

The Right Stuff: Critical English Communication Skills for Japanese Business Professionals Working in the Global Marketplace

Yoshiko Aiba

Corporate Officer and Principal Lecturer, Q-Leap Inc.



Communication: A Core Competency in the Global Workplace

6 Core Competencies for All Level of the Organization

1. Adaptability
2. **Communication**
3. Decision Making
4. Driving for Results
5. Innovation
6. Teamwork

Communication Skills

- Good verbal communicator
- Good writer
- Good listener
- Good public speaker
- Makes good presentations
- Reports always accurate, punctual
- Shares information with team

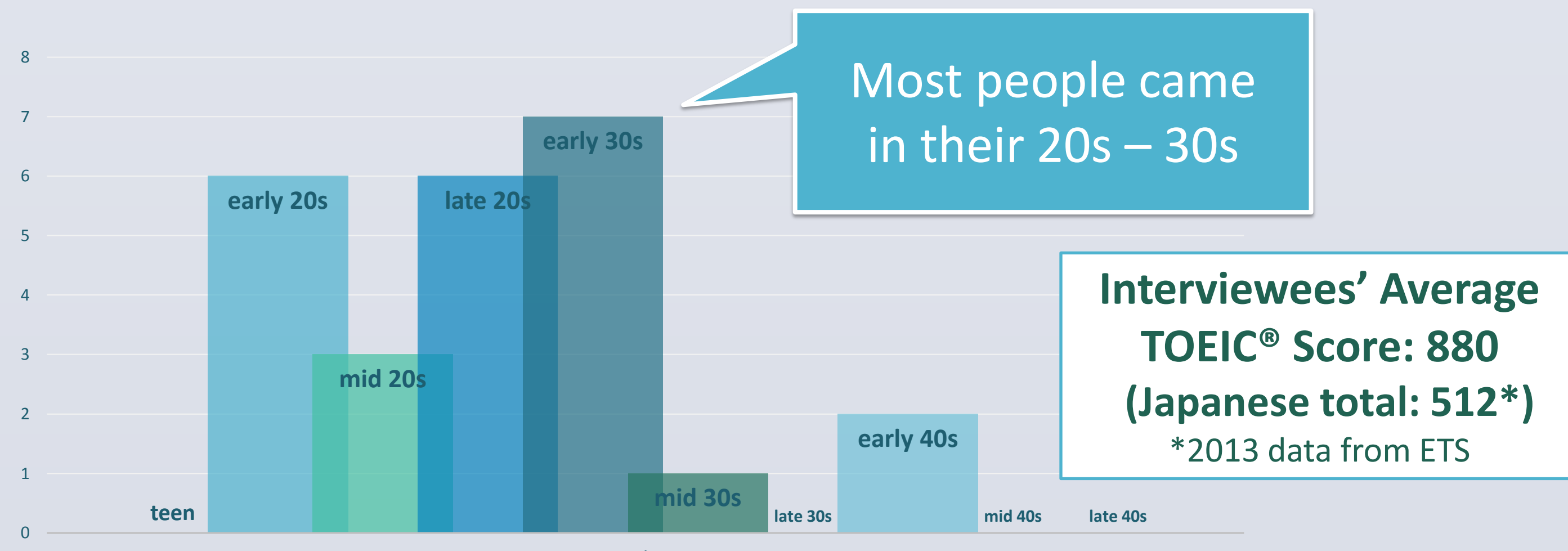
What Impact Do They Want to Have by Communicating Effectively?

- Gain the respect and cooperation of colleagues
- Develop trust with internal partners and external customers
- Build a network of strategic business relationships
- Help themselves and others embrace change
- Resolve interpersonal conflicts
- Provide feedback that helps people achieve higher levels of performance
- Turn difficult customer situations into positive interactions

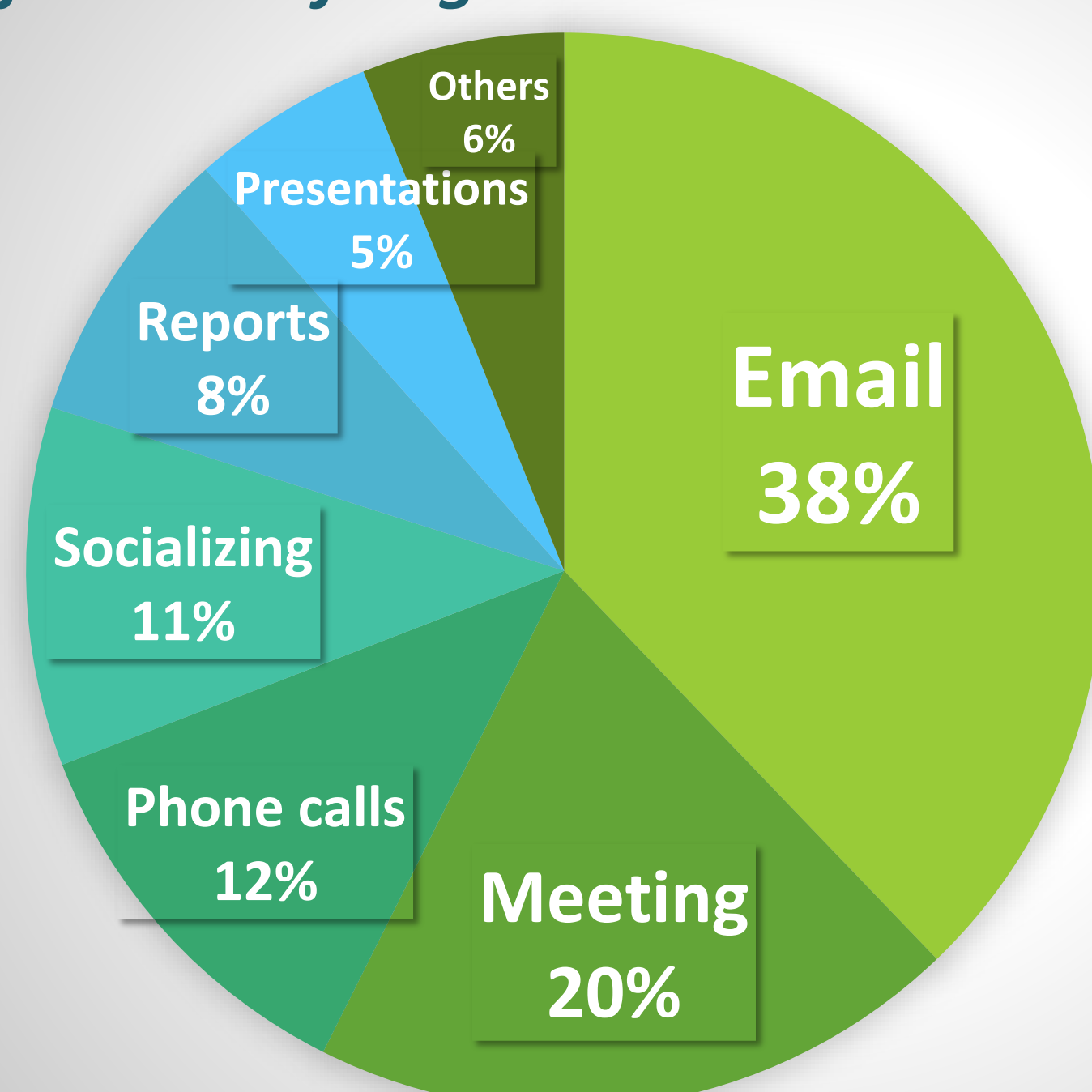
Analysis of Japanese Business Professionals' English Proficiency

- Interviewees: 25 Japanese business people working in the US
- Period: Nov. 2013 - Aug. 2014
- Industries: Finance, Trading, Health, Oil & Gas, Medical, Education, Fashion, IT, Consulting, Coaching, Media, Coaching, Art
- Responsibilities: Sales, M&A Consulting, Marketing, Management, Phys. Dentist, Licensing, Artist, Wedding planner, Geologist, Trader

Ages When They First Came to America to Work



Major Uses of English at Work



Email & Meeting account for more than 50%

All 4 skills are needed

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking

Most Challenging Situations When Communicating in English

- Listening
 - When speakers speak very fast or with strong accents
 - Tele-conferences (when sound quality is not good)
- Speaking
 - Discussion, Negotiation
 - Meeting facilitation
 - Making complaints & Handling complaints
 - Q&A at presentations
- Culture
 - Cross-cultural differences
 - Sense of humor, Small talk

Teaching Strategies for JP Learners Who Pursue a Global Career

English Proficiency Prerequisite:

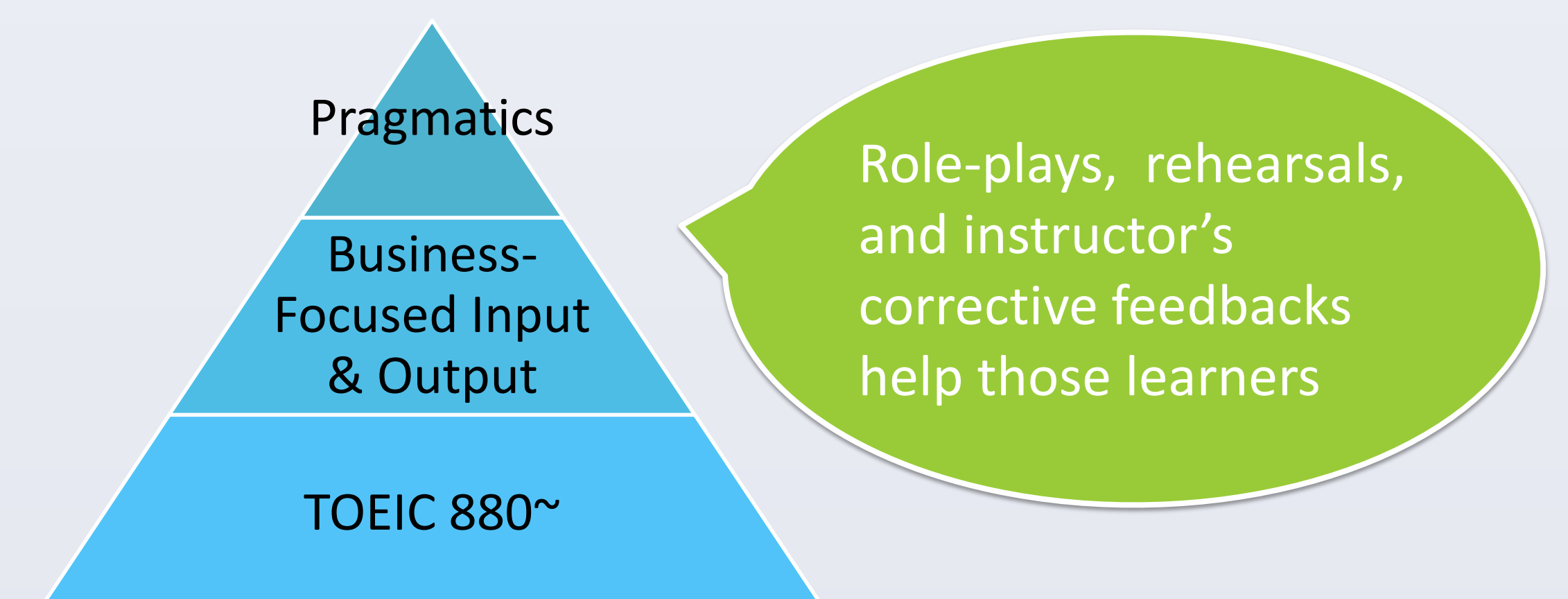
TOEIC® 880 / TOEIC SW 340 / TOEFL iBT 95 / IELTS 6.5 / Eiken Pre-1
These scores prove the learners' English proficiency including vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Business-Focused Language Input & Output

Business meetings, tele-conferences, presentations, negotiation, Q&A, meeting facilitation etc.

Pragmatics skills (Socio-Cultural Appropriateness)

Inter-culture & inter-language pragmatics skills including speech acts strategies. e.g. requests, refusals, complaints, apologies etc.



Sample Lesson

Goal: "How to Effectively Enhance Self-Esteem"

Enhancing self-esteem means telling your colleagues or clients that their insights and input make a difference. When people succeed at something or make a valuable contribution, you can enhance their esteem by acknowledging their efforts. This can motivate and energize them as they will know that what they do is valued and appreciated.

Key Strategies:

- Be specific and sincere
- Use the person's name to make a more personal connection
- Recognize accomplishments and efforts
- Acknowledge good thinking and ideas
- Use context-appropriate language depending on SDI*

* S-Social Status
D-Distance
I-Intensity

Sample expressions:

"Thanks so much for finding such a nice venue for our PR event, Maki. I'm sure our guests will be very happy. You're the best!"

"Thank you for pointing out this issue, Mr. Sato. I appreciate your taking the time to tell me there was a problem."

"Grace, you're really good at creating high-impact presentations, so thanks for offering to make our proposal. It definitely will attract our potential customers."



Role play: Tell your colleague Jack that you appreciate his effort to keep track of everyone's requests to submit an accurate list to management .

→ Teacher to give corrective feedback to the speech.

References

- Ishihara, N. & Cohen, A. D. (2010) "Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet." Harlow, Essex, England: Longman/Pearson Education.
- Maxwell, J.C. (2010) "Everyone communicates, few connect: What the most effective people do differently." Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson
- "Communicating with Impact", Development Dimensions International, Inc, MMX

Contact Information

Ms. Yoshiko Aiba
yoshikoaiba@q-leap.co.jp
<http://q-leap.co.jp/>

