

Developing Students' Feminist Literacy

—Through An EFL Speech Communication Class in Japan—

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1 INTRODUCTION

Integrating feminist studies into an EFL speech communication class in a Japanese university can remarkably raise students' awareness about feminist theory and gender discrimination. By writing a coherent speech on gender issues and orally presenting, discussing and debating these issues with classmates, students can sharpen their feminist literacy, and their ability to respond and become sensitive to gender, sexual, class and power-based conflicts in the world.

Building upon the premise that Japan is transforming herself from a traditional male-dominated society into a more egalitarian society in the direction of global multiculturalism, and that school education should be charted as a principal actor in the playing of egalitarian gender roles, this empirical study reflects on the merits of the simultaneous acquisition of feminist literacy and speech communication skills for the purpose of self-representation in English at the tertiary level.

As the world is becoming a more integrated and interdependent mosaic in the direction of multiculturalism developing feminist literacy with egalitarian gender relations and equity is an imperative endeavor, especially for language/culture educators and students in Japan. Also, as the world is enacting this transformation, hurtling into an egalitarian global community, Japanese education is fully responsible for transforming women's subordinate condition into a more egalitarian condition.

A study carried out after this program had been taught for a semester at the tertiary level revealed that a majority of the students exposed to this program felt that they had developed feminist literacy and problem-solving skills concerning potential gender discrimination as well as greater freedom and the joy of self-representation in the target language. In theory this suggests that they had developed a global perspective and that feminist studies are multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary subjects which relate all humanity to each other on

this earth regardless of nationality, sex and religion. Consequently we found out that transcultural and transnational people are more competent to transcend the limits of traditional gender roles and relations.

2 FEMINIST THEORY

A feminist is a person who is sensitive to the control and domination by men over women and who fights gender, sexual, racial and power-based discrimination in order to create an egalitarian society. To foster feminist literacy through education, an awareness of the concepts of feminist theory is vital. Feminist theory should be understood as follows: Feminist theory is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary discipline which covers history, sociology, education, anthropology, ecology, political science, economics, health, medical science and biology. It also advocates the guarantee of women's human rights and equal opportunities in social life, overcoming problems of sexual, racial, class, and power-based conflicts.

The history of women is the history of discrimination and subordination to patriarchy. As Stromquist (1996) states, feminist theory is sensitive to the control by men of the women's body and the normalization of the sexual division of labor through diffused patriarchal ideologies. It also focuses on the relations of domination and control by men over women in many layers of the social context. According to feminist theory, the role of superstructure (which McCarthy, 1988, classifies into three elements: ideology, culture, and consciousness) is just as important as material conditions, not merely their byproduct (Stromquist, 1996). Thus, feminist theory has always been committed to corrective work, i.e., altering individual perceptions and actions and modifying institutions (Weskott, 1979; Mies, 1983).

In the history of human society for several centuries, myriad forms of disempowerment, subordination to men and infringement of human rights have been experienced by women in everyday life. We have to transform women's subordinate condition in our homes, working places, communities and society. This is a point of departure for a real transformation of gender consciousness and respect for diversity. To achieve the mission of transformation, diversity and equity, education has the initial and also ultimate key to open the window for women's challenges and explorations.

Therefore, as Stromquist (1996) has emphasized, teachers and students have been identified as the main actors in the process of transforming the social relations of gender. Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow

in creating an egalitarian society, education still has a significant mission to transform the fixed and biased notion of gender relations and gender roles into an egalitarian one.

3 FEMINIST LITERACY, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Feminist literacy, development and empowerment are closely linked to each other. This link should be highlighted in the context of human rights and interactions of women's various roles with those of men in patriarchy. Gender issues can be seen as central to several socioeconomic indicators such as UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM). HDI indicates human's development in the area of life expectancy, education and income. GDI indicates women's development in life expectancy, education and income. GEM indicates women's participation in the process of political, economic and social decision-making.

Rowlands (1997) defines human development as "a complex process involving the social, economic, political and cultural betterment of individuals and of society." Empowerment, in this context, means to involve women in participating in the process of political, economic and social decision-making. It must also include the processes that lead women to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.

Practically speaking, women should be empowered in the forms of "power over", "power to", "power with" and "power from within." "Power over" is controlling power to weaken the process of victimization and manipulation. "Power to" is generative and productive power which creates new possibilities and actions without domination. "Power with" is a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together. "Power from within" is the spiritual strength for acceptance and self-respect to respect for and acceptance of others as equals (Rowlands : 1997). "Power with" here also implies organized protest and activities.

The point is that development and empowerment for women should not be implemented as "Westernization." Women should be developed and empowered not in the sense of "the dominant top-down approach influenced by Western imposition or Orientalism which perpetuates relations of inequality, but in the sense of a bottom-up approach with "participation" "consultation" and "partnership" in each social and cultural context. True empowerment cannot be

bestowed but comes from within and in bottom-up approach. Thus human development and empowerment must be used in the context of oppression, manipulation, exploitation, inequity and inequality. As Rowlands (1997) emphasizes, empowerment can take place on a small scale, linking people with others in similar situations through self-help, education, support, or social action groups and network building; or on a larger scale, through community organization, campaigning, legislative lobbying, social planning, and policy development.

As many Japanese college students will live in a global community or will try to transform our male-dominated society into a more egalitarian one, a clear educational goal of feminist studies in education should be explicitly presented as evaluation criteria to assess “success” or “progress” in development and empowerment for women. The following criteria by Womankind World-wide, a British NGO, is worth noting :

- The introduction of new ways of doing things—in child-care, in household, in livelihood, in local political arrangements
- Women refusing to continue old practices (e. g., genital mutilation, child marriage, taking daughters out of school, privileging sons etc.)
- Women leaders at all levels
- Women advocating changes within the community
- Women influencing other groups
- Women setting up their own self-help groups (Rowlands : 1997)

As the aim of developing feminist literacy in this educational program is to foster an egalitarian citizen, democrat and social activist, it is prerequisite for instructors and students to have clear criteria for the development and empowerment for women.

4 DEVELOPING FEMINIST LITERACY IN EFL COLLEGE EDUCATION

An assumption is that integrating feminist studies into an EFL speech communication class, focusing feminist theory as a kernel of gender issues, will develop students’ feminist literacy and skills for self-representation as an egalitarian person. Empirically the process of thinking, sharing, presenting and discussing gender issues related to human rights, and consequently the process of organizing, and revising one’s own idea for oral presentation is the process of human education itself. By orally presenting one’s perspectives on gender issues before the class as the result of the process approach, students become aware of

the limits and the contradictions of the male-dominated tradition in Japanese society. Thus, students can enhance their awareness of feminist literacy which can then generate human development and empowerment. This is the process of the transformation of students' awareness of gender issues into a more egalitarian awareness within themselves, within their class and within their family. Consequently, through this learning process not only students, but also teachers, can transform themselves as principal actors.

Another assumption is that feminist studies should be integrated in the direction of multi-cultural education, which helps future generations respect minorities, diversity and transcultural perspectives in a pluralistic society. Ultimately, students can transcend the limits of stereotypical gender walls and can create a more egalitarian learning environment in their classrooms, school buildings, homes, and communities.

The ultimate goal of this program is not to be hostile to the opposite sex, but to raise students' awareness as an egalitarian feminist citizen in order to influence their families, schools and work places. The kernel of feminist theory lies in the following statements; "My dream for tomorrow is not that she becomes like man but that she influences the future with her own intellect, values and perceptions (Keeton, 1985).

5 RATIONALES

One of the responsibilities of language educators using this syllabus is to propel students to realize that conformist and male-dominated orientations can no longer suffice as sound views today; instead, egalitarian and diversity-based thinking are required. With these goals in mind, and taking account also of criticism and suggestions by professionals in and out of campus, efforts were made to develop a workable methodology to put into practice the adoption of feminist theory for EFL students.

There exists a well-entrenched binary typology in foreign language teaching, that is, language use and language awareness on the one hand, and cultural and global studies on the other. One contribution that the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language can make to cross-cultural communication is increasing students' cultural sensitivity and multi-cultural literacy. On the other hand, students in a male-dominated conformity society like Japan continue to be hampered in improving students' feminist literacy compared with those learning in a multicultural context. For this reason, a prerequisite for EFL education for feminist literacy is that students should be involved in integrated communicative

tasks which cover feminist studies and gender issues. Empirically, this program encourages EFL college students to become successful interlocutors with appropriate feminist literacy and sensitivity for self-representation. There are four reasons why feminist studies should be considered as a significant component of EFL college education in Japan :

1. The program has meaningful and comprehensible input based on gender issues, which reflects global and universal concerns of feminist theory, and can be an excellent aid in acquiring skills for self-representation in persuasive speeches, problem-solving discussion and logical debate in a target language.
2. Feminist theory, is best characterized as a multidisciplinary field, with perspectives from the social sciences such as political science, sociology, history, and anthropology, and from the humanities, such as philosophy, English, and critical studies (Stromquist, 1996).
3. Since feminist perspectives link theory and praxis, it has looked at the potential for and actual cases of human agency within schools. Teachers have been identified as the main actors in the process of transforming the social relations of gender ; parents and the students themselves are increasingly seen as additional actors capable of introducing change (Streitmatter 1994, Weiler, 1989).
4. Intermediate and advanced classes for EFL college students those who have interest in feminist studies over a period of one semester, can be a simulated egalitarian setting as well as a target-language speech community for self-representation.

These statements clearly explain that in order for EFL college students to develop their feminist literacy in a way which is acceptable to a global level, we need to develop their feminist awareness and sensitivity as well as their confidence and joy in self-expression and self-representation in the target language. Consequently, the process of transforming students' traditional attitudes towards gender issues into an egalitarian one can be a very important process of education for future generations, for the purpose of peaceful coexistence between women and men. Therefore, it can be safely said that these statements support the rationales for introducing feminist studies into EFL Speech Communication.

Morgan (1993) maintains that "the notion of opening up new and interesting areas of knowledge through the teaching of cultural awareness, and the possibility of changing through the teaching of cultural awareness, and the possibility of changing attitudes while so doing, seem to go to the very heart of the educational process itself." As the central components of feminist theory address culture, gender and power-based conflicts, we can also say that the possibility of transforming students' attitudes through the teaching of feminist

theory can be a part of the educational challenge itself. The point is how teachers coordinate and integrate feminist studies into EFL education through public speaking, problem-solving discussion and logical debate on gender issues in the target language. The following is a trial of the integration of feminist theories into an EFL speech communication class at an university level.

6 THE PROGRAM IN PRACTICE in 1998

Persuasive public speaking and problem-solving discussion should be integrated and sequenced on the learner-centered principle for the purpose of problem-solving skills and self-representation for gender issues. Nunan (1989) defines the communicative tasks as "a piece of meaning-focused classroom work involving learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language." Communicative tasks must be a centerpiece of interactive classroom work, designed to immerse students in comprehension, production and interaction in the target language involved in content-based gender issues. The following are the procedures of a Speech Communication Class for Advanced students, aiming at communicative competence with feminist literacy, at Konan University in 1998.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

(1) Clear explanation of the objectives of the class :

Giving students a brief lecture on the significance of the feminist studies in EFL education in order to raise awareness of feminist theory and gender discrimination.

(2) Awareness and conceptualization of the topic :

Giving students relevant reading materials concerning gender issues and gender discrimination as a form of immersion strategy to increase their relevant background knowledge on feminist studies.

(3) Critical reading and presentation :

Encouraging students to develop their critical and analytical view on the text or passage and consequently present their critical remarks on each gender issue.

(4) Video watching :

Watching documentary videos recorded from CNN International, BBC World on gender discrimination and sexual harassment selected to give students an understanding and visualization of the "real world"

(5) Writing first drafts for Persuasive Speeches and Discussion on Gender Issues

Facilitating students' ability to structure and integrate information and their own perspectives into cohesively and coherently connected English paragraphs which can be used for public speech, discussion and debate in class.

(6) Oral Presentation practice for self-representation :

Encouraging students to express their own opinion on the issue in terms of persuasive speech and problem-solving discussion.

(7) Inviting guest speakers :

Broadening students' awareness of gender issues through guest speakers' perspectives and criticism on the subject matter. Hopefully, guest speakers should have bicultural or multicultural experience as cultural informants.

TEACHING MATERIALS

Handouts compiled from various perspectives from the conference papers of the Gender Session in World Congress of Comparative Education (WCCE), the University of Sydney in 1996 and University of Cape Town in 1998. The Times and English newspaper for reading, CNN International News, BBC World and other video materials on Gender Issues.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Evaluating oral and written presentations in terms of logical reasoning, emotional appeal and audience credibility, originality and feminist literacy. Participation in discussion and debate in terms of new opinions, problem-solving strategies and cooperation are evaluated, too.

7 SYLLABUS DESIGN

The following is a syllabus for Speech Communication for Advanced Students in the first semester in 1998 as implemented at Konan University, Kobe, Japan. It should be noted that the topics vary within the framework of feminist studies and human rights.

Week 1: Feminism and Feminist Theory

Encouraging students to study feminist theory, which is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary subject, involving diversity, transformation and equity. The history of women's liberation as linked to the civil rights movements is focused.

Week 2: Basic Principles of Feminist Studies : Development and Empowerment

Students are encouraged to understand the terms and principles of

feminist studies to enhance comprehension of information and their knowledge for discussion. Students should be familiar with the concept of terminology regarding feminist studies, such as feminism, feminist theory, human development, empowerment, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, power-based conflicts, diversity, transformation, equity, egalitarianism, fundamental human rights and politically corrected phrases.

Week 3: Gender in Multicultural Societies and Homogeneous Societies.

Reinforcing an orientation of multi-cultural education, premised on cultural relativity by comparing the diversity of heterogeneous societies, with the egalitarian ideal and the conformity of homogeneous societies, with male-dominated practices like those in Japan. Encouraging students to study the entity of "minorities" and gender roles and relations in terms of negative patterns such as stereotypes, gender prejudice and gender discrimination.

Week 4: Gender Discrimination in Japanese Society

Students are encouraged to gather debatable and controversial opinions and essays on gender discrimination in Japanese society from the Internet and discuss many problems with exchange students. One article from the Internet written by a Japanese woman, for example, is quite debatable. She writes as follows; "Although I have lived with my boy friend for 6 years, I don't want to get married. The reasons are: 1. I don't want to change my family name. 2. I don't like to be identified as a housewife." This article is an example of the voice of a Japanese woman who is fighting back against the control and subordination by men over women in Japan. Students are encouraged to have a group discussion on this topic. Representatives from each table are encouraged to report what their group members have discussed. After each report an open discussion in class is scheduled.

Week 5: Women Speak Out on Workplaces Web Site.

The Internet is very effective to gather information such as the latest feminist theory, feminist movements, organized protests and the women's network. Reading an article, for example, on "Women Speak Out on the Workplace Web Site," Japanese students can learn how to reach out to the women's network and how to organize by sharing their experiences and stories.

Week 6: A Newspaper Article on the Report by the Working Women Network

The Working Women Network (WWN) members visited the ILO and several Human Rights Agencies in EU and reported many questions on gender discrimination in Osaka. This report was a very good motivation for Japanese college students as an organized protest. CNN and BBC World are

also useful in this topic.

Week 7: Sexual Harassment in the Japanese Working Place.

Sexual harassment often silences a woman. By reading and watching several successful cases of women's organized protest and women's network, students can benefit themselves and open up their perspectives on sexual harassment and sexual discrimination. CNN International News reported some causes of sexual harassment in Japanese companies and sexual harassment in the midst of commercialism in Japan. This news spread all over the world which are a strong impact on Japanese college students. According to the report from CNN International News, seventy five percent of Japanese working women have suffered sexual harassment for the past five years. This fact results from a male-dominated Japanese society and women's impoverished working conditions in their workplaces.

Students are encouraged to make a persuasive speech for a discussion on sexual harassment based on John Dewey's reflective thinking for problem solving. Students are encouraged to learn the following five steps of problem-solving.

1. Defining the problem (Sexual Harassment in Japanese society)

2. Analyzing the problem

3. Suggesting possible workable solutions

4. Selecting the best solution

5. Implementing the best solution

Week 8: Problem-Solving Discussion on Sexual Harassment

Based on the relevant background knowledge from the previous class and reading materials, students are encouraged to have a problem-solving discussion on sexual harassment in the Japanese work place in terms of empowerment.

Week 9: Marriage and Divorce (Speech and Discussion)

Helping students learn about the place of marriage in human culture and how to become a successful marriage-builder or how to enjoy a successful single life. Also, students are encouraged to study how a woman can balance her career and household duties with the help of an understanding husband/homemaker. Monogamy and Polygamy in different cultures are discussed in terms of the anatomy of love. Students are requested to widely research the topic in resource centers in order to make a speech on marriage and divorce, narrowing the subject into their own topic. After hearing all presentations, students are encouraged to have an open class discussion.

The aim of this class is to encourage students to respect and accept the diversity of women's and men's identities in human life such as divorced women, unmarried women, widows, spinsters, single parents, married women, single mothers by choice, divorced men, unmarried men, widowers, and married men. Students should learn that married women and married men are not the main stream but one of the options of human life in an egalitarian society.

Week 10 : Keeping Maiden Names After Marriage in Japan (Debate)

Reading many articles on the controversial issues of changing maiden names after marriage on women's side in Japan. Students prepare pro-con side of the issues for the debate. This is a very important issue for college students as everyone will be involved in this problem in Japan. Students are encouraged to study both pro and con sides to have a heated and rational debate. The whole process of their preparation for organizing their constructive speeches, gathering effective evidence, and practicing persuasive refutation are meaningful and communicative activities in a simulated real world context.

8 STUDENT SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires on the program were given to Konan students who took Speech Communication for Advanced Students (two classes in 1998) based on content-based instruction in July 1998 at the end of the first semester. The participants in this program comprised 40 students of Konan University. (35 female students and 5 male students)

QUESTION and RESPONSE

Part 1 (Feminist Theory and Literacy) n=number of students

- (1) Do you think you have become more interested in gender issues ?
Yes (100%) (n=40) Don't know (0%) (n=0) No (0%) (n=0)
- (2) Do you think you have become more aware of feminist theory in your daily life ?
Yes (95%) (n=38) Don't know (5%) (n=2) No (0%) (n=0)
- (3) Do you think you have become more aware of gender discrimination ?
Yes (90%) (n=36) Don't know (10%) (n=4) No (0%) (n=0)
- (4) Do you think you have enhanced feminist literacy in a social life ?
Yes (87.5%) (n=35) Don't know (12.5%) (n=5) No (0%) (n=0)

- (5) Do you think Japanese society is still a male-dominated society ?
 Yes (97.5%) (n=39) Don't know (2.5%) (n=1) No (0%) (n=0)
- (6) Do you think that you have become more aware of gender identity than before ?
 Yes (90%) (n=36) Don't know (10%) (n=4) No (0%) (n=0)
- (7) Do you think your urge to express your own ideas and opinion on gender issues become much stronger than before through this class ?
 Yes (95%) (n=38) Don't know (5%) (n=2) No (0%) (n=0)
- (8) Do you think you have developed critical and analytical thinking through this program ?
 Yes (75%) (n=30) Don't know (25%) (n=10) No (0%) (n=0)
- (9) Do you think you have developed the knowledge of gender issues ?
 Yes (100%) (n=40) Don't know (0%) (n=0) No (0%) (n=0)
- (10) Do you think feminist literacy and confidence to speak up your own opinion in public will be helpful and important in your future life ?
 Yes (92.5%) (n=37) Don't know (7.5%) (n=3) No (0%) (n=0)
- (11) Do you think it is significant to learn Feminist Studies in EFL Class ?
 Yes (97.5%) (n=39) Don't know (2.5%) (n=1) No (0%) (n=0)
- (12) Do you think it is significant to integrate feminist studies with speech communication ?
 Yes (97.5%) (n=39) Don't know (2.5%) (n=1) No (0%) (n=0)
- (13) Do you think it is significant to discuss gender issues based on John Dewey's Reflective Thinking for problem solving ?
 Yes (97.5%) (n=30) Don't know (2.5%) (n=1) No (0%) (n=0)

Part 2 (Balancing Professional Career and becoming a Homemaker)

- (14) Do you want to continue to work outside the home after graduation of university ?
 Yes (90%) (n=36) Don't know (10%) (n=4) No (0%) (n=0)
- (15) Do you want to continue your career after having a child ?
 Yes (75%) (n=30) Don't know (20%) (n=8) No (5%) (n=2)
- (16) Which of the domestic chores should be shared with your future homemaker ?
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| Taking care of the children | (n=35) | (87.5%) |
| Cleaning the house | (n=20) | (50%) |
| Tutoring the children | (n=15) | (39.7%) |
| Shopping | (n=12) | (31%) |
| Repairing house | (n=10) | (25%) |
| Preparing dinner | (n=10) | (25%) |

- Doing the laundry (n= 8) (20%)
- (17) Does raising children prevent women from pursuing their career in Japanese society ?
 Yes (92.5%) (n=37) Don't know (7.5%) (n=3) No (0%) (n=0)
- (18) What has prevented Japanese women from getting equal rights as men do ?
 Different wage (100%) (n=40)
 Equal opportunity for promotion (75%) (n=30)
 Upbringing (75%) (n=30)
 Using husband's family name (72.5%) (n=29)
 Traditional social norm (62.5%) (n=25)
 Education (12.5%) (n=5)

FINDINGS

A majority of students generally have a positive outlook regarding egalitarian gender roles and equal opportunities for women. The results from the student responses here reveal that a considerable number of students felt the significance of learning gender issues and feminist theory in EFL education (Q11 : 97.5%). Most students felt they became aware of gender discrimination (Q3 : 90%) and many students enhanced their feminist literacy (Q4 : 87.5%).

As for the necessity of summarizing the gist of each essay and making an oral presentation, the students' replies argue strongly in favor of the integration of feminist studies with oral communication (Q12 : 97.5%). Also, most students feel the significance of learning John Dewey's Reflective Thinking for problem solving as a practical strategy to fight back against any kind of gender discrimination down the road (Q13 : 97.5%). It is also worth noting that many students felt feminist literacy with gender identity and confidence in speaking their own ideas in public will be important in their future life (Q10 : 92.5%).

The first reason that many students support such an integrated program is that they can enjoy expressing their own ideas freely while acquiring basic problem-solving strategies and skills for organizing and constructing logical and persuasive oral presentation. The second reason is that the students' motivation to speak up in public is significantly raised by the selection of content-based topics involved with gender issues, and the inclusion of the teacher's encouraging oral comments. The third reason is the dramatic impact of learner-centered tasks in pairs, sharing with classmates in a trusting classroom atmosphere.

As for the topics, a majority of the students took an interest in issues related to human rights and gender roles to transform male-dominated Japanese

society into a more egalitarian society for both men and women.

The results from the students responses and their speeches on the feminist studies reveal considerable satisfaction with the integration of feminist studies into speech communication in a learner-centered classroom. The remarkable development of student's skills in organizing persuasive speeches on gender issues and their critical attitude toward gender discrimination gave students significant feminist literacy and confidence in self-expression and self-representation in the target language. Consequently, as the result of this experimental program for speech communication, students could cultivate their feminist awareness, creating a warm classroom atmosphere, closer in atmosphere to an egalitarian home than a typical language classroom.

9 DISCUSSION : WOMEN'S SELF-REPRESENTATION

An important assertion is that Japanese women should verbally represent themselves. They should express their own ideas in male-female interaction rather than following the portrayals, stereotypes and patriarchy created by the men who have dominated working places and homes. Historically, women have been culturally incorporated and assimilated by a male-centered system in its conception of women.

Facing difficulties created by the false ideas of the male-female relationship, cultural regionalism and power-based conflicts, it seems that now is the most opportune time for Japanese educators to think of possible methods to develop a feminist literacy for the future generation and to equip them for genuine self-representation in a target language to get along with people in the global community. The major contention here is that a syllabus for feminist studies can be one means of acquiring self-representation and one way of helping to avoid unnecessary gender friction, confrontation, gender animosity and misunderstanding.

By integrating speech communication with gender issues, students can naturally learn the necessity of expressing their own perspectives on gender issues, and gender roles in terms of equity and egalitarianism. The fundamental purpose of this program is to shift students' fixed stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women into broader perspectives in egalitarian settings. Cultivating feminist literacy is not simply a matter of becoming a good person without a clear gender and cultural identity. What is important is to respect each gender identity so that we can get along with a variety of people within the framework of mutual respect for gender identity, while working, developing,

empowering and sharing for the benefit of all humanity.

Whether the Japanese people welcome it or not, the real world is rapidly changing in an egalitarian and transcultural direction. People are coming to Japan in increasing numbers from different social strata of diverse societies. They live here for varying purposes such as global business activities, education and research, interracial and international marriage and as guest workers. One thing is certain, however, that Japan is becoming a focus of interest to many, and while they are here, these people have to live together with us, some of them assessing us in terms of global feminist literacy and criteria.

For these reasons, verbally-focused self-representation is expected of a country which has become so advanced technologically. Our male-female relations need to match our own modernization or we will simply be regarded as an unacceptable and ineffective leader in the world arena. This means that we should be culturally sensitive and literate in the direction of egalitarianism, equity and multiculturalism. Perhaps it is a truism, but great efforts are needed for us, as language educators, to realize a situation where we can be counted as an asset to this egalitarian environment. Language educators are indispensable partners in the task of helping the future generation become capable of representing themselves with clear gender identity with feminist literacy, better able to live with one another as egalitarian citizens of the world onward into the 21st century.

10 CONCLUSION

In this study, I have empirically examined the validity of the integration of the philosophy of feminist theory into a speech communication class for advanced students, discussing the necessity of feminist studies in EFL education, especially in speech communication class. We have reviewed a practical college-based experiment conducted to enhance feminist literacy, and have argued that self-representation with egalitarian perspectives in a target language is a goal that should not be overlooked by language educators in the coming age of globalization.

Through this study we have found two things: The first is that a significant number of students supported an approach emphasizing content-based feminist studies in EFL education for self-expression. The second is that the majority of students view the main significance of the integration of feminist studies with oral presentations to be its value as a highly motivating language program. As the results of students' positive response to the questionnaires and students'

impressive presentations, most students in this program clearly felt that the knowledge of feminist theory and gender issues were helpful and important in EFL education. Also, most students showed a strong desire to develop their feminist literacy and sensitivity to get along with minorities, the opposite sex and people from other cultures. Consequently, they hope to create an egalitarian open society for both men and women. It also should be noted that the study of feminist studies involved in human rights dramatically increased students' motivation to make a persuasive public speech.

Through the favorable responses of the participants, we have verified the positive aspects of the integration of feminist studies with oral speech communication for EFL college students. Although this program undoubtedly has much room for improvement in terms of theoretical support, pedagogy and experimental scale, it can safely be said that the students involved in this program have developed their skills for self-representation in speech communication as well as their feminist literacy to transform themselves, their homes and communities into more egalitarian directions at the dawn of the 21st Century.

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