English problems

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It is said that Japanese English standard is the worst in Asia. Certainly, the average score on TOEFL is really low. Also, we saw foreigners laugh because English on the information board is something weird. It seems cheap translator. In this way, our English skills are terrible. However, the most serious problem is that few people can conversate in English. While globalization continues, SMEs still tend to be domestically oriented. The Japanese labor force has become polarized, with only large corporations seizing the opportunity to expand overseas. This also affects wages. This is why everyone needs to be able to use English as a sub-skill, not the main skill. Then, I am going to examine what is wrong with English education in Japan.

First, A big problem in Japan is that English conversation practice often gets delayed. Schools mainly focus on reading and grammar, so students don't get enough practice speaking English. For example, there is little time for speaking practice in the school curriculum. Also, students rarely get to use English in real-life situations. This gap between learning the rules and using the language makes it hard to develop good communication skills in English.

Second, one major challenge is that English grammar has become overly complex due to a focus on entrance exams. The primary goal is to prepare for tests, making the grammar not very practical for real-life use. For instance, the curriculum highlights difficult grammar points required for exams. This focus creates a gap between the grammar needed for actual communication and what is taught. As a result, students often struggle to use English in everyday situations, even if they understand complex grammar rules.

Third, Japanese students often lack opportunities to use English in real-life situations, which affects their language proficiency. One clear example is the limited chances for studying abroad. Such programs offer immersive experiences that significantly boost language skills and cultural understanding. However, these opportunities are frequently scarce due to financial barriers, limited program availability, or inadequate institutional support. Without these experiences, students miss out on practicing English in natural settings, interacting with native speakers, and gaining the confidence needed to effectively use the language. This lack of real-world practice hinders their overall language development and fluency.

What should we do in order to solve “poor English”? To enhance English education in Japan, we should focus on three key areas. First, prioritize English conversation by incorporating more speaking practice into lessons. This will help students develop practical conversational skills. Second, improve grammar education by focusing on grammar that is useful in real-life situations, ensuring students can effectively apply their knowledge. Finally, strengthen listening skills and practical application by introducing diverse listening materials and expanding study abroad programs. These changes will provide students with more opportunities to use English naturally and improve their overall language proficiency.

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