），「CD-ROM 版 TOEIC
テストスーパー模試600問」（アルク），「TOEIC(R) テストパーフェクト730点」（アルク）であり，
最も人気の高いビジネス英語のソフトは，Dynamic Business English (DynEd) であった。よく好
まれた物語ソフトは，Murder She Wrote（アスキー），Beverly 90210 (Sourcenext), Columbo
（アスキー）などであり，一番良いと評価されたフィクションもののソフトは，「ジェシカおばさん
の事件簿シリーズ」，「英語上達ビバリーヒルズ高校白書」，「刑事コロンボ」（以上すべてアスキー）
であった。NEC International/NHK の「日本文化を英語で語ろう」もかなり高く評価された。