

The Impact of Empathy on Attitudes Towards English in Japanese University Classes

Paul B. Nadasdy¹
Tokyo Denki University

ABSTRACT

Data were collected from 192 Japanese university students relating to how they interpreted empathy and whether or not the presence of empathy was important in communicative English classes. Furthermore, to get a better understanding of students' attitudes towards learning English, individuals were asked to give feedback about their studies at junior high school and high school. This was compared to how their attitudes towards English had changed after a year studying communicative English at university. The majority of students reported that it was important for empathy to be present in the learning environment and that their attitudes had changed positively over the course of a year. In addition, questionnaires were distributed relating to how teaching approaches, choice of tasks, and ways of interacting affected levels of empathy between classroom participants. The results from the data suggested that students enjoyed practicing communicating with strangers, enjoyed a range of tasks, and preferred it when teachers recognised them as individuals.

¹ Paul Nadasdy teaches at a private technical engineering university in Tokyo. His main research interest is educational psychology, with a particular focus on how group dynamics, empathy, rapport, and attitudes affect the learning process. Correspondence should be sent to nadasdy@cck.dendai.ac.jp

INTRODUCTION

Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, helps people bond in social situations. To what extent empathy affects the learning environment is still relatively unknown. However, as teachers and researchers generally agree, students thrive in a positive learning atmosphere. Other influences on the success of the language learning classroom include the teacher quality, pedagogic approach, and choice of teaching materials, the goals and aims of the educational institution, as well as the ability of the student. However, without the presence of trust and empathy between classroom participants an atmosphere can become “stale”, with participants disengaging from the subject being studied and from each other. The teacher may also feel that students end up simply going through the motions as it becomes harder to motivate them from lesson to lesson.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become an integral part of language education at tertiary level in Japan. However, many students reach university having only been exposed to teacher-fronted lessons, where they were expected to remember vocabulary and grammar, and solely for the reason of gaining qualifications to enter the next tier of education. At university, students are suddenly faced with the prospect of having to communicate with each other in English. This new experience affects students' attitudes towards the subject as a whole, and especially if they are forced, often against habitual behaviours ingrained through previous educational experiences, to conform to the expectations of communicative classes. Foreign language teachers are constantly challenged to think of innovative ways to motivate Japanese university students to share their ideas and offer opinions, or to simply communicate. Having a good reason to practice English is not always present, however, and with integrative or instrumental motivation sorely lacking it is not always possible to engage beyond the most fundamental stage, whether on an individual level or as a group (Benson, 1991).

This paper examines how empathy affects individuals and the group as a whole in foreign language learning environments, and focusses specifically on how empathy and group dynamics affect the attitudes of Japanese university students studying communicative English at a technical college in Tokyo. There is a discussion on the teacher's role in creating a successful classroom atmosphere, and an attempt to pinpoint whether and to what extent students believe empathy has an impact on their learning. After a brief summary of ideas by

researchers in educational psychology, this paper explores the results of a classroom-based research project in order to highlight how students' attitudes towards English improved within a year of study and what was implemented to achieve this. Students also provided feedback on the effectiveness of teaching approaches, the impact of tasks, and how certain interactions created solid relationships between participants in class.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several researchers agree that empathy and group dynamics influence the quality of the learning experience when studying a foreign language (Stevick, 1980; Hadfield, 1992; Arnold, 1999; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Cooper, 2004). Part of that learning experience is developing the ability to communicate efficiently. As communicative English is now an integral part of Japanese students' English education, further focus on improving the learning process seems imperative. The quality of output at present, however, often leaves much to be desired. With student motivation and confidence levels low (Berwick and Ross, 1989) and ingrained errors frequent by the time the average Japanese student reaches university, all a teacher can expect is the same attitudes towards learning and limited development in terms of ability thereafter, despite the extensive exposure to English language study up to that point. Yamaoka supports this view, saying: "The Japanese cannot speak English even though they have studied English for ten years from junior high school to university" (2009, p. 59). Yamaoka is not alone in her criticism of the ability of Japanese learners of communicative English. LoCastro draws attention to the "negative reputation" Japan has for not producing skilled communicators in foreign languages (1996, p. 40), observing that, despite the efforts and desires of the Ministry of Education to promote the communicative approach (MEXT 2008a), the grammar translation method still remains a popular pedagogic choice, and that it has a debilitating effect on Japanese students who are still underachieving where communicative competence is concerned.

Moreover, as Hirasawa (2009) explains, cultural factors affect the ability of Japanese students to communicate their ideas openly and without hesitation during lessons, stating: "Due to the collective culture, many students are educated to value harmony with others, so they are likely to hesitate to express their ideas and thoughts in public" (2009, p. 4). The limits created, then, by ineffectual preparation for extensive communication lessons, combined with strongly influenced communication-related characteristics mean that students

are unlikely to succeed in this particular foreign language learning environment. Therefore, the way a teacher intervenes once students reach tertiary level will have a significant influence on the possible learning outcomes (Dornyei and Murphy, 2003).

As mentioned above, empathy and group dynamics can have a considerable impact on the learner group and the individuals within it. Stevick (1980) observes that classroom successes are likely influenced by the internal mechanisms of individuals and how relationships are fostered within the group of people, and that this has more of an impact than other factors such as the type of materials used, teaching techniques and linguistic analyses. Hadfield (1992) agrees with this assertion, and specifically in relation to group dynamics points out that “a successful group dynamic is vital in the teaching/learning process.” As the presence of empathy and positive group dynamics appear to have such a strong impact on how individuals communicate and bond in the language learning environment, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to create a conducive atmosphere.

Considering Arnold's description of "teacher as facilitator" (1999), which describes three types of teaching approach (hierarchical mode, cooperative mode, and autonomous mode), it is recommended that teachers provide opportunities for students to have meaningful interactions if trusting and empathic bonds are to develop. Arnold describes a “special society established within the classroom”, and “the affective dimension of the relationships among the learner, the teacher and other learners” when talking about how positive outcomes can be achieved (1999, p. 19). Therefore, the conscientious teacher, aiming for harmony and bonds between individuals in their classroom, should adopt the role of facilitator, incorporating the three teaching modes in a deft and subtle way. Once Japanese students have reached university, however, there is often little the teacher can do encourage them to believe that English communication is not a waste of their time (Whitney, 2015), and though students spend an extended period under the instruction of the same foreign language teacher, attitudes that have become so ingrained due to negative experiences, particularly during high school, are extremely difficult to overcome.

Moreover, because many students have gotten used to a certain type of teaching and prefer to continue being taught that way (Matsuura et al., 2001), innovative approaches by the foreign teacher may have little or no impact and students may remain reticent and unengaged. To combat this, Matsuura et al. argue that teachers must better understand how students want to learn, that learner satisfaction and commitment are inextricably linked to learner beliefs and that once teachers learn how to adjust their teaching approach to complement this, a

greater chance of learning success exists. This is easier said than done, however, with it often being the case that university classes are packed with students, making access for teachers to all individuals difficult. The aim, therefore, is for a teacher to find ways to engage with students, get them focused, and encourage them to have a stake in their learning process. Ultimately, the teacher wants their students to be autonomous and to not need complete attention to make sure they are on task. This can be achieved in an environment where students believe they can benefit from the subject being taught and one in which they connect in a positive way with the teacher and with each other.

In an ideal situation, once students start to become independent of the teacher, higher levels of learning successes will be realised. Cooper (2004) describes how through functional and fundamental empathy students can reach higher levels of independence as learners, leading to "profound empathy" (p. 15). In this case, individuals are finally in control of their learning. They "take responsibility" and therefore become less reliant on the teacher. Moreover, referring to the development of self-confidence and self-esteem in the learning environment, Caine and Caine describe the importance of the understanding between all classroom participants:

Because it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the affective domain, the emotional climate in the school and classroom must be monitored on a consistent basis, using effective communication strategies and allowing for student and teacher reflection and metacognitive processes. In general, the entire environment needs to be supportive and marked by mutual respect and acceptance both within and beyond the classroom. (1991, p. 82)

Referring to the changing classroom dynamic, Dörnyei and Murphy (2003) point out that as a group evolves over time, there are plenty of opportunities afforded to the conscientious teacher to mold the dynamics of the group. If students are reticent to teaching methods, do not respond to immediately to attempts by the teacher to create bonds, or do not have motivation because of the subject being taught, the teacher has to be constantly aware and ready to take advantage of moments where better relationships can be formed in the group. Knowing the learning and emotional needs of the students individually and as a group cannot be underestimated in these circumstances.

In summary, students must be confident and open enough to express themselves in the learning environment if they are to become proficient communicators in English, they must have an investment in the subject being taught if they are to be focused from lesson to lesson,

and they must establish a positive connection with their teacher and other class members if trust and empathy are to be achieved. It is vital that teachers find ways to create an environment that allows these conditions to happen. What follows is a classroom-based research project at a university in Tokyo, Japan, that focuses on how to create such an environment.

BACKGROUND

Between 2009 and 2010, data was collected from Japanese university students at various institutions with the aim of identifying the most important factors for creating a positive foreign language learning environment (Nadasdy, 2010). This research suggested that having a shared sense of purpose, activities that were fun and easy to follow, and, most importantly, empathy between individuals were the three most important factors. This led to further research which attempted to answer why students considered the presence of empathy so important and, secondly, what factors are important in creating an environment conducive to fostering empathy between learners. The study described in this paper, conducted over a year at a technical engineering university in Tokyo, concentrated on gathering information from students about their English language learning history, their interpretation of empathy, how their experiences through studying at university had changed their attitudes towards English, and what factors mattered most with regard to teacher, task, and interaction when applied to language learning.

The students in this study major in a variety of technical subjects, ranging from electrical engineering and environmental chemistry to architecture and robotics. Apart from a small minority of these students who go on to do post-graduate study and will be writing their theses in English, academically it has little relevance to them or their main study interests. Students, therefore, do not show particularly high levels of motivation or enthusiasm, but instead are quiet, well behaved, and restrained. Classrooms are set up for lecture style instruction and due to cultural and interpersonal issues, most students sit quietly awaiting instructions and do little in the way of interacting with their partners in English (or Japanese), and especially with those of the opposite sex.

Due to the reticence of the majority of the students, it is often the case that the teaching style becomes a form of light entertainment which, while good in itself for creating a positive atmosphere and for creating a sense of trust and connection with the teacher, does

little in the way in allowing students the amounts of talking time necessary to improve their English communicative skills. The course is structured so that most of the classes focus on grammatical and vocabulary points in order to prepare for oral communication tests (twice each semester). The final grade, calculated combining the class score, grammar and TOEIC tests, and a weighted standardisation, is the main reason that most of the students are attending the class. Learning to communicate in English would appear secondary at best.

DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study were collected over a period of one year. Classes meet once per week for a 90 minutes over two 15 week semesters, beginning in April and ending in January the following year. For the initial study, students were asked to give a detailed description of what empathy meant to them (Appendix A). In section A, students were given multiple-choice questions related to their experience studying English at junior and senior high school and then at university level (A1, A2, & A3), with the purpose of comparing how their English study history might be affecting their perception of English now. Section B focused on change in their attitudes towards English over the course of the first year of study (B1, B2 & B3). Section C focused on empathy students felt between them and their classmates and with the teacher. Finally, section D focused on how teacher, task, and interaction affected classroom dynamics and empathy between participants.

RESULTS

Students defined empathy in several ways (Appendix B). The most popular answers were that empathy meant the ability to share open and honest opinions with each other, having similar or the same opinions as others, being able to understand each other's thoughts and feelings, having the same sense of humour, having the same values, and having the same interests. Other examples included feelings of trust, acceptance of others, a feeling of closeness, behaving positively towards others, being patient, thinking and feeling the same way, and a willingness to learn from each other.

Questions A1-A3 collected responses relating to experiences students had at junior high school and high school, as well as at the current university (Appendix C). Regarding experiences at junior high school, the most frequent positive answers were that studying

English was fun, that it was a good start to learning English, and that there was an increase in motivation. However, there were several negative responses relating to study at this stage, including that English was too difficult, was not enjoyable, was not taken seriously, and was not effective. The feedback relating to junior high school teachers was mixed, with some students responding that they liked their teacher and others did not. The negative responses, in fact, outweighed the positive, with respondents saying that the teacher was too strict, serious, and was difficult to understand.

Regarding experiences at high school, the feedback suggested that the main reason for study was to gain entrance to university. There was also an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary study, testing, and reading. Most reported that they did not like English, that there was no experience practicing communicative English, that study was boring, and that lessons were difficult to follow. Students also responded that they did not take English seriously and that motivation dropped. Therefore, the data suggests that the experience studying English at junior high school and high school for the participants in this study was, on the whole, framed negatively and demotivating.

On whether students' attitudes towards English had changed during the first year at university (Section B), 57% reported that their general attitude towards English had changed positively during the year, 41% said their attitude towards English had not changed, and, notably, only 2% reported a negative change. Regarding whether the positive change had occurred somewhere specifically throughout the communication course (B2 & B3), 44% reported a positive change, 48% reported no change, and 8% reported a negative change.

Results in Section C showed that 46% had positive empathic feelings towards fellow students by the end of the course, 44% felt at least some empathy towards others, with 9% reporting there was little empathy (C1). Results relating to connection with the teacher throughout the course (C2) showed that 9% of students reported there was a high level, 31% reported a fairly high level, 46% said there was some connection, 12% responded that there was not much of a connection at all, and 2% responded there was no connection with the teacher. Changes in empathy (C3) throughout the communication course were reported as 12% where empathy had increased a lot, 54% a slight change, and 33% that there was no change. On whether empathy between classmates and with the teacher was important (C4), 77% responded that it was important, 21% were unsure, and 2% believed it was not.

Teacher, Task, and Interaction

Students reported that the best way a teacher can connect with them is by remembering their names. This was closely followed by the amount of attention given to them in class. The next most popular answer was the amount of respect they have for the teacher and this was followed by whether the teacher is easygoing or not. Strictness was the least popular choice. None on the choices relating to task were favoured considerably more than any other. However, individuals having the opportunity to express real thoughts was the most popular choice. This was closely followed by group and pair work. Easy tasks and interactive games were also considered good for creating empathy between individuals. Challenging tasks was chosen the least, though still scored relatively high. The most chosen example for the category of interaction was the opportunity for students to get to know each other. This was followed closely by interaction with unfamiliar members in the group. Being assigned easy textbook conversations was also a popular choice. Neither focus on the teacher or interaction with other familiar members of the group scored high on the scale.

DISCUSSION

At the start of this paper, empathy was defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Though the students in this study included this in their definitions, they went further, describing it as a combination of several factors. Due to the many ways of experiencing empathy, coming up with a straightforward definition is problematic. Considering the various definitions of empathy in this paper alone, it is clear that, due to the subjective experience of each individual, reaching a consensus on a “one definition fits all” is unlikely to be achieved. However, considering Cooper's 2004 model, which applies the concept of empathy to an educational model, there are sets and subsets of definitions relating to how and to what extent empathy impacts learners and the learning environment. Therefore, while a single definition of empathy may still be out of reach, once it is applied to specific situations, it may be possible to begin seeing how it impacts those situations and the people within them. The participants in this study stated clearly that they believed empathy was important for the language learning environment. Participants also reported that their attitude towards English changed in a positive way, that they felt more connected to each other through studying in a communicative environment, and that they felt a specific teaching

approach benefited them best.

The data suggests that the implementation of certain teacher-related classroom practices had positive effects on individuals and the group in this study (Appendix A: Section D), and this signals that a conscientious and attentive teaching approach is vital for creating a positive and empathic atmosphere. In classes which have many students, giving individual attention is not always practical, however, and as some students are likely to receive more attention than others, finding the balance is not always going to be straightforward. Moreover, as each member of the learner group tends to require a slightly different approach, the manner in which the skilled teacher gives attention will differ subtly from individual to individual. Referring back to Dörnyei & Murphy's (2003) assertion regarding the change in class dynamics over time, a teacher also has to take into account that their class and its participants will not remain static and that these changing conditions and mindsets will need to be closely scrutinised and monitored to make sure levels of trust and empathy are maintained. Adopting the teacher as facilitator approach suggested earlier by Arnold (1999) is one way to cope with any changes that occur, as teacher can switch between various degrees of intervention and distance when necessary to create harmony within the group (this includes commanding respect but without the need for intimidation). The teacher has to allow for individual personalities to function and evolve properly, understanding that not all students respond with the same levels of respect and behaviour. Experience in the classroom is, of course, an advantage for knowing how to deal with the many varieties of student personalities. However, even inexperienced teachers can adopt a simple set of techniques to give them an early advantage. How a teacher sets rules from the start and how they connect with members of the learner group is clearly an important strategy. There are several things a teacher can do:

TEACHER

Action: Be a facilitator

Process

- set rules and guide the students to operate within those limits
- encourage students to form the character of the group

- keep the classes fun and interesting
- acknowledge and reward instances of positive behaviour
- create goals through positive framing so that students believe good levels of English can be achieved

Potential benefits

- effects strongly how positive relationships build within the group
- achieves profound empathy if rules and codes are adhered to
- cultivates discipline with instructions being accepted from non-Japanese teacher
- gives students sense that they are being treated fairly
- allows students to become more self-determined, motivated, and self-efficacious

Action: Prepare photo sheet of the students for quick reference

Process

- take photos, or have students take their own photos, at start of semester
- use free software to create contact sheets (Irfanview; OpenOffice)
- put one whole sheet in a folder for easy cross-reference with register
- cut up sheet into individual photos and use it to divide students into groups of three for speaking tests
- distribute photos around tables at start of class so students can mix with unfamiliar members of the group

Potential benefits

Teacher...

- can instantly recognise students (especially useful when they are new)
- can spot absentees without having to take a register
- can identify, penalise, and reward students without individual contact
- can immediately address students (answering, giving information and examples)

- can get to know students more easily by remembering their names and faces

Students...

- have a sense of being treated as individuals
- receive attention which can lead to more connection with teacher
- learn other's names without direct contact
- become more engaged during the lesson (on alert in case their name is called)

TASK

Action: Encourage real communication through tasks

Process

- allow students to find their own way within tasks (help/explain only if and when necessary)
- extend communication tasks to allow students to express themselves more
- introduce the 'communication class' at the start of the semester (they must 'communicate' with one another)
- implement idea that there is no such thing as 'finished' (infinite conversation (Appendix D))
- draw attention to the dynamics of how they communicate in Japanese (fundamentally the same in a foreign language just with different words)
- intervene when conversations become unfocussed

Potential benefits

Teacher...

- focusses more time on monitoring and evaluating and less time on prompting
- does not have to constantly intervene, which allows for better conversational flow
- can indirectly collect information on students' interests
- can indirectly collect information on areas that need improving

Students...

- require less prompting to extend conversations

- become more engaged in the subject itself through utilising new skills
- empathise more through real interaction with unfamiliar members of group
- develop communicative competence
- develop interpersonal intelligence
- accept advice and guidance from near peer role-models
- frame the idea of learning communicative English positively
- engage in fewer 'joke conversations' (will actually engage with what partner says)

INTERACTION

Action: Teacher as chaperone and deflector of attention

Process

- monitor to see if students understand what they are supposed to be doing
- bring individuals together to speak in classroom activities (only when necessary)
- join in conversations when there are natural opportunities to do so
- implement 'do not speak Japanese' policy – have students remind each other it is an English practice class not a Japanese practice class
- implement the 'infinite conversation' model (Appendix D)
- promote idea of having fun with English
- connect conversations to real events

Potential benefits

Teacher...

- will be more attentive and positive with students, not intimidating and imposing
- has opportunities to observe and can pinpoint trouble areas that need attending

to

- can afford to be more relaxed and can assert natural character on the class
- can bring interesting and topical subjects into class

Students...

- show focus, motivation, and eagerness to interact
- speak English more because everyone else around them is doing so
- frame English competency as something that can be achieved
- believe English study is interesting and will benefit them, thereby reducing resentment of the subject and animosity towards the teacher
- achieve learning goals, leading to satisfaction and a successful classroom environment

The categories of teacher, task, and interaction intertwine, giving us some ideas about how to approach the learning environment and the learners within it. From the ideas above, the best approach would appear to be when the teacher allows the group to define itself and grow organically within a clear set of rules, and promotes the idea that English is not just another subject to get a grade in but one that will allow for the development of communicative and interpersonal skills, both of which can be applied in general terms and not just in a foreign language environment. How students interact during their time in class will greatly influence attitudes towards learning and the subject being learnt now and in the future.

In the culture of the classroom many factors come into play, either allowing students the freedom to express themselves or, conversely, pushing them further inside themselves. As mentioned above, one way to subtly cultivate a positive learning environment is for the teacher to assume the role of facilitator. By standing back and letting students exercise control over their experience, while practicing simple tasks that promote real conversations, there is a higher likelihood of meaningful interactions and establishment of empathic feelings. Most importantly, though, is that the teacher acts as both a chaperone and deflector of attention. This brings individuals together so they have a chance to interact within their comfort zone. Japanese students are notoriously shy when it comes to communicating in English. If these interactions are positive, the benefits are twofold: students enjoy conversing

with one another so they want to do it more, and over time they become used to having meaningful conversations with unfamiliar others while communicating in English, leading to more potential for positive reinforcement.

CONCLUSION

Empathy in the learning environment can have an impact on the way students think about the subject they are learning. This paper revealed that most Japanese students have similar experiences during their English education and that these experiences influence their attitudes towards English when they enter university. If the current climate remains, it is likely that most Japanese university students will continue to consider English as a subject that they cannot learn effectively and will continue to regard developing English communication skills as not necessary for their futures. However, by analysing how empathy affects individuals in a learning environment and through a careful pedagogical approach, teachers can start to implement strategies that will help students develop better connections with each other in class, and this can have a strong impact on how individuals develop their communication skills when conversing in English, as well as having an influence on whether they consider English as an important and integral part of their educational history and future development.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire: Students' experiences of studying English and the importance of empathy.

Introduction: Interpretation of Empathy

1. What does **empathy** between people mean to you? Please write in this box below.

Section A: Experiences studying English

1. How were your experiences studying English in junior high school?

Please write the reason for your answer in the box below

2. How were your experiences studying English in senior high school?

Please write the reason for your answer in the box below

3. How are your experiences studying English at this university?

Please write the reason for your answer in the box below

Section B: Attitude towards English now

1. Has your attitude towards English changed? (Circle 'better' or 'worse', or 'no change')

- a. better b. worse c. no change

2. How was your attitude towards English at the start of the English course?

- a. very positive b. positive c. neutral d. not positive e. negative

3. How is your attitude now towards English?

- a. very positive b. positive c. neutral d. not positive e. negative

Section C: Empathy

1. How much empathy do you feel towards your classmates?

- a. a lot b. quite a lot c. some d. not much e. none at all

2. How much connection do you feel between you and your communicative English teacher?

- a. a lot b. quite a lot c. some d. not much e. none at all

3. How has your empathy towards you classmates changed since you started studying English at university?

- a. increased a lot b. increased a little c. no change d. decreased a little e. decreased a lot

4. Do you think that empathy between you and your classmates, and between you and the teacher, is important?

- a. yes b. no c. not sure

Section D: Influence of teacher, task, and interaction on class atmosphere

(Score: 1 – very important, 2 – important, 3 – somewhat important)

Teacher: What can the teacher do to create a better atmosphere in class?

Teacher gives students lots of individual attention ()

Teacher is strict ()

Teacher is easygoing ()

Teacher remembers students' names ()

Teacher gains respect from the students ()

Tasks: Which types of tasks help to create a better relationship between students?

Interactive games ()

Tasks that help students express real thoughts ()

Easy tasks ()

Challenging tasks ()

Tasks that allow lots of group and pair work ()

Interaction: Which of the following help improve empathy between students?

Practice of easy conversations with each other using language from the textbook ()

Getting to know everyone in class ()

A lot of interaction, especially with students you are less familiar with ()

A lot of interaction, but only between friends ()

Little interaction – main focus on teacher ()

Appendix B

Students' definitions of empathy

| |
|---|
| 1. Being able to share thoughts |
| 2. Having the same opinion |
| 3. Feelings are the same or similar |
| 4. Understanding each other's thoughts and feelings |
| 5. Agree with each other openly |
| 6. Have the same hobbies and interests |
| 7. Have the same values |
| 8. Have the same sense of humour |
| 9. Enjoy the same activities |
| 10. Accept other people |
| 11. Learn from each other |
| 12. Feelings of trust |
| 13. Feelings of closeness |
| 14. Respect for each other |
| 15. Thoughts are the same or similar |
| 16. Be patient with each other |

Table 1. Feedback provided by students relating to their interpretation of empathy

Appendix C

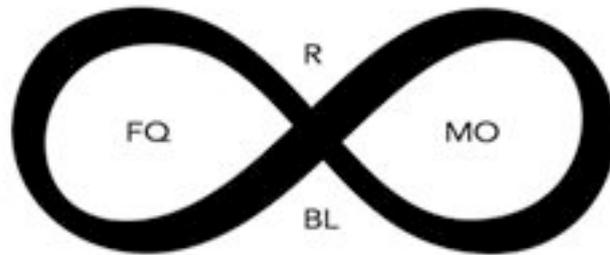
Feedback relating to students' educational experiences

| Junior high school | High school | First year at university |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Was fun | Studied for college entrance | Speaking class fun |
| Was easy | Did not like English | Fun with classmates |
| Motivation increased | Difficult to keep up | Teacher gave attention |
| Good start to learning Eng. | No practical English | Opportunities to talk |
| A little difficult | Too much vocabulary | Understood a little |
| Too difficult | Focus on getting good score | Got used to English |
| Pace too fast | Did not want to study | Fun extending conversations |
| Did not take study seriously | Often boring | Still not confident |
| Did not like English | Easy to understand | Happy when can understand |
| Did not study at all | Too grammar focussed | Fun talking with teacher |
| Teacher was friendly | Nothing special | Did not learn much vocab |
| Teacher was serious | Did not take seriously | Reading class was slow |
| Teacher difficult to understand | Did not pick up listening | No autonomous learning |
| Education not effective | Effort not rewarded | Reading class teacher awful |
| Did not like teacher | Lessons too fast | Poor placement test |
| Crammed grammar & vocab | Motivation dropped | Classes not practical |
| Focus on test scores | Felt encouraged | |
| Not able to understand NS | Focussed on reading | |
| Other | Teacher not good enough | |
| | Some speaking practice | |
| | English top priority | |

Table 2. Feedback relating to students' educational experiences while studying English

Appendix D

Model of infinite conversation



Key:

FQ = Follow-up Questions

MO = More Information

R = Reactions

BL = Body Language