英会話用教科書の分析システム

A System for Analyzing English Conversation Textbooks

三 浦 孝

Takashi MIURA

Abstract

This paper proposes a system for analyzing English conversation textbooks that is capable of revealing the background language/learning theories each textbook is based upon and predicting the classroom procedure each textbook is likely to impose on teachers and students. To ensure systematic analysis I have created a set of numerical measurement scales that measures the five major variables determining the characteristics of each textbook : (a) topic consistency, (b) types of syllabuses, (c) frequency of the use of drills, (d) presence or absence of activities for expressing students' own ideas, and (e) types of language activities. These variables were discovered as a result of a survey made on the sixteen government-authorized textbooks published in 1995 for use in Oral Communication A, a newly-started course directly aiming at developing conversational abilities in Japanese senior high school.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to propose a systematic analysis method for analyzing English conversation textbooks. Originally I developed this system to analyze textbooks for Aural/Oral Communication A (hereafter abbreviated as OC-A), a new senior high school English core course started in 1995. It is a course that directly aims to develop conversational English abilities in a setting where word-to-word translation and grammatical explanation of written text have played a dominant role for over a century.

With the sudden advent of the new MOMBUSHO COURSES OF STUDIES announced in 1988 and enacted in April 1994, textbook writers have been obliged to start exploring their way into this field. The result has been publication of quite different types of textbooks with different content and activities which all claim to contribute to developing aural/oral communicative abilities.

This kind of diversity is not only limited to the OC-A textbooks ; quite the contrary, it is common to all sorts of textbooks for teaching English communication, a general area of concern for English teachers. Richards (1990) talks about the complexity of teaching

conversation as follows:

> ... the content of conversation classes varies widely. In one class, the teacher's
> primary emphasis might be on problem solving. Students work on communica-
> tion games and tasks in pairs or small groups with relatively little direct
> teacher input. In another class, the teacher might have a more active role,
> employing grammar and pronunciation drills and structured oral tasks. A third
> teacher may use the conversation class as an opportunity for unstructured free
> discussion, while in another class the teacher might have students work on
> situational dialogues such as "At the bank" and "At the supermarket" (p. 67).

Because of this complexity, it is very important for teachers to select a textbook
that suits their beliefs about the nature of language and the nature of language learning,
and which engenders the classroom language activities they wish to realize in their
classrooms. Of course it should be noted that their beliefs should continually be explored
in the light of pedagogical effects and the recent developments of study in language
acquisition and language teaching methodology.

This study is based on a textbook survey I conducted between the years 1995 and
1997, on sixteen government-authorized OC-A textbooks published in 1995. After the
survey, in April 1998 all of the OC-A textbooks went through a textbook revision.
Although this analysis is based on the textbooks before the revision, the analysis system
itself is independent from the textbooks and therefore should be applicable to a wide range
of conversation textbooks with similar components, i.e. model conversations, listening
practice, comprehension questions, key expressions, language drills, language activities
and tasks.

The Type of Required Analysis System
Systematic Analysis

All through this paper I will avoid using the terminology of "evaluation", and
instead choose to call it "analysis." This is because when we take up textbook evaluation,
it never fails to involve value judgments on the part of evaluators. What this paper intends
to propose is a neutral analysis system, composed of a set of systematic measurement
scales, each of which represents a different analysis criterion. Such an analysis system is
expected to save teachers from a never-ending exchange of subjective impressions of
textbooks. Data obtained through such an analysis will prepare a common discussion
ground for teachers despite their different preferences regarding approaches and tech-
niques.

A Method with Systematic Scales

In creating an analysis system, it is not sufficient to merely propose a set of analysis criteria, for criteria are not free from subjective assessment. In order to make the criterion measures mutually understandable, it is necessary to create a common scale of numerical measurement based on those criteria. One of the advantages of such a common scale is that once it has been established, it enables a quick overview of the characteristics of all the textbooks at a glance on a table. Another advantage is that the analysis system itself can survive textbook revisions that are periodically repeated on government-authorized school textbooks in Japan. A third advantage is that by changing the scales, the system can be converted into an analysis system of other types of textbooks such as those for writing.

Proposing an Analysis System
Identifying Measurement Scales

What characteristics do all the sixteen OC-A textbooks published in 1995 share? Where do they show marked differences of content among themselves? These are the questions that I began the textbook examination with. I read through all the units of the sixteen OC-A textbooks, and identified the following similarities and differences.

Similarities: There were only a few similarities. All the textbooks have a similar unit organization: each unit consists of about 8 to 15 lines of a model conversation, accompanied by listening practice, comprehension questions, key expressions, language drills, language activities and tasks. None of the textbooks contain authentic materials, but there are a few textbooks that seem to generate authentic classroom use of the target language.

Differences: The textbooks show marked differences in terms of the following areas:
1 . topic consistency
2 . types of syllabuses
3 . frequency of the use of drills
4 . presence or absence of activities for expressing students' own ideas
5 . types of language activities:
    5 - 1 . interactive or noninteractive
    5 - 2 . creative or noncreative

In the following sections I will describe each of the differences and propose practical measurement scales for analyzing the differences.

Scale 1 : Topic Consistency-Topic Inconsistency

One of the remarkable differences found in the textbooks is in how topics are treated, specifically whether a textbook has topic consistency or topic inconsistency in its units. By topic consistency I refer to the unit organization in which the same topic is used

in all of the unit components.

The presence or absence of topic consistency has a direct relevance to the content and activity types of a textbook. In a topic-consistent unit the balance of weight tends to be on the depth of the exchange of ideas; it is possible to provide students with a full-fledged set of key words, expressions and ideas related to a given topic that will stimulate and promote students' in-depth exchange of ideas in the target language. What follows is an example of a topic-consistent unit in an OC-A textbook. We can see how the topic of "sport" is used in all of the unit components:

> Unit title: My Favorite Sport (From *Hello, There ! Oral Communication A,* Unit 6)
>> Part 1 :　(1) model dialogue 1 (12 lines, about TV sport broadcasting) with tape-recorded comprehension questions
>> 　　　　　(2) guided conversations (on students' favorite spectator sports and their opinions on different kinds of sports)
>> Part 2 :　(3) model dialogue 2 (inviting friends to skiing) with tape-recorded comprehension questions
>> Part 3 :　　Task A : Interviewing peers with the following questions :
>>> 1 . What kind of sports do you like?
>>> 2 . Do you play it or do you just enjoy watching it?
>>> 3 . Are you good at it?/Who's your favorite player?
>> 　　　　Task B : Reporting the results of the above interviews to the class.
>> 　　　　(e.g.)　"Kumi likes soccer. She doesn't play it. She just enjoys watching it on TV. Her favorite soccer player is Kazu Miura."

On the other hand, in a topic-inconsistent unit, topics vary from one activity to another in the same unit, or vary from one utterance to another even in the same exercise, or a topic as such is not identifiable. This is because in a topic-inconsistent unit, the emphasis is not on the content but on something else such as the language form or function; the instructional goal is placed on giving students focused presentation and/or drilling of a certain language element. Below is an example of a topic-inconsistent unit.

> Unit title : I'm sorry I'm late. (From *Laurel English Communication A,* Unit 9)
> (1) a model dialogue on the topic of "appointment" with its Japanese translation
> (2) key expressions: "I'm sorry I'm late." "That's all right." "Excuse me."
> (3) presentation of conversation gambits :
>> I'm sorry. ---No problem. /I'm sorry. ---Don't worry about it.
> (4) Exercise A : "Complete apologies, filling phrases from the attached list into the parentheses."
>> 1 . I'm sorry (I broke your window.)

      2 . I'm sorry (I didn't finish the work.)

      3 . I'm sorry (I forgot to buy the magazine.)

      4 . I'm sorry (I didn't cook your egg right.)

(5) Exercise B : "Say, 'Excuse me,' and then explain why you must leave, filling phrases from the attached list into the parentheses.

      1 . Excuse me. I (have to see someone).

      2 . Excuse me. I (want to use the bathroom).

      3 . Excuse me. I (have to get back to my work).

      4 . Excuse me. I (want to make a phone call).

Here the topics shift from appointment to baseball, job, books, cooking, biological need, telephone, and sometimes the topic is unidentifiable. This is because the focus of the unit is not on the topic but on some other content of the textbook, the language function.

Scale 2 : Syllabus Organization

The second remarkable difference can be found in the syllabus organization. Syllabus in this study refers to the principle of choice and ordering of the textbook content. Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) explain what kind of information we can obtain from the study of a syllabus :

> a description of the contents of a course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught. Language teaching syllabuses may be based on (a) grammatical items and vocabulary (see STRUCTURAL SYLLABUS) (b) the language needed for different types of situations (see SITUATIONAL METHOD) (c) the meanings and communicative functions which the learner needs to express in the target language (see NOTIONAL SYLLABUS) (p. 368).

Although they refer to a course syllabus, their definition is applicable to the study of a textbook syllabus as well.

The procedure used for analyzing the syllabus of each textbook is as follows :

1 . Take up each unit of a textbook and analyze its unit organization. What is the basis for organization that is used in all the components of the unit ? Is it structure, function, topic, situation, skill or something else ?

2 . Examine if the same organization is used in all the units in a textbook. If it does, and there is systematic ordering in the components of the organization, it is considered the textbook main syllabus. If some of the units in a textbook are organized according to a certain principle (structural, for example), but the others are organized according to another principle (functional, for example) the textbook is considered to have a mixed syllabus.

3 . A textbook written according to the principles of a certain syllabus may have a

subordinate systematic organizational principle governing a part of each unit. For example, in a textbook with a topical syllabus, a certain part of each unit may be devoted to presenting language functions. Such subordinate principle is categorized as a sub syllabus of a textbook.

Nunan (1991, p. 210) discusses that "beliefs on the nature of learning can also be inferred from an examination of teaching materials." By studying a textbook syllabus we can infer its background beliefs on the nature of language and language learning. I have examined the sixteen OC-A textbooks published in 1995 and discovered that all of them are written according to one or two of the following four types of textbook syllabuses: functional, topical, structural and/or situational.

Structural Syllabuses

In a structural syllabus, textbook contents are arranged according to the structural components of the language. It reflects the structuralist view of language:

> Learning a language... entails mastering the elements or building blocks of the language and learning the rules by which these elements are combined, from phoneme to morpheme to word to phrase to sentence (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 49).

What follows is the first five units of an OC-A textbook with a structural main syllabus. Although the unit titles do not include any structural meta-language, emphasis on structure is obvious from the types of exercises.

Unit Titles	Exercise types
1 . In the Morning	(conversion) I open the door. (He)→ He is opening the door.
2 . The Last Two Tickets	(substitution) Thank you for_____ing.
3 . Rain or Shine	(rejoinder) I think so, too./I don't think so.
4 . Going to School	(conversion) I wait for the bus. (She)→ She is waiting for the bus.
5 . Going out to Dinner	(rejoinder) Really? I don't believe it./ That sounds great.

(From *Birdland Oral Communication A*)

There are seven OC-A textbooks with structural syllabuses, one with a structural main syllabus, and six with structural sub syllabuses.

Functional Syllabuses

In a functional syllabus, also called a notional-functional syllabus, the textbook

content is arranged according to the purposes that language is used for. It reflects the view that "language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning" (Richards and Rogders, 1986, p. 17). There are six OC-A textbooks with functional main-syllabuses and eight with functional sub-syllabuses. A typical example is *Evergreen Oral Communication A,* in which all the units are written and arranged according to functional items such as 'greeting', 'requesting', 'inviting' and 'accepting'.

Topical Syllabuses

A topical syllabus is one in which each unit concentrates upon a given topic such as 'school life', 'hobbies', 'health', etc., and the textbook is arranged according to a series of topic headings. In an EFL situation in Japan, where there is virtually little need for students to speak English outside the classroom, choosing appropriate topics can be considered very important in conversation materials for enhancing students' motivation to participate.

Of the sixteen OC-A textbooks, there are no textbooks that are written exclusively according to a topical syllabus. However, there are nine textbooks that partly employ topical syllabuses. For example, in *Active English Communication,* eleven out of sixteen units are written according to a topical syllabus with topics such as 'school life', 'family and relatives', 'eating out' and 'shopping'.

Situational Syllabuses

A situational syllabus is one in which the textbook content is organized according to the kinds of situations where language is used, such as 'at the airport', 'at the doctor's office', 'in the classroom', etc. There is one OC-A textbook written mainly according to this syllabus and another with a situational sub-syllabus. In *Expressways Oral Communication A,* for example, the first ten units are written according to a situational syllabus consisting of situations such as 'at the immigration', 'taking a taxi', 'at dinner', 'at home-staying' and 'at a bank'.

Scale 3 : The Percentage of Drills
Defining Drills

The third remarkable difference among OC-A textbooks is found in the use of drills. The term "drill" in this paper refers to language practices such as "repetition, substitution and transformation drills" (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992, p. 117) in which students are required to produce utterances that contain target language elements, for the purpose of "mastering the elements" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 49) rather than "using language for meaningful communication" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 131).

Some textbooks make extensive use of substitution drills and transformation drills, as in the following example :

Exercise A: "Convert these sentences, following the example."

(e.g.) I do the exercise.   (He)→ He will do the exercise.

1. I ask my teacher a question.   (She)→

2. I look up a word in the dictionary.   (My sister)→

3. I take notes.   (Tom)→

4. I read my textbook.   (They)→

(From *Birdland Oral Communication A*, Unit 10)

In this example, students are asked to produce utterances not for the purpose of conveying meaning but for the purpose of mastering "future auxiliary 'will' plus root-form verb" and the use of personal pronouns.

Theory Behind Drills

Richards and Rodgers (1986) explain that extensive use of drills is a feature of audiolingualism, and that it reflects structural linguistic theory and behaviorist psychology:

> Dialogues and drills form the basis of audiolingual classroom practices.... After a dialogue has been presented and memorized, specific grammatical patterns in the dialogue are selected and become the focus of various kinds of drill and pattern-practice exercises. (p. 53)

It is possible to learn to what extent a textbook is based on structural and behavioristic beliefs by counting the frequency of the drills in the textbook. This scale enables us to penetrate below the surface organization of a textbook, for even among the textbooks with functional or topical syllabuses, there are some whose exercises are made up of audiolingual drills, as in the previously-mentioned example of the unit entitled "I'm sorry I'm late."

The actual calculation of frequency can be done by picking up a typical unit of a textbook and counting what percent of activities and/or exercises in the unit belongs to the category of "drills", as defined in the previous section.

Scale 4: The Number of Activities for Expressing Students' Own Ideas

The fourth scale is concerned with the number of activities for expressing students' own ideas in a textbook. Obviously such activities stand at the other end of the cline from the drills discussed before, in that the self-expressing activities focus on meaning rather than on form.

The inclusion of self-expressing activities in OC-A textbooks is not only emphasized in the Mombusho's *Course of Study* for OC-A (Mombusho: 1989), but is considered effective for enhancing students' motivation to participate in the classroom activities.

Edwards, Shortall, Willis, Quinn and Leek (1994, p. 117), citing McDonough and Shaw (1993), stress the importance of such materials:

> McDonough and Shaw draw attention to materials which require 'personal responses' from students "in order for learners to become more closely involved with the materials so that they can have more meaningful things to talk about and thereby learn more readily and efficiently" (p. 168). Such materials might require students to give their personal opinions on specific issues, or on aspects of their own life such as their hopes and aspirations (p. 168).

Conditions of Self-Expressing Activities

Letting students express their own ideas in the target language in a Japanese English classroom, however, is no easy task. Miura (1991, p. 46) points out how carefully preliminary activities on a given topic must be put together in a unit so that they will provide students with necessary interest, ideas, lexical items and discourse models that will culminate in successful self-expression on the topic.

Though many of the OC-A textbooks contain seemingly self-expressing activities, some of them do not really seem to work because of the lack of the preliminary activities discussed above. In the unit below, for example, its "(6) Communicative Activity" at the end of the unit is completely isolated from the preceding activities both in terms of language and content:

> Unit title: Beth Looks back on the Summer (From *The New Age Dialog*, Unit 11)
> (1) model dialogue (on summer vacation) and comprehension questions
> (2) rejoinder drills (on traveling)
> (3) guided conversation (on summer vacation)
> (4) dialogue completion drills (on high school baseball tournament)
> (5) Communicative Activity: "Form two parties in the class, one favoring baseball and the other favoring soccer, and discuss how these two sports are fun."

In the above example, students are abruptly required to debate on their preference of baseball or soccer without being provided with enough reasons to debate, lexical items to use or discourse models to follow in preparation. Such isolated tasks do not seem to lead to self-expression in the ordinary English classroom in Japan, and therefore can not be counted as self-expressing activities. It would be more accurate to count only those which satisfy the following conditions:

1. Activities that motivate students to express themselves, in short speeches or conversation on topics related to themselves.

2 . Activities that accept and encourage student's original answers or utterances, instead of imposing a predetermined one.

3 . Activities that are preceded by sufficient models to follow and accompanied by sufficient linguistic aids for accomplishing the task.

I have already introduced a unit entitled "My Favorite Sport" as an example of a well-made self-expressing activity, in which simpler activities (1)-(6) are carefully organized in order to help students express their own views in the final two activities in "Part 3".

Calculation

Self-expressing activities tend to require lengthy preparations; so that it is rare to find more than one self-expressing activity in each unit. Therefore, in this study I have chosen to count the total number of all the self-expressing activities contained in the whole textbook.

The result of this measurement reveals that there is a great diversity in the attitude toward self-expressing activities among the OC-A textbooks. Of the sixteen published textbooks, there are five textbooks that contain approximately one self-expressing activity per unit, while there are another five textbooks that contain no such activity throughout all the units.

Scale 5 : Activity Types

The fifth remarkable difference lies in the types of activities contained in the textbooks. The difference can be classified into the following two categories :

1) interactiveness : Are the students really required to have conversational exchanges in the target language with their speech partners in order to accomplish the task in the activity ?

2) creativeness : Does the activity allow students to create meanings and language for themselves instead of imposing predetermined utterances ?

Each of these categories will be discussed in the following sections.

Interactive-Noninteractive Distinction

In this study, interactive activities refer to those activities whose tasks can only be accomplished through the conversational exchanges between a speaker and his/her interlocutor, and noninteractive activities refer to those activities whose tasks can be performed alone without an interlocutor. Let us take the following activity as an example :

Noninteractive Activities

Below is an example of a noninteractive activity in an OC-A textbook :

Activity 2 : "Perform a dialogue practice according to the example, substituting
the underlined parts with the phone numbers in 1-4."

[example]　A : Hello. May I speak to Kate ?

　　　　　　B : I think you have the wrong number. What number are you
　　　　　　　　calling ?

　　　　　　A : 221-7313.

　　　　　　B : This is 211-7313.

　　　　　　A : Oh, I'm sorry.

1 . 2-8988/2-8998　　2 . 38-3563/38-3536

3 . 872-0130/872-0930　　4 . 3527-6938/3257-6938

(From *English Street Oral Communication A*, Unit 7)

It is doubtful whether this activity will actually help generate student-student
interaction, because students do not have any reason to interact other than for the purpose
of language manipulation. In addition, this activity can perfectly well be self-studied since
all the necessary information is already present. In other words, in such activities the
existence of an interlocutor is unnecessary, therefore they are categorized as noninter-
active.

Breen and Candlin (1987) discuss that materials for classroom work should have
different features from materials which focus on individual language learning, and explain
as follows :

> Many, if not most, available published materials are not explicitly designed for
> classroom work. They may have classes of learners in mind ; nonetheless they
> very often address the individual learner or assume that the main 'dialogue' in
> the classroom will be between him or her and the teacher, via the materials. We
> want to argue the case for materials whose characteristics make the most of the
> classroom as a gathering of people who have a shared purpose of discovering
> a new language (p. 24).

Interactive Activities

Let us compare the above example with "Tasks A and B" in *Hello, There !*, which
have been examined before. In "Tasks A and B", students really need to ask their
classmates about their favorite sports in order to obtain the required information and
report it to the class. In other words, the presence of interlocutors is mandatory here.

By employing interactive-noninteractive distinction it is possible for us to trace
back to the approaches which underlie these activities. "Activity 2" in *English Street*
reflects behaviorist habit-formation theory, in which "learners play a reactive role by
responding to stimuli" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 56). On the other hand, "Tasks A
and B" reflect communicative theory in which "language learning comes about through

using language communicatively, rather than through practicing language skills" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 71).

It should also be noted that the Mombusho's *Course of Study* for OC-A (1989) puts a special emphasis on interactiveness. It emphasizes abilities to "talk with others [underline added] about familiar matters, using expressions appropriate to the given situation and purpose" (pp. 32-34).

Creative-Noncreative Distinction

The textbook survey has also revealed that OC-A textbooks have diverse attitudes toward the creativity of activities: some textbooks contain plenty of activities which allow students' creative utterances (indicated as "creative"), while others contain activities which only accept predetermined utterances (indicated as "noncreative"). Let us examine two contrasting examples from OC-A textbooks.

Creative Activities

An example of creative-type activity has already been given in this paper in "Tasks A and B" in *Hello There !* These tasks are most likely to produce the following teaching/ learning processes in the classroom :

(in Task A)

1 . Students will be motivated to learn the interview questions by heart for the purpose of actually using them to obtain meaningful information from their classmates.

2 . There is no predetermined answer provided, so students are required to practice hypothesis testing (Brown, 1987, p. 168) in order to create novel utterances.

3 . Interviewers will have to listen to interviewees carefully because they cannot predict what the latter would say.

4 . Interviewers and interviewees will be obliged to negotiate meanings between themselves in order to understand the novel utterances created by their speech partners.

5 . Students will "get to know each other personally" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p. 73) through the exchange of personal information.

(in Task B)

6 . Students will listen to the reports about their classmates' responses and further get to know each other personally.

(in both Tasks A and B)

7 . Students' performance will be more fairly evaluated according to multiple criteria ; the quality of content and the correctness of form.

Noncreative Activities

On the other end of the creative-noncreative cline are activities that give no room for students to produce any creative utterances, as shown in the example below :

(From Laurel Oral Communication A : Unit 12)

Activity A. "Work in pairs. One person should ask, 'Can I ～ ?'. The other person
should answer yes or no."

(1) use a calculator, (2) take this book home, (3) take pictures in this museum

Activity B. "This time, practice saying, 'You're not supposed to ～,' as in the
example. Use the same questions as in Activity A."

[Example]

A :Can I use a calculator?

B :No, you can't. You're not supposed to use a calculator.

These activities can be categorized as mechanical substitution drills. Their purpose is to reinforce the target structure "Can I ～ ?", and there is no connection between the utterances and students' real life. What types of classroom teaching/learning processes would these activities be likely to realize? The following processes seem probable :

1 . Students will be required to produce the utterances correctly, for there can be no other goal of this activity.

2 . Neither of the students in pair will have to pay attention to what the other says, because he/she knows beforehand what the other will say. This means that there will be no hypothesis testing or negotiation of meaning involved.

3 . There will be only one criterion of evaluation in the classroom--the correctness of form.

4 . As a result of the above-mentioned processes, even those teachers who are not confident in their own EFL performance will be able to teach with confidence.

5 . These activities do not facilitate socialization or personal understanding among students.

Some Comments on the Two Types of Processes

In the processes of creative activities above, "unpredictability" and "negotiation of meaning" (Edwards et al., 1994, p. 103) constitute important requirements for tasks for spoken communication, for without a certain degree of unpredictability communication does not take place. Nunan (1991, p. 42) emphasizes that "if language were totally predictable communication would be unnecessary (i.e. if I know in advance exactly what you are going to say, then there is no point in my listening to you)." Also hypothesis testing is considered a very important process of acquiring language in communicative language acquisition theories. Those teachers who emphasize meaning over form will place more importance on unpredictability, negotiation of meaning and hypothesis testing in their classrooms than those who emphasize form over meaning.

On the other hand, the processes of noncreative activities described above seem almost negative. However, in terms of manageability they might have a positive aspect in Japan, particularly the process # 4. This is because the great majority of English teachers

in Japanese secondary schools are nonnative English speakers, and all of them do not have enough confidence to use any oral or unpredictable English in class.

In reality, most textbooks contain both creative and noncreative activities. This is understandable when we consider the general tendencies of classroom procedures in which language activities proceed "from controlled to free practice" (Hubbard, Jones, Thornton and Wheeler, 1983, p. 187).

A Two-Axis Scale

For a given OC-A textbook, to show efficiently the features of activities discussed in the previous two sections, I propose a two-axis scale as shown in Figure 1.

The horizontal axis indicates the creative-noncreative distinction, and the vertical axis indicates the interactive-noninteractive distinction, respectively. This gives four cells in the diagram, as follows:

1. Noninteractive, noncreative activities (the left-hand bottom cell in Fig. 1):

This type of activity is not interactive, and does not allow any creative utterances. Included in this type are repetition drills, substitution drills, transformation drills and oral translation from the student's native language to English. In this type of drills, the classroom relationship is basically between the teacher and isolated students, and all the focus is on mastering a target language element. "Exercise A" in *Birdland*, which has been examined in the section of *Defining Drills*, is an example of this type of activities.

Figure 1 : A Two Axis Scale for Analyzing the Balance of Types of Activities in a Conversation Textbook
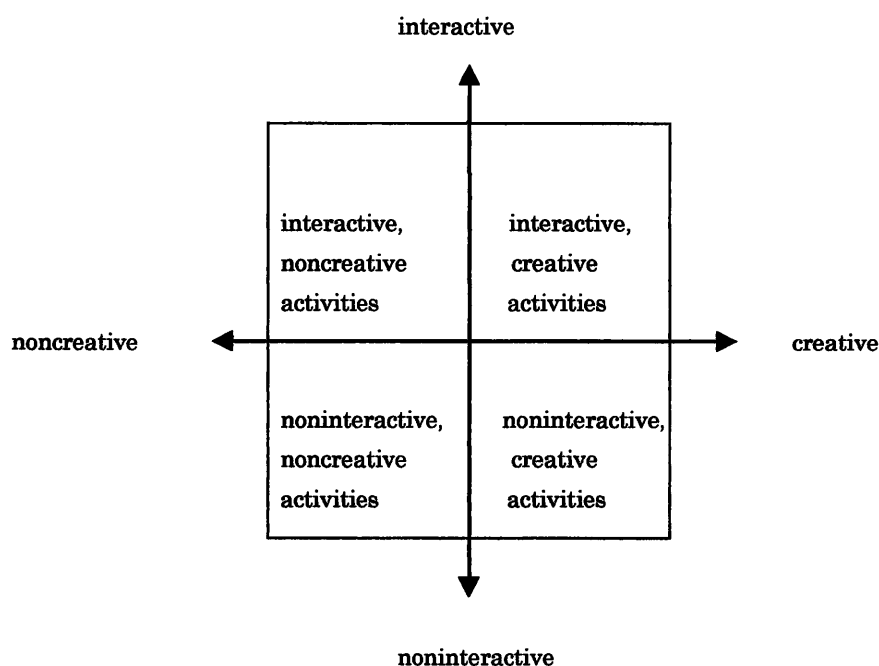
2 . Noninteractive, creative activities (the right-hand bottom cell in Fig. 1) :

This type of activity is not interactive, but allows creative utterances. Included in this type are guided oral composition and guided conversation. These activities may take the form of a dialogue, but a student doesn't necessarily need to interact with anyone else to complete the task. Below is an example of such an activity :

(From Select Oral Communication A, Unit 7)

"Talk about your future dreams, filling proper words in the underlined parts."

What do you want to be in the future ? --I want to be _____.

What country would you like to visit ? --I'd like to visit _____.

If you had enough money, what would you like to buy? --I'd like to buy _____.

3 . Interactive, noncreative activities (the left-hand top cell in Fig. 1) :

Included in this type are closed information gap activities. These are activities which require oral interaction between two or more students, but do not accept student's original utterances. Since they accept only predetermined utterances, it is easy for both teachers and students to judge correctness of utterances. What follows is an example of such activities :

(From *Oral Communication Course A Interact*, Unit 1)

"Form pairs of students. One of the pair should look at TABLE A on page 1. The other should look at TABLE B on page 84. Ask each other questions, following the examples given in the tables, to find the missing information."

Table A (p. 8)

NAME	HOME COUNTRY	OCCUPATION	HOBBY
Carlos		secretary	
Pauline	Singapore		painting
Vera	Brazil		sewing
	The United States	bus driver	

Table B (p. 84)

NAME	HOME COUNTRY	OCCUPATION	HOBBY
Carlos	Spain		skiing
Pauline		teacher	
		journalist	
David	The United States		horse riding

4 . Interactive, creative activities (the right-hand top cell in Fig. 1) :

These activities require interaction between two or more students, and at the same time encourage student's original utterances. Included in this type are open information-gap activities and task-based activities. Below is an example of such activities :

(From *Echo English Course Oral Communication A*, Unit 15)
"You have received a letter from your friend in America. S/he is asking you some tourist information about Japan. Ask these questions to several of your classmates, and record their answers in a table, following the example."

I want to visit Japan sometime next year.
Tell me :
　What time of the year do you recommend to visit Japan ?
　What places do you recommend to visit ?
　What things do you recommend to see or do ?
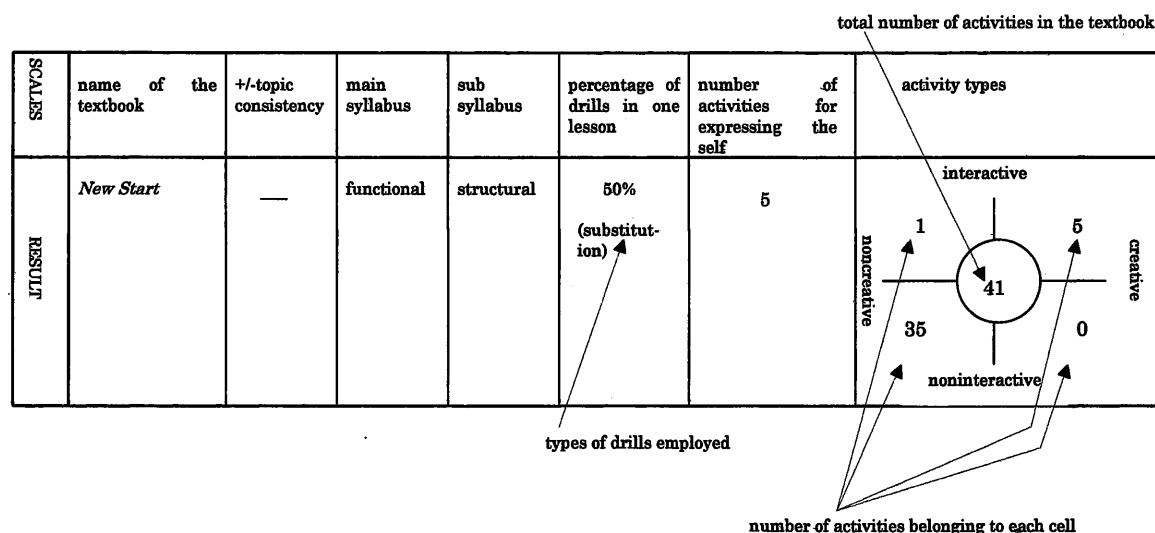　What do you recommend to buy for souvenirs ?

Example :

name	time	place	things to see/do	souvenirs
Kiyomi	April	Kyoto	cherry blossoms	kiyomizu-yaki
Makoto	May	Shizuoka	ride the Shinkansen	green tea

In this example, student-student interaction is not only mandatory but seems to successfully encourage it. Although the interview questions are predetermined, there is no control over the form of responses. Both the form and content of the responses are at the disposal of the interlocutor. In this type of activity, learning is designed to occur through the exchange and sharing of personal opinions among the members of the classroom community, which seems to facilitate authentic classroom use of the target language.

Combination of the Proposed Scales and Concluding Remarks

So far I have proposed five main scales for analyzing OC-A textbooks ; those for measuring (a) topic consistency, (b) syllabus types, (c) percentage of drills per unit, (d) number of activities for expressing students' own ideas and (e) activity types. Figure 2 is a combined analysis chart of these five scales and their subcategories, accompanied by some guides for interpreting the figures in the table.

Figure 2
Aural/Communication A Textbook Analysis Chart

total number of activities in the textbook

SCALES	name of the textbook	+/-topic consistency	main syllabus	sub syllabus	percentage of drills in one lesson	number of activities expressing self for the	activity types
RESULT	*New Start*	—	functional	structural	50% (substitution)	5	interactive / 1 / 5 / noncreative / 41 / creative / 35 / 0 / noninteractive

types of drills employed

number of activities belonging to each cell

Application of the Proposed Analysis System and Concluding Remarks

We often discover that textbooks that look alike at first glance turn out to be totally different in approaches, and it is usually after we have started using a certain textbook that a mismatch between our beliefs and those of the textbook writers becomes clear. How can we avoid choosing the wrong textbook ? It is this question that this study has intended to answer. I have applied the proposed analysis system on all of the OC-A textbooks published in 1995 and obtained the following results. (The analysis data are provided in Appendix.)

1 . The proposed analysis system enables teachers to sort out OC-A textbooks according to the criteria that they consider most important to their classrooms.

2 . The analysis system is flexible enough to allow the sorting of OC-A textbooks in various ways by combining any two or more scales. For example, the analysis data in Appendix are sorted primarily in the order of the higher percentage of creative-and-interactive activities and secondarily in the order of topic consistency over topic inconsistency.

3 . By placing the analysis data of all the textbooks side by side in an analysis table, as seen in Appendix, it is possible to make a comparison of textbooks quickly and easily.

4 . By observing the fifth scale, "activity types" consisting of the two-axis scale, teachers can readily infer the roles of teachers and students a given textbook is likely to impose on them.

Of course, even with this analysis system, it is still time-consuming to analyze as many as sixteen textbooks. Nevertheless the analysis result can be shared by many other teachers. The analysis does not tell teachers which textbook to choose, but gives them data necessary for making their own decision.
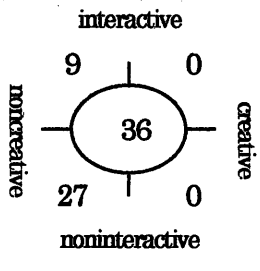
References

Araki, K. (1995). *The new age dialog*. Tokyo : Kenkyusha.

Breen, M & Candlin, C.N. (1987). Which materials? A consumer's and designer's guide. In L. Sheldon (Ed.), *ELT textbooks and materials : Problems in evaluation and development. ELT Documents 126* (pp. 13-28). London : Modern English Publications.

Brown, H.D. (1987). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall.

Edwards, C., Shortall, T., Willis, D., Quinn, A., & Leek, P. (1994). *Language teaching methodology*. MA TES/FL, Open Learning Programme Coursebook, the University of Birmingham.

Hazumi, E. et al. (1995). *English street oral communication A*. Tokyo : Daiichi Gakushusha.

Hubbard, P., Jones, H., Thornton, B. & Wheeler, R. (1983). *A training course for TEFL*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Ishii, B. et al. (1995). *Oral communication course A interact*. Tokyo : Kirihara Shoten.

Jimbo, H. et al. (1995). *Hello, there ! Oral communication A*. Tokyo : Tokyo Shoseki.

Kitade, A. et al. (1995). *Select oral communication A*. Tokyo : Sanseido.

Krashen, S. & Terrell, T. (1983). *The natural approach*. Oxford : Pergamon Press.

McDonough, J. & Shaw, C. (1993). *Materials and methods in ELT*. Oxford : Blackwell.

Miura, T. (1991). Treating students' shyness and passivity. *Aichi-ken eigo kyoiku kenkyuukai koutougakkou bukai kaishi, 30*, 46-55. Aichi Prefectural Association of Senior High School English Teachers.

Mombusho. (1989). *Koutougakkou shidouyouryou kaisetsu gaikokugo-hen eigo-hen* [*A guide to the course of study for upper-secondary school foreign languages*]. Tokyo : Kyoiku-shuppan Co.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology*. Hertfordshire : Prentice Hall.

Ogawa, K. (1995). *Active English communication A*. Tokyo : Hitotsubashi Shuppan.

Richards, J. (1990). *The language teaching matrix*. Cambridge : CUP.

Richards, J., Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992). *Longman dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics*. Essex : Longman.

Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge : CUP.

Sasaki, A. et al. (1995). *Evergreen communication A*. Tokyo : Daiichi Gakushusha.

Suzuki, S. et al. (1995). *Expressways oral communication A*. Tokyo : Kairyudo.

Tanaka, Y. (1995). *Laurel oral communication A*. Tokyo : Sanseido.

Yamamoto, A. (1995). *Echo English course oral communication A*. Tokyo : Sanyu-sha.

Yoshida, K. et al. (1995). *Birdland oral communication A*. Tokyo : Bun-eido.

Appendix: Aural/Oral Communication A Textbook Analysis Data

name of the textbook	+/-topic consistency	main syllabus	sub syllabus	percentage of drills in one lesson (types of drills)	number of activities for expressing the self	activity types
Speak to the World	+	topical	functional	0%	10	interactive: 3 / 19; noncreative — creative; center 41; noninteractive: 11 / 8
Select	+	topical	functional	0%	17	interactive: 3 / 15; noncreative — creative; center 33; noninteractive: 7 / 7
Echo English Course	+	topical	functional	0%	19	interactive: 1 / 21; noncreative — creative; center 54; noninteractive: 15 / 17
Hello, There!	+	topical	functional	0%	19	interactive: 8 / 16; noncreative — creative; center 60; noninteractive: 15 / 21
Interact	+	topical	functional	13% (substitution)	17	interactive: 5 / 9; noncreative — creative; center 34; noninteractive: 19 / 1

Mainstream	—	functional	structural	14% (reproduction)	16	interactive: 0, 32 / center 121 / 57, 32 noninteractive (noncreative — creative)
The New Age Dialog	+	topical	situational	0%	8	interactive: 1, 23 / center 92 / 66, 2 noninteractive (noncreative — creative)
New Start	—	functional	structural	50% (substitution)	5	interactive: 1, 5 / center 41 / 35, 0 noninteractive (noncreative — creative)
Lighthouse Conversation	—	functional	structural	33% (substitution)	0	interactive: 2, 4 / center 58 / 43, 9 noninteractive (noncreative — creative)
Birdland	—	structural	functional	100% (conversion) (rejoinder)	6	interactive: 3, 9 / center 123 / 109, 2 noninteractive (noncreative — creative)
Active English Communication	+	topical	structural	60% (substitution)	0	interactive: 0, 3 / center 81 / 45, 33 noninteractive (noncreative — creative)

English Street	＋	topical	functional	33% (substitution) (oral translation)	3	interactive noncreative 5 / 1 creative 54 39 / 9 noninteractive
Evergreen	—	functional	structural	50% (substitution) (reproduction)	0	interactive noncreative 0 / 1 creative 67 46 / 20 noninteractive
Expressways Part 1 (18 units)	—	functional	structural	50% (substitution) (rejoinder)	0	interactive noncreative 0 / 0 creative 36 36 / 0 noninteractive
Expressways Part 2 (18 units)	＋	situational	functional	100% (reproduction) (substitution)	0	interactive noncreative 0 / 0 creative 36 36 / 0 noninteractive
Sailing Part 1 (8 units)	—	functional	unidentfi-able	100% (repetition)	0	interactive noncreative 0 / 0 creative 16 16 / 0 noninteractive
Sailing Part 2 (17 units)	＋	topical	functional	29% (substitution) (oral translation)	0	interactive noncreative 0 / 0 creative 68 68 / 0 noninteractive

| Laurel | — | functional | topical | 100% (substitution) (oral translation) | 2 | interactive
　9 ｜ 0
noncreative ⊂ 36 ⊃ creative
　27 ｜ 0
noninteractive |