The Practice of Haiku Writing in Second Language Classrooms

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Introduction

Among the many foreign languages taught in Japan, English is regarded as the most significant in public education. However, in spite of the increasing need to use English in the world, learning English is not easy and it takes time and effort. The relative difficulty of acquiring English for Japanese students stems from the fact that English is not usually available outside the classroom. In these circumstances, English ability is acquired mainly through public education.

In general, Japanese students learn English for at least six years in their middle and high schools. As a result of the heavy demands made by entrance examinations, many English courses are allocated to teach English grammar. The students learn a lot of grammar in a limited time, but they do not have much opportunity to use their knowledge after they have obtained it. At the university level, students usually take English courses for more than one year in the lower division; these courses however, often focus exclusively on academic writing. Such courses are clearly effective from the point of view of acquiring the structure of an academic paper in a short time, which is useful for students in their later academic life.

Although the importance of academic writing cannot be denied, we need to be more attentive to the advantages of creative writing. The organization of an academic paper can be taught, but the originality and the contents of the paper will be gained through the creative thoughts of learners. Moreover, as a linguistic task, well-organized creative writing practice can enhance the degree of attention that learners pay to the second

language. In this paper, the effectiveness of poetry writing in the foreign language classroom will be explored. In particular, the value of haiku writing exercises will be illustrated under the assumption that creative writing should be considered as an option in English education in university.

The Need to Facilitate Output

The situation of English education in Japan needs to be considered in its particularity. Second language acquisition theories based mainly on the experience of immigrant societies may not be fully applicable to the circumstance of Japan's English education (Saito, 2007). According to DeKeyser (1998), classroom plans need to be adjusted appropriately depending on whether the learners are "academically oriented learners", such as university students in Japan, or "immigrants who need a crash course in survival skills" (p. 62), such as people who have recently arrived in America. Doughty and Williams (1998) also point out that specific classroom plans should be distinguished between those suitable for "learners of English as a foreign language in traditional classroom settings, such as those found in Japan or Korea", where students are learning English intensively within a learner group sharing their first language in common, and "learners of a variety of foreign languages in the United States" (p. 200) who are learning English in a group consisting of people with different cultural backgrounds.

As mentioned above, in their classroom-centered second language education, the university students of Japan have been disciplined in fundamental grammar already, but they are not yet ready to use the knowledge for actual communication. The key point is how to convert the knowledge which students already have into practical use of the second language in the form of output.

Swain (1995) describes three functions of output: noticing, hypothesis-testing, and conscious reflection. At first, through producing output, learners can notice their linguistic problems by recognizing the gap between what they know and do not know. Secondly, learners can test their knowledge through using the second language; that is, "learners may use their output as a way of trying out new language forms and structures as they

stretch their interlanguage" to meet their needs (pp. 131–132). Thirdly, the metalinguistic function of output makes it possible for learners "to reflect on language" when they are assigned tasks which lead them to negotiate about the form of the target language rather than just its meaning, thus "allowing learners to control and internalize" that language (p. 132).

Haiku writing can be effective in this context. Firstly, learners can explore their language through trying to express their thoughts and feelings within the constraints of a simple literary form; through doing this, they will discover whether their linguistic knowledge is sufficient to express their thoughts and feelings or not. Secondly, through the experimental process of trying to stretch their language boundaries, learners can consolidate and develop their language. Thirdly, because poetry depends on the appropriateness of the words and phrases chosen, learners have to be attentive to, and consciously reflect on, the form of the language itself. In addition, a further advantage is that the language the learners have produced in their haiku will be easily remembered, and this will help with the acquisition process.

Literature-based Activities

Haiku writing in a second language is an attempt to foster learners' writing ability through producing literature as output. Before talking about haiku writing, however we need to review the issue of using literature in writing classes. In first language freshman writing courses, whether or not to use literary materials has been a controversial topic. For example, Lindemann (1993) criticizes the use of literature in freshman writing courses by pointing out that literature-based courses "focus on consuming texts, not producing them" (p. 313). In addition, according to her, the use of literature in classrooms is not helpful in learning an effective style because of the gap between literary style and the kind of neutral or academic style which the students are required to use.

However, we can consider the literature issue differently in second language classrooms. Lindemann argues that analyzing literature is not helpful in ordinary composition classes, but she does not deny another way of teaching literature. As she points out, "if our students were writing poems, or short stories, or

even dialogues, literary models might suggest stylistic options worth practicing" (p. 314); thus, if students are asked to write haiku in a second language, this may avoid the harmful effects which she mentions.

The hesitation to use literature in the classroom is based on the assumption that the language of literature is the result of an intensive process of composition by a specially gifted author, so the language of literature is seen as being sophisticated and complex. However, the language of literature need not be difficult and transcendent. According to Hall (2005), "literature is made of, from and with ordinary language, which is itself already surprisingly literary" (p. 10) in its creative use of "discourse types such as metaphor or narrative" (p. 9). It can thus be said that the language of literature and ordinary language are dynamic contact with each other.

One of the most powerful reasons to use literature is the pleasure which literary language gives. The fictional power of literary language makes it possible for us to express our thoughts freely in ordinary language, and also to extend that language beyond the horizon of everyday use. Lakoff and Turner (1989) comment that "poetic thought uses the mechanisms of everyday thought, but it extends them, elaborates them, and combines them in ways that go beyond the ordinary" (p. 67).

Another aspect of the pleasure of literary language arises from seeing language learning as play. Cook (2000) suggests that language play is intrinsic to language learning in that such play leads students to be closely attentive to linguistic features while engaged in it. As a way of achieving this kind of language teaching, he suggests exploiting the resources of literature. In this context, "literature" can be understood as "knowledge *of* literature", that is, active, experiential, and pleasurable involvement with literary texts, rather than "knowledge *about* literature", that is, an accumulation of literary information about authors and texts (Carter & Long, 1991). In practical terms, Cook (2000) proposes to teach "many literary and quasi-literature genres (such as the haiku, proverb, epigram, and nursery rhyme) [which] exploit the tantalizing potential of a brief, unexpanded statement to arouse interest and stimulate thought, simply by saying very little" (p. 196). These show the simple haiku can be a relevant resource for

second language practice.

Writing Poetry in Second Language Classrooms

Poetry writing in the classroom aims to help learners express their thoughts freely. Furthermore, the literary form of poetry causes learners to be attentive to the linguistic forms of the target language in order for them to be able to write meaningful poetry. In the section, I will first discuss the way in which poetry writing enhances self-expression, then I will go on to examine the linguistic benefits of poetry writing in second language education.

In a first language educational environment, Koch (1970, 1973), who based his practice on the idea that children can express their senses and feelings freely in poetry, was a pioneer in the successful use of poetry writing exercises in elementary schools. Similar attempts to lead children to write poetry for educational purposes have also been conducted in Japan. Through writing poetry children can not only articulate their thoughts and personal interests, but also learn how to use language precisely and expressively. Family relationships and feelings are expressed frankly and in precise words in their poems. The following is a poem by Fumiko Yamashita, age 8, which was written in her first language and translated later into English.

> OLDER BROTHER
>
> My older brother got angry.
> His eyes became a triangle.
> "My older brother's eyes
> are a triangle," I said.
> Then his eyes became a hexagon.
>
> [Fumiko Yamashita] (Lewis, 1970, p. 30)

Lewis (1970), the editor of the anthology of Japanese children's poems from which Fumiko Yamashita's work is quoted, comments that in the poems created by children we can find "a merging of the real and unreal, an angle of vision which [has] caught very subtle details in human relationships, a clarity of imagery . . . and a mixture of humor and sadness suggesting an unusual philosophical stance" (p. 9). These comments reflect the

positive effects of expressive creative writing pedagogy.

Such pedagogy assumes the learners are "individual human beings who will have private and maybe public lives that transcend whatever disciplines they associate themselves with in college" (Tate, 1993, p. 321). This assumption means that the variety of thoughts and feelings of the student writers should be respected. McQuade (1992) points out that creative writing "is informed by an enormously important assumption: no one does it wrong. That assumption does not preclude the judgment, however, that some writers are more accomplished than others, but it does suggest that, in the world of literature, right and wrong are not so important as the sustained ability of a writer's performance with language" (p. 516). As he comments, it is a significant benefit of the language of literature that it gives students the opportunity of expressing themselves freely.

In second language classrooms, however, these assumptions lead to concerns about accuracy in language use. Nevertheless, in spite of these concerns, writing poetry leads the students not only to pay attention to their intended meanings, but also to pay extremely close attention to the linguistic forms of the second language in order to meet the demands of the poetic form they are using. Studies in second language acquisition suggest that this double focus on meaning and linguistic form is useful for language learning. Ellis (1994), for example, explores the concept of "good language learners" and concludes that in most of the studies in this area, "the learners appeared to benefit from attending to both form and meaning" (p. 549). In addition, Long and Robinson (1998) differentiate "focus on forms", which concentrates on analyzing the target language, "focus on meaning", which claims that languages are learned not by treating them "as an object of study, but by experiencing them as a medium of communication" (p. 18), and "focus on form", which "often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features" (p. 23) in a meaningful communicative context. Focus on form thus handles forms and meaning simultaneously.

This feature of focus on form can compensate for the weak points of expressive pedagogy in second language creative writing classrooms. Poetry writing is a task which not only enhances the self-expression of learners, but also makes them attentive to the linguistic forms of the target language. Poetry writing such

as haiku writing can "promote sensitivity and . . . develop interpretive skills by exploiting awareness of the patterns of language 'from the inside' " (Carter & Long, 1991, p. 90). In haiku writing, as Kawamoto (2000) points out "everything is telescoped into three short lines, and the reader is forced to focus renewed and conscientious attention to the subtle relationship among words he once would have read over without paying any particular notice" (p. 166). In this context, Koch's (1970, 1973) method of suggesting model poems before writing is effective because it makes learners sensitive to linguistic form. For example, he shows his students a poem by William Carlos Williams and encourages them to write their own poem using the structure of the model poem.

This Is Just to Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold
[William Carlos Williams] (cited in Koch, 1973, p. 98)

The following is a poem by a student in his class who learned and imitated the linguistic form of the poem above.

Dear Dog

Please
for
give

me
for
eating
your
dog
biscuit.
[Lorraine Fedison, sixth grade] (cited in Koch, 1973, p. 103)

We can notice even in such a short poem, the language can be salient to the learners and can thus be easily internalized by them. Koch's aim to encourage linguistic ability in the first language, but his method is also applicable to the second language classroom.

Poetry writing in a second language thus encourages students to produce self-expressive output while focusing on language form. Yet, poetry writing does not mean only imitating the target language; rather, the activity has the purpose of helping the learners find their own language. Rossiter (1997) describes poetry writing in second language education in terms of linguistic experiment.

> "[A]ny exercises we can take into the classroom which encourage learners to be creative, in the sense of encouraging them to experiment with the foreign language, are worthwhile, not just in helping the learners to acquire the particular language point which is focused on in the exercise, but also in fostering a positive attitude toward linguistic experiment which is going to be generally helpful in language acquisition" (p. 31).

Further, Hanauer (2004) explains that poetry writing is "a process of personal discovery that involves shifting unconscious linguistic functioning to conscious consideration" and "the goal of writing poetry is to enhance students' exploration of themselves and the world" (p. 48). In a similar context, Kramsch (1993) also suggests that writing poetry is "an opportunity to test the limits of available meanings within [the learners'] restricted linguistic resources", and the process is "to verbalize a familiar experience in unfamiliar words and thereby change the memory and the meaning of that experience" (p. 171). Hanauer and

Kramsch thus both suggest that writing poetry makes it possible for learners to explore the meaning of life while developing their linguistic ability. Second language poetry writing may therefore provide the benefits of expressive pedagogy without losing attention to linguistic form.

A Definition of 'Haiku' for Second Language Education

The term 'haiku' needs to be defined, although some aspects of the definition may not necessarily be appropriate for the purposes of second language writing. The work of Basho Matsuo (1644–1694), the great Japanese poet, displays most features of traditional haiku. His works are impressive in that they show us "how to look with a poetic eye upon the ordinary and prosaic incidentals of urban and rural . . . life" (Kawamoto, 2000, p. 172). Strictly speaking, Basho's work should be called *hokku*, that is, the first 5–7–5 syllables of the 5–7–5–7–7 poetic form called *haikai*. Shiki Masaoka (1867–1902) established the use of the word 'haiku' to refer to an independent poem with 5–7–5 syllable count, and that term has now become general. Thus, in this paper, the word 'haiku' will be used in a broad meaning including the *hokku* of Basho and others.

Among teachers who use haiku in second language classrooms, there are some controversial issues, including whether or not it is appropriate to insist on the use of traditional haiku conventions in the second language setting. These include employing a strict syllable count, the obligatory use of season words, and the non-use of metaphor.

Generally, haiku in Japanese keep a strict syllable count of 5–7–5. It can be said that the existence of this rule "enables . . . extremely condensed expression" (Kawamoto, 2000, p. 172) in only three lines. However, counting syllables can be a hurdle to some learners. Koch (1973), who had a good understanding of Japanese haiku and experimented with haiku in his first-language poetry-writing classroom, comments that counting syllables may discourage students from writing (p. 102). In the case of second-language learners with a lower level of proficiency, they often do not yet have sufficient vocabulary and so may be defeated by having to keep a strict syllable count. Furthermore, forcing students to count syllables may interfere with their free

expression.

If a student wants, of his or her own accord, to keep a syllable count, however, it is best not to oppose it, but keeping a syllable count probably should not be compulsory. A more important thing than counting syllables is letting the students know that in haiku many things can be expressed even in a single word. The reason is that in haiku, “not a single syllable is redundant, not a single word wasted” (Burns, 2006).

On the other hand, for second language learners with high proficiency, keeping a strict syllable count can be beneficial because it makes learners more attentive to the selection of vocabulary. Students will reconsider whether the word they chose at first has the appropriate number of syllables or not. As a result, attention to the second language will be fostered. Thus, with high proficiency learners a strict syllable count could be used depending on the teacher’s judgment of the level and abilities of the students.

Another important feature of the classical haiku is the use of season words or *kigo*. The conventional image of a season can evoke particular feelings without too much explanation, allowing much feeling to be compressed into only three lines. For example, in traditional haiku, ‘cherry blossom’ can be swiftly connected to images of spring. However, in spite of these merits, in the context of second language learning, using conventional seasonal words need not be strictly enforced as it would probably make learners reluctant to write. For helping the learners focus their writing, suggesting a seasonal situation will be beneficial, but it can be conducted at the level of “mention of a season” (Higginson, 1985, p. 87) or having “some element of nature” (Reichhold, 2002, p. 52).

A third issue in classical haiku is the question of whether or not metaphor should be used. Some haiku poets oppose the use of metaphor in haiku. For example, Yasuda (1957) mentions that “haiku eschews metaphor, simile, or personification” and “metaphor is always an interference for the haiku poet” (p. 50) because the aim of haiku authors is to “render the object so that it appears in its own unique self, without reference to something other than itself” (p. 50–51).

However, in second language classrooms using the rhetoric of metaphor need not be prohibited. Learners can express their

thoughts and feelings using figurative language in the same way as in any other poetry writing. In fact, using metaphorical imagery may work well in haiku writing classes. Higginson (1985) looks at examples of modern haiku that are "successful in creating depth and mystery through metaphor" (p. 124) while Blasko and Merski (1998) argue that even many classical haiku, including Basho's, "seem to have a clear metaphorical quality" (p. 40). Reichhold (2002) draws out the metaphorical quality of the following haiku of Basho (*kareeda ni karasu no tomarikeri aki no kure*):

on a bare branch
a crow lands
autumn dusk

(cited in Reichhold, p. 59)

She suggests that "what he [Basho] was saying, in other words, was that the way darkness comes down on an early autumn evening is the way it feels when a crow lands on a bare branch" (p. 59). We cannot know whether or not Basho meant the metaphor in the way in which Reichhold understands it, but we can draw a conclusion that the use of metaphor does not impede the poetic effectiveness of haiku. Such a view clears a space for the free use of metaphor by learners in second language classrooms.

A Plan for a Haiku Writing Class

In order to practice haiku writing effectively in second language classrooms, a specific plan is necessary. Drawing on pedagogical plans suggested in the previous literature, I suggest a five-step plan for a haiku writing classroom. This is designed as a one- or two-week activity for students in lower division university English courses, rather than as a semester-long course.

The First Stage

At the beginning of the haiku writing class, the concept of English haiku is explained. However, before providing a definition of what haiku is, it is more attractive to show students examples of haiku in English. In many studies, it is reported that providing representative examples of poetry before the students start writing is effective because it helps them understand what poetry is

(Koch, 1970, 1973; Harter, 1985; Kramsch, 1993; Rossiter, 1997, 1998; Cheney, 2002). For example, Basho's most famous haiku (*Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*) can be put forward as a model for students:

an old pond . . .
a frog leaps in,
the sound of water
[Basho] (translated by Shirane, 1998, p. 13)

Showing a model haiku will increase students' understanding of how haiku works by mentioning a specific place, identifying an object, and expressing the writers' response to the occurrence.

The Second Stage

Apol (2002) asserts that "being a good writer of poetry requires being an active reader of poetry" (p. 90); giving students an opportunity to respond freely to model haiku and to articulate those responses in discussion with their peers is one way to promote such active reading. Such discussions will also help them write their own haiku more easily, because the discussion of a specific haiku will give them the scaffolding within which to organize their own thoughts.

In the discussion, learners will be speaking to each other, but also can be guided or questioned by the teacher in order to come to an understanding of local issues, such as the meaning of phrases, or global issues, such as the construction of the haiku; finally, students will arrive at a "comprehensive interpretation of the poem" (Hanauer, 2001, p. 306). For example, through discussion a comprehensive understanding of Basho's haiku could be presented as follows: "the sudden movement of the frog, which suggests the awakening of life in spring, stands in contrast to the implicit winter stillness of the old pond" (Shirane, 1998, p. 15).

The Third Stage

In the third step, students are asked to write a haiku. This exercise will occur in a student-centered atmosphere. In the writing process, the teacher plays a collaborative role as an "enabler" who "is confident enough to share control with the learners, or perhaps to hand it over to them entirely" and "whose job is to

create the conditions that enable the students to learn for themselves" (Scrivener, 2005, p. 25). This facilitates the learners' exploration of the language for themselves.

In the haiku of Basho quoted above, a place is suggested in the first line, the observation of an object is depicted in the second line, and finally, the feeling of the moment is expressed by the sound. For haiku writing in a second language, the instructor recommends, for example, that the students select places that they like. Then, they are given a short time to think about what happened in those places. Finally, they are asked to express their response to the situation by using words related to the physical senses.

Exercises for the Third Stage

One good way of stimulating the haiku writing process is to ask students to write about the natural things which surround them. As I previously argued, the use of conventional seasonal words need not be obligatory in haiku writing classrooms, but mentioning nature or writing about seasonal feelings works well as in any other poetry. As Shulman (1995) suggests in her literature-based textbook for learners of English as a second language, encouraging the use of "indirect reference", such as cherry blossom, in haiku will make learners focus on how language can function in poetry without using direct words (p. 277). For example, here are two haiku which inspire the reader with the atmosphere of winter.

Snow falling
on the empty parking-lot:
Christmas Eve . . .
[Eric W. Amann] (cited in Higginson, 1985. p. 87)

In the falling snow
A laughing boy holds out his palms
Until they are white.
[Richard Wright] (cited in Higginson, p. 88)

In the haiku above, there are no explanations in direct words, but readers can catch the atmosphere of the days through the words "empty" and "laughing". The teacher can encourage students to

write about natural phenomenon and depict places or objects in a similar indirect way.

Depicting everyday life is also a good starting point for writing haiku. It does not need to be a great event, but observing our lives with the eyes of a poet, learners can discover what they have not paid attention to before. The following poems show us how to express the essence of a moment in the form of poetic language.

In the laundromat
she peers into the machine
as the sun goes down.
[Sydell Rosenberg] (Van den Heuvel, 1974, p. 129)

empty room:
one swinging coat hanger
measures the silence
[Jack Cain] (Von den Heuvel, p. 11)

an empty passenger train
stands on a siding
frost on all its windows
[Van den Heuvel] (Van den Heuvel, p. 168)

For a specific classroom activity, the students can be asked to select a familiar place which they often visit. The instructor can suggest example situations: in an English classroom, in a laboratory for a science class, in a corridor of the library, at the subway station, in the supermarket, and other everyday locations. Then, the teacher can ask them if there is any evocative memory associated with any of those places and encourage them to write about their feelings at that time.

In addition, giving the students a homework assignment to practice looking around themselves can also be an effective preparation for haiku writing. For instance, the exercise which is reported in Rossiter (1998) can be applicable to haiku writing classrooms. The students are to imagine themselves as being "the first exchange students from the University of Mars to study at the University of Tokyo" and "they should write a postcard home giving their impressions" about what "they observed

in their everyday life in Tokyo" (p. 64). The practice of observing their everyday lives from an alienated point of view may help them create an idea for writing haiku since they may find new and surprising meaning in the everyday environment which they usually do not pay attention to. Moreover, they can be attentive to the second language itself because they have to express their observation in the proper linguistic forms of the target language.

The Fourth Stage: Group Activity

Once all the students have written their haiku, they can compare and share their works with other learners in small groups. Both Carter and Long (1991) and Kramsch (1993) suggest that the students can read their haiku aloud to each other within their group. Carter and Long comment that "reading aloud can be a relief, it can heighten the impact of a line or phrase, it can effectively dramatise key points in the action and it can reveal humour which may not otherwise be noted in the printed word" (p. 84). During this reading, students can confirm whether the flow of the language in their haiku is natural or if it has to be changed. In a variation on this, Kramsch suggests making each student who is in the listening role write down something "he or she particularly liked about the poem" or suggest the points "he or she would have said differently" (p. 171). Feedback from friends will thus give learners the recognition of the importance of audience.

In a similar way, the students can exchange their haiku and talk about what they think the theme of the haiku is. The other students try to catch the state of mind of the student author at the moment portrayed in the haiku. If the interpretation of the readers matches with the idea of the author and their communication goes well, the haiku can be assumed to be expressed appropriately. If the listeners cannot imagine what idea or which situation is presented in the haiku, the student author needs to revise his or her work.

Such peer-review benefits not only writers but also readers. Being a critical reader of the work of friends will help learners be "more critical readers and revisers of their own writing" (Rollinson, 2005, p. 24). Similarly, reading others' works will give students the chance of "paying attention to the ways words work

and the ways writers create" (Apol, 2002, p. 90). Earlier in this paper, drawing students' attention to the linguistic forms of the target language by suggesting a model haiku before beginning to write was recommended; reading the haiku of peers will provide similar benefits.

Moreover, peer-review enhances learners' linguistic ability in many fields of language learning because it "spans all four skill areas, i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and helps learners to develop communicative competence by addressing sociolinguistic, linguistic, strategic, and discourse aspects of communication" (Hansen & Liu, 2005, p. 38). Thus, if the student author's friends cannot understand his or her haiku, he or she should explain its meaning in the target language, a process which will enhance the learners' communicative competence.

Final Stage: Assessment

In the assessment of second language haiku, both accuracy in the use of linguistic conventions and fluency of creative expression need to be considered. Thus, in addition to assessing haiku according to organizational and linguistic criteria, it is also necessary to evaluate them in terms of "personal voice" and creativity. The evaluation sheet suggested by Iida (2008) for use in haiku writing classes makes a good starting point for assessment. It is divided into five categories: personal voice, audience awareness, organization, haiku conventions, and L2 linguistic conventions (p. 178). In Iida's scheme, personal voice is weighted most heavily as his approach is strongly based on expressive writing pedagogy. Thus, the categories which Iida suggests are also applicable to the approach taken in this paper, but the rating scales should perhaps be weighted differently in order to reflect a greater emphasis on linguistic form and a reduced stress on haiku conventions. Personal voice, organization, and L2 linguistic conventions should probably be treated equally in rating scales because both meaning and linguistic form, as I argued earlier, need to be treated as equally important.

A Pilot Class

While writing this paper, I conducted a pilot class to practice

writing in a second language. The participants were 23 students who use Japanese as their first language and two students whose first language is Chinese. All of them were first-year students enrolled at the University of Tokyo. Because of the pressure of time, we proceeded only as far as the third stage, and there was no opportunity to practice the group activity or peer-review.

Ten students wrote their haiku during class time; twelve students could not complete their haiku in the classroom, so they submitted their work later; and three students did not complete the task. Many of these students had experienced reading haiku written in Japanese before, but they were not familiar with writing haiku in a second language. Many of them said it was interesting and one student commented that "I found writing haiku in English is more fun than I have thought". The students' haiku are attached as an appendix.

Conclusion

In current English language curricula in Japan, university students do not have much opportunity to practice their second language; the haiku writing course discussed above is a suggestion for written practice of English using the language of literature. Being only three lines long, haiku is easy for students to write in a second language. Literary language makes it possible for learners both to express their thoughts and emotions freely and to be attentive to linguistic form. The second language haiku writing process begins by imitating previously published haiku or by writing on given topics; through practice, students can find effective ways to express their thoughts and feelings in appropriate form in the second language.

Although the haiku written by students are valued, haiku writing classrooms do not focus on the final product only; the process of responding to haiku is equally significant. In the group activities, learners can compare their works with those of their friends, which may have a similar theme but a different point of view or other types of expression. This process of peer-review benefits the students: student authors develop their speaking skills by explaining their haiku in the second language, while students in the reader/listener role can explore the different ways in which the writers attempted to convey meaning

effectively.

Although keeping the classical haiku conventions need not be strictly enforced for writing haiku in a second language, one significant legacy of the classical tradition is the way in which it uses words referring directly or indirectly to the seasons to help express the extraordinary feelings of a specific moment, feelings which arise as a result of observing nature or everyday life around us. On account of these characteristics, haiku is written not only in Japan where it was originally created, but also in many other countries in many languages. This implies the potential of haiku as a form of poetry which can work even without the strict application of conventional rules. Given all these qualities, writing haiku in a second language can contribute to language learning by helping learners discover appropriate linguistic forms while developing a way of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

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Appendix

In a pilot class, the five haiku which were mentioned in this paper (by Basho Matsuo, Eric W. Amann, Jack Cain, Sydell Rosenberg, and Cor van den Heuvel) were used as models. The participants were first-year students of the University of Tokyo.

the silent wind . . .
birds are flying in the sky.
the sea in the morning.

lively voices
hope and a little apprehension:
the eve of a school festival

learning philosophy . . .
looks like space
broad and unseen place

In my room
I'd fallen asleep
with empty mind

empty room
and no money, but
I have a dream

get out into night
divine beautiful world
waiting for me . . .

always forget going round
so stepping on
gingko nuts . . .

After raining
there is a spider web
shining with drop of rain

one rainy day
I feel only wet air
in my warm room

a summer day
a ball flying over
in the blue sky.

Until last autumn
anything usual used to be
beautiful in autumn

A cold autumnal wind blowing
along the row of trees
I am alone . . .

In this year
temperature is falling suddenly
maybe there is no autumn

Greeting each other

in a cold October night Happy Halloween

At the top of a mountain
rocks covered with orange snow
as the sun rises.

a child in the snow
how did he get here?
one silent night

White breath
  appears and disappears
  on a winter's night

Victoria Harbor
Shining light standing behind the sea
in front of him and me.