論文

Toward the establishment of inclusive education in Japan, with special reference to support for pupils with dyslexia

ONEYAMA, Akane
(Justy Co,. Ltd)

1. Introduction

In 2007, MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology) introduced the concept of Inclusive Education into the Japanese educational system. As Japanese society is becoming more diverse nowadays, the number of Japanese students who have learning difficulties is increasing. Teachers are being asked to cater to each pupil who needs learning support in mainstream classrooms. Many school teachers have therefore tried to establish an inclusive environment by giving effective support to each student in classrooms. However, this establishment does not seem to be succeeding and teachers are facing a lot of problems. Some teachers are struggling with the pedagogical question of whether such students should be included into mainstream classrooms while others accept the goal but do not know how to support them correctly.

For English teachers, the recent introduction of English classes into primary schools has helped make teachers aware of pupils with learning difficulties, such as pupils with dyslexia who have difficulty with reading and writing. Yet, they have not yet found effective ways to support such students in mainstream classrooms and English teachers therefore face more problems today teaching all pupils effectively. With inclusive education and English education introduced into primary schools, it is now the time to consider what should be done for teachers to carry out inclusive pedagogy, especially in the case of English classes. Therefore, this article examines inclusive education with particular reference to the context of English education and pupils with dyslexia, to determine what barriers there are to establishing an inclusive environment and supporting students with Special Educational Needs or Difficulty (SEND).

2 Terminology –Literature Review-
2.1 Inclusive Education

The concept of "Inclusive Education" was born in the 1970s in the United Kingdom and has been developed since then. Mary Warnock suggested to offer education to all

learners "under the same roof" or the same mainstream classrooms even if they have difficulties. Her suggestion led to the birth of inclusive education under the influence of social and political situations at that time in the UK. Ochiai and Shimada (2016) mentioned that the principle of free market and the movement to aim welfare-state in the UK were combined and after taking a long time, British society formed "Inclusive Education". This educational concept involves not only educational reality but also social or political thinking. The term inclusion has spread internationally and developed into the philosophy to include all students in general educational systems. In fact, UNESCO (United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) announced the agenda "Education for All" in the Salamanca Statement in 1994, which was mainly focused on the inclusion of pupils with SEND. This concept is interpreted differently in each country.

Many countries have tried to achieve inclusion by identifying the pupils with difficulties in the mainstream classrooms, labelling them SEND and giving support. In the international trend about inclusive education, the concept of "equity" whose core point is translated by UNESCO as "seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for democratizing and enriching learning" (UNESCO 2017) is regarded to be important for the inclusive pedagogy. Rather than excluding pupils with SEND to special educational schools, this concept aims to teach all students in general classrooms and to create the diversity in classrooms concerning difficulties and backgrounds.

Some educators have questioned the necessity itself to include all students with learning difficulties. To be sure, the amounts of students who need additional educational services have increased nowadays. The target of inclusion became large, but opponent opinion expressed that it is impossible to teach students under the inclusive environment in the mainstream classroom. The diversity of students' difficulties is too great to support each learner in the same classroom. Hansen mentioned the limits of inclusive practice and explained that the participation of pupils with SEND in a mainstream classroom can be judged by teachers not to be beneficial for specific pupils themselves (2011). The discussion over where the best places for pupils with SEND to attend is ongoing and the process to seek the pedagogy which is effective for all students cannot end.

In the Japanese educational system, inclusive education was introduced in 2007 in order to achieve two political and social purposes. First, Japanese government has tried to make Japan a cohesive society. In modern Japanese society where the

population is getting smaller, people are forced to live and work together, and education is required to teach living in society with others. Ochiai and Shimada (2016) claim that aiming for a cohesive society is an unavoidable matter under the shrinking society in Japan. Inclusive education has been positioned as one of the important parts to establish a cohesive society. Second, the ratification of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) helped the introduction of inclusive education into Japan. CRPD is the international convention from the United Nations in 2006 referring to "the prohibition of disability discrimination and the provision of reasonable accommodation". This convention requires the promotion of inclusive educational system to ratify (Kondo et al, 2015). Japan finally ratified it in 2014 by changing and creating new educational laws regarding disability discrimination as those actions by government were expressed in the report from MEXT (MEXT 2012). In this way, those two movements which are the domestic social problem and international demand concerning discrimination joined together and led to the introduction of inclusive education in Japan.

MEXT defined inclusive education as the system that enables both students without difficulty and ones with difficulties to study together with adequate support and opportunity (MEXT 2012). For a practical way to include pupils with SEND in Japan, MEXT created two basic principles, which are the establishment of "reasonable accommodation" and the improvement of the basic environment for the whole schools. "Reasonable accommodation" is referred to as the system which gives personal support under a general educational system. In fact, MEXT aims to increase the number and the quality of "resource rooms" located within some general schools, where the students who are placed in regular classrooms receive special education services (MEXT 2012). This Japanese support system is required not only to prepare for sharing the learning environment in the general classrooms but also to draw and develop the potential ability of pupils with SEND and lead them to commit to Japanese society (Kudo 2016). On the other hand, the principle of the improvement of the basic environment was created based on the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Originally, the term "universal" is not mentioned as "one-size-fits all", but UDL in general education is defined as "the dynamic process of teaching and learning" that makes it possible to meet the needs and interests of each learner (Hall et al, 2012). The Japanese education system interpreted it as the necessity to improve the curriculum and to prepare proper equipment for classrooms. Needless to say, this process needs the budget from the government. The process to improve the basic classroom environment demands the involvement of government rather than teachers alone. It can be said that corporation between classroom teachers and government is essential

to establish the inclusive environment in the Japanese education system.

2.2 Dyslexia

When English teachers deal with inclusive education in Japan, dyslexia is one of the learning difficulties that they have to face. Students with dyslexia are normally mentioned as those who have problems in reading and spelling because of neurological problems, but it is also true that there are a lot of definitions and expressions of this difficulty depending on contexts. The International Dyslexia Association explains that its difficulty involves poor spelling, decoding and reading comprehension, which can influence their reading experience (IDA 2002) while British Dyslexia Association (BDA) refers to the Rose's report in 2009 that its characteristic features are difficulties in "phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed"(Rose 2009 quoted in BDA). For example, pupils with dyslexia tend to make mistakes such as writing 15 as 51 or b as d, cannot concentrate while reading, and have difficulty writing answers even though s/he can answer orally (Sato 2012). These diagnostic points are not the perfect tools to "cure" this difficulty. Rather than looking for the remedy, it is better to think of coping with this phonological difficulty in an educational situation by finding the best supports, which fits each pupil with dyslexia. In order to cope with and get over this neurological difficulty through their entire life, it is necessary to find their difficulty and start looking for an effective support from their early years. Wolff and Kutscher (2014) also claim the importance of early detection and aggressive treatment. Educators should be careful when pupils learn a language for the first time. English teachers in Japan can face pupils with dyslexia in the general classroom, especially now because primary schools have introduced English education. From the early stages of their life, teachers should try effective teaching methods for them to make the most of their ability through English education in Japan.

So that pupils with dyslexia find the best way to cope with and overcome dyslexia, some individual support for pupils with dyslexia is suggested to try in the classrooms. First, multisensory and three-dimensional methods can be effective (Bell and McLean, 2016). For example, learners with dyslexia require saying the words repeatedly with pictures or cards or overlearning with memory cues in order to know the words by associating the letters and sound. To make the repetition or the overlearning more attractive for them, writing letters colourfully, using associated shapes or images can also be adapted (Bell and McLean, 2016). Second, examinations should be held in quiet places and students should be given extra time (Wolff and Kutscher 2014). It takes more time for students with dyslexia to concentrate and to read. In addition, phonics is believed to be essential for learners with dyslexia. Generally, pupils with this difficulty

have trouble understanding rom letter formation and need greater support for phonics (Wolff and Kutscher, 2014). Murakami (2012) also explains from the point of children's development of phonological recognition that it is reasonable to teach phonics before introducing multisensory methods. A combination of three-dimensional methods and phonics is worth trying for classroom teachers.

In the general classroom, UDL should also be introduced to support their learning, through such things as digital and computer technologies. Wolff and Kutscher mentioned spelling and grammar checkers on laptops and Bell and McLean (2016) recommend digital recorders, screen readers, digital notebooks, touch screen technologies, and so on. Rather than trials to strengthen their reading ability itself, methods to compensate their deficit by making the most use of other abilities and devices, such as listening skills and audio equipment are suggested in learning environments.

3 Analyse of Japanese situation regarding inclusive education

This section will analyse what kind of problems teachers, especially English teachers, face in providing effective support to pupils with SEND in general classrooms and discuss what prevents the full establishment of inclusive education in Japan and should be done to achieve inclusive education in Japan.

3.1 Lack of understanding and knowledge

Although it has been more than 10 years since the concept of inclusive education was introduced into Japan, many teachers do not have enough understanding to practice it and they do not know how to include pupils with difficulties into classrooms. There are many disputes over the concept of inclusion, but the lack of understanding in Japan can hinder the implementation of inclusive pedagogy. In fact, Kudo (2016) explains that starting and trying inclusive education itself is a big task for teachers. Negative attitudes also can be seen among classroom teachers. Some teachers feel it as workload to carry inclusive pedagogy (Forlin et al, 2015) and others say that they do not want to take charge of classes with pupils with learning difficulties (Arimatsu 2013). Needless to say, the implementation of inclusive pedagogy requires sufficient skills and knowledge of each difficulty, which can be acquired through training and experience. The trial for inclusive pedagogy can easily be a burden for busy Japanese teachers.

Not only the understanding towards inclusive education but also the lack of teacher's knowledge about each difficulty can hinder the establishment of inclusive

education. Not all Japanese teachers in general classrooms have sufficient knowledge about each difficulty itself and the skills needed to teach them. Dyslexia is an example that the lack of teachers' knowledge leads to the failure of effective support to student with dyslexia. Dyslexia is not widely known in Japan and confused with autism or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) (Murakami 2012). Japanese teachers are not familiar with it, although dyslexia is one of the learning difficulties which is the target of inclusive education. This might be because the appearance ratio of dyslexia in the Japanese language is lower than that of an English speaker due to the pronunciation system (Murakami 2012). Moreover, according to Toyama et al (2017), the lack of teacher training and research prevents teachers from finding solutions for the difficulties, which pupils with dyslexia face. Teachers cannot get enough information about dyslexia and face the problems giving appropriate individual support in mainstream classrooms in order to implement the inclusive pedagogy.

The complex process to identify pupils with SEND in classroom is also a problem for the implementation of inclusive pedagogy. In order to give learning support for each pupil with SEND and to include them into general classrooms, it is essential to identify what kind of difficulties they have and to find out the most effective method to teach under the inclusive classroom environment. However, as the diversity of difficulties is getting bigger it became difficult to put labels on each student. Some pupils have complex difficulties, which makes it difficult to put one label and identify the most effective support. As not all pupils with learning difficulties are necessarily "label-able", the action of labelling each student as SEND is getting problematic while without a label, they will receive less attention and support from teachers than those who have labels (Lauchlan and Boyle 2007). Teachers need knowledge about each difficulty, but careful consideration is also required to look for the effective learning support in a general classroom.

3.2 Incomplete environment and accommodation

In order to establish the inclusive education in Japan, there is a problem in the construction of a support system. MEXT encourages mainstream school teachers and school principles to create a support system for pupils with difficulties by involving the whole school and establishing a "school committee for pupils with SEND". An ideal structure of support system is that a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) arranges and covers the support by involving other teachers, rather than only a homeroom teacher giving additional support to a pupil with SEND. SENCo is assigned by a school principal and they plan teacher training within a school, help classroom teachers make support plans and communicate with stakeholders in their community,

such as doctors. Toyama et al (2017) also point out the importance of communication among groups of teachers and parents. By sharing information and tasks regarding the support for the pupils, teachers do not feel stressed and burden towards the implementation of inclusive education. However, how well this system functions is influenced by how deep principals understand the importance of special educational needs (Otsuka 2009). Not all schools in Japan necessarily take positive attitudes towards this cooperative work. Different schools have different focused and recognition towards additional support though all schools want to back up pupils and their parents (Toyama et al, 2017). So that all teachers and schools can make advancement for the establishment of inclusive education, each school should encourage communication both inside and outside the school.

In addition, the lack of facilities can be seen though CRPD tried to promote the establishment of reasonable accommodation which enables students with SEND to access to the individual learning support. For example, resource rooms are not placed in all schools and located outside the neighbourhood of regular classrooms (Nagano and Weinberg 2012). Even if there are pupils who need individual support to study in a general classroom, they might not be able to use resource rooms and get access to the support. For the pupils with dyslexia, some schools have equipped resource rooms for ADHD and Learning Disabilities (LD). LD usually contains dyslexia, but MEXT does not define this difficulty now and resource rooms for LD do not specialise in the support of dyslexia. There is a possibility that pupils cannot get the appropriate support in these resource rooms.

This insufficient accommodation can be affected by the recognition of necessity. Some schools commented that they do not provide the basic accommodation judging from the educational needs of targeted pupils (Kudo 2016). It can be said if teachers do not realise that students are struggling at dyslexia, schools may not prepare the environment to support them, and may not provide any equipment which supports pupils who are struggling at reading and writing. The situation around inclusive education varies school to school and what pupils require is also different. It is important that all teachers always consider what pupils need and what teachers can do for them in order to establish the inclusive education. MEXT should also actively encourage schools to equip and prepare the environment for students support.

3.3 Curriculum Design

Basic curriculum design by MEXT can be an obstacle for the establishment of inclusive education. Originally, curricula in primary and secondary schools in Japan

were designed under the assumption that teachers teach many students at the same time (Kudo 2016). In other words, pupils are taught the same content in the same way. Although equity is regarded as one of the most important principles for inclusive education, the original Japanese way of teaching is incompatible with the way to look at individuals in classrooms. It is difficult for the Japanese educational system to meet educational needs of each pupil without changing their framework (Kudo 2016). For instance, pupils with dyslexia need extra time for their examinations and individual support. However, English education in Japanese junior high school keeps competitive nature and both teachers and other students have no room to consider dyslexia and their different, individual support, such as a multisensory approach. Teachers just give the same exam and lean it heavily for the evaluation of students (Sato, 2012). The Japanese way of teaching and competitive nature makes it difficult to pick the pupils with dyslexia up and provide effective support.

4 Suggestions

With regarding to the analysis about the Japanese situation about inclusive education, this section makes some suggestion for the full establishment of inclusive education, such as about teachers' recognition of inclusive education, the system for teacher education and the way of student evaluation.

4.1 Teachers' recognition towards special educational needs

As the incompleteness of accommodation in schools is mentioned before, there is a possibility that Japanese schools do not equip necessary accommodation or give the appropriate support when teachers do not feel the necessity to prepare it. However, this attitude can hinder teachers from giving effective support and constructing inclusive environment in the general classrooms. How much teachers can be aware of hidden necessity of support by students influences how much they can find and pick up the difficulties of pupils with SEND in classrooms. Teachers in general classrooms themselves should be aware of each difficulty of students through various points of views (Kudo 2016). Classroom teachers can share the information of students who need support to be included into general classrooms and get advice from other teachers. Specialists in the community, such as doctors or counsellors can give advice and reduce the anxiety and stress of teachers. Although there are some schools which do not focus on giving special support in general classrooms, it is important to prepare for an environment where each teacher can communicate and build the relationship with other teachers or other specialists in their community.

4.2 Teacher Education

Moreover, teacher education should be improved so that teachers can get sufficient knowledge and skills to include pupils with SEND in classrooms. MEXT have to increase the number of in-service training courses which enable teachers to experience inclusive schooling, and universities which offer the courses to teacher candidates need to improve programmes to be ready for the "new era of inclusion" (Forlin et al 2015). It might seem that the range which teachers should learn and cover is huge and training is time consuming. However, the goal of training should not be the acquisition of all knowledge about inclusive education, but the acquisition of skills to pick up the difficulties of each pupil to give individual support. Bell and McLean (2016) explain the points of training courses about dyslexia that teachers have to cover many difficulties even with an e-learning system, but the purpose of learning them is to be able to make referrals to other specialists when they suspect a problem in one of their students. Teacher education in Japan for inclusive education also should be one of the opportunities for teachers to know where to ask for advice about difficulties of students, which can encourage the communication and collaborative work in the community.

4.3 New way of student evaluation and team-teaching

With regards to the support for pupils with dyslexia, the recent reform of English education in Japan has clues for the establishment of inclusive education in this country. The way to evaluate students and the method of team-teaching, which is suggested as the ideal pedagogy for English education in primary schools, can be the ideal models to build the inclusive environment in Japanese education.

Traditionally, in Japanese secondary schools, the way of student evaluation has been exam-oriented. However, after the reform starting in 2018, English classes in Japanese primary schools will use a "CAN-DO list". The use of the "CAN-DO list" or its criteria can encourage students to understand the practical usage of English and makes it easier for teachers to identify what students cannot do or do not understand at each stage of the textbooks (Fujita 2017). With the "CAN-DO list", teachers can find that they have difficulties due to dyslexia and start supporting them more easily than by taking the examinations which focus on only a student's score. Of course, the introduction of English education at the early stages of primary school must lead to the effective support of dyslexia, and the "CAN-DO list" is also an effective tool to identify an individual's difficulty. For other learning difficulties, it might be an effective way for the identification of a difficulty and to detect what they can do and cannot do, too.

Furthermore, team teaching can also be a clue for the implementation of inclusive

pedagogy. In Japanese primary schools, English is not always taught by a homeroom teacher alone, but with other teachers inside the school, ALT (Assistant Language Teacher), specialists in the community, and sometimes parents of students, who have English teaching skills. The success of English teaching is influenced by how to construct the system in whole schools (Komasa 2017). Of course, homeroom teachers should take the initiative to make lesson plans and provide the guidelines about lessons to other teachers (Matsuka 2017), but this systematic way of English lessons looks similar to the ideal environment for inclusive education which MEXT suggested. As English teachers ask people inside and outside schools, such as professionals of universities in the community, one of the ideal methods for the construction of inclusive environment in general classrooms is the collaboration work involving both whole school and its community. Therefore, in my opinion, the construction of team teaching system for English lessons may help in the advancement towards the establishment of an inclusive environment in primary schools. In other words, if teachers can establish the atmosphere and environment for the team teaching, this relationship among teachers and with community can play a role for the collaboration work for inclusive education. In this way, team teaching for English education in primary schools can be a hint for the establishment of inclusive education in Japan.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the lack of understanding about inclusive education in Japanese education, insufficient knowledge about each difficulty and the pedagogy, inadequate accommodation in schools, and today's curriculum hinder the achievement of inclusive education in Japan. In order to advance the establishment of inclusive education in Japanese education, it is required to prepare the environment where the relationship among teachers and specialists in the community are built for the collaboration work for the implement of inclusive pedagogy. Some teachers feel that such collaboration work for inclusive education is a burden, but by using teacher training as the opportunity to know where to ask for advice, educators can work for the establishment of inclusive education. Furthermore, the introduction of English education into primary schools can function well for the inclusive education, especially from the points of relationship involving whole schools and its teaching methods. As English education and inclusive education have the same goal to foster students who can survive the diverse and cohesive society, both English teachers and classroom teachers who face pupils with SEND should work collaboratively to help pupils in classrooms.

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