総説

The imaginative approach as a conceptual basis for elementary foreign language teacher education

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初等外国語教師教育の概念的基盤としての イマジナティブ・アプローチ

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Abstract

Foreign language activities (FLA) was introduced as compulsory in Japanese elementary schools in 2011. There are quite a few issues with FLA, and most of them are rooted in the insufficient development of teacher education for elementary-level foreign language teachers. According to the researchers who approach second language acquisition (SLA) from sociocultural perspectives, it is necessary for student or novice teachers to re-conceptualize foreign language education, because they tend to rely most on their experiences of learning English when teaching. In this paper, I suggest that Kieran Egan's imaginative approach (IA) should be effective as a theoretical foundation for elementary-level foreign language teacher education. IA is centered on engaging learners' emotions and feelings, and evoking imagination in education. This focus aligns with one of the contents in Japan's national guidelines for FLA[1]: "to experience the joy of communication in the foreign language." Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to illustrate IA as a conceptual basis for elementary-level foreign language teacher education programs, by exploring three keywords in Egan's theory: imagination, kinds of understanding, and cognitive tools.

Key words : elementary-level foreign language education, teacher education, imagination, kinds of understanding, cognitive tools

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2011年度より公立小学校で「外国語（英語）活動」が導入されたが、解決すべき課題は少なくない。その多

1）教育学部こども教育学科

くは教員養成教育の確立が不十分なことが原因となっている。新人教員や養成課程の学生は、自分の英語学習の経験に頼って教える傾向にあるため、社会文化的理論から第 2 言語教師教育にアプローチする研究者は、彼らの外国語教育の概念を再構築することが必要であると述べる。その見解から、本論文では、初等外国語教師教育の概念的基盤として、キエラン・イーガンの想像力を触発する教育法（imaginative approach、以下 IA）を取り入れることを提案する。IA は、教育の中心は、学習者の情動や感情に働きかけ、想像力を触発することだと述べる。これは、「外国語活動」学習指導要領に示される内容の一つである、「外国語を用いてコミュニケーションを図る楽しさを経験すること」に沿うものである。そこで、この論文では、イーガンの理論の 3 つのキーワード、「想像力（imagination）、「理解様式（kinds of understanding)」、「認知的道具（cognitive tools)」を明らかにしながら、初等外国語教師教育の概念的基盤としての IA を検証する。

キーワード：初等外国語教育、教師教育、想像力、理解様式、認知的道具

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Foreign language activities (FLA) were introduced as compulsory in Japanese elementary schools in 2011. Teachers and researchers have since been arguing about issues related to its objectives, teaching methods and materials. Most of the issues, however, are rooted in the insufficient development of elementary-level foreign language teacher education. According to Japan's national curriculum guidelines (MEXT,2008), FLA provides a foundation for students' communication abilities by familiarizing them with the sounds of the foreign language and expressions through oral language. Homeroom teachers primarily teach it independently or in conjunction with assistant language teachers, who are native English speakers and were not necessarily trained in teacher education programs. One of the biggest concerns with FLA is that very few homeroom teachers have taken English teacher education programs in higher education institutions. Moreover, FLA licensure has not yet been established. Thus, homeroom teachers who are teaching FLA are required to attend workshops and on-the-job training programs hosted by the MEXT or the local board of school education. Taking these issues related to FLA into consideration, designing appropriate FLA teacher education programs that are both theoretically and practically supported is essential.

1.2 The role of theory in language teacher education

As Velez-Rendón (2002)[2] points out, several studies on SLA argue that pre-service as well as novice language teachers tend to be influenced more by their experience as learners than by what they have learned in the education programs, when they teach in classrooms. Freeman and Johnson (1998)[3], for example, state: "teacher educators have come to recognize that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills" (p. 401). Therefore, it is assumed that English learning experiences at the secondary level are most influential on prospective FLA teachers' understandings and conceptualizations of FLA, as the present compulsory FLA programs were not offered to these teachers in elementary schools If prospective elementary school teachers rely too much on their experiences of

learning English at the secondary level, they may be unable to create pedagogically sound FLA lessons. In the light of these issues, it is necessary for student teachers to re-conceptualize EFL in elementary schools.

Sociocultural scholars highlight the significance of reconceptualization in teacher education. Based on the theories of Vygotsky, Johnson and Golombek (2011)[4] argue that it is important, in second language teacher education (SLTE), to expose teachers to scientific concepts and to have them re-conceptualize everyday concepts based on their experience as learners. The authors state: "The responsibility of SLTE then is to present relevant scientific concepts to teachers but to do so in ways that bring these concepts to bear on concrete practical activities, connecting them to their everyday and goal-directed activities of teaching" (2011, p. 2). Student teachers' everyday knowledge is based on their experience of learning English in secondary schools, and it needs to be re-conceptualized.

1.3 The purpose of this paper

The effectiveness of IA may lie in the fact that it puts emphasis on students' emotions. Especially when teaching foreign languages to young learners, it is important to have them find emotional meanings in learning. As Guz and Tetiurka (2013)[5] quote from Williams and Burden (1997), children can only understand and focus on what is "meaningful to them" and in ways that are "meaningful to them" (p. 423). Besides, one of the national curriculum guidelines for FLA states that students need "[to] experience the joy of communication in the foreign language". That is, teachers should evoke students' emotional engagement in FLA. Hence, adopting Kieran Egan's IA into FLA teacher program can be valid, because IA attempts to engage students' emotions and feelings, in the learning process. Therefore, in this paper, I will argue for IA as a conceptual basis for FLA teacher programs by exploring three keywords in Egan's theory: imagination, kinds of understanding, and cognitive tools.

2. Kieran Egan's Imaginative Approach

2.1 Overview of Kieran Egan's Imaginative Approach

What Egan (1997)[6] attempts to do is preset a new conception of education that aims to foster "kinds of understanding" by "the acquisition of cognitive tools driv[ing] students' educational progress" (2005, p. xvii)[7]. Egan (1997) argues that education is best grasped as the process of developing "a set of language-based intellectual tools that generate Somatic, Mythic, Romantic, Philosophic, and Ironic kinds of understanding" (p. 5). One of the essential aims of regular school education, according to Egan (2005), is to develop "three great multipurpose cognitive tools" (p. xvi): oral language, literacy, and theoretical thinking. To foster them, Egan claims that it is effective to engage students' imaginations by using cognitive tools associated with each multipurpose cognitive tool.

The conceptual core of Egan's educational approach is imagination. According to Egan, when students can make emotional associations with what they are learning, their imaginations are enhanced and their flexibility of mind is increased; as a result, their understanding is deepened. Specifically, pupils in the phase of Mythic understanding should develop oral language and acquire knowledge in the

curriculum using cognitive tools associated with oral language, while keeping the former understanding, Somatic understanding, spirited. Similarly, students in Romantic understanding should develop literacy as a cognitive tool and acquire knowledge using cognitive tools associated with literacy, keeping the former understandings − Somatic and Mythic − as lively as possible; the same thing can be said of those students who are developing theoretic thinking in Philosophic understanding. Egan(2005) calls cultural tools fostering kinds of understanding "cognitive tools" (CTs). According to Egan, cognitive tools are "[aids] to thinking developed in human cultural history and learned by people today to enlarge their powers to think and understand" (2005, p. 219). Egan claims that the best way for students to learn is by engaging their emotions and imaginations using CTs. In the following sections, the three fundamental principles of IA − imagination, five kinds of understanding, and CTs − are explained in detail.

2.2 Imagination

In Egan's theory, the importance of activating learners' imagination is highlighted, but imagination is actually a difficult concept to define. It also does not seem easy to activate learners' imaginations in subjects such as mathematics, science and foreign languages. However, Egan (2005) claims that even in such subjects, making learning imaginative is the most effective way to deepen students' understanding.

Then, what is this imagination that can be the workhorse of effective learning? Egan (2005) regards imagination as follows: "the ability to think of things as possible − the source of flexibility and originality in human thinking. The literate imagination is enhanced by the array of discoveries made in cultural history" (p. 220). In Egan's definition of imagination, the influence of Vygotsky as well as the influences of Warnock (1976/1978)[8], White (1990)[9], as Takaya (2010)[10] suggests, can be seen.

Vygotsky (2004)[11] regards imagination as the source of creative activity in human life. He mentions about imagination: "in actuality, imagination, as the basis of all creative activity, is an important component of absolutely all aspects of cultural life, enabling artistic, scientific, and technical creation alike." (p. 9). Imagination is important in learning, because learning is a significant component of our cultural life; thus, when learning refers to the acquisition of cultural tools created by human imagination, imagination is essential and central in learning. Warnock (1976/1978) describes imagination as a faculty that generates possibility: "All I would claim is that my interpretation is possible" (p. 196). The authors explored above agree that imagination is not a special gift, but is essential for human cultural life. Thus, the imagination promoted by IA would enhance leaners' creativity and enable them to find possibilities in what they are learning.

IA emphasizes emotional engagement. Egan (2005) highlights the significance of evoking emotional meaning in students, stating:

> All knowledge is human knowledge and all knowledge is a product of human hopes, fears, and passions. To bring knowledge to life in students' minds we must introduce it to students in the context of the human hopes, fears, and passions in which it finds its fullest meaning. The best tool for doing this is the imagination. (p. xii-iii)

Egan sees coherence between imagination and emotion: "the imagination is tied in complex ways to our emotional lives" (2005, p. xii). It can be said that imagination involves integration of *the head*, which

symbolizes intellect and reason, and *the heart*, which is responsible for emotion and feeling. Egan (1997) quotes Wordsworth's *The Prelude*: "Imagination is … Reason in her most exalted mood" (p. 56), because he says it conveys the manner of this integration well. Another point on which Egan praises Wordsworth is that, unlike other Romantic poets, "Wordsworth resisted the easy contrast of the romantic imagination with dull rationality" (1997, p. 101). Egan resists the influence of Romantics' "easy opposition of reason and imagination" (p. 101), as he believes that Romantics sometimes underrate or misunderstand imagination.

Vygotsky (2004) and Warnock(1976/1978) speak about the coherence of emotion, intellect, and imagination. According to Gajdamaschko (2005)[12], Vygotsky sees imagination as "a process directly connected with meaning making, a higher psychological function that has connections not only with emotions but also with intellectual functions (p. 16). Warnock (1976/1978) also sees imagination as integration of emotion and reason, or *the heart* and *the head*: "Its [Imagination's] impetus comes from the emotions as much as from the reason, from the heart as much as from the head" (p. 196). Thus, both intellectual and emotional faculties are necessary for grasping the potential of imagination. Our imagination, or our faculty for generating possibility, is enhanced when we get emotionally involved, and consequently, the flexibility of our minds and creativity get activated.

Thus, Egan's grasp of imagination is neither a novel nor unique idea. However, the advantage of Egan's theory is that it presents a theoretical basis for how imagination plays a significant role in teaching and learning, by engaging emotion and feeling. Though the importance of imagination in education is often mentioned, it is actually difficult to argue for imagination in academic contexts, partly because of Romantics' interpretation of imagination, as well as due to insufficient research on the application of imagination to education. Egan thus attempts to clarify the potential of imagination to make education more meaningful and effective, and to demonstrate how his theory can be taken into actual classroom lessons as an educational approach.

2.3 Five kinds of understanding

In this section, I will briefly describe the basic components of Egan's theory: Somatic, Mythic kinds of understanding, because these two kinds of understanding are concerned with FLA. Egan (1997) argues: "each kind of understanding results from the development of particular intellectual tools that we acquire from the societies we grow up in" (p. 4). These five kinds of understanding are not like steps of biological maturity but a sequence: "each kind of understanding does not fade away to be replaced by the next, but rather each properly coalesces in significant degree with its predecessor" (p. 5). He also points out that the sequence is not rigid but flexible: "These kinds understanding are only "somewhat" distinctive in that they are not wholly different forms of thought, mutually incomprehensible" (1997, p. 180). In this writing, Egan suggests that his concept of kinds of understanding does not accord with Piagetian ideas on psychological development: "these kinds of understanding are not the precise on/off conditions suggested by some Piagetian stages" (1997, p. 276).

2.3.1　Somatic understanding

Before acquiring our first language, we use our body to make meaning of our experiences and our world. Egan regards this manner of understanding as Somatic. Egan (1997) describes:

Somatic understanding, then, is not something that exists only prior to language development but rather, like each of these kinds of understanding, it ideally remains with us throughout our lives, continuing to develop within, though somewhat modified by, other kinds of understanding. (p. 163)

Somatic understanding tends to be lost as an individual intellectually develops, but it is significant, because it is the foundation of other kinds of understanding, and it is thus necessarily sustained in the process of individual cognitive development.

However, Chodakowski[13] points out that Egan (1997) sees Somatic understanding as "evolutionary adaptations" (p. 175). She further argues that Egan(1997, 2005) did not fully illustrate tools that develop Somatic understanding, compared with others.

Since the society to which we belong is mostly intellect-oriented, we sometimes tend to ignore bodily and sensory perception. With Somatic understanding, we could grasp our lives and worlds more profoundly and essentially than with language alone. As Egan (1997) suggests one of the important aims of education should be "to maximize the gains while minimizing the losses" (p. 7), teachers' responsibility is to attempt to minimize the loss of Somatic understanding in students at the Mythic understanding, as well as in students at the Romantic and even Philosophic understanding. The importance of fostering Somatic understanding cannot be understated, on the contrary, it should be valued in current educational environments, which attach too much importance on *the head*.

2.3.2　Mythic understanding

On the foundation of Somatic understanding, we foster Mythic understanding, by developing oral language. Therefore, using CTs associated with oral language is effective for students in this phase. This phase is called Mythic understanding, because the ways of understanding and thinking of young children who have not acquired literacy yet is similar to that of people in traditional oral cultures. Egan (1997) also points out that students in Mythic understanding love fantasy stories or fairy-tales that have "so much in common with myth stories from around the world" and are "somehow tied up with profound features of our mental lives" (p. 45). That is to say, story is a powerful cognitive tool for helping students in Mythic understanding phase make meaning of the world. Therefore, when teachers teach pupils in Mythic understanding, it is effective to use story and story form in organizing their classes. Rhythm and pattern, metaphor, and image, among others, are essential for oral culture, and are thus important CTs for children in Mythic understanding phases to develop.

For FLA, Somatic and Mythic understanding should be focused upon; it is important to foster Mythic understanding while sustaining Somatic understanding as much as possible. Therefore, teachers and teacher educators concerned with teaching foreign languages to young learners have to pay more attention not only to orality, but also to bodily and emotional aspects of language, which *the heart* symbolizes.

2.4 Cognitive tools

What Egan (1997) calls cognitive tools originated from Vygotsky: "tools" is obviously an awkward word; I mean something like the "mediational means" that the Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) describes as the "shapers of the kind of sense we make of the world" (p. 4-5). Egan argues that Mythic, Romantic, and Philosophic understandings, which are the kinds of understandings that should be developed in school education, are fostered by oral language, literacy, and theoretic thinking, respectively. In order to develop these three multipurpose cognitive tools, teachers should effectively conduct activities using CTs associated with them.

IA further shows how teachers can engage students' emotion and feeling by adopting CTs in order to make teaching effective and meaningful for students. For example, according to Egan (2005), a *story*, which is a powerful CT of Mythic understanding, is illustrated as follows: "The value of the story to teaching is precisely its power to engage the students' emotions − and also, connectedly, their imaginations − in the material of the curriculum" (p. 12). Then, Egan explains in detail, by giving examples of such topics as "place value" and "butterfly transformations," how teachers should use *story* in elementary classes such as mathematics and science, which seem to be difficult to make imaginative.

2.4.1 CTs for oral language

Since my interest lies in FLA, in which learning takes place through oral language, I would like to pay a close attention to how Somatic and Mythic understanding can be fostered with the use of bodily toolkits and CTs associated with oral language (See Table). According to Egan (2005), *story* is "one of the most powerful cognitive tools students have available for imaginatively engaging with knowledge" (p. 2). As Egan (1986)[14] suggests, teachers should "see lessons or units as good stories to be told" (p. 2), and *story* means not only a certain story related to the topic of the lesson or used to interest students at the beginning, but also a framework of story along which lessons should be planned. That is, planning the lessons using the construction of story, and teaching the lessons just like telling a story, are effective to engage students' emotion. According to Egan, *story* is a primary tool that orients our feelings to its content and therefore has the power to engage our emotion in learning. It is also used to shape teaching content to activate our imagination and emotion.

In order to teach the lessons just like telling a story, it is important to start class with a conflict or sense of dramatic tension. Egan (1986) points out that most fairy tales begin with a conflict, like *Cinderella*, which begins with "a conflict between these embodiments of good and bad" (p. 27). Egan (1986) argues:

> A model for teaching that draws on the power of the story, then will ensure that we set up a conflict or sense of dramatic tension at the beginning of our lesson and units. Thus, we create some expectation that we will satisfy at the end" (p. 25).

In this sense, *binary opposites* are essential to set up a conflict at the beginning. Another advantage of *binary opposites* is that they clarify how to organize the lesson and what to teach in the lesson, as Egan (1986) mentions: "These abstract binary opposites serve as criteria for the selection and organization of the content of the story and they serve as the main structuring line along which the

story moves forward" (p. 27). Thus, it is important to figure out appropriate binary opposites in designing the lesson, in order to make "lessons or units as good stories to be told" (1986, p. 2). The conflict at the beginning of a lesson draws expectations of satisfaction. Finally, just like a fairy tale, the lesson should be led to a certain conclusion. Egan argues for the following "story rhythm": conflict, then expectation for satisfying end, so that students see emotional meaning in what they are learning.

Egan (2005) advocates for the process of planning lessons using CTs as a planning framework. In order to foster oral language, after finding the importance of the topic, teachers should organize content in *story* form based on *binary opposites*; they should then find additional CTs such as *metaphors, rhythm, rhyme and pattern, jokes and humor, mental imagery, gossip, play,* and *mystery*, which can be used to make the topic of the lesson emotionally engaging.

Table
An Overview of CTs for Oral Language (based on Egan, 2005, 2006) and Bodily Toolkits
(based on Chodakowski and Egan, 2008; Judson and Egan, 2013)

Story	A primary tool that orients our feelings to its content and therefore has power to engage our emotion in learning. It is also used to shape teaching content to activate our imaginations and emotions.
Metaphor	A tool that enables us to see something from other perspectives and thus strengthens our flexibility of mind.
Binary opposites	Tools that are used to organize and categorize things and ideas into two opposite conceptions. Using them in introducing topics makes the subject matter to be learned clear and comprehensible. They are also necessary to create the conflicts that start stories for children.
Rhyme, rhythm, and pattern	Effective tools that make knowledge easy to memorize and convey. They can be regarded as somatic tools because their musicality engages our embodied knowledge.
Jokes and humor	Tools that allow us to play with elements of knowledge. They also enhance our flexibility of mind, because they let us see and interpret our knowledge from other viewpoints.
Images (Mental imagery)	A tool that makes knowledge more memorable and imaginative than concepts alone. They can be powerful tools, especially when images are generated from words in our mind.
Gossip	A tool that shares features with a story in enhancing the ability to organize events into a narrative. Gossip in early childhood develops the foundation for rich orality upon which a rich literacy is built, because it is one of the most basic forms of social interaction.
Play	A tool that releases children from the constraints of the world's normal forms. It develops children's symbolic functions and meta-level of thinking. Play often provides a situation where children learn what they did not know how to do by working with other children; they can thus develop their self-control (Vygotsky, 1978).
Mystery	An important tool that helps us recognize that there is more than we can see, hear, and experience in the world. It leads to fascination by opening our minds to the unknown.
Living knowledge	A tool that makes learning effective by incorporating realistic aspects of students' lives.
Senses	Sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, which are necessary for our initial understandings of the world.
Emotions	Occur in our body and orient and organize our cognition throughout our life.
Pattern and musicality	Make us construct meaning with recurring regularity.
Humor	Based on incongruity; contributes to flexibility of mind.
Mimetic intentionality	Early forms of human learning behavior; it is different from mimicking in that it combines gestures and sounds and even invents new ones.

2.4.2　Tools for Somatic understanding

The idea of sustaining Somatic understanding is also essential in FLA, because, as Egan suggests, it is significant way of making meaning and it proceeds Mythic understanding where oral language should be developed. In fact, Egan et al.[15] presents tools associated with Somatic understanding as the "body's toolkit," mentioning that they are *senses, emotions, pattern and musicality, humor, and mimetic internationality*. It should be important to explore attempts to foster Somatic understanding in education, as it is foundation of other kinds of understanding. Sustaining and developing Somatic understanding is applicable to FLA as well as EFL, since EFL in Japan has put too much emphasis on raising students' scores in exams. Hence, the idea of fostering Somatic and Mythic understanding using associated bodily toolkits and CTs would cast a new light on EFL and FLA in Japan. Moreover, it would enable student teachers to transform their ideas of EFL based on their experience as a learner, and consequently enable them to re-conceptualize SLA and FLA.

3.　Conclusion

It is necessary in FLA teacher programs for student teachers to re-conceptualize EFL and FLA, in particular. To accomplish this, this paper explores IA as a theoretical basis of the program, and clarifies the three key concepts of this educational theory: imagination, kinds of understanding, and cognitive tools.

Egan demystified the notion of imagination − the conceptual core of IA − which has often been avoided in the academic research due to its multifaceted characteristics, by emphasizing feelings and emotions, which are considered to be the source of flexibility and creativity. Then, the integration of emotions and learning, which was seemingly a difficult goal, is made achievable by highlighting the correlation between emotions and imagination. Developing oral language using associated CTs should be a novel concept for student teachers who studied English mainly using the grammar-translation method. The specificity and novelty in Egan's argument should be powerful and impressive enough for student teachers to transform their concepts based on their experience as learners.

IA, which is specific and novel, can thus form the conceptual basis of FLA teacher programs. However, as Miyazaki points out, Egan goes as far as to present the process and keys to plan lessons in the IA framework, which Miyazaki[16] call a "rough outline of class" (p. 162), but Egan does not analyze actual classroom practice. Therefore, there is no description of students' reaction to teachers, and teachers' reactions to students in the classroom. Miyazaki suggests that, in developing actual classes, it is essential to observe how teachers organize and teach lessons, as well as analyze how they should interpret and organize students' voices (p. 163). As Miyazaki's statement implies, empirical research is necessary to verify IA as a theoretical foundation for teacher education, and to design programs based on IA, to verify its effectiveness in classroom practice.

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