

EXPECTATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

— GREETINGS —

The Language Laboratory Association of Japan has reached its twentieth year, being inaugurated in July 1961. We are going to commemorate the anniversary by an international conference instead of the regular annual convention. The National Association of Learning Laboratory Directors in the United States of America has taken interest in our project and agreed to help us as a joint sponsor. It is of great significance to be able to have outstanding specialists from various parts of the world come together, exchange experiences, and discuss problems in foreign language education.

Here in Japan, on January 15th, which is a national holiday called 'Adults' Day', young people who have reached or will reach the age of twenty during the course of the year celebrate their coming-of-age. I think that it is also appropriate for a twenty-year old academic association such as ours to celebrate its coming-of-age by an event of epoch-making importance. This is a good opportunity for our association to look back upon the past, consider the merits and demerits of its activities, and try to find a way, if possible, for international cooperation. For twenty years we have acted on our belief that the proper use of electronic and other educational apparatuses go a long way to bringing up a new generation in such a way as to enable them to use a foreign language as a means of international communication.

In these days, foreign language education is becoming more and more indispensable to each member of the nation. However, only three 50-minute periods a week in lower secondary school and only five 50-minute periods at most in upper secondary are allotted in the schedule. In this situation the only way to enable learners to acquire a good command of a foreign language is, on one hand, to review the traditional methods and materials in a new light, and, on the other, to make use of modern inventions that can make the learning easier and more enjoyable.

It is a hopeful sign that the general standard of achievement in English of Japanese students is gradually rising. Visits to schools both urban and rural will testify to this. This change that has become noticeable in the past decade or so may well be attributed - at least in part - to using native speakers' taped models. Everybody nowadays is aware how essential it is to hear, imitate, and get used to the pronunciation of native speakers from the very beginning.

In view of these circumstances the Japanese Government has been appropriating huge funds yearly since 1979 in order to fully equip schools with educational media. Improvement of foreign language education in this country is now a national demand. It should be realized that the responsibility placed before our association is very heavy indeed.

Hitherto, our association tended to be regarded as something meant chiefly for colleges and universities rather than for secondary schools.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, it is in the beginning stage of foreign language learning that educational media should be most actively used. In the coming conference we are particularly looking forward to having a large number of secondary school teachers of English as participants. In drawing up the program special care has been taken to include as many problems as possible related to the teaching of English in secondary schools.

On behalf of the FLEAT Conference I would like to express the wish that the conference prove rewarding and successful for all our participants.

TAKASHI KURODA
President of L.L.A &
President of FLEAT Conference

— GREETINGS —

I am greatly honored to convey, on behalf of the FLEAT Committee members, our heartiest welcome to all of you who will join us in the first international conference on Foreign Language Education and Technology. Let me also take this opportunity to explain the *raison d'être* of this conference to those who may not be well acquainted with its stated purpose. The LLA (Language Laboratory Association of Japan) was formed some twenty years ago for the purpose of promoting foreign language education in Japan. Since that time, LLA has taken the lead in seeing to it that our students are provided with the best available language laboratory equipment and techniques to aid them in their difficult task of mastering foreign languages. Japan is, of course, not the only country where continuing research is being done in those areas. We, therefore, have long felt the need to develop some means by which all of us, who are, throughout the world, involved in language laboratory technology, might establish a dialogue for sharing mutually beneficial information. This conference, it is hoped, is a step toward the realization of that goal. Thus, the conference, to be held under the joint sponsorship of LLA and NALLD (National Association of Learning Laboratory Directors, U.S.A.) will provide a forum for discussing matters relating to all phases of foreign/second language education pertaining to the present use and future promise of technology. Of no less importance, this conference will provide each of you with a chance to meet colleagues from other countries who have the same interests and concerns, but may well have refreshingly different perspectives as to how to solve the problems encountered in our common field of endeavor.

A quick look at the history of English education in Japan will convince us that the use of technology in the field of education has been an epoch-making event in our country. From the Meiji Restoration until about thirty years ago, the major goals of foreign language teaching in schools, from junior high school to college level, had remained essentially the same, that is, to teach English as a means by which to introduce Western cultures and ways of thinking into Japan. Accordingly, too

much emphasis had been placed, during that period, upon the teaching of English grammar and translation of English into Japanese. About thirty years ago, however, a change started in our methods of teaching a foreign language, although the majority of teachers of English still continued to practise the traditional method of teaching English. The change was to give new attention to the teaching of the four basic skills of language: speaking, understanding, reading and writing with greater emphasis on the first two. Therefore, the advent of the language laboratory system gave tremendous encouragement to Japanese teachers of English.

Finally, a brief mention must be made of some highlights of our program. First, there will be an intensive discussion on international cooperation for foreign/second language education and technology, scheduled for August 18 and 21. We are expecting that participants in these discussions would be able to come up with some concrete ideas as to possible ways and means to promote such cooperation. Second, the Video Festival on August 19 and 20, could well prove to be stimulating to those who are involved in making audio-visual aides. Third, at various meetings on August 20, we are expecting that many papers of value would be presented, which will stimulate lively discussion. Lastly, the special presentations and the symposium would explore possibilities for the enhancement and improvement of language laboratory methods, and define our future role in foreign/second language education.

See you at the conference in August 1981.

Sutesaburo Kohmoto
Chairman of the First International
Conference on Foreign Language
Education and Technology

GREETINGS

The National Association of Learning Lab Directors (NALLD) wishes to congratulate The Language Laboratory Association of Japan on its twentieth anniversary and to thank everyone who has invited us to Japan to co-sponsor this first international conference.

Our organization is younger (1965) and smaller (about 650 members) but has members in over 21 different countries. While originally limited to language laboratories, we have taken advantage of recent electronic developments and innovations to expand our services to meet the many and varied needs of our clients. We have and do encourage the application of scientific principles, both technical and psychological, to the task of teaching/learning.

Recently the President of the United States established the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (Perkins Report) and shortly thereafter received their report. This report encouraged international education and its natural ally, language study.

Hence this is an appropriate time — when America's attention is being called to the study of foreign language and Japan's national demand has never been greater — for us to meet for the purpose of reviewing, evaluating and planning how foreign language instruction can be improved and the role that educational technology can play.

Let us join our efforts, dear colleagues, so that we may have wisdom through knowledge and strength through wisdom.

Joseph H. Sheehan, President
National Association of
Learning Laboratory Directors
University of Houston

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