

**Toyohashi University of Technology,
Institute for Global Network Innovation in Technology
Education
News from Penang
(Vol.8 2016/2/29)**



■ Reports

My Lectures in Malaysia

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In this report I describe my lectures that I gave in Penang, Malaysia, in February, 2016.

I made lecture materials for two 90 minute slots under the theme of “A Brief Introduction to Information Theory” because I have taught the course of Information Theory at my college and I will be able to utilize the lecture materials in the near future.

I gave my first lecture at Politeknik Seberang Perai (PSP), which is a three-year school for fostering engineers with practical skills. Students of PSP can get a Diploma, which nearly corresponds to an Associate Degree in Japan, after graduation. Fifty third-year students, who are taking a Diploma in Network at the Department of Information and Computer Technology, attended the lecture. Since I had never given a lecture in English for 90 minutes, I was nervous and exhausted. From the result of a questionnaire survey, the most common comments were on my English as I had expected. Although the students seemed not to understand explanations based on equations well, they were responsive to my questions. I should have taught in a more interactive way.

I delivered my second lecture to the same students as in the first lecture at PSP. I was less nervous in this lecture than in the first lecture and I was able to enjoy the lecture. The result of the survey for this lecture was better than that for the first lecture.

My third lecture was held at the School of Computer Sciences, University Science Malaysia (USM). Forty six first-year students attended the lecture and 35 of them major in mathematics. Although the lecture content at USM was slightly

more difficult than that at PSP, the understanding of the students seemed to be good. During the lecture, because I was getting used to teaching in English little by little, I was able to pay attention to my grammatical errors and fidgeting with a laser pointer that I had noticed by watching the videos of the lectures at PSP. I think watching a lecture video is important to notice common errors and behavioral habits objectively by oneself.

After finishing my lectures in Penang, I think that if I am not competent to carry out teaching in Japanese such as explanation, discussion and interaction, I cannot do them in English as a matter of course. To make lectures taught in English effective, as a basic step, we need to speak aloud, slowly and clearly. “Teacher Voice” is a good keyword that represents this situation. When we don’t feel confident about explaining something in English, we tend to speak in a weak voice, quickly and unclearly. Bearing “Teacher Voice” in mind, I need to keep on improving my teaching in English as well as my teaching ability itself.



Fig. Lecture in PSP.

About what I obtained and learned in Penang

Mio Kobayashi, National Institute of Technology, Anan College

Apa kabar? Khabar baik!
Sudah makan? Sudah!

That means, “How are you?” and “I’m good!”, then “Have you already eaten?” and “Yes, I’ve already eaten!” in “Bahasa Melayu.” Those are common greetings for people in Malaysia. Honestly saying, it hasn’t been acceptable for me to stay in Malaysia for our training for teaching in English, because I had a prejudice in my mind that Malaysia is a still “developing country” and all of the people living in the country are “non-native” speakers of English. I didn’t understand why I have to conduct lectures in Malaysia, even though I have already known the schedule of this faculty development program.

My first presentation in Malaysia was in USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia), University of Science of Malaysia. When I had been in TUT before I came to Malaysia, I had wanted and planned to let the Malaysian people know about my college which is working on engineering education and collaborative researches with local industries. Also, I wanted to tell them that the place where our college is located is very famous for LED industry and we are also teaching practical experiments to students with using LED-related technologies. That was the reason why I decided that I tried to have the presentation in USM about the engineering education in our college and collaborative researches with local industries.

In the presentation, which were held in Jan. 26, surprisingly, there was a bigger audience than I expected, because it was day off for students, and my mentor, Prof. Low, also said to me that there might be a few audience members. In the presentation, the Ph.D. student who is from Nigeria, was interested in the project in my college about a small hydroelectric

generation system with a local community. In addition, almost all of the audience were interested in the engineering education we were working on.

After finishing participating in the international conference, “IGNITE 2016,” held on Jan. 27-29, our training for teaching in English was kicked into high gear. In my case, it was scheduled that two classes for 90 min. and one presentation for teachers about engineering education were held in PSP (Politeknik Seberang Perai), one lecture in DISTED college, and three classes in USM. The understandings, backgrounds, and interests of students in those school, college, and university are really different. The lecture I conducted for the students in PSP might be understandable but shallow. In terms of students in DISTED college, I couldn’t get enough information of the students including their interest and motivation for the topic of my lecture, so during lecture, many students might be bored in my class. And also, their evaluation for my lecture was very severe, but I thought they should be more serious in the lecture. As for the students in USM, they were earnest and smart. They not only studied well but also encouraged me in the class.



Prof. Low and me



At the presentation of engineering education in USM



Lecture in PSP

In terms of my lecture, I tried different ways for preparing. I haven't believed that I could do well if I prepare scripts in advance because I must depend on the script and I really care about doing exactly the same as the script. That thought is based on my experience for "Pechakucha" style presentation while in Queens College. At that time, even though I prepared script and sat up all night for practicing, I could not make a good presentation. Since that time, I have not prepared any script for presentations in advance.

Because of the reason above, I didn't prepare any scripts for the lectures until I had my lectures in USM. Seriously, I realized that I need to prepare scripts when I need to explain specialized subject and make it clear for students. By preparing what I explain and say, I believe that the explanation must be changed to be clear and refined. As a result of the preparation, in my lecture in USM, it might be better than those in PSP and DISTED college.

During my stay in Penang, Malaysia, I studied many things from people who are living here. Those are not only how to make a good lecture in English but also the attitude and respect for different cultures. In addition, I like their thought that English is just a tool for communication. I realized that I am studying English not for "English" but for making a good lecture and communicating with students. I am aware that my feeling for this country was changed. Malaysia was my good teacher.

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