

## Reading beyond “Translation”

～ How to Read English Texts Creatively to Communicate with the Author ～

「ただ訳す」のではない：書き手との創造的なコミュニケーションのために

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### 1. Introduction

#### (1) Brain Storming

How to translate the following into Japanese?  
“Save yourself”

##### a. Coach Situation

The players are practicing hard at the end of the day. They have an important game tomorrow.  
Worrying about their overwork, the coach yells.  
“Save yourself!”

##### b. Pinocchio Situation

The angry whale is trying to attack Geppetto and Pinocchio in the sea; Geppetto is drowning and Pinocchio is trying to help him.

Pinocchio: Father!

Geppetto: Save yourself!

#### (2) Bad practice

English sentence == [word-by-word replacement and reordering] ==> Japanese sentence

#### (3) Creative activity

English sentence == [ [A] ] ==> **understand** what the writer/speaker intends to convey

#### (4) Understanding what the writer/speaker intends to convey == [ [B] ] ==> Japanese sentence

#### (5) **Class Work 1: What do we need in [A] in (3)?**

a.

b.

c.

d.

#### (6) Today's Goals

a. to understand that bad habit (2) does not work

b. to understand [B] in (4) is easy and fun (and creative activity)

c. to understand [A] in (3) is most important: it's fun since it is a creative activity to communicate with the writer/speaker

## 2. Small Grammatical Items Matter (「てにをは」と端理論 (Edge Theory) )

### (7) Class Work 2: Reconstruction Game – Worm-Eaten Sentences

Fill in \_\_\_\_\_ with てにをは and [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] with verbal ending to complete the sentence.

(How many patterns can you think of?)

アリス \_\_\_\_\_ 森 \_\_\_\_\_ 狼 \_\_\_\_\_ 食べ[ \_\_\_\_\_ ]

(8) Fill in \_\_\_\_\_ with grammatical words/morphemes to complete the sentence.

(How many patterns can you think of?)

Alice \_\_\_\_\_ eat \_\_\_\_\_ the wolf \_\_\_\_\_ the forest.

(9) Grammatical (function) words are often more important than content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.).

**Bad Practice:** focusing on only content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc), and ignoring small grammatical items and just guessing what the sentence may mean.

**Creative activity:** focusing on small grammatical items and trying to communicate with the author.

### (10) Class Work 3: Focus on Edge

Fill in the gap and complete the modifying clause [ \_\_\_\_\_ ].

- |    |                         |  |
|----|-------------------------|--|
| a. | これは [太郎が食べ _____ ] ピザです | This is <u>the pizza</u> [ _____ John ate]     |
| b. | これは [最初に来 _____ ] 男の子です | This is <u>the boy</u> [ _____ came first]     |
| c. | ここは [花子が勉強 _____ ] 部屋です | This is <u>the room</u> [ _____ Mary studies]  |
| d. | これが [私が遅れ _____ ] 理由です  | This is <u>the reason</u> [ _____ I came late] |

(11) There are several verbal conjugation forms in Japanese: e.g., 食べ、食べる、食べて、食べる、食べます、食べた、食べました、食べれば、食べたら、etc. But only two specific forms are possible at the \_\_\_\_\_ **edge** of a modifying clause: 食べる and 食べた

(12) There are several relative pronouns in English: *which, who, whose, where, when, why, that* etc. But only specific forms are possible at the \_\_\_\_\_ **edge** of a modifying clause.

(13) The edge of the chunk [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] indicates that the chunk is the modifying clause: the form of the edge is very important.

Furthermore,

### (Class Work 4

Is the school 「学校」 the destination or the departure point?

- John came [ \_\_\_\_\_ the school]
- 太郎は [学校 \_\_\_\_\_ ] やって来た

The \_\_\_\_\_ edge of a phrase determines the nature of the phrase in \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ edge of a phrase determines the nature of the phrase in \_\_\_\_\_.

(14) The right edge of a sentence determines the nature of the sentence in Japanese.

- 太郎は [花子が来たと] 思っている。 (\*[花子が来たか] 思っている)
- 太郎は [花子が来たか] 尋ねた。 (\*[花子が来たと] 尋ねた)

- (15) The left edge of a sentence determines the nature of the sentence in English.
- a. John believes [**that** Mary came] (\* ... believes [**if** Mary came])
  - b. John asked [**if** Mary came] (\* ... asked [**that** Mary came])

**Bad Practice:** Just try to translate the English words of a sentence from left to right, not try to find a chunk and focus on the edge.

- (16) **Tips for a creative reader (i)**  
Mind grammatical items and focus on the edge of chunks (left-edge for English; right-edge for Japanese).

**3. A Secret Life of Dummy *Do* (ダミーDo の秘密): It's there but sometimes invisible**

(17) Student question

Where is this *do* coming from?

- (18) a. I do not drink milk.  
b. Do you drink milk?  
Cf. They are not studying French.  
Are they studying French?  
He can speak Spanish.  
Will they speak Spanish?
- (19) a. *be*-verbs or auxiliary verbs (*can, will, may, would, etc.*) are always there after the subject.  
b. Yes/no question formation: move *be*-verb/auxiliary verb to the front.  
c. Dummy *do* is a special type of \_\_\_\_\_ verb (i.e., ninja/spy type)  
It hides itself **only when there is a main verb right next to it.**
- (20) a. I will not drink milk.  
b. I do not drink milk.  
c. Will you \_\_\_ drink milk?  
d. Do you \_\_\_ drink milk?
- (21) When dummy *do* and the main verb are next to each other, *do* hides itself behind the verb.  
a. I will drink milk.  
b. I do drink milk. → I \_\_\_ drink milk. [*do* hides behind *drink* → *drink*]
- (22) Dummy *do* appears in (20) but it is not because the sentence is negation or the sentence is a yes/no question. Rather, it is because dummy *do* is not next to the main verb to hide itself behind.
- (23) a. They did not come to the party.  
b. Did they \_\_\_ come to the party?  
c. They did come to the party. → They \_\_\_ came to the party. [*did* hides behind *come* → *came*]
- (24) a. Mary does not like natto.  
b. Does Mary \_\_\_ like natto?  
c. Mary does like natto. → Mary \_\_\_ likes natto. [*does* hides behind *like* → *likes*]

(25) **Tips for a creative reader (ii)**

Don't worry too much about dummy *do*. It is exactly the same as other auxiliary verbs except that it hides itself behind the host main verb only when it is right next to the verb.  
(It has nothing to do with the meaning of the sentence (negation or question))

4. **Ellipsis and Pro-Forms (省略と代用表現) : 本当に「彼」でいいの?**(26) **Class Work 5**

How to translate the following into natural Japanese?

a. I love my father. He always encourages me.

b. A: "We have three boys here; John, Tom, and Mike. John washed John's bike, Tom washed Tom's bike, and Mike washed Mike's bike.

B: I see. Every boy washed his bike.

(27) The write/speaker uses ellipsis or pro-forms **because it would help** the reader/listener understand the text more effectively (specifically, avoiding unnecessary redundancy).

Note, however:

(28) What can be elided and what can be pro-forms are grammatically different between Japanese and English.

(29) VP-ellipsis is possible in English but not in Japanese. (VP = verb phrase)

a. "Will Sam come to the party?" "Yes, he will [~~VP come to the party~~]"

b. 「サムはパーティに来ますか?」 \* 「はい、サムは [~~VP パーティに来~~] ます。

(30) Subject/Object can be null in Japanese but not in English.

a. 「西川先生は、そのビールをお飲みになりますか?」

「はい、~~[西川先生は]~~ ~~[そのビールを]~~ お飲みになります」

b. "Will Prof. Nishikawa drink the beer?"

\* "Yes, ~~[he]~~ will drink ~~[it]~~ "

(31) A typical bad practice: they/their/them = 「彼ら」?

A: Have you seen our new computer rooms?

B: Yes, I like them.

(32) A: Will you come to the party?

B: Yes, I will [~~VP come to the party~~]. VP-ellipsis

(33) **Class Work 6**

Now, we know how the dummy *do* in (A) below appears.

(Recall **Section 3** above)

Then, where is the dummy *do* in (B) coming from?

A: Do you play chess?

B: Yes, I **do**.

(34) **Tips for a creative reader (iii)**

The write/speaker uses ellipsis and pro-forms because the referent is clearly recoverable from the context/discourse. Try to find the connection (i.e., the antecedent of ellipsis/pro-forms) first to communicate with the writer/author creatively and accurately.

5. Inference and Knowledge of the World (推論と世界に関する知識)

(35) Class Work 7

a. Who is always nice to whom?

良子は智子を尊敬している。いつも優しくしてくれるからだ。

b. Who recommended whom as the class representative?

良子は智子を尊敬している。だから、クラス代表に推薦した。

(36) In the second clauses in both (35a) and (35b), the subject and the object are invisible.

a. \_\_\_\_\_が、いつも \_\_\_\_\_に優しくしてくれるからだ。

b. だから、\_\_\_\_\_はクラス代表に\_\_\_\_\_を推薦した

(37) To correctly understand what the sentence means (including the recovery of the information on phonologically empty portions), we use our knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, AND our \_\_\_\_\_ and knowledge of the \_\_\_\_\_.

(38) Class Work 8

a. Who is *he* and who is *him* below?

Jeff respects Paul because he is always nice to him.

b. Who recommended whom as the class representative?

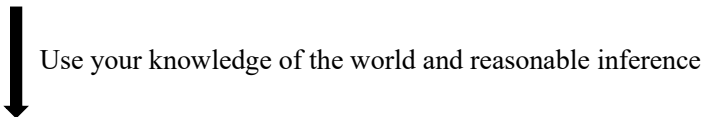
Jeff respects Paul so he recommended him as the class representative.

(39) Bad practice: word by word translation and reordering of words: he = 「彼が」(誰?)  
him = 「彼に・彼を」(誰?)

(40) Positive/creative reading: Use inference and knowledge of the world (as well as grammar and vocabulary)

(41) [節1 Jeff respects Paul] because [節2 he is always nice to him]

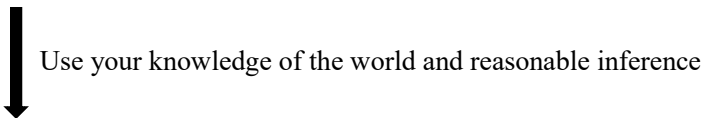
a. Clause 2 is the reason for Clause 1. (← grammar & vocabulary knowledge)  
b. What is the reasonable relation between Clause 2 being the reason and Clause 1 being result?



c. *he* in Clause 2 must be Paul and *him* in Clause 2 must be Jeff.

(42) [節1 Jeff respects Paul] so [節2 he recommended him as the class representative]

a. Clause 1 is the reason for Clause 2. (← grammar & vocabulary knowledge)  
b. What is the reasonable relation between Clause 1 being the reason and Clause 2 being result?



c. *he* in Clause 2 must be Jeff and *him* in Clause 2 must be Paul.

- (43) Note that “inference” here is not an ad hoc guessing.  
Inference is based on proper understanding of words and grammar, and on natural human mental reasoning.
- (44) **Tips for a creative reader (iv)**  
Based on what is written, use your healthy inference and your knowledge of the world to communicate with the author. (This is easy because you are naturally/unconsciously doing this when you read in your native language)
- (45) A: Shall we play video games together after school?  
B: I wish I could. 「私は、私ができたことを望みます」??

- Culture-Bound

(46) **Class Work 9**

What sport is Speaker B talking about?

- a. A:何かスポーツお好きですか?  
B: 毎年、甲子園を見ています
- b. A: Do you like any sport?  
B: I watch the Super Bowl every year.

**6. Conclusion**

- (47) Reading is not just translation. It is a very creative activity to communicate with the author.
- (48) It is fun to actively use your knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and inference and the knowledge of the world to communicate with the author.
- (49) The author may be on the other side of the world. The author may be in the past.
- (50) Reading is the foundation for all the other skills (listening, writing, and speaking).

**References**

北大オープン教材（無料で誰でもアクセス利用可）  
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