

広島大学学術情報リポジトリ
Hiroshima University Institutional Repository

Title	Oral English Teachers from a Sister College
Author(s)	HASHIUCHI, Takeshi
Citation	NIDABA , 4 : 23 - 27
Issue Date	1975-03-31
DOI	
Self DOI	
URL	https://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00050961
Right	
Relation	



Oral English Teachers from a Sister College

Takeshi HASHIUCHI

This short paper was read before the 13th Annual Convention of the Japan Association of College English Teachers, which was held in Kyoto on the 6th of October in 1974.

I. INTRODUCTION

In September 1969 Notre Dame Seishin University, Okayama, recruited two assistant teachers of English from America. They were new graduates from Trinity College, Washington, D.C. Since then a couple of young teachers from this sister college of Seishin have been appointed every year.

Their contract is usually made on a year basis, but sometimes they extend their stay over one and a half years. In addition to a monthly stipend, they gain the following conveniences: a house with three rooms, bath and kitchen is provided, dinners are usually given at the convent; and after a year of teaching, a one-way plane ticket from Japan to the U. S. A. is purchased by the university.

Assistant teacher's assignments are an average of sixteen hours of teaching, mostly oral English, and club moderating, and general availability to the students. Moreover, the English department asks these young American colleagues to conduct the Oral English Workshop during the long vacations.

I have known all fourteen of the assistant teachers; among them, eleven have gone home after enjoying their stay at Seishin,

while three are presently on campus teaching English and learning things Japanese.¹ I would say that they now constitute an indispensable part of English education at Seishin. I feel, however, that the time has come both to examine and evaluate the nature of this "teacher exchange program".²

II. DISCUSSION

Some of the problems underlying this program can be discussed under the following headings:

1. Academic year: Japan versus America
2. One-way exchange program
3. Inexperienced young American teachers
4. Short stay: one to one and a half years
5. Lack of coordination
6. Japanese attitude towards Americans

1. Academic year: Japan versus America

In order to make a compromise between the two school calendars Notre Dame Seishin University introduced a new semester system: first semester, early April through late July: second semester, late September through the end of January, almost the same as the fall semester of American colleges. This system has been functioning well since April of last year.

2. One-way exchange program

It has been proposed that the teacher exchange program be reciprocal: that Japanese teachers be given the opportunity to teach at Trinity College in Washington, D.C.

3. Inexperienced young American teachers

We should not consider these inexperienced teachers as established scholars who deliver series of lectures and who conduct seminars. They are, by profession, oral English instructors;

by nationality, Americans; and agewise they are twenty-two to twenty-four.

4. Short stay: one to one and a half years

Their short stay at Seishin, I believe, is not bad. Because of this we are always keeping on campus fresh, young minds from America. They are not only language teachers but also informants of contemporary English and interpreters of present-day American civilization.

5. Lack of coordination

It seems that the lack of coordination comes from Japanese idea of "academic freedom". For a moment, therefore, it is the practice that the more experienced assistant teachers and Anglo-American nuns are giving some orientation to the new arrivals.

6. Japanese attitude towards Americans

It is a noticeable fact that the Japanese people have their own peculiar attitude towards *gaijins* which often makes "new-comers" uneasy. It is not easy to explain to the American teachers the Japanese students' attitude towards them. Moreover, it is very difficult to change it. The important thing is, however, for both sides to understand the differences of norms in interpersonal behavior between Japanese and Americans.

III. EVALUATION

What do I think of this "teacher exchange program"? My answer to this question is definitely a positive one. Let me give some of the reasons.

1. Seishin's young American ladies are employed as fulltime

lecturers, while foreign teacher's appointments in this country are usually made as part-time. Therefore, our oral English instructors are in better positions.

2. They come from Trinity College, which was founded by the same Catholic order as Seishin so that we have mutual trust and personal ties between the faculties at Seishin and at Trinity.

3. They are all young adults, so that they can share the youth culture with our college students.

4. They are all unmarried women. I personally think that it is a very good thing that they are not bachelors from abroad, who might cause troubles with Japanese girls.

5. Judging from some alien residents who have been teaching in Japan over a dozen years, we find that even a mother tongue can deteriorate in the course of time if the speaker stays long out of his own English-speaking country. Therefore, there exists a positive value behind the fact that our young teachers stay on campus only one or one and a half years.

As I wrote above, my evaluation of this "teacher exchange program" is on the whole a positive one.

IV. CONCLUSION

Notre Dame Seishin University is a small Catholic women's college in the city of Okayama. As an English teacher myself I am proud of the fact that I can share both academic and non-academic experiences with the lively young minds from America. Without them Okayama remains as a provincial town, and with them it forms an international community.

Notes

1. One of the former assistant teachers, who has recently returned from the U. S. A., is now holding instructorship at a protestant women's college in Nishinomiya.
2. Two of the Seishin highschoools, one in Kurashiki, the other in Hiroshima, used to have a similar type of teacher exchange program, but failed to continue it.

(Lecturer of English and Linguistics
Notre Dame Seishin University,
2-16-9 Ifuku-cho, Okayama, 700)