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as she pointed out, when this occurs, language teachers oftentimes focus on superficial trait differences, such as whether or not chopsticks are used, rather than work towards a comprehensive understanding of the target culture. Culture can best be understood in its totality.

She further noted the difficulty of learning a new culture due to one's native culture. Though no culture is any better than another (they are merely *different*), individuals believe their own to be superior. This attitude of ethnocentrism prevails in all societies, due to the overbearing influence of the native culture. Awareness of one's ethnocentrism is the first step in learning a new language and culture, and transcending this barrier is the second.

In the classroom, Dr. Eagle suggests teachers work on students' attitudes. Learning to be psychologically prepared and to be open-minded is of great importance. Learning how to observe one's own culture can also be helpful. As for presenting American culture, since the topic is so broad, teachers need to focus on the rich diversity in areas such as music, religion, ethnic groups, etc. Dr. Eagle recommended that in teaching culture, one should realize how incredibly complex the topic is and become more aware of the processes involved.

Faulkner discussed the learning of languages through NLP techniques (see recent issues of *The Language Teacher*), and both presenters gave participants much to consider.

Reported by Robert Bini
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OMIYA

ADVENTURES IN LISTENING

By Mike Thompson

Listening practice is seldom a concern in junior and senior high school English classes in Japan. Japanese learners of English rank next-to-last in listening ability among learners in 11 countries. What can be done about it? Mike Thompson, speaker for October and Longman's ELT consultant for Japan, recommended stories as a lively alternative to playing dull dialogue tapes or contrived plane departure announcements.

Thompson pointed out that storytelling is an authentic, cross-cultural activity. Japanese students like cowboy, adventure, ghost or mystery stories. He gave us many excellent examples of how to exploit such stories in the classroom. The students can listen to part of a

tape and make predictions about what will happen next. Listening for specific information or main ideas are other possible tasks. Stories supply practice listening to natural dialogues and narration. Outside the classroom, we listen to things that have "interest" or "information" value, and stories match these criteria.

Beginning and intermediate students enjoy graded readers taped or read by the teacher. Taped novels or short stories are good for advanced classes. You can use a specially prepared radio drama during a whole class, or play one episode per lesson. You can also tell stories you know. You may be surprised when your students come up with some stories of their own!

Reported by Marian Pierce

YOKOHAMA

ERROR CORRECTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

By Steve Mierzejewski, Language Institute
of Japan (LIOJ)

At the October meeting of the Yokohama chapter, Steve Mierzejewski described where the field of error correction is today and suggested how teachers can use current theory in their classrooms.

Mierzejewski began by tracing the history of error correction from Audio-Lingual Methodology to the Natural Approach. The field has swung from complete error elimination to no error correction at all. Based on recent studies in applied linguistics and memory research, Mierzejewski sees a stronger role for error correction in the language classroom. He believes that one of the important roles of language teachers is to make learners aware of their errors and to help them remember corrections. He cited research that suggests if the learner can solve his own error and that if the error has some social significance, the possibility of the error being repeated is greatly reduced.

Mierzejewski concluded by presenting some error correction techniques which have been successful in his classes. In a structured activity, the teacher can signal an error by holding up a Cuisenaire rod. Different colored rods can signal different kinds of errors: red - verb; yellow - preposition; green - idiom, etc. During a free activity, a tape recording of student conversations can be made and errors can be treated by the teacher in the next class.

Reported by Jack King
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