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Problems in English Education in Japan

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I would like talk about problems in English Education in Japan. I think that there are 4 problems and shortcomings in the Japanese educational system for the English language.

The first is a lack of opportunities to improve conversational and communicative skills. English education in Japan focuses mainly on grammar and reading comprehension, which limits opportunities to improve actual speaking and communicative skills. Students learn English structures and vocabulary, but they do not have the opportunity to use them in real situations, and this does not help them to improve their speaking and listening skills. As a result, many students lack confidence in using English, and their practical English language skills tend to be lacking.

Second, it is difficult to acquire pronunciation and listening skills. Because the sound systems of Japanese and English are very different, pronunciation and intonation problems are likely to occur when Japanese speakers speak English. However, pronunciation instruction is often not reinforced in Japanese school education, and students may progress in their studies without accurate pronunciation. In addition, listening instruction is often inadequate, which can lead to poor comprehension of English, especially when spoken at the natural speed of native speakers.

The third is a lack of practicality due to an emphasis on English for entrance examinations. Because English education in Japan focuses on studying for university entrance exams, it often lacks practicality in actual situations where English is used. For example, there is a lack of English skills that are useful in daily conversation and in actual business situations. Because much of the content of English for examinations is not directly related to actual communication, it is difficult to develop operational English skills. It is also likely that students are less motivated to learn English if they are studying for an entrance exam.

Fourth, teachers' English language skills and teaching methods vary. Some English teachers may vary in English proficiency and teaching experience. Especially in rural areas or in small schools, there are few native English-speaking teachers, so exposure to native pronunciation and expression is limited. In addition, teachers often specialize in teaching English for entrance exams and may not have enough time to devote to teaching conversational and practical English.

Next, I will talk about how to improve English education in Japan. I have two ideas. The first is to shift to English-language education that emphasizes communication. English education in Japan tends to be focused on grammar, reading and writing, but it is important to learn English that can be used in real conversations. More emphasis should be placed on communication and listening and speaking should be actively introduced. For example, I think it is effective to provide opportunities to practice discussions and presentations and to interact with native speakers. The second is to improve the skills of teachers. It is essential that teachers have higher English proficiency and effective teaching methods. I believe that an effective strategy would be to provide training for teachers to learn the latest methods of teaching English and to improve their English speaking and pronunciation teaching skills. In the future, educational reforms are required to enable students to use English as a practical communication tool.

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