

News Article-Based Discussion Activities for an Undergraduate Interpreting Course at a Japanese University

Yoshihito Kurasawa

Abstract

Against the backdrop of rapid globalization, many universities in Japan have introduced interpreting courses or interpreting training as part of EFL courses focusing on developing cross-cultural communicative competence. However, interpreting is a complex, multi-faceted ability, not just in terms of linguistic competence but content and cultural knowledge. Developing these abilities at the undergraduate level poses significant challenges for instructors. This paper explores these issues and proposes concrete pedagogical techniques that can be used to assist students in developing more effective communication and interpreting skills.

急速なグローバル化を背景に、日本の多くの大学では、異文化コミュニケーション能力の育成に重点を置いた EFL コースの一環として、通訳コースや通訳トレーニングを導入している。しかし、通訳は言語的能力だけでなく、内容や文化的知識など、複雑で多面的な能力である。このような能力を学部レベルで育成することは、指導者にとって大きな課題となる。本稿では、このような問題点を探り、学生がより効果的なコミュニケーション能力や通訳能力を身につけるための具体的な教育手法を提案する。

Keywords: Teacher-Led Discussion, Students-Led Discussion, News Article Log, Content Awareness-Raising, Relevance

1. Introduction

As the world has become increasingly globalized over the years, Japan's English education has correspondingly emphasized the teaching of communicative English (MEXT 2014a; MEXT 2014b) and the employment of innovative means to improve communicative competence (Giustini, 2020). Against this background, and along with increasing economic pressure for global-minded human resources, many universities in Japan have implemented

interpreting training “as a tool for the enhancement of students’ communicative competence” (Giustini, 2020, p. 3). Nowadays, more than one hundred universities in Japan offer interpreting training or interpreting-related courses for undergraduate students (Someya et al., 2005; Yamada, 2019).

Interpreting programs for university students in Japan, however, are not without problems. First, interpreting requires high linguistic competency. It is an intrinsically heavy-load activity that necessitates a greater amount of parallel processing (e.g., language comprehension and production at the same time in the case of simultaneous interpreting) (Seeber, 2013), and, as Setton and Derwant (2016) point out, an interpreter needs not just one but four core competencies as a skill set (see Table 1). Lambert (1991) observes that when selecting candidates for an interpreting program at the University of Ottawa, various screening instruments are used, and several characteristics are considered including general knowledge, particularly relevant to current events.

Table 1 *The Interpreter’s Skillset*

Core Competency	Description
Language proficiency (L)	Language proficiency in both source and target languages, to decode the signs and present the message intelligibly, clearly and idiomatically.
Knowledge (K)	Knowledge, both general (including cultural) and local, to penetrate the cognitive world(s) of speakers and listeners sufficiently to mediate their exchange.
Skills (S)	Skills, both general (for communication) and specific to interpreting, to manage the constraints and exploit the opportunities of the medium.
Professionalism (P)	Professionalism to manage conditions, set priorities and take operational and ethical decisions aimed at optimizing the service in real life.

Note. Adapted from Setton and Dawrant (2016, p. 5).

Another challenge of interpreting programs relates to the historical background of how interpreters have been trained in Japan. The relatively recent development of interpreting programs at universities in Japan has not come to fully establish pedagogically viable and practical ways to teach interpreting to university students. Based on my own observations as an interpreter by profession and an instructor of interpreting courses at the undergraduate level, interpreting programs at universities in Japan in large part have been incorporated into the curricula not so much for the very serious development of interpreters but as a tool to improve students' communicative competence. A majority of interpreting instructors, on the other hand, who are current or former interpreters, have received their training at commercial vocational schools affiliated with interpreting agencies for commercial purposes rather than in a pedagogical context as in the case of Europe (Giustini, 2020). As such, there seems to be a gap between interpreting instruction and the requirements students need to fulfill. Interpreting instruction may be more oriented toward the style of teaching would-be interpreters due to the instructors' training backgrounds. As Morizumi (2018) and Giustini (2020) observe, the course requirements can be very demanding as compared with students' English proficiency because the outcome level of university students' learning interpreting in Japan seems to be B1/B2 in CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) rather than C1/C2 which is a prerequisite in Europe.

In view of this gap between highly demanding interpreting skills and undergraduate students' current English proficiency, it seems that greater pedagogical attention needs to be paid to interpreting instruction given to undergraduate students. Shibahara et al. (2012) argue that interpreting and translation education at the undergraduate level must "provide language education in tandem with interpreting and translation training" (p. 176) and emphasize the importance of a liberal arts education combined with linguistic skills. In fact, there is a number of studies that show positive results of applying interpreting training methods to English learning, including the

positive effect of developing cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies in consecutive interpreting and students' self-learning processes (Miyamoto, 2008), the development of students' L2 speaking and listening through interpreting (Rido, 2011), the effectiveness of reproduction (Tomoda, 2013), the useful interpreting process involving the full understanding, analysis, and processing of a spoken message (Mahmoud, 2023), and the benefit of preparing students to become independent and autonomous language learners (Morizumi, 2018). Such positive effects can also be found from cross-cultural perspectives. Takimoto and Hashimoto (2010) argue that interpreting and translation contribute to intercultural exploration between one's native language and culture (L1/C1) and the target language and culture (L2/C2), as well as the acquisition of skills including analytical and critical thinking, problem-solving, and general interpreting and translation.

In order to address the issue of filling the gap between the demanding interpreting skills and undergraduate students' overall language proficiency, this paper aims to focus on content awareness-raising through news article-based discussion activities. News is relevant to knowledge of current events as part of general knowledge, a core competency of the interpreter's skillset as shown in Table 1. Because interpreting topics can be virtually anything and everything under the sun, acquainting yourself with what is happening in the world around you (i.e., knowledge of current events as part of general knowledge) seems to be very useful, and as previously mentioned, it is the kind of knowledge highly expected of the interpreter.

Specifically, the paper brings into focus a Japanese private university's interpreting course at the undergraduate level comprising a total of 30 classes a semester, with each class being 90 minutes. In order to address the issue of content awareness-raising using news articles as part of preparing students to improve their language competency and acquire interpreting skills accordingly, it also gives consideration to the following three points:

- 1) There should be a variety of well-balanced topics, which are level-appropriate, relatable, and meaningful to students.

- 2) There should be ways to keep students motivated and engaged in a variety of news articles and their topics so that they can form a habit of reading news articles.
- 3) There should be opportunities to recycle vocabulary related to various general topics to increase the breadth and depth of content and language.

Thus, the activities should make use of news articles to help students increase their active vocabulary and raise their content awareness of current events.

2. Selective Literature Review

2.1 Content and Language Relevance

Many contemporary views of language emphasize the importance of language in context (e.g., Halliday, 2014; van Lier, 2000). According to van Lier (2000), the ecological perspective views language as relations rather than objects (e.g., words, sentences, and rules), sees language and learning as relationships among and between learners and the environment whose particular property is its potential usefulness to learners, and puts language into the context of other semiotic (i.e., meaning-making) systems and the world. This perspective provides useful insights for news article-based discussion activities, which bring into focus the relationships between learners, current events, and the world relevant to the learners. Halliday's principles of functional grammar also provide a valuable perspective on the relationship between context and language in the technical sense. In Halliday's view: "texts vary systematically according to contextual values [and they] vary according to the nature of the contexts they are used in" (Halliday, 2014, p. 29). Because language operates in context, one of the basic features of language from this systemic and ecological perspective is that it varies according to the situational context, which can be characterized by field ("what's going on in the situation"), tenor ("who is taking part in the situation"), and mode ("what role is being played by language and other semiotic systems in the situation")

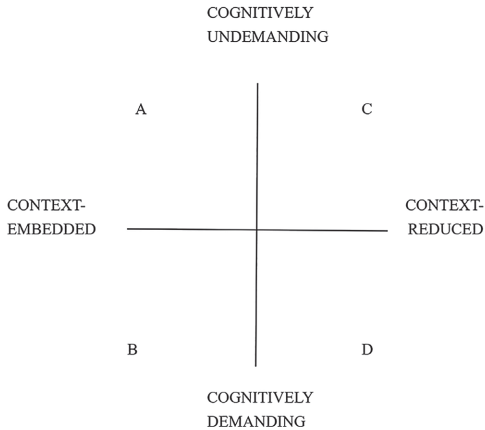
(Halliday, 2014, p. 33; see also Martin, 1999 for an in-depth description of the relationship between language and context in contemporary linguistics).

From the relational view of the world, Naiditch (2018) argues that “if we are to make sense of the world around us, we need to be able to look at the bigger picture of world events and understand how they relate to us at a social, political, historical, and even personal level” (p. 1). Current events are particularly relevant to general knowledge (Lambert, 1991), which, as mentioned previously, is considered to be one of the interpreter’s competencies (Setton & Dawrant, 2016). News articles, which deal with current events, serve as a highly valuable resource for intermediate and advanced students (Farmer, 2008) and can be converted into materials for intermediate and advanced level students (Moglen, 2014).

When using news stories in the classroom, it is important to understand the basic style of journalistic writing comprising 5W (when, where, who, what, and why) and 1H (how), which is not limited to news stories but also communicative English (Antepara, 2003). The 5W1H considerations can help students to “summarize an article they read,” “organize their thinking,” and “use a range of question types independently” (TKI, 2017). The questions of 5W1H are also relevant to planning lessons because they concern participants (who), date and time (when), school and room (where), *scope* (i.e., what content should be taught), *sequence* (i.e., in what order linguistic items and topics should be presented as part of *how* content should be taught), and rationale for them (why) (Murray & Christian, 2020). Dabrowski and Marshall (2018) suggest that assignments be based on essential questions and universal understandings, real-world materials and events, and students’ values, interests, and goals.

One challenge teachers face is guiding learners from their common sense understandings about the world around them toward more distant and unfamiliar contexts. Cummins (1983) presents a useful framework to consider “the developmental interrelationships between academic performance and language proficiency in L1 and L2” (p. 131) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 *Range of Contextual Support and Degree of Cognitive Involvement in Communicative Activities*



Note. Adapted from Cummins (1983, p. 131).

The horizontal axis relates to the “range of contextual support available for expressing or receiving meaning” (Cummins, 1983, p. 131), and is a continuum from context-embedded communication to context-reduced communication. In context-embedded communication, the participants actively negotiate meaning, and there is more interpersonal involvement in a shared reality. In context-reduced communication, there is no such shared reality assumed, and the participants have to rely on linguistic cues for meaning. The vertical axis addresses the “developmental aspects of communicative proficiency in terms of the degree of active cognitive involvement in the task or activity” (Cummins, 1983, p. 132). Cognitively undemanding is the area where the linguistic tools are mostly automatized with little cognitive involvement needed, whereas cognitively demanding is the area where the linguistic tools have not become automatized with active cognitive involvement needed (Cummins, 1983). Cummins’ framework, therefore, helps teachers to understand the balance between content and language and provides a useful conceptual tool for organizing the curriculum contents of a news-based course.

Taken together, it would be useful to ensure the content relevance to students based on the 5W1H perspective by employing Cummins' framework to assess the appropriateness of content, considering the scope and sequence of materials to be covered, and the relational context and language where meaning-making processes occur through interaction.

2.2 News English

The discourse of news English can be especially challenging for learners. According to Biber et al. (1999), news has the highest lexical density across registers (i.e., conversation, fiction, news, and academic prose) because a key purpose of news is to convey information as concisely as possible. Biber et al. (1999) define the lexical density of a text as “the proportion of the text made up of lexical word tokens (nouns, lexical verbs, adjectives, and adverbs)” (p. 62). Biber et al. (1999) also point out that 1) adjectives are more frequent in written than spoken registers, 2) attributive adjectives, which are “one of the primary mechanisms used to pack additional information into noun phrases,” are used to a much greater extent than predicative adjectives, 3) noun + noun sequences also function to convey complex meaning in concise form, particularly in news where nouns abound, and 4) appositive noun phrases quite often appear in news to provide background information about people, places, items, etc., stating “[i]n news, over 90% of all appositive constructions involve a proper noun” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 639). Thus, it would be useful to draw students' attention to the characteristics peculiar to news English as they familiarize themselves with this challenging discourse.

2.3 Vocabulary and Narrow Reading

News discourse is not just grammatically complex; its lexis also presents challenges for learners. While vocabulary is essential to overall language proficiency and development (Nation, 2013), researchers have pointed out its link to reading and suggested ways to make reading more efficient. Krashen (2004, 2013) argues that learners can develop a wide range of knowledge

and vocabulary as they keep reading books by one author or a series of texts under one topic of interest (i.e., narrow reading). This provides much opportunity for review and the reader can gain greater knowledge from the context, resulting in better background knowledge of the topic. One approach to narrow reading, according to Kang (2015), is “to encourage students to read ongoing news stories on current issues” (p. 167). The same topics often recur in news articles, resulting in greater exposure to a wide range of ideas and topic-related vocabulary (Kang, 2015). Frequent recurrence of vocabulary in newspaper stories in succession is less demanding than stories on unrelated topics (Hwang & Nation, 1989). Thus, it may be worthwhile to allow students to be exposed to news articles in which frequent recurrence of vocabulary is expected.

2.4 Motivation

Motivation, one of the affective constructs, has been viewed as the “initial spark” for learning that students need as well as maintaining such learning desire over time (Oxford, 2013, p. 72). There are two well-known types of motivation: intrinsic motivation is the “desire to do something based on a combination of interest, enjoyment, and personal challenge,” and extrinsic motivation is the “desire to do something based on a desire for external rewards, such as grades or salary” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, cited in Oxford, 2013, p. 72). Strong (2010) outlines a small-group discussion task in a university setting and explains how motivating it is when students choose topics that interest them. Wolf’s (2013) study also shows that learners gain greater knowledge and interest and higher levels of confidence in discussion topics of their own choice. As part of intrinsic motivation, interest is “both a psychological state of attention and affect toward a particular object or topic, and an enduring predisposition to reengage over time” (Harackiewicz et al., 2016, p. 220). It is also “the desire to carry out activities to achieve a goal,” and “[i]nterest in learning is a feeling of pleasure, liking, and attention to gain knowledge” (Lena et al., 2022, p. 3). Thus, it would be beneficial to allow

students to choose articles of their own for group discussions and their own pursuance of their areas of interest.

2.5 Classroom Discussion

One opportunity to recycle vocabulary and provide sustained focus on a topic is through class discussions. The discussion can provide an intellectually lively and challenging space in the classroom for students to participate actively (Mehta & Fine, 2019). Dialogic discourse changes the positioning of the teacher and students, which contributes to the development of knowledge as students participate in such discourse (Monte-Sano et al., 2021). Language “emerges out of semiotic activity [and] the active learner engages in meaning-making activities together with others” (van Lier, 2000, p. 252) through which experience is shared and relationships enacted (Halliday, 1978, cited in Monte-Sano et al., 2021). As such, interaction among the participants (e.g., the teacher and students) can contribute to the development of language and knowledge, and supporting such development through interaction plays an important pedagogical role (Monte-Sano et al., 2021).

Joint inquiry into topics in discussions on the part of students and teachers can promote their exploration of various concepts and engagement in each other’s reasoning in student-to-student exchanges (Reznitskaya et al., 2001). Productive discussion can also promote a collaborative learning environment that enables students’ greater engagement with content and increased participation in the class (Matsumura et al., 2008).

According to argument schema theory (AST), “students acquire generalizable knowledge of argumentation, or an argument schema, through participating in dialogic discussions with their peers” (Reznitskaya et al., 2009, p. 29). Higher mental functions are developed through social participation where psychological tools are internalized (Vygotsky, 1981), and the value of education through social participation is partly attributable to dialogic interaction (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1981). Collaborative reasoning derived from AST is “an educational approach that places dialogic inquiry at the

center of its pedagogy,” and students “participate in small group discussions of controversial issues from their reading” (Reznitskaya et al., 2009, p. 33).

Classroom discussion has been found to produce greater vocabulary learning gains than other types of work such as self-study with worksheets (Stahl & Clark, 1987), and increasing the amount and quality of discussion is related to the increase in student learning of target vocabulary (Lawrence et al., 2015). A study on teaching biology concepts to tenth graders also demonstrated their development of learned words and concepts through student-led small-group and teacher-led whole-class discussions (Stahl & Clark, 1987).

To conclude this section, some key points raised include the following:

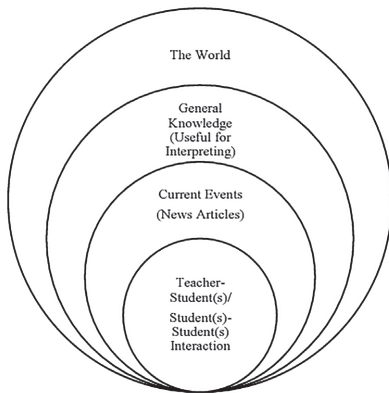
- 1) Language should be taught in context, and meaning is made through interaction with others. Considering various contextual variables can help teachers select appropriate course content. It would be useful to ensure the content and language relevance based on the 5W1H questions which have a close bearing on the materials' appropriateness and sequencing of classroom materials.
- 2) Motivation can be increased by providing students with the opportunity to choose topics of interest to them. Therefore, it is important to give students some autonomy to choose topics they are interested in, thereby sustaining their motivation and nurturing a habit of reading.
- 3) Discussion can provide an intellectually stimulating, lively, and challenging space where students can engage in meaning-making activities with one another through sharing their experiences and enacting relationships. It can also contribute to the development of language and knowledge through interaction, which plays an important role pedagogically.

3. Pedagogical Action

This section outlines news article-based discussion activities that incorporate the insights from the literature presented in the previous section.

In doing so, I will keep in mind the relational links among the teacher-student(s) or student(s)-student(s)' interaction, current events (i.e., news articles), general knowledge, and the world as the philosophy behind these activities. Figure 2 shows a schematic that I developed to represent the inter-relationship among these elements. Such links also echo van Lier's (2000) view of language being relational in a world full of potential meanings in which the learner is immersed. The activities, therefore, aim to be relatable and pedagogically suitable to students in the context in which they live and relevant to raising their content awareness and language thereof.

Figure 2 *Teaching in the Relational World*



The composition of the activities, therefore, will take into account *when*, *where*, *who*, *what*, *why*, and *how* questions in the activities and holistically relate them to one another. *When* relates to timing, *where* to place, *who* to the teacher-student(s) or student(s)-student(s) dynamics, *what* to content, *why* to the rationale for the action taking place (i.e., *when*, *where*, *who*, and *what* all included), and *how* to the way of engagement at any given moment.

The news article-based discussion activities comprise three components, i.e., 1) Teacher-Led Discussion (TLD), 2) Students-Led Discussion (SLD), and 3) News Article Log (NAL). These three components proceed in parallel

(i.e., a three-way approach). This three-way approach adopts three different news articles every week, i.e., articles of the teacher's choice (TLD), articles of students' choice as a group (SLD), and articles of students' choice as an individual (NAL). TLD and SLD articles include a few article-related questions made by the teacher and students respectively and are distributed to all the participants one week before the class, so all the participants have time to read and study the articles in advance. Students then need to answer the questions in writing and submit them to the teacher no later than one day before the class, which usually enables students to read and answer the questions and think about the topic in advance. NAL is the activity where each student chooses a news article of his/her choice each week, reads it, and sends a NAL to the teacher by the day before class, which enables students to keep reading an article of their choice every week to form a habit and exchange orally what they have read with others in class.

Except for interpreting steps in TLD and SLD where both English and Japanese are necessarily used (see Steps 6 and 7 in Tables 4 and 7 respectively) and sharing partner's reading with the class as a summary in Japanese in NAL (see Step 7 in Table 8), these TLD, SLD, and NLD activities in the classroom are conducted all in English in principle, but Japanese is used where needed as a resource to help students better understand any point in question because typically most of the students' first language (L1) is Japanese and the use of L1 can serve as useful support in learning the target language (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

In Teacher-Led Discussion (TLD), the teacher introduces various timely topics based on news articles that are relevant to students' interest and pedagogically important to teach. In choosing articles, while being cognizant of Cummins' framework of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement, I will use criteria of four axes, i.e., domestic, foreign, local, and global (Table 3). As much as the world is increasingly globalized, our day-to-day life for most people takes place locally at a specific location. Our daily routine is more domestically bound, and students are also more familiar with

things happening locally and domestically, including proper nouns associated with locally and domestically occurring events. Naturally, foreign and global topics can be more challenging due to the unfamiliarity of their content and language. On the other hand, foreign news on some local traffic accident may ring a bell if a similar accident has occurred in Japan many times before and students are used to such news. Such news is foreign and yet local, so students may find it less challenging to understand. Students may also find it less difficult to understand news focusing on Japanese topics from foreign news because of their familiarity with the content, except for some proper nouns associated with places or cultural contexts overseas. There is also news of a global nature that is not limited to any one particular location and is rather relevant to the whole of humankind. The difficulty of such news varies according to the domestic or foreign nature of the content and context as well. In all of these news articles, there are, of course, individual differences at the personal level depending on the topic. It seems, however, very useful to look at news articles from these four axes to determine their appropriateness for class discussion.

Table 3 *Example of Classification of News Articles*

	Domestic	Foreign
Local	A car accident in Tokyo	A car accident in Barcelona
Global	Japanese high school students gather in Hiroshima to appeal for nuclear disarmament	Military experts from seven countries meet in Reykjavik to discuss nuclear disarmament

Table 4 shows the entire procedure for the TLD activity, which aims to provide the articles that are pedagogically meaningful and relatable to students so that they can take interest in the articles' topics and find them informative or challenging to their existing views.

Table 4 *Teacher-Led Discussion (TLD) Discussion Procedure*

Steps	
1	Before the class: The teacher sends an article of his choice with a few questions to students a week before the class.
2	Each student reads the article, answers the article questions in writing, and sends his/her answers to the teacher one day before the class.
3	In the class: The teacher summarizes and critiques the article.
4	The teacher answers the questions from the students, if any, and further explains some important points about the article.
5	The teacher introduces the article questions and has students discuss them in pairs.
6	After the pair work, each pair reports back their discussion, with one being a reporter and the other interpreter.
7	The teacher checks their interpreting and gives feedback.
8	The teacher then asks a few questions to have a short discussion with the class on the topic.

Interpreting in the report-back section (Steps 6 and 7 in Tables 4 and 7) after the pair work (TLD) or group (SLD) discussion is to allow students to habituate themselves to interpreting. It can be sentence by sentence simple interpreting without note-taking or longer paragraph by paragraph interpreting with the help of note-taking depending on students' interpreting skills as the course progresses. The news article-based discussion activities this paper proposes are only a part of the interpreting course in which there are other activities that primarily focus on interpreting techniques such as reproduction, sight translation, summarization, and consecutive or simultaneous interpreting of various speeches. As such, the chief purpose of interpreting referred to in Table 4 (Teacher-Led Discussion procedure) and

Table 7 (Students-Led Discussion procedure) as part of the news article-based discussion activities is to allow students to make a habit of interpreting.

In Students-Led Discussion (SLD), students work in teams (Table 5). Each team will serve as a Discussion Lead Team (DLT) in turns. Each DLT decides an article of their choice as a team according to a set schedule (Table 5), makes a few article-related questions, and sends it to the teacher one week before the class, which gives the DLT members an opportunity to work together and prepare themselves for serving as facilitators in different Discussion Groups in class when they mingle with other students from other teams.

Table 5 *Example of A Schedule for Submission of an Article and Questions and Discussion Days*

DLT	Send an Article and Questions by	Discussion Day	Send an Article and Questions by	Discussion Day
Team 1	9/23	9/30	11/11	11/18
Team 2	9/30	10/ 7	11/18	12/ 2
Team 3	10/ 7	10/14	12/ 2	12/ 9
Team 4	10/14	10/28	12/ 9	12/16
Team 5	10/28	11/ 4	12/16	12/23
Team 6	11/ 4	11/11	12/23	1/ 6

Note. Each team comprises four students, i.e., Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D.

In the class, students are divided into Discussion Groups (Table 6) so that a student from the DLT can facilitate the discussion in each Discussion Group.

Table 6 *Example of Discussion Group Composition*

Discussion Group	Composition
1 (6 students)	Students A from Teams 1-6 in which one Student A is from the DLT
2 (6 students)	Students B from Teams 1-6 in which one Student B is from the DLT
3 (6 students)	Students C from Teams 1-6 in which one Student C is from the DLT
4 (6 students)	Students D from Teams 1-6 in which one Student D is from the DLT

Table 7 shows the entire procedure for SLD based on the article of students' choice, which aims to facilitate their collaborative learning, improved confidence, self-efficacy, and classroom engagement.

Table 7 *Students-Led Discussion (SLD) Discussion Procedure*

Steps
1 Before the class: The Discussion Lead Team (DLT) sends an article of its choice with a few questions to the teacher a week before the class.
2 The teacher checks the article and its related questions and sends it to all the participants.
3 Each student reads the article, answers the article questions in writing, and sends his/her answers to the teacher no later than one day before the class.
4 In the class: The students are divided into Discussion Groups (Table 6). Each DLT member leads discussions in each Discussion Group as a facilitator.

- 5 In each Discussion Group, the DLT member (i.e., facilitator) follows the following procedure:
 - 1) State the reason(s) for the choice of article.
 - 2) Summarize the article for review.
 - 3) Critique the article.
 - 4) Introduce the discussion questions.
 - 5) Facilitate the discussion, making sure that everyone in the group speaks for about the same number of times.
 - 6) Report the group's discussion to the class.
 - 6 Students in the group consecutively interpret the facilitator's report-back speech.
 - 7 The teacher checks their interpreting and gives feedback.
 - 8 The teacher then asks a few questions to have a short discussion with the class on the topic.
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In the News Article Log (NAL), students read a news article of their choice individually every week and send a NAL to the teacher weekly no later than one day before the class. The NAL comprises an English news article each student has read, its summary in Japanese, and his/her comment in English. As mentioned previously, NAL is an activity reflecting the concepts of narrow reading (Kang, 2015; Krashen, 2004, 2013). It also concerns motivation in the affective dimension of each student's context and centers on his/her area of interest. NAL is to encourage students to get used to reading news articles of their interest so that they can make a habit of reading news articles and gain greater content knowledge and language in their respective areas of interest. Table 8 shows the entire procedure for the NAL activity.

Table 8 *News Article Log (NAL) Activity Procedure*

Steps
<p>1 Before the class: Each student reads a news article of his/her choice individually every week and sends a NAL, which comprises the English news article he/she has read, its summary in Japanese, and his/her comment in English, to the teacher weekly no later than one day before the class.</p>
<p>2 In the class: Students exchange what they have read as NAL in pairs. The procedure is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Student A explains the article s/he has read in three minutes in English to Student B.2) Student B asks a few questions in English to Student A.3) Both Students A and B exchange some views on the topic of Student A's article in English.4) Student B explains the article s/he has read in three minutes in English to Student A.5) Student A asks a few questions in English to Student B.6) Both Students A and B exchange some views on the topic of Student B's article in English.7) Student A explains to class about what Student B read in Japanese, using the first person speaking style, and Student B then explains to class what Student A read in Japanese, using the first person speaking style.

Step 7 in Table 8 serves as a summarization of each other's NAL reading and adopts an interpreting style of speaking using the first person (i.e., "I read ..." rather than "He [She] read..." as the student explains to the class about his/her partner's reading). In this way, each student needs to listen carefully to his/her partner before Step 7 to understand each other's reading and can also practice the first person's speaking style as in the interpreting style.

4. Conclusion

This paper presented a pedagogical action plan for news article-based

discussion activities in a Japanese university undergraduate interpreting course. The three-way approach brought into focus the enhancement of students' greater content awareness and language proficiency, particularly vocabulary related to each topic, which is hoped to promote more effective interpreting skills. Teacher-Led Discussion (TLD) brings about an opportunity for students to be exposed to a variety of topics from news articles that can be relatable and pedagogically beneficial to them, covering a greater breadth and depth of topics, which will be useful as they work toward improving their interpreting skills. Students-Led Discussion (SLD) aims to allow students to work in teams to choose articles of their choice and serve as facilitators in discussion groups in class that are different from the article preparation teams. News Article Log (NAL) provides students with an opportunity to get used to news articles in their areas of interest, which could help develop a habit they can continue beyond the course. Through these pedagogical techniques, it is hoped that students will raise their content awareness of a variety of topics by reading news articles and that the relevant content and language they encounter will be useful to them as they work toward improving interpreting skills more earnestly in the future.

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