A Note on Grounding in Japanese Elementary School English Language Classrooms

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Abstract

The concept of grounding (Clark and Schaefer, 1989), or the process by which people gain confidence in mutual understanding by providing each other with positive evidence of understanding, may prove to be an invaluable tool for English language teachers in Japanese elementary schools. This is because it may well help teachers more clearly understand certain curriculum goals, more easily grade student ability, and more readily tweak textbook interactions so that students are encouraged to show more positive evidence of understanding to one another.

For many teachers responsible for teaching English to Japanese elementary school students, the introduction of English language as a graded subject in 2020 is quite possibly presenting a serious challenge. Studies such as Yonezaki, M., Tara, S., and Tsukuda, Y. (2016) have shown that, despite the fact that foreign language has been part of the Japanese elementary school curriculum for over a decade, elementary school teachers still have feelings of anxiety towards teaching English. Of course, there has been quite an effort by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in order to help prepare teachers for the change, such as designating 2018-2019 as a transition period in order to allow teachers to become used to increased class hours and new curriculum content, dispatching 'area managers' to show teaching methods and conduct workshops at schools in certain areas, and producing 'workshop guide books' which seem to be designed to give a more practical understanding of curriculum content. Recently, MEXT has even started to upload videos to the online video-sharing platform, YouTube, in order to demonstrate teaching techniques. Such effort deserves to be applauded. However, in order to help Japanese elementary school teachers conduct English language classes, it may be also necessary to give them a solid grasp of core concepts that can serve to inform them about the nature of the subject that they are teaching. To that end, this paper suggests that it may be appropriate to raise awareness of the concept of 'grounding' (Clark and Schaefer, 1989), and how incorporating it into language classes at Japanese elementary schools can benefit both teachers and students alike.

1. Grounding

According to Clark and Brennan (1991), communication is a form of collective activity that relies on its participants assuming a vast amount of shared information, or 'common ground', in order to be able to coordinate with each other. For example, if interlocutors A and B are introduced to each other by a mutual acquaintance C that informs them they grew up in neighboring cities, they could immediately assume a certain amount of common ground by virtue of this introduction. This could include proficiency in the language used in that area, specific knowledge of the layout of their own respective city, a general knowledge of the layout of the neighboring city, and so on. These assumptions form a base from which they can start to try and interact with one another.

However, in order for A and B to continue to be able to coordinate with each other as the conversation progresses, it seems that the common ground needs to be updated. For example, if A and B start talking about their hobbies and A mentions she likes sports, it might be expected that B would start asking about what sports A liked, whether A actually plays sports, etc. However, this would not be possible unless the knowledge that 'A likes sports' was added to their common ground. That is to say, if for some reason what A said was misheard, misunderstood, or for some other reason did not appear "on record"(Clark, 1996, p.54), B may not ask specific sport related questions because he would not have an understanding of A's liking of sports with which to justify asking them.

According to Clark and Brennan (1991), grounding is the process A and B in the previous example would go through in order to update their common ground. It is said to occur when the participants in a conversation achieve the grounding criterion: "The contributor and the partners mutually believe that the partners have understood what the contributor meant to a criterion sufficient for current purposes" (Clark and Schaefer, 1989, p.262). The grounding criterion, in turn, is achieved by making contributions to conversation in the following phases:

> *Presentation Phase*: A presents utterance u for B to consider. He does so on the assumption that, if B gives evidence e or stronger, he can believe that B understands what A means by u.

> *Acceptance Phase*: B accepts utterance u by giving evidence e' that he believes he understands what A means by u. He does so on the assumption that, once A registers evidence e', he will also believe that B understands.
> (Clark and Schaefer, 1989, p.265)

Understanding is a phenomenon that occurs inside our heads and, as such, even if we understand each other, it may be difficult for us to have confidence in mutual understanding unless we show that understanding in a form that is perceptible to others. To this end, it seems that when people say things to their communication partner(s), they are expecting their communication partner(s) to show positive evidence of understanding, while also trying to reassure their partner(s) that they understand what their partner(s) say by showing positive evidence of understanding themselves.

1.1 Positive Evidence of Understanding

Clark (1996) proposes that positive evidence comes in the following four main classes: *assertions of understanding*, *presuppositions of understanding*, *displays of understanding*, and *exemplifications of understanding*. *Assertions of understanding*, according to Clark (1996), are what happens when a person nods, smiles, says "I see", "uh huh" etc, and *asserts* that they understand what their communication partner(s) is saying. Clark (1996) goes on to explain that *presuppositions of understanding* are what

happens when a person assumes they have understand well enough to proceed to the next step in the interaction. For example, if students think they have been told "Go to the gym, get five basketballs and come back" they may simply *presuppose understanding* and leave to complete the task. According to Clark (1996), the willingness to initiate action in and of itself shows positive evidence of understanding. However, *displays of understanding*, as described by Clark (1996), are what happens when people initiate action and, in the process, also *display* what they have understood their communication partner(s) to mean. Examples of *displays of understanding* would include students sitting down instead of jumping etc when told to "Sit down, please", answering appropriately "I like blue" when asked "What colors do you like?", etc. Finally, Clark (1996) says that *exemplifications of understanding* are what happens when people *exemplify* what they have thought their communication partner(s) to have meant via paraphrasing or repeating verbatim what their communication partner has said, performing gestures that indicate meaning, etc.

Although the four classes of evidence mentioned in the previous paragraph all provide evidence of understanding, some provide stronger evidence of understanding than others. To be specific, "Displays and exemplifications tend to be more valid evidence than assertions and presuppositions" (Clark, 1996, p.229). This is because they provide more evidence of understanding message content. For example, if you tell someone your phone number and they are able to read it back to you, which would be *exemplification of understanding*, that would be valid evidence of understanding message content. On the other hand, if they were to simply nod while listening and then proceeded to type numbers into their phone, which would be *assertion of understanding* followed by *presupposition of understanding*, you may not be sure they truly understood what your phone number was. Of course, if they were then able to call your phone straight away you could be sure that they understood; however, that is because being able to call your phone would be a *display of understanding*.

Despite being weaker forms of evidence, *assertions of understanding* and *presuppositions of understanding* also have their uses. It would be tempting to say that since the stronger evidence provides a more comprehensive level of grounding, *displays of understanding* and *exemplifications of understanding* should be used at every opportunity. This may not be what happens in real use, though, as language users seem to adhere to the *principle of least collaborative effort* (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986), which describes how people try only to perform the minimum of work necessary to achieve the grounding criterion. That is to say, in order to maximize the efficiency of communication, people do not always stop to comprehensively ground every single thing that is said. They may instead settle for less than comprehensive evidence of understanding which would include *assertions of understanding* or *presuppositions of understanding*.

However, what participants consider the minimum work necessary to achieve the grounding criterion may differ according to context. For example, if two proficient language users have a conversation about an everyday topic, they could presuppose common ground that, among other things, would include the knowledge of commonly used vocabulary, grammar, expressions, and their meanings and usage. This would allow them to have mutual confidence in their ability to perform grounding without requiring comprehensive evidence. In other words, the minimum work necessary for proficient language users to achieve the grounding criterion may be quite minimal indeed. On the other hand, if two language learners have a conversation about an everyday topic in the language that they are learning, they may not be able to presuppose such common ground. This would require them to either perform the conversation without having confidence in successful mutual understanding, or use more comprehensive forms of grounding such as displays and exemplifications more often. Language learners may have to work harder than comparatively proficient language users in order to achieve the same level of confidence in mutual understanding.

1.2 Grounding as Represented in Japanese Elementary School Textbooks

　　Verbal communication is the main focus of English language study at Japanese elementary schools, and so it makes sense that some examples of grounding, which seems to be a fundamental concept of verbal communication, would already exist in the textbook. An examination of the teacher version of government produced textbooks such as *Let's Try 1 & 2* and *We Can! 1 & 2* quickly reveals that they do feature some example interactions that include some elements of grounding. For example, unit 2 of the grade 5 textbook *We Can! 1* has a listening exercise with the following（abridged）script:

　　Teacher: ...Aoi, when is your birthday?
　　Aoi: My birthday is October 15th.
　　Teacher: I see. Thank you.
　　（MEXT, 2017d, p.23）

The teacher saying 'I see' is an *assertion of understanding* of Aoi's birthday.

　　The government produced textbooks also contain some communication games that feature elements of grounding. For example, the pointing game that appears in unit 8 of the grade 6 textbook *We Can! 2*（MEXT, 2017e, p.77）has the teacher saying occupations like 'soccer player' to the students, who then have to point at the corresponding picture. This would be an 'indicative gesture'（Clark & Brennan, 1991）and an *exemplification of understanding*.

　　There is also a MEXT produced workshop guidebook that seems to have some content relevant to grounding. It appears in a section that deals with 'small talk', which is an activity that involves students performing a short interaction with classmates at the beginning of class. One goal of this activity is the retention of basic expressions used to continue conversations（MEXT, 2017b, p.84）and, to this end, the guidebook recommends teachers instruct their students to perform repetition and ask follow-up questions. Of course, verbatim repetition of what someone else says would be *exemplification of understanding,* and follow up questions, as long as they were relevant to the conversation, would be *displays of understanding*.

　　However, there does not seem to be a section in the official literature that goes in depth with the theory involved and, as a result, it might be difficult for teachers to apply the concepts hinted at in the activities and guidebooks to varying teaching situations.

2. Benefits to be Gained from Grounding

　　Grounding, as it is the process whereby people strive for adequate mutual understanding, seems to play a fundamental role in helping people perform more satisfying communication, regardless of whether they are trying to communicate in L1 or L2. However, incorporating grounding into Japanese elementary school English language classrooms may have specific benefits for teachers and students.

2.1 Possible Benefits for Japanese Elementary School Teachers

　　The concept of grounding, while not being directly mentioned in the latest Japanese Ministry of Education produced English language curriculum for elementary schools, may help teachers more clearly understand certain curriculum goals and, as a result, might help inform teachers how to go about helping students achieve them. One such curriculum goal is the following:

> Deepen understanding of the culture(s) behind foreign languages and foster an attitude of independence when using foreign language to communicate while showing consideration for the other party. (MEXT, 2017c, p.72)

The key phrase here is 'while showing consideration for the other party'. It is explained in more detail in the following passage:

> If the activity is a speaking or listening activity, *'while showing consideration' for the other party* could be considered to mean speaking while checking the other party's understanding, listening while responding empathetically to what the other party said, etc. (MEXT, 2017c, p.74)

As it is, this concept may be a little difficult for teachers to grasp; however, when looked at through the lens of the concept of grounding, it becomes somewhat clearer. 'Speaking while checking the other party's understanding' becomes 'speaking while also looking for positive evidence of understanding'. That process may well also involve giving the other party a chance to show positive evidence of understanding. 'Listening while responding empathetically' is not as clear. However, a slightly different incarnation of essentially the same concept that appears in an earlier part of the curriculum has a little more to add to this explanation; it talks about requiring students to show the attitude of trying to continue listening to (their communication) partner while responding to what they say (MEXT, 2017c, p.16). The two explanations, when taken together, seem to be referring to the act of showing positive evidence of understanding, including such assertions of understanding as nodding, saying 'right' or 'm', etc.

Another curriculum goal that might be better understood through the lens of grounding is the following:

> (Have students) become able to use simple words/phrases and basic expressions in order to convey to each other their thoughts and feelings etc in regard to simple and familiar topics that relate to everyday life. (MEXT, 2017c, p.79)

The key phrase in this particular goal is "convey to each other". It infers a higher standard than, for example, "saying to each other"; in fact, it infers that the participants in question actually understand what each other say. If this is indeed the case, it begs the question of how students will actually know when they have successfully conveyed what they wanted to tell their communication partner(s), and how they will actually know when they have successfully understood what their communication partner(s) told them. Of course, one answer would be to have the students show evidence of positive understanding to each other while they interact; that is to say, one answer would be to have them perform 'grounding'.

Having students incorporate grounding into their interactions should also help teachers grade student ability to achieve the above curriculum goals. As previously mentioned, the process of grounding involves students showing positive evidence of understanding to each other in a form that is *perceptible to others*. Of course, the primary audience for this show of positive evidence is the classmate(s) the student in question is interacting with; however, it is reasonable to expect that a nearby teacher should also be able to perceive this evidence and use it as a basis to grade students.

2.2 Possible Benefits for Japanese Elementary School Students

Logically, one way for a language learner to gain confidence in their communication abilities would

be to be through the act of assessing their abilities themselves and coming to a positive conclusion. Unfortunately, though, it seems that if students are not sure how to assess their own ability, they may default to the negative. Rohre (2011), in a study of Japanese students attending a bilingual school, found that while some students compared themselves with their peers and used written tests to ascertain their own ability, other students "were uncertain what benchmark was best to use in assessing their skills, so they lacked confidence" (p.53). Moreover, according to Foss and Reitzel (1988), "negative self-perceptions set in motion a perpetuating cycle of negative evaluations that may persist in spite of evaluations from others to the contrary" (p.440). If students do not have a consistent method of assessing their own abilities, they could go down an unfortunate path.

One way to try and avoid such a regrettable outcome might be to encourage students to incorporate grounding into their interactions. This is because grounding itself would empower students to assess their own ability to convey/understand *without* having to rely exclusively on overt third-party evaluation in the form of compliments, tests, interviews, etc. Of course, this does hinge on students being given ample opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to perform the interactions; after all, being able to more accurately assess your own constant *inability* to convey/understand may not have a positive effect on student self-confidence. However, if students are given the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills before being required to perform interactions, then having them incorporate grounding into their interactions should help them positively confirm their ability to convey/understand the target language. Students may still sometimes find that they were not successful at conveying/understanding, even when they thought they were. However, all in all, it is thought that incorporating grounding in student interactions would have a positive influence on student self-confidence.

3. Practical Grounding in the Classroom

In parts 1.2 and 2.1, it was shown that there are elements of grounding featured in current textbooks, curriculum, and other official documents. However, simply raising awareness of these already existing elements does not guarantee that teachers will be able to incorporate grounding into interactions/activities that are not explicitly set out for them. Putting aside such assertions of understanding as eye contact, smiling, nodding, etc because it is probable that teachers will instruct students to apply them as a matter of course, a simple method for teachers to use when looking to incorporate grounding into interactions might be to choose to include one or both of the following two ways of showing understanding:

1. Initiate a side-sequence (Jefferson, 1972) that confirms understanding of
   particular vocabulary items conveyed by other party

2. Initiate a next relevant turn in order to progress the interaction.

3.1 Initiating a side-sequence to confirm understanding

A side-sequence is something that occurs during an ongoing activity but does not seem to be part of the main flow of the activity, despite being relevant (Jefferson, 1972). An example of a side-sequence as it might occur in conversation is the following:

A: Do you like chicken?
        B: What, like barbecue chicken?

        A: Yes.
    B: I sure do!

It can be seen from the first and last contributions that this is actually a question-answer adjacency pair (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). However, instead of answering A straight away, B chooses to clarify what sort of chicken A was referring to. Of course, B still intends to answer the question; s/he was merely delaying the answer until satisfied that s/he understood well enough to answer it appropriately. However, it is not part of the main flow of the conversation, which is only returned to when B answers A's question in the final line.

    Adding similar side-sequences to otherwise fairly standard question-answer adjacency pairs that appear in the textbooks might be one simple way to incorporate grounding into interactions. In the case of yes-no questions such as the following (modified) example taken from unit 4 of the grade 3 textbook *Let's Try 1* (MEXT, 2017a, p.16), the side-sequence might come in between the question-answer adjacency pair.

    A: Do you like blue?
        B: Blue? (*indicating a blue object by pointing at it or touching it*)
        A: Yes.
    B: No, I don't.

On the other hand, in the case of wh- questions, the side-sequence might instead come after the answer, like in the following example taken from unit 5 of *Let's Try 1* (MEXT, 2017a, p.20) and then modified.

    A: What sports do you like?
    B: I like soccer.
        A: Soccer? (*doing a soccer gesture*)
        B: Yes.

The above examples incorporate a combination of verbatim repetition and meaningful gestures. This is because gestures seem to be more appropriate for elementary school level content than do alternative descriptions, which may be more difficult for students to perform due to a lack of vocabulary.

    The reason why stand-alone verbatim repetition is not included is that, for interactions between language learners, verbatim repetition may not always provide the same strength of evidence of understanding that it may provide for interactions between more proficient language users. More proficient users should have a firm grasp on both how to pronounce common vocabulary items and their associated meanings; as a result of this, repeating a common vocabulary item is probably evidence enough that they also understood the associated meaning(s). On the other hand, language learners may not have as firm a grasp on common vocabulary and associated meaning(s), and so simply being able to repeat a certain vocabulary item would not necessarily equate to an understanding of the attached meaning. After all, it is certainly possible to repeat verbatim gibberish that has no meaning at all as long as you can reproduce the sounds produced by the other party. As such, in the Japanese elementary school English language class, verbatim repetition is probably best used in conjunction with gestures.

3.2　Initiating a Next Relevant Turn in order to Progress the Conversation

    Japanese elementary school textbooks seem mostly to consist of isolated question-answer adjacency pairs that are studied in separate units. This is fine up to a point, as this structure provides

students with a stable environment which opportunity to concentrate on getting a firm grasp on sets of vocabulary and basic phrases. However, where it falls down is in supplying students with the ability to continue a conversation. Unfortunately, simply stringing together arbitrary question-answer adjacency pairs does not a conversation make. What is needed is a way to expand upon the core question-answer pairs while still maintaining continuity. The content of the section of the MEXT produced workshop guidebook mentioned in 1.2 seems to be an attempt to fill this need. However, as it is meant to be a practical guide that stands separately from the wordy curriculum it represents, it does not go into detail as to theory behind what can be done to progress conversations; the following section will try to do just that.

Firstly, it is important to note that "giving an answer can be used to accept the presentation of a question by virtue of its conditional relevance" (Clark and Schaefer, 1989, p.272). In other words, giving an appropriate answer to a question posed to you could be considered evidence of understanding the question. The following interaction, again taken from unit 5 of *Let's Try 1* (MEXT, 2017a, p.20) and modified, includes just such a show of understanding:

A: So... what sports do you like?
B: I like soccer.

A contributes to the conversation by presenting B with an utterance which, in this case, is a question about sports preference. In response, B presents A with the utterance 'I like soccer'. Since soccer is a sport and B has said that they like it, this could be considered an appropriate answer. B has shown positive evidence of understanding A's question and has also been able to complete the question-answer adjacency pair.

However, as Clark and Schaefer (1989) point out, "Answers, of course, are also contributions, so they too should have presentation and acceptance phases" (p.272). B's answer could also be considered a contribution to the conversation in its own right, and one which A might very well display understanding of in his/her next utterance. For example, A might choose to respond in the following way:

A: So... what sports do you like?
B: I like soccer.
A: <u>What soccer team do you like</u>?

A has responded to B's answer by initiating another question-answer adjacency pair. However, it is important to note that it the question is not arbitrarily chosen; it is relevant to the conversation in that it displays understanding of B's previous utterance. Of course, A does not have to necessarily respond with a question; s/he may choose to make a statement instead, as in the following example:

A: So... what sports do you like?
B: I like soccer.
A: <u>Me, too</u>!

By stating his/her own sports preference, which in this case happens to be the same as B's, A is making a relevant contribution to the conversation that can also be considered to display understanding of B's previous utterance.

Incorporating such relevant next turns as the *relevant questions* and *relevant statements* shown above might just help students start to develop the skills necessary to perform interactions that do not end abruptly after the completion of a question-answer adjacency pair.

3.2.1 Relevant Questions

It is one thing to say that students should ask relevant questions but quite another to be specific about what sort of questions they would be capable of asking. Of course, the students could be expected to use previously studied language in their interactions. Therefore, for example, since elementary school students study "Do you like 〜?" and "What 〜 do you like?" in grade 3, they can be expected to be able to incorporate these questions in interactions they perform with classmates in grade 4, 5, and 6. They may even be able to apply the same formula to "Can you 〜 ?" to get the following interaction, taken from the grade 5 textbook, *We Can! 1* (MEXT, 2017d, p.44) and modified.

> A: Can you cook?
> B: Yes.
> A: What can you cook?
> B: Curry rice.

However, ultimately, the students may be severely limited in the range of relevant questions that they can ask simply because they have not yet studied all the phrases they may want to use. It is there that short-form questions may come to the rescue, as can be seen in the following interaction.

> A: Can you dance?
> B: Yes.
> A: Hip-hop?
> B: No... rock!

Applying the same formula as the previous example might result in a student asking "What can you dance?", which does not seem to be an appropriate usage of the question. Of course, what a student wants to really ask might be "What sort of dancing do you do? Hip-hop?"; however, A may simply not know enough to be able to produce the first question and, even if s/he did, there is no guarantee that B would understand it. There is a better chance that both A and B know the single word "hip-hop", though, and so making that one word the question might be a more effective method of progressing the conversation. Another example of another question-answer adjacency pair that might benefit from short-form questions features in the following (modified) interaction from unit 5 of the grade 6 textbook *We Can! 2* (MEXT, 2017e, p.44).

> A: So... what did you do (during the summer holidays)?
> B: I went to Costco.
> A: Yahata? Hisayama?
> B: Yahata.

The long-form version of the question might be "Which Costco did you go to? Did you go to the Yahata Costco? Or did you go to the Hisayama Costco?". However, again, the students may not have the capacity to formulate those questions, whereas they are quite capable of producing the short-form versions.

3.2.2 Relevant Statements

Relevant statements that elementary school students might be capable of producing would,

again, include previously studied language. However, it seems to be effective to also have a stock set of short, easy to remember statements that elementary school students can use in various different situations. Such a stock set of short statements might include the phrases "Me, too.", "Me, either.", "Cool.", "I thought so.", and "Really?", all of which can convey information regarding how the communication partner's contribution to the conversation relates to themselves or their opinions and expectations. For example, the phrases "Me, too." and "Me, either." are an efficient way of conveying similarity of opinion or condition.

> A: Hey, do you like chicken?
> B: Yes, I do.
> A: Me, too! Do you like kiwi fruit?
> B: No, I don't.
> A: Me, either.

Expressions such as "Cool.", which could conceivably be used in combination with "Me, too." to reinforce similarity, can also be used in isolation as an alternative to "Me, too." or "Me, either" in order to subtly convey difference. Of course, difference could be conveyed by using other, more direct statements that bring greater attention to that difference, such as in the following example.

> A: Hey, what sports do you like?
> B: I like soccer.
> A: Soccer? I hate soccer. (*A is not a fan of soccer*)

However, it seems more appropriate to encourage students to respond using non-committal, more socially harmonious expressions such as "Cool.", "That's nice.", "Right.", etc.

> A: Hey, what sports do you like?
> B: I like soccer.
> A: Cool. 　(*A is not a fan of soccer*)

Finally, phrases like "I thought so." and "Really?" can be used to convey how a partner's contribution matched/conflicted with one's own expectations or pre-existing knowledge, as in the following examples.

> A: So... what time do you get up?
> B: I get up at 3 a.m.
> A: 3 a.m.? Really? (*A thought that B might get up a little later*)

> A: Hey, when is your birthday?
> B: My birthday is April 2nd.
> A: I thought so! (*A thought that B's birthday was April 2nd even before asking*)

The preparation of a limited stock of phrases such as those introduced above seems to allow students to more easily show understanding and express themselves without always having to come up with a more original response.

3.3 Side-sequences and Relevant Next Turns – When to Incorporate

While it is possible to encourage students to incorporate both side-sequences and relevant next turns in their interactions at the same time, it may be more appropriate to focus on one or the other depending on how far a class has progressed in a unit of study. Specifically, inserting content confirming side-sequences into interactions is more likely to be necessary while the learners have only a tentative grasp on the target vocabulary set, or while the students may not consider the ability to convey/ understand the target vocabulary set to be common ground for their class. In fact, the start of many units of study may be designed to help students manufacture this very common ground, with teachers quite possibly having students perform stripped down interactions consisting only of the vocabulary set and the side-sequence. An example of this sort of interaction might be:

> A: Soccer.
> > B: Soccer? (*doing a soccer gesture*)
> > A: Yes.

An activity based upon such an interaction would be focused purely on acquiring the ability to convey/ understand the vocabulary items in question. On the other hand, once learners have a firmer grasp on the target vocabulary set and consider the ability to convey/understand the target vocabulary set to be common ground for their class, it may be more appropriate to focus on relevant next turns such as the relevant questions and statements mentioned in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

4. Outlook for the future

The concept of grounding may prove to be an invaluable tool for English language teachers in Japanese elementary schools because of the way it may well help teachers more clearly understand certain curriculum goals, more easily grade student ability, and more readily tweak textbook interactions so that students are encouraged to show more positive evidence of understanding to one another. As such, it is surely important to conduct research in order to ascertain how aware teachers currently are of the concepts of grounding and work to achieve a greater awareness. Research that aims to ascertain how much incorporating grounding into English language classes at Japanese elementary schools affects student motivation and/or ability should also be considered.

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