A dogme based approach from the learners' perspective.

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1. Introduction.

When Thornbury (2000) published his deliberately provocative criticism of an apparent overreliance on resources in the classroom, in which 'real communication' is 'buried under an avalanche of photocopies' (ibid:2), a new approach to language teaching was instigated. This approach became known as Dogme ELT (English Language Teaching). Dogme ELT is perceived to be an alternative to materials 'heavy' lessons, such as a coursebook-based lesson, in which teachers use only 'the resources that teachers and students themselves bring to the classroom' (ibid:2). My experience of teaching using a dogme-based approach was hampered by a lack of knowledge as to the wider opinion of the learner toward the approach. I noticed a paucity of academic study examining a dogme-based approach and continued to teach both coursebook-based lessons and a dogme-based approach in tandem.

The present study will examine the attitude and opinions held by my own Japanese students in response to a dogme-based approach. The lessons in which I adopt a dogme approach will be taught alongside the coursebook-based lessons. I intend to gain insight into what the students see as the primary learning features of both Dogme ELT and the coursebook-based lessons and whether the two approaches are valued equally and if this value has any relationship with the learners overall English goals.

2. Literature Review.

Dogme ELT is a relatively new approach to teaching; consequently this literature review is divided into two parts. In Part 1 I shall provide background information and discuss the core principles of Dogme ELT. In part 2 of the literature review I have made an extensive study of the Yahoo Dogme ELT forum in order to examine the opinion of other teaching professionals and what they conceive to be the advantages and disadvantages of the dogme-approach.

2.1 Part 1: What is Dogme ELT?

Dogme ELT takes its inspiration from the Danish filmmaking movement *Dogme 95*. Rejecting the effects laden technical wizardry of the mainstream Hollywood movie these Danish filmmakers set about making spontaneous, semi-improvised films with a focus on story and accessibility. In place of the Hollywood mainstream, Dogme ELT rejects the overreliance on materials and technology in the contemporary classroom in favour of a focus on the 'raw materials that are in the room' (Meddings & Thornbury 2009:7). Dogme consists of three 'core precepts' (Meddings & Thornbury 2009:8) which involves teaching that is: *Conversation-driven, materials-light* and focuses on *emergent language.*

2.2 Conversation-driven.

Previously, conversation was perceived to be a 'product' of learning with more traditional learning methods, such as the grammar translation method, placing the emphasis on language learners initially mastering grammar. With the emergence of sociolinguistic studies into language learning, scholars, notably Hymes (1966), began to examine what it was to 'know and use' a language and argued that 'appropriateness is as important as grammaticality' (Paulston & Tucker 2003:27). As a result the term

communicative competence arose and referred to a language user's knowledge of both the grammatical and social elements of a language. Communicative competence is one of the elements that underlie Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The practical manifestation of CLT in the classroom was a move toward teaching the learner every day speech acts and language functions, invariably containing transactional elements or 'the communication of information to achieve some goal' (Corbett 2003:47) such as buying a train ticket or ordering food in a restaurant. Meddings & Thornbury (2009) argue against the 'quasi-communicative' content of current 'communicative' coursebooks and identify a 'degree of artifice' (ibid:10) in the design of turn based information gap activities or role-plays often employed in communicative learning that diminishes the spontaneous nature of real conversation. Dogme ELT focuses on language that is not solely transactional but also interactional and which includes social elements such as greetings, casual conversation and the telling of jokes (Corbett 2003). Dogme ELT maintains the principle that conversation is not 'evidence of grammatical acquisition, but a pre-requisite for it' (Meddings & Thornbury 2009:9).

2.3 Materials-light.

In the original dogme article Thornbury (2000) called for a back to basics style of teaching that involved only 'a room with a few chairs, a blackboard, a teacher and some students' (ibid:2). In fact, the main focus of a dogme proponent's criticism is, and continues to be, the 'coursebook'. A negative opinion of coursebooks had been expressed pre-dogme and some authors even saw materials as 'destroyers of teacher and learner creativity' (Bell & Gower 1998:114) whereas Richards (1993) suggested that coursebooks can lead to a situation where the materials do the teaching and the teacher becomes an 'imperfect delivery system' (ibid:4). Meddings & Thornbury

(2009) argue that Dogme ELT is not anti-material or anti-technology but rejects material that does not 'conform with the (Dogme) principles' (ibid:12) and argued that the most important factor when introducing material in a Dogme ELT lesson is too ensure that it can 'support the establishment of a local discourse community… mainly through mediated talk' (ibid:12).

2.4 Focus on Emergent Language.

> If we define 'content' as the sum total of 'what is taught' and 'what is available to be learned', then it becomes clear that 'content' (potential intake) is not predictable. It is, rather, something that emerges because of the interactive nature of classroom events. (Allwright 1990:134)

Dogme ELT proponents argue that the method of language presentation commonly found in coursebooks contradicts SLA research which suggests that language is not learnt 'in an additive, linear fashion' (Van den Branden 2006:5) and that this approach to presenting language does not 'bear any resemblance' (Long & Robinson 1998:16) to detailed studies into how learners acquire language. Allwright (1990) argues that within a classroom the learners are exposed to 'much more language than is focused on in teaching' (ibid:134). Dogme ELT focuses on the language that *emerges* from the conversational interaction between students which, in turn, allows the learner to shape the 'content and objectives of the language course' (Meddings & Thornbury 2009:18) rather than the material/coursebook. Allwright (1990) also examined this point of view pre-Dogme ELT when he stressed that the materials relationship with learning objectives should be acknowledged to 'contribute in some way (but not) determine goals' (ibid:133).

2.5 Part 2: Voices from the Classroom.

The 'ELT Dogme' Yahoo group was set up in 2000 in response to the reaction provoked by Thornbury's (2000) article. It became the most important forum for the development of Dogme ELT from the standpoint of both the proponents and opponents of the approach. For the purposes of this study I have numbered the sources I have quoted by the position they occur on the forum and whether it is a teacher or a student. For example; (Teacher 23) = a teacher's message appearing at number 23 on the messages list (this would be an early posting from 2000).

2.6 The Learner's Expectations.

> Learners can be more conservative than their teachers and can resist new methods, especially methods which require more active involvement, more commitment, more responsibility and more openness. (Gibbs 1988:6.2)

The postings on the forum by teachers who have attempted to teach using a dogme-based approach have often commented on resistance from the learners themselves and contend that Dogme ELT 'runs counter to many learner's expectations' (teacher 7137). Many Dogme proponents have outlined how Dogme ELT can be a struggle because the learners have 'deep rooted expectations' (teacher 1357) or have been 'trained within the traditional schooling system' (teacher 9594) and so have a set of preconceptions about what a language lesson should include and this invariably involves the use of a coursebook. The students 'belief system sometimes contradict with what the teacher wants to do' (teacher 710) and the students 'don't understand why you are teaching in a weird way' (teacher 701). Some teachers commented on the appropriateness of a dogme-based approach for their Chinese learners who

expect a more teacher led class (teacher 3742) or Korean learners who may ‘clam up’ (teacher 8171) in a more open, conversation-driven class. There is also the danger that with the coursebook removed a lesson can be interpreted as unstructured in comparison to more traditional methods and devalued in the eyes of the learners and not held in a similar regard to ‘decades of accumulated transmission-based teaching’ (teacher 1940); ‘it’s nice to ‘chat’ and talk about language but we could do this down the pub’ (student 1054) and ‘we no pay money for games and stupid things, we want study from book because more good for English’ (student 2010).

2.7 Dogme and Formal Assessment.

A frequent issue raised by teachers on the Yahoo forum was the implementation of Dogme ELT within certain educational contexts and the expectations that exist therein. These institutional expectations derive from the school and also from the Ministries of Education in the respective countries and often involve formal examination as a means to assess a learner’s English language ability. With the idea of formal testing running somewhat contrary to the ideals of Dogme ELT’s principles, many teachers have asked the question; how can I use Dogme ELT to help my students prepare for examinations? Exam related concerns are voiced in Japan, where teaching to the test in order to gain entry to the best universities outweighs any desire to learn ‘English in any practical way, except in practically answering the language questions on the test properly’ (teacher 1554) the teacher feels that this renders Dogme ELT’s focus on ‘real communication’ incompatible with the learners’ aims which are influenced by the wider educational environment. Taking into account the external factors and with Dogme ELT remaining a largely un-researched area there are issues with adopting in the ‘real world’ a methodology that remains ‘purely theoretical’ (teacher 8762).

2.8 In Defence of Material: The Coursebook.

> The truth of the matter is that about 99 percent of teaching is making the students feel interested in the material. (Chomsky 1988:181)

Although Thornbury's (2000) initial idea behind Dogme ELT was to reduce the use of *all* material and technology in the classroom the debate on the Yahoo forum has most often centred on the role of the coursebook in the classroom. There has been a robust defence of the coursebook from many members of the yahoo forum who have drawn attention to the implications of a materials-light classroom. It has been pointed out that a coursebook can provide comfort to the teacher (teacher 401) a structure to fall back on, a 'crutch' (teacher 593) that can be leant on or discarded depending on the needs of the students (teacher 1967). A reoccurring theme from coursebook defenders is that the coursebook does not have to be rigidly followed (teacher 6588) and in reality rarely is, most teachers utilize the course book as much or as little as they want 'build on it, pick and choose from it or just chuck it out the window' (teacher 4974). A teacher in Germany suggested that a tutor who is familiar with a coursebook and their learners can develop ideas and activities that can 'make the page come alive' (teacher 1179), indeed many teachers have suggested that the coursebook is a springboard or 'communicative gateway' (teacher 4046) through which they can introduce their own activities (teacher 420, 1278).

3. The Research Methodology.

3.1 The Aims of the Research & the Research Questions.

The aim of my research was to examine the relatively new methodological approach of Dogme ELT and my own students' opinions of the approach when taught alongside the coursebook-based lessons. The research questions that guided

these aims are as follows;

1. To what extent do my learners find a dogme-based approach to teaching ‘useful’ compared with a coursebook-based approach and is ‘usefulness’ related to the students’ perceptions of the learning opportunities afforded by each approach?
2. With many of my students often studying towards a test do my learners feel a dogme-based approach can help them to pass an examination?

The participants of the study were a group of nine Japanese learners between the ages of 30 and 65. The group was of a mixed level ranging from intermediate to low advanced. For four of the students learning English was their hobby, three of the students were learning English because they used the language during their respective employment. Finally, two of the students were preparing to take the TOEIC English examination in the near future. The coursebook used in the class was New Headway Intermediate: Third Edition (Soars & Soars 2003). The study consisted of four weekly sessions consisting of two lessons per session. The Lesson duration was 2 hours and 15 minutes as part of the students’ regular schedule. The location of the class was in Tsukuba City, Japan.

3.2 The Research Design.

For the current study I decided to undertake action research utilizing qualitative methodology and research instruments. Richards (2001) argues that studies of specific methods can be difficult because often the crucial variable is ‘the teacher’s enthusiasm or the novelty of the new method’ (ibid:168). I acknowledged that my own enthusiasm would inevitably have a bearing on the study and so a feature of action research is that it allows the teacher to be an ‘active participant’ (Fraenkel

& Wallen 2003:576) and become part of the research data. With the predominant feature of quantitative research being 'centered around numbers' (Dörnyei 2007:32) I decided that qualitative research instruments would best suit the data I wanted to collect, which would consist of the opinions of my students. Finally, my research was also ethnographic in nature as I was studying a 'group in real-world rather than laboratory settings' (Nunan 1992:55).

3.3 The Research Instruments.

As the practitioner I would be both observing and teaching and so needed to ensure that I would be collecting as much data as possible without affecting my role as a teacher. In order to address the problem of needing to teach and observe simultaneously I decided to take field notes during the lessons and I also decided to video one lesson to allow me a degree of reflexivity and to examine my 'presence within the research setting' (Holliday 2007:138). I opted to use an open-ended questionnaire as I share the opinion that this form of questionnaire is more likely 'to accurately reflect what the respondents wish to say' (Nunan 1992:143). I decided to use reasonably direct questions that were designed to elicit opinion about the two approaches I employed during the lessons. I decided after the 4th lesson to have a group discussion in place of the questionnaire as I hoped this could provide an opportunity for the students to reflect on the previous lessons and also it allowed me to follow-up on some of the phenomena that emerged from the questionnaires. I interviewed three students, one of the interviews was conducted between sessions 3 and 4 and two interviews were conducted after session 4.

3.4 The Research Procedure.

One of the most important aspects of the research procedure was to try to keep

the process as 'normal' as possible for the students, I tried to design the procedure to mimic my usual teaching approach. If it is accepted that the goal of action research is to investigate 'aspects of (the practitioners) own context and situation' (Nunan 1992:18) I wanted to ensure that the context was not altered drastically to accommodate the research. I built the research lessons into the normal lesson schedule.

	Lesson A (50min)	**5 mins**	**Lesson B (50min)**	**30mins**
Session 1 (January 15 2011)	Dogme ELT	Break	Unit 8	Questionnaire
Session 2 (January 22 2011)	Unit 8 (contd.)	Break	Dogme ELT	Questionnaire
Session 3 (January 29 2011)	Unit 8 (contd.)	Break	Dogme ELT	Questionnaire
Session 4 (February 5 2011)	Unit 8 (contd.)	Break	Dogme ELT	Group Discussion

(Table 1.1 Teaching Schedule illustrating the Dogme ELT lessons and the unit of the coursebook taught)

I adopted the Dogme ELT 'activites' included in Meddings & Thornbury (2009) to initiate the conversation. Of these activities Meddings & Thornbury (ibid) explain:

> There are no language exponents (the language will emerge from the activity), no timings (this will depend on where your class take the activity), and no levels (these activities are designed to adapt to and reflect the abilities of learners). (ibid:23)

During session 4 no activity was required because the students initiated the conversation (for a full description of the Dogme ELT lessons see appendix 6). During the sessions I took discrete observational field notes on any occurrence of interest. After the lessons I wrote a teaching journal in which I could reflect on the day's lesson. In keeping with the 'emergent research design' (Dörnyei 2007:37) of qualitative studies I formulated questions for the interviews based on notes of interest that occurred during the course of the research and had the opportunity to interview three of the students. The final significant element of the procedure was the videoing of one session (session 1) and also the group discussion after session 4.

3.5 The Data Analysis.

The raw qualitative dataset that was initially collected seemed difficult to interpret; however, I was able to draw on the work of scholars in the area to develop a method. Firstly, I relied on my 'subjective intuition' to 'find a creative way out of the maze' (Dörnyei 2007:244) in my attempts to analyse the data. Secondly, I applied Holliday's (2007) 'thematic approach' with the data arranged 'under themes' (ibid:94) in order to organize the data and develop an argument. The use of subjective intuition in the analysis of qualitative data allows the researcher to be flexible in the analysis and allow 'new theories to emerge freely' (Dörnyei 2007:244). To a certain extent subjective intuition takes into account the subjectivity of the researcher in the analysis, for example it was research into a class and method I was obviously familiar with and, as a result, I obviously had a 'hunch' as to what might emerge from the data. Holliday (ibid) discusses organizing the data thematically as this allows for 'a common storyline' to emerge that 'represents the character of the data as a whole' (ibid:94). Analysing the data thematically, I began to see patterns and similarities and could organize these patterns under a broad theme or heading and begin to see a wider picture.

4. The Findings from the Research Data.

In this section I shall discuss the findings derived from the research data collected in relation to the research questions. The findings will be accompanied by a discussion detailing their significance and how they might contribute to the understanding of language teaching processes. I have taken the students' comments from all 3 questionnaires except when I specifically refer a comment to a particular session where relevant. Throughout this section I am *acutely aware* that I am comparing *one* type of coursebook to Dogme ELT; however, in my experience of coursebooks in Japan I maintain that New Headway (Soars & Soars 2003) shares many features and similarities to the type of coursebook commonly used in private language schools and to some extent even those that feature prominently in state education such as New Horizon (Tokyo Shoseki 2006).

4.1 The Students' Perception of Lesson Content and 'Usefulness' (Research Question 1).

Question 1 (*Can you remember what you learnt or practised in the 2 lessons you took today?*) of the questionnaire revealed that the students identified what *they* considered to be the primary learning features provided by a dogme approach and the coursebook-based lessons. The students recognised that a dogme-based approach provided opportunities for speaking practice; *'talking about each other', 'learn students voice', 'discussion about newspapers', 'we did speaking'*. However, in the students' responses to the coursebook-based lesson content, speaking was not identified as a prominent feature of the lessons even though the coursebook unit featured 'speaking activities' throughout the 4 lessons, most commonly in the form of pair-work. During interview 2 I investigated the student's opinion of the speaking activities contained in the coursebook:

S: Coursebook, umm, has routine.

T: Structure or routine?

S: Routine, for example…so 'If I…If I blah blah blah' (student uses 'blah' to refer to a sentence strand in the coursebook), that sentence we…we use just…talk about *that* sentence.

T: Oh, so the coursebook kind of gives you the sentences?

S: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Already, uh…

T: It's already written for you.

S: Uh, uh, uh. Yeah. If I didn't use textbook…so I have to more thinking…ideas.

The student was referring to the structured nature of some of the speaking activities in the coursebook where sentence strands are provided for the student. During interview 3 a different student also commented on the artificial nature of the coursebook-based speaking activities: *'that activities just copy the textbook conversation and practise so not natural conversation'*. When it came to the question of which lesson the students felt was more useful (question 2) those students that chose a dogme approach also indicated that it was the speaking opportunities that motivated this choice; *'lesson A (dogme) because we talked a lot of daily conversation', 'express what I want to say'*. This feature of the current study has left me with the impression that Dogme ELT's primary feature in the eyes of the learner is as an exercise in speaking practice or 'free conversation'. I was also concerned to learn that so few of my students appeared to equate the coursebook-based lessons with speaking practice. The two students I interviewed specifically about this point seemed aware of the somewhat artificial nature of the coursebook-based speaking activities and as a result did not seem to value them as providing genuine conversational interaction in comparison to a dogme-based approach.

The students' comments originating from the questionnaire related to what they had learnt during the coursebook-based lessons almost exclusively stated the word '*grammar*', there was little reference made to the topics that the authors used to present the grammar or the vocabulary exercises (session 3) included in the unit. The grammatical feature of the coursebook was also the motivation behind the students' decision regarding which lesson had been more useful (question 2 *which lesson did you feel was the most useful for you today?*); *'Lesson A (coursebook) because I think grammar is important for me (us)', 'Lesson A (coursebook) I learned the difference between 'will' and 'would''*. Conversely, during a dogme-based approach, the majority of the students failed to identify grammar as an element that they had either learnt or practised. These observations even extended to the Dogme ELT lesson in Session 3 during which an implicit grammar focus emerged (on this occasion the dependant preposition and the 1st conditional). Only 3 of the 9 students recalled that they had learnt grammar during this particular lesson which continued to be regarded, at least primarily, as an opportunity to practise speaking rather than to 'learn grammar'. This suggests that the manner in which grammar is presented in a coursebook prompts associations or activates shared schemata among the students they are now 'learning grammar'. It could be argued that when specific grammar points are taught using a dogme approach they need to be made explicit on occasions, such as when covering items on a syllabus prescribed by the school or institute in which the teacher works. It might be necessary to investigate how to draw greater attention to grammar points that emerge, in order for the learner to 'notice', during the dogme-based approach. One method might be to have generic exercises that are simple and easy to set-up. Ironically, it might be that these generic exercises could mimic those that are commonly found in a coursebook if that is what encourages the students to 'notice' the grammar content of a dogme lesson.

However, this would inevitably raise questions as to the extent to which one is prepared to 'structure' a lesson that adopts a dogme approach.

4.2 Dogme-based and coursebook-based lessons: ideal partners?

During interview 1 I asked the student which type of lesson they would prefer if they began lessons at an English language school in the future:

T: Would you prefer the A style lesson (coursebook) or the B style lesson (dogme) if you started an English course at a language school?
S: Hmm, err, I had your and Chris' (a previous English teacher) lesson for a few years... like a conversation lesson. Maybe…I need coursebook as well.
T: Oh, So how about a mixture of the A type lesson and the B type lesson?
S: Of course that is best.

The student's response to the suggestion of a mixed approach which emerged from this interview prompted further exploration with the other students. I asked the students the same question during the group discussion after the 4th and final session and a majority of the students expressed a preference for the mixed approach and I took the opportunity to investigate the reasons behind the choice during the group discussion; *'because I need to learn grammar and I need to also learn for speak', 'I have to learn English grammar a lot but mixture lesson I have to a lot of ideas and imagination'*. The students again appeared to relate their perception of the content of the two lesson approaches, grammar from the coursebook and Dogme ELT for speaking practice, to justify their preference for the mixed approach. The students were of the opinion that Dogme ELT and the coursebook can actually complement each other: *'learning something from lesson A first (coursebook) and after that use*

that grammar in a conversation is really practical'. During interview 3 the student made a similar comment: *'that's natural thing...maybe everyone feel we want to try what we learned (in the coursebook lesson)'*. On reflection I had not previously given serious consideration to the possibility that a dogme-based approach when taught after a course-book based lesson might be recognised by the learners as an opportunity to practise items learnt in the coursebook and this could also account for the emergence of the 1st conditional during session 3's dogme lesson. I feel that this is a positive example of the students realising their own potential to control and influence the content of the dogme lessons and, as a result, shape the characteristics of their own learning experience.

4.3 Summary.

A primary concern of this current study was the student's perception of a dogme approach, was it useful and was 'usefulness' related to the learning opportunities. The findings seem to suggest that the students value each lesson style precisely because of what the lesson's characteristics enable them to practise. However, I also detected a strong sense of association between characteristic and teaching approach that perhaps resulted in the students not recognising other learning opportunities contained in the lessons and, as a result of these associations, the students identified the benefits to their own learning if the teacher utilises both a dogme approach and the coursebook-based lessons in tandem.

4.4 Dogme and Examinations (Research Question 2).

The students' responses to question 7 *(Which lesson do you feel would help you to pass an examination?)* leant overwhelmingly toward selecting the coursebook-based lessons as the best method in which to prepare an examination (see appendix

9 for tallied response). The predominant reason the students gave for this was because of the grammar content that they perceived to be the main feature of the coursebook lessons: *'grammar is important for TOEIC', 'lesson A (coursebook) is important method to study grammar', 'test needs grammar skill'*. Although only 2 of the students were intending to take the TOEIC examination in the near future even a student in my class who had no intention of taking an English examination felt that the coursebook was most applicable to their long term goal: *'I feel would help me to pass an examination with the learning lesson B (coursebook) because that is my long term goal'*. I asked the same student to clarify their long term goal during interview 1; *'to speak with a native (speaker) with no mistakes'*. This suggests that this particular student saw assessment and the use of a coursebook as intrinsic to achieving a certain level of language proficiency.

In order to better understand the associations my students made between material and examinations and whether I could replicate selected elements using a dogme-based approach I investigated the students' opinions of the features contained within a coursebook that they perceived to contribute towards examination preparation. During the group discussion the class discussed the links between the coursebook and examination: *'most exam is important to control the time to pass the exam so many words to read speedy…so I think I need read more text book', 'I want to get used to TOEIC test style', 'text book is organised already…if I make notes by myself from conversation lesson maybe unorganised'*. The students discussed the fact that a coursebook can mimic the type of exercises that are featured in an examination and help develop the skills needed to pass an examination. I found it difficult to dispute these opinions and most examinations in Japan, from the university entrance examinations to the TOEIC test, have several accompanying coursebooks that are explicitly designed to help the student pass a specific test. Additionally, the tests tend

to be multi-choice, a variant which also suits visual representation in a coursebook. If a dogme-based approach was to be used to help my students prepare for examinations I envisage the need for some development in response to the educational context the teacher is working within. Personally, I remain unconvinced that Dogme ELT *is* compatible with the Japanese examination system in its present form.

4.5 Summary.

Frequently I teach students in my class who are preparing for an examination and during the current study I wanted to examine whether my students could identify Dogme ELT as a tool for exam preparation. In Japan, English examinations are little more that exercises in rote memory recollection rather than genuine and practical English ability and the tests have serious implications for career prospects in Japan. Recently, some companies have begun to set a TOEIC test score of 730 (a score achieved by only 10% of the test takers) for any prospective employees wishing to join their company in order to become more competitive in the international market. Taking these points into consideration I feel that the adoption of a purely dogme approach to teaching English in Japan may not be compatible with some of my potential learners' expectations.

4.6 Conclusion.

The findings have presented valuable insights into my own class that will also influence my teaching in the future. Perhaps most importantly I feel that the perception of my pedagogical approach and the decisions I have made in the past are, to some extent, mirrored in the opinions of my own students. From the standpoint of my own professional development I feel the findings have indicated that the students have an academic appreciation of a dogme-based approach and I envisage this will

have a direct impact on my confidence in the classroom as I can begin to concern myself with *developing* rather than *questioning* my use of Dogme ELT in the future. Issues of particular personal interest derived from the findings and in relation to my research questions are as follows:

1. The students' appreciation of Dogme ELT when taught in tandem with the coursebook-based lessons and the benefits they associate with that particular approach.
2. The strength of the association the students make between the coursebook and examination preparation.

It is these 2 issues derived from the original 2 research questions that I will discuss in the next section and how they might relate to the wider English teaching profession.

5. Implications of the Research.

5.1 Teaching Dogme ELT alongside the Coursebook.

In terms of teaching methodology the findings of the research suggest that my original concerns about Dogme ELT not being 'valued by the learner' appear to have been unfounded. However, an emergent feature of the research revealed that the students in my class seemed to value a dogme-based approach precisely because it was taught alongside the coursebook-based lessons and as a result of *their* own perception of the primary learning opportunities afforded both types of lesson; Dogme ELT for speaking practice and the coursebook-based lesson for grammar. Currently there exists an inclination among proponents of Dogme ELT to argue for the approach as a *replacement* for the coursebook-based lesson rather than to examine how it might be a complement.

5.2 Dogme & Educational Context.

Holliday (1994) discusses the outside influence that the host 'educational environment' (ibid:15) inevitably has on the classroom. My motivations for examining this aspect of my teaching was related to acknowledgment of the importance of examinations for many of my learners and how they remain an integral part of English language assessment in Japan. I detected in my learners a tendency to equate grammar with examinations and the bridge stone between these elements remained the coursebook-based lesson. Adopting a methodology because it is believed to be the best practice also needs to take into account the educational context in which the lesson is taught and, in the current case, the realities of the Japanese education system which remains 'entrenched and resistant to change' (Lo Castro 1996:47). The students in my class indicated that they were perhaps not ready to undertake a lesson that utilised *only* a dogme approach for the entirety of their English classes, hence the inclination toward retaining the coursebook. I was intrigued by the apparent similarities between my own beliefs and the beliefs of my learners with regard to my use of material in the future. In conclusion, I believe a teacher should always be willing and able to adapt, evolve and refine their methodology in order to best meet the needs of the learner and in consideration of the wider social and educational context.

5.3 Conclusion.

> Not only should a teaching style be determined partly by the traditions and needs of the learners, but also it should derive from the personality of the teacher. Everyone teaches in a different way because we teach as the people we are. (Brumfit 1983:207)

This research has allowed me to reflect on my own teaching style within a specific context and to some extent has increased my confidence through the insight gained of my learner. The above quote from Brumfit (1983) perfectly encapsulates my own conclusions at the end of this research process. My research has left me with the impression that the methods I have adopted since teaching in Japan are entirely synonymous with the context I have found myself within and the concerns I had about methodological choice are intrinsically linked to and influenced by the concerns and needs of those I teach. Finally, the study has given a 'voice' to my students as individuals and it is precisely this individuality that must be considered when making methodological decisions and I will endeavour to ensure that this remains the case in whatever teaching context I find myself working within in the future.

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