I. Introduction: the purpose of this study

The author’s observation of differing performance levels in students enrolled in Toyo Eiwa Women’s University English classes gave rise to speculation concerning the possible causes of such a phenomenon.

First, it is hypothesized that there exists a correlation between a student’s progress in news media-centered English classes and that student’s personal interest in current international events.

More specifically, it is proposed that those who chose World History as a subject for their university entrance examination would therefore perform better in their English classes than those who avoided such a topic in favor of Japanese, Japanese History, or the Japanese essay.

Additionally, it is hypothesized that students enrolled in the Social Sciences Department should perform at higher levels than students enrolled in the Human Sciences Department, because of the characteristics and distinct emphases of these two academic groups.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is three-fold: To investigate and specify what, if any, relationship actually does exist between student performance levels and student interest in world events in those classes which teach news media English; to clarify and define factors which might serve as basic indicators of different levels of student interest in world events; and, to apply such findings at the university level, in order to establish the most effective parameters for future instruction at Toyo Eiwa Women’s University.
II. Method
A. Indentification of English class composition

All Freshman and Sophomore students were assigned to one of three levels according to their English proficiency as manifested by their scores on the Institutional Testing Program's Test of English as a Foreign Language (ITP). These students were required to take the ITP prior to their first class in April. The top 20% were divided evenly into two classes (Level A), the following 40% into four classes (Level B), and the remaining 40% into four classes (Level C). Students at all three class levels met three times a week with three different teachers, and with different skill emphasis in specific class activities. One class centered upon speaking, another emphasized reading, and the last class concentrated on writing. Each class was of 80 minutes' duration.

B. Sample classes and class activities

The sample classes consisted of four Freshman classes\(^1\) (F-1, F-2, F-3 and F-4) and three Sophomore classes\(^2\) (S-1, S-2 and S3). In all but one Freshman class (F-4), learning materials from the news media English were deliberately used in one or two of the three classes per week. Although the average number of students in each class was about thirty, some did not qualify as sample students either because of poor attendance or because of failure to submit the data necessary for this study. The sample classes and the number of qualified students per sample class are listed in Chart 1.

The sample students took the same multiple-choice vocabulary test twice, once in the first class in April, and again in the last class in December. The test was designed so that students would choose correct translations for one hundred Japanese words/phrases whose English counterparts were frequently used in news media English. The test materials were collected and isolated after being used in April, so that the students were unable to either review the test materials or use the test materials to prepare for the December test.

In the meantime, during regular class activities, the students in F-1, F-2, F-4, S-1 and S-2 watched twenty videotaped NHK bilingual news programs\(^3\), and learned ten key words/phrases for each topic every week. The second vocabulary test was given to all students when the nineteenth news
The contents and dates of broadcast of each news program used are as follows:

1. Gubernatorial election in Tokyo (April 8)
2. Mikhail Gorbachev’s visit to Japan (April 16)
3. Final proposals by the Central Council for Education (April 19)
4. Abduction of Waseda University students in Pakistan (April 30)
5. Report on the damage in Kuwait by the Gulf War (May 3)
6. Child care leave bill (May 7)
7. Death of Shintaro Abe (May 15)
8. Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi (May 22)
10. Presidential election in the Russian Federation (June 13)
11. Failed coup attempt in the Soviet Union (August 23)
12. U.N. peacekeeping operations (Sep. 24)
13. Securities and Exchange Law (Sep. 25)
14. U.S. nuclear arms reduction plan (Sep. 28)
15. Typhoon damage in Japan (Oct. 16)
16. Policy speech by Prime Minister Miyazawa (Nov. 8)
17. Supreme Court ruling of the Taiyo Department Store fire case (Nov. 14)
18. Comprehensive relief package for Minamata disease victims (Nov. 26)
19. Return of Clark Air Base to the Philippinn government (Nov. 26)
20. Toshiba engineers freed in Colombia (Dec. 17)

Specifically, ten key words/phrases in Japanese were presented for each news broadcast prior to showing the film, so that the students could listen for their English equivalent as they listened to the English news program. Each news item was shown first in Japanese, so that the students might get a general idea of what the news was about, and then in English. As the students watched the English version, they recorded it for later use. They were given approximately ten minutes to work individually in search of the English equivalents for the Japanese already presented.

According to Nishida (Hasegawa et. al. 1986, 131), the fact that students know the content of news topics does not make any difference in their listening power. Supposing that such knowledge does make a difference in terms of the students’ listening ability and depth of interest (Takeshita 1991, 30-31), the author did not hesitate to spend a few minutes in also showing the
news in Japanese.

The key words/phrases varied in levels of difficulty and in parts of speech. The author deliberately included rather easy words/phrases so as not to discourage the students. For example, in the news about the Toshiba engineers abducted in Colombia, key words/phrases included nouns, such as engineer, abduction, guerrilla, ransom, detention and truce; verbs such as free, found and disarm; and adjectives such as mountainous, anti-government, left wing, revolutionary and armed.

The key words/phrases studied with the NHK news may be classified under the following categories according to the students’ depth of knowledge:

① the majority know the meaning of the word/phrase well both in Japanese and English, such as responsibility and president;
② the majority know the word/phrase in Japanese and English, but tend to make spelling mistakes, such as curriculum, guerrilla and coup d'état;
③ the majority find the word/phrase quite difficult in Japanese, but the meaning becomes clearer in English such as sudden attack (kishu-kogeki) and policy speech (shoshin-hyomei enzetsu);
④ the majority know the word/phrase in Japanese, but the English counterpart does not occur to them, such as abduction, detention, and referendum;
⑤ the majority do not know the meaning of the word/phrase even in Japanese, such as nuclear arsenal, and the difference between notice and instruction.

For words/phrases in the fourth group, the author gave careful explanation from etymological, cross-cultural and peripheral points of view for impressing students with the English version. For words/phrases in the fifth group, pictures, maps and written materials were often provided in introducing new concepts.

The key words/phrases were chosen from the news regardless of the vocabulary test. Although they partially overlapped with the vocabulary test as a coincidence and natural outcome, the author did not manipulate the activities with the intent of gaining better test scores.

In F-1, F-3, S-1, S-2 and S-3, materials from news media English were used in order to supply students with word power as well as the background knowledge of each topic they studied with the materials. The way each class
was conducted slightly or greatly differed from the other classes mainly because of the inconsistency of the instructors, the learning materials, the skill each class emphasized, and the students’ levels of English proficiency manifested in the ITP scores.

The author did not use Japanese for instructional purposes in any of the sample classes, as was the case with all the Freshman and Sophomore English classes at this institution.

Chart 1 also shows which classes worked with the NHK bilingual news with the emphasis on what skill, and which classes worked with what written materials on the news media with the emphasis on what skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>class</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>level</th>
<th>NHK</th>
<th>skill</th>
<th>other materials</th>
<th>skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F-1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>reading</td>
<td><em>World Events '91</em></td>
<td>reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>writing</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>speaking</td>
<td><em>English from the Mass Media</em></td>
<td>writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>TV News from the USA (2)</em></td>
<td>reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>reading</td>
<td><em>TV News from the USA (2)</em></td>
<td>reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>speaking</td>
<td>$\Delta^2$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Formulation of hypotheses and data-gathering methods
The author proposed the following hypotheses:

1. The best-performing class would be F-1 at Level A;
2. F-3, S-2 and S-3 would follow F-1;
3. F-2 and S-1 would follow F-3, S-2 and S-3;
4. The poorest-performing class would be F-4;
5. Students in the Social Sciences Department would perform better than those in the Human Sciences Department;
6. Freshmen who took World History would perform better than those who did not.

Each student's April and December scores on the vocabulary tests were
kept in record. Out of these scores, the following have been calculated:

1. average scores of the April and December tests for each class;
2. increase points for each class;
3. increase points for Freshmen majoring in Social Sciences and in Human Sciences, respectively;
4. increase points for Sophomores majoring in Social Sciences and in Human Sciences, respectively.

The increase points were the bases for the author's judgment on the students' performance and improvement.

Unlike the Sophomores who took English and Japanese essay exclusively for the purpose of examination upon entering the institution, the Freshmen were able to choose what to take, namely, a combination of English and Japanese, of English and World History, or of English, Japanese and Japanese history, etc. Therefore, all the Freshman students who entered the institution through the regular entrance examination system were asked to show what subject(s) they took in order to pass into the university. Out of these data, additional increase points were calculated according to the subject(s) chosen for entrance examination. Further, students were requested to state their reasons for choosing or not choosing the history examinations.

Having watched twenty different news items from the NHK program, students in Classes F-1, F-2, F-3, S-2 and S-3 were requested to choose three topics which they found were most interesting and informative.

III. Results
A. The results of the April and December vocabulary tests

The average scores, the increase points, and the levels of classes in parentheses are listed in Chart 2; the increase points are shown in Chart 3.

In Class F-1 at Level A, in which the NHK bilingual news and World Events '91 were used in the reading class, the average scores for the April and December vocabulary tests were the highest, with good increase points of 1.9. In Class F-2 at Level B, in which only the NHK news was used in the writing class, the result was only fair with increase points of 1.1. In Class F-3 at Level C, in which the NHK news was used in the speaking class
and English from the Mass Media was used in the writing class, the result was the most successful, with the lowest average of 29.3 in April and the best increase points of 2.5. In Class F-4 at Level C, in which no instruction was done using any material from the mass media, the worst results were obtained, with a poorer average score in December than in April. In Class S-1 at Level B, in which only TV News from the USA (2) was used in the reading class, the results were fair, with a good average score in April and increase points of 1.6. In Class S-2 at Level C, in which both NHK news and TV News from the USA (2) were used in the reading class, very good increase points of 2.0 were obtained. In Class S-3 at Level C, in which NHK news was used in the speaking class and an occasional supplement in mass media English was provided in the reading class by another teacher, the result was successful, with a poor average score in April and good increase points of 1.8.

Listed in Chart 4 and Chart 5 are the average increase points of students in each class with different majors, either Human Sciences (H.S.) or Social Sciences (S.S.), with the number of students for each category in parentheses. The difference of majors did not seem to be influential to the students' performances. Chart 5 sums up the Freshmen and Sophomores according

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F-1(A)</th>
<th>F-2(B)</th>
<th>F-3(C)</th>
<th>F-4(C)</th>
<th>S-1(B)</th>
<th>S-2(C)</th>
<th>S-3(C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+5.1</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
<td>+8.1</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>+2.3</td>
<td>+7.1</td>
<td>+6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to their majors. For the best-conditioned and best-performing Classes, F-1, F-3 and S-2, the increase points for those in the H.S. were 2.2, while the points for those in the S.S. were 2.0, as is shown in Chart 6.

2. The correlation of test results with subjects chosen for the entrance examination

Increase points obtained from Freshman scores were further classified into four groups according to the subjects chosen for the entrance examination, as shown in Chart 7 and Chart 8. The first group (W) consists of the scores of students who took World History. The second (WO) consists of the scores of World History oriented students—those who did not actually take either history, but had a preference for World History if they had to take one of them⁵. The third (J) consists of those who took Japanese History. The fourth (JO) consists of the scores of Japanese History oriented students—those who had a preference for Japanese History⁶. The average scores of the first and second groups (W and WO), and of the third and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F-1</th>
<th>F-2</th>
<th>F-3</th>
<th>F-4</th>
<th>S-1</th>
<th>S-2</th>
<th>S-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H.S.</strong></td>
<td>2.3 (12)</td>
<td>0.8 (5)</td>
<td>2.6 (15)</td>
<td>0.5 (18)</td>
<td>1.7 (16)</td>
<td>1.8 (9)</td>
<td>1.9 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S.S.</strong></td>
<td>1.6 (17)</td>
<td>1.2 (24)</td>
<td>2.4 (16)</td>
<td>0.6 (14)</td>
<td>1.0 (3)</td>
<td>1.9 (16)</td>
<td>1.6 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 4

![Chart 4](image)

Chart 5

![Chart 5](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>F &amp; S</th>
<th>F-1, F-3 &amp; S-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H.S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>S.S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>H.S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>S.S.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 (56)</td>
<td>1.5 (71)</td>
<td>1.8 (56)</td>
<td>1.7 (53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fourth groups (J and JO), for each class, are shown in Chart 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F-1</th>
<th>F-2</th>
<th>F-3</th>
<th>F-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>2.1 (8)</td>
<td>2.5 (2)</td>
<td>2.0 (2)</td>
<td>— (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>2.5 (10)</td>
<td>1.0 (8)</td>
<td>2.7 (10)</td>
<td>1.1 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>1.0 (5)</td>
<td>0.3 (6)</td>
<td>3.0 (2)</td>
<td>0.7 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO</td>
<td>1.5 (6)</td>
<td>1.2 (9)</td>
<td>2.4 (17)</td>
<td>0.3 (17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all the classes, W and WO students performed rather well. The tendency is clearest in Chart 9.

Class F-3 was the best-performing class with the highest increase points of 2.5. Unlike Class F-1 and F-2, in which the J and JO students performed rather poorly, the J and JO student in Class F-3 did very well—particularly the J students. The number of students who actually chose either history for the subject in the entrance examination was quite small—two took World History and two took Japanese History—although the number of the WO students was remarkably large.

Class F-1 failed to meet the author’s expectation that this class would obtain the highest increase points. The WO students performed best, followed by the W students, and both J and JO students performed at a com-
paratively unsatisfactory level.

Class F-2 followed the pattern of Class F-1, as far as Chart 9 indicates. The increase points for the W students were far better than for the WO, J and JO students in this class, and the difference in the increase points between the W and J students was the greatest compared with the other three classes.

Class F-4, in which no instruction whatsoever was given using any material from the mass media, naturally performed very poorly, the average score for the December test being worse than the April score, and the increase points failing to reach even 1.0. None of the students were the W students, and there were more JO students here than in any other class. There was the same tendency even in this class, although the level of performance was rather poor, for the WO students to perform better than the J and JO students.

In Class F-1, with increase points of 1.9, there were eight W students and five J students. When requested to give reasons for choosing either type of history, the following reasons were presented. Of the eight W students, four said they wanted to know a lot about the world, two said they merely liked World History, one said she loved to look at the world map, and the other said she hated learning the difficult Chinese characters used for names of people and places in Japanese History. Of the five J students, three said they liked Japanese History better than World History, and two said names of people and places written with Katakana were more difficult to learn than those written in Chinese characters. The reasons of the students who did not take either history included such reasons as insufficient preparation, and dislike of social studies in general.

In Class F-2, with increase points of 1.1, there were two W students whose increase points were very good, and six J students whose increase points were extremely poor. One of the W students said the reason for choosing World History was that she took an interest in learning about the world, and the other said that she thought she had enough preparation in this subject. Of the six J students, one said she chose Japanese History because she took interest more in domestic affairs, and three said they had enough preparation.

In Class F-3, with increase points of 2.5, there were two W students whose
increase points were 2.0, and also two J students whose increase points were 3.0. One of the J students stated that she chose Japanese History because she was interested in domestic issues, and one of the W students said she was more interested in contemporary world issues than in domestic historical facts, but the remaining two did not give specific reasons other than having had sufficient preparation for the examination, and general preference.

In Class F-4, with increase points of 0.5, there were three J students and no W student. One of the J students stated that she chose Japanese History as she was not good at learning names of people and places written in Katakana, and the other two mentioned that they merely preferred Japanese History to World History. Four of the students who did not take either history said they were not good at social studies in general.

The students' preference for foreign news to domestic news was manifested when they were asked to fill out a questionnair in which they chose three of the twenty topics in the NHK news which they found most interesting and informative. The most popular ones are listed below in chronological order:

Abduction of Waseda University students in Pakistan
Report on the damage in Kuwait by the Gulf War
Assassination Rajiv Gandhi
Presidential election in the Russian Federation
Failed coup attempt in the Soviet Union
Typhoon damage in Japan

All the domestic topics, with the exception of the typhoon damage item, such as the gubernatorial election in Tokyo and the policy speech by the prime minister, were not as popular among the students as those mentioned above.

IV. Analyses and Conclusion
A. Class performances

As has already been mentioned, the author judges the performance or the improvement of each student on the basis of increase points. The fact that F-1 at Level A scored highest of all the Freshman and Sophomore classes both in the April and December vocabulary tests signifies that the levels of the classes were definitely influential to the average scores. That
is, there was a certain correlation between the ITP and the author's vocabulary tests. The author had hypothesized that F-1 would produce the best performance with the highest increase points because it was the only class at Level A and because it had a good proportion of news media English in class activities. However, the levels did not appear to influence the progress a class could make when it receives approximately the same amount of learning materials in news media English; the result, as far as the increase points indicate, is that F-3 and S-2 at Level C performed better than F-1 at Level A, and Class S-3 at Level C performed almost as well as F-1.

The author had hypothesized that F-1, F-3 and S-2 would be the best performing groups, that F-2, S-1 and S-3 would be the second best, and that F-4 would be the poorest performing class, according to the amount of learning materials from the news media used in class activities. These hypotheses turned out to be correct, although the order within the top group did not necessarily coincide with the author's expectation, and increase points of F-2 were rather lower than those of the other two. There was naturally a certain correlation between the students' performance and the amount of learning materials in the news media. A teacher could improve students' vocabulary power in the news media English classes if he/she provided the students with proper materials to work with and a sufficient amount of time in which to do the work required.

Although the author cannot submit any scientific data, there was a clear tendency that the students' interest in news media English was promoted by the NHK bilingual news. The students started a "guessing game," when they had watched the news for a few weeks—what the topic for the day would be—and the author felt their excitement as she wrote the key words/phrases in Japanese on the board in prior to showing the film. The tendency was clearest in F-3 and S-2. The author believes that the method she used with the NHK news, with its unpredictable nature and strong visual characteristics caused students to be interested, expectant and motivated—and that this effect would have been smaller if she had simply handed out words/phrases for the students to remember.

The performance of F-2, S-1 and S-3 in the second best group did not
lead the author to determine whether the NHK news or TV News from the USA (2) was more effective in gaining word power in news media English. Because TV News from the USA (2) was both a written and visual material, however, S-2 did receive an equal amount of visual stimuli in class activities, despite the fact that the topics compiled in the textbook were not as fresh as those offered in the NHK news. The fact that S-2 performed better than S-1 proves that the NHK news had an additional effect to that of TV News from the USA (2) in improving students’ vocabulary.

Although the reason for F-4’s poor performance is distinct, the author needs to clarify why F-3 did extremely well: The existence of students who are not fresh from high school should not be ignored. Toyo Eiwa Women’s University is unique in being open to women older than ordinary high school graduates. These students are said to have decided to enter or re-enter college with a clearer purpose to pursue their studies, even though they are not necessarily enthusiastic about learning the English language. There are four such students in F-3, and their increase points were 4, 4, 3 and 3 respectively.

There were two in F-1, and their increase points were 7 and 4. There were none in F-2, and there was one in F-4, but her increase point was 0. Whether a class had these older students, and whether they performed well, did influence the performance of the whole class.

B. Performances according to majors

The author hypothesized that the S.S. students would perform better than the H.S. students because of the intrinsic nature of each major. In fact, the H.S. seemed to have performed slightly better than the other, as Chart 6 shows most distinctly. It was impossible, however, to find any evidence convincing enough to conclude that students in either department were better in learning English in news media-related classes at the Freshman and Sophomore English levels.

The author again hypothesizes that there will be clearer divergence in performance levels as the students divert to more classes directly related to their majors in their junior and senior years. During the first two years in this institution, the students may not be involved deeply enough with factors strong enough to distinguish students in different majors. At this
stage, they are merely S.S.-oriented and H.S.-oriented students. The students' performances shall be kept on record in the future.

C. Freshman performances according to preference for histories

The number of students in each class who entered the institution through the regular examination system shows that such students generally did better in the ITP than those who were admitted in other ways. Specifically, there were 19 such students in F-1 at Level A, 14 in F-2 at Level B, 5 in F-3, and 8 in F-4 at Level C. This means that there was a certain correlation between the ITP score and the preparation students made for the examination. However, the levels did not correlate with the amount of improvement in vocabulary, as was already stated.

In F-1, the WO students did best followed by the W students, and in F-2, conversely, the W students did best followed by the WO students. In F-3, the contribution by the W and WO students was remarkable, although that might have been outshone by even better performance of the J and JO students. In F-4, on the contrary, where overall performance was extremely poor, the poorest-performing JO students outnumbered all other categories, without even a single W student included in their group.

F-3, the best performing class, showed a different pattern. The J students did best, followed by the WO and then JO students. Of the four older students mentioned above, two were JO and the other two were WO, which must have contributed to the good performances by the WO and JO students. Taking into account the special contribution by these four students, however, does not change the fact that the J students did remarkably well. Because the numbers of W, WO, J and O students were not consistent in any class, the reliability of the increase points of each group might not in fact be so high. However, there was no justifiable way other than obtaining the average increase points of each group for comparison among the groups. In summary, the W and/or WO students tend to perform better than the J and JO students, and the performance of a class turns out to be very good when the J and JO students perform as well as the W and/or WO students.

The reason for the tendency of W and/or WO students to perform so much better is not clear. Some of the W students, however, clearly stated that they were interested in learning about the world on a global basis. The
author speculates, therefore, that their interest in, or preference for, world events broadcast in the media, reflected by their choice of studying World History in their high school days, led to their better performances on the vocabulary test.

Of the twenty NHK bilingual news items, students' interest centered on foreign news rather than on domestic news. There was also a certain tendency among them to be attracted by topics familiar to them. The abduction of the Waseda University students, for example, was much more popular than that of the Toshiba engineers, and the typhoon in the fall of 1991 was something they literally experienced. The author supposes that the students' interest was broadened or extended on a global basis, for even J and JO students who had initially suggested their indifference or dislike concerning the world events in various ways in April, later thought some of the world news quite interesting and informative.

The words/phrases learned in the news could be used by the students in various ways according to the skill emphasized in each class—those in a speaking class could orally summarize the news content, those in a writing class could perform the same activity in a more sophisticated way, and those in a reading class could go on to reading the same news in a newspaper article and deepen their understanding of the event. Above all, the listening power was most improved with the exposure to the TV news program.

As was clarified by the performance of F-4, the word power in news media English could easily be decreased without sufficient training at the college level, and without good motivation on the part of the students. In the Freshman and Sophomore years, the levels of proficiency in English, and the students' particular majors, should not be taken as the only determinants of teachers' expectations for the students' future improvement. That is, a teacher should not heighten or lower his/her expectations, and should not control the amount of effort put into a class, merely according to the level of the class, the academic department, the students' depth of interest so far, or even the sex of the students. This study has merely identified certain different factors, such as the news media and the topics used in class, which can influence the students' willingness and interest in studying English through the use of the news media.
As far as Toyo Eiwa Women’s University is concerned, most of the students are very likely to prefer practical English, as may be the case with many college students in Japan, living in this information age as would-be cosmopolitans. The TV has been proven to be their most favored media (Torikai et. al. 1991, 95) and therefore might be considered one of the best tools available for teaching practical English, not only because of the students’ preference for it but also because of its unique ability to be both contemporary and simultaneous. The author considers bilingual TV programs to be a suitable method of initiating students who have not been exposed to media English, and who therefore have been wondering where to start. The theory and methodology of teaching mass media English is still in the working stage; ultimate methodology has yet to be established. Teachers interested in this approach are experimenting with various applications according to their own beliefs, their own resources, the characteristics of their students, etc.

The author is aware that the students’ performances in this study have been judged by their vocabulary exclusively, and therefore could have proven to be different by using a different procedure. The author, however, believes that the vocabulary is one of the bases for students’ future improvement. It is acknowledged that this type of classroom activity is only one of the many good methods currently used in college classrooms. This study is therefore presented in the hope of adding some variety to the present means of instruction in the English language with a new focus on the news media, and with the establishment of a new theory of teaching practical English by using current topics of immediate interest to our students.

Notes
1) Yumiko Mikuni, a member of JACES and part-time lecturer at Toyo Eiwa Women’s University, was responsible for lessons with the NHK news in F-2. She was also responsible for lessons using English from the Mass Media for F-3, while the author instructed the same class with the NHK bilingual news.
2) Kumiko Torikai, a member of JACES and assistant professor at Toyo Eiwa Women’s University, was responsible for the S-3 reading class in which she partially dealt with topics in the mass media.
3) All the news programs were recorded on weekdays at seven o’clock in the evening, and shown in class at the earliest possible opportunity.
4) As the author took interest in how much progress could be made by the students, she avoided judging the performance of each class by using the raw scores to assess the difference in students' proficiency in English. The scores were processed into increase points for each student according to the differences (d) in the two scores obtained by subtracting the April score from the December score, as listed below. For example, if Student A scored 35 in April and 50 in December, her increase points are 4, and her difference between the two scores is 15. Then, the average increase points for each class were calculated to show the total performances of classes.

\[
\begin{align*}
    d \leq 0 & \Rightarrow 0 \text{ point} \\
    1 \leq d \leq 4 & \Rightarrow 1 \text{ point} \\
    5 \leq d \leq 8 & \Rightarrow 2 \text{ points} \\
    9 \leq d \leq 12 & \Rightarrow 3 \text{ points} \\
    13 \leq d \leq 16 & \Rightarrow 4 \text{ points} \\
    17 \leq d \leq 20 & \Rightarrow 5 \text{ points} \\
    21 \leq d \leq 24 & \Rightarrow 6 \text{ points} \\
    d \geq 25 & \Rightarrow 7 \text{ points}
\end{align*}
\]

5) Included among WO and JO students are those who entered the institution without going through the regular examination system. For example, some had been admitted with the recommendation by Toyo Eiwa Senior High School, or by other accredited senior high schools. These people were asked to state what history they would have taken, had they been required to.

6) The numbers of students per class for the four groups may not always coincide with the total number of students in each class. There were some who failed to answer which group they belonged to.

7) The composition of Class F-4 differs from that of the other three, for no student in this class took World History.

8) As the students were allowed to give more than one reason, the number of answers may not coincide with the total number of the students who responded.

References


