

# Using iPad App “Kumata” at Junior High School to Facilitate Self-Expression in English

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## Abstract

Today, there is an increasing need for Japanese school children to master self-expression in English. However, they are likely to feel reluctant or end up with a poor performance when it comes to self-expression. They need some assistance. This summer, a practice using an iPad picture moviemaking app “Kumata” was conducted at junior high school to see how it facilitated self-expression in English. As a result, most students were able to express themselves in English without hesitation.

**Keywords** : picture movie, iPad, digital storytelling, multimedia learning, learner-centered output-based learning

## 1. Introduction

The second author Susono has been developing such learner-centered output-based (Joho-Hasshin) activities as 3sCard and digital storytelling (DST). DST has first-person narration as a feature, and usually a learner utilizes a computer or other digital devices by him/herself and puts pictures and the narration together. Consequently, s/he can produce a creative story.

At Mie University, students have produced digital stories through Windows Moviemaker or iMovie since the practice began in 2006. Compared with those of 10 years ago, the present students of the “digital native” generation are more familiar with digital devices and movie editing software, but they still need some time secured for production. Meanwhile, the Mie University Higashikishu satellite faculty developed an iPad app “Kumata” to enable simpler movie-making, even for K-12 students. The name “Kumata” comes from the city of Kumano, where the Higashikishu satellite campus of the university lies.

This study focuses on how Kumata helps junior high school students express themselves in English. The practice was carried out in cooperation with the Higashikishu regional contribution by Mie University.

## 2. Design of Kumata, and the concept of multimedia learning

The following are the points considered for the design of Kumata:

- Operation is user-friendly to lower grade elementary school students
- Movies can be completed within a short period of time
- Movies can be produced in the ordinary classroom without difficulty
- Photographing and hand-drawing functions are included
- Narration can be recorded

The app can be used in various information-spreading activities.

Mayer’s principle of multimedia learning (2009) is “People learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone.” According to this statement, it is beneficial for teachers to know how to utilize Kumata in class. Our practice (described later) will imply what sort of effects would be obtained by adding pictorial slides to self-

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introduction presentation in English.

### 3. Features of Kumata

#### (1) Usability for lower grade elementary school students

As shown in the upper-right corner of the initial screen (Figure 1), a user can choose the display language between *kanji-hiragana* combination and *hiragana* only.

#### (2) Options for the number of slides, switching slide orders and deleting slides etc.

The number of slides to use can be fixed initially or modified afterwards (Figure 1). In the editing screen (Figure 2), the order of the slides can be changed manually, and slides can be deleted with a single tap.

#### (3) Simple movie making functions

There are no options for slide transitions, pan and zoom and visual effects unlike the movie editing software for computers. Slides are switched automatically as narration moves on.

#### (4) Adding a script

A script for the narration can be added to each slide (Figure 2).

#### (5) Recording

Narration can be recorded to each slide. The user can see the script while recording and record the narration repeatedly (Figure 2).

### 4. Educational practice plans using Kumata

As part of the Regional Support at the Higashikishu satellite campus, an educational practice using Kumata was conducted in Higashikishu region.

#### Lesson plan overview

Date : 10-11<sup>th</sup> July, 2018

Venue : Asuka Junior High School, Kumano

Targeted Grades: 7<sup>th</sup> grade (6 students), 8<sup>th</sup> grade (7 students) and 9<sup>th</sup> grade (4 students).

Goal : To make an English presentation movie about something (somebody) you like.

#### Warmer

Students sit in a group. The teacher shows a completed presentation movie to let the students know what they are going to do.

#### Initial settings

Each student gets an iPad. They type their names as title. The initial settings are “1 slide” for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and “2 slides” for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The number of characters is “Unlimited”.



Figure 1.  
iPad app “Kumata” initial screen



Figure 2.  
Kumata editing screen

### Making a title slide and end slide

Following the teacher’s instruction, students make the title and end slides together. For the title slide, they choose their favorite background colors and write their names by handwriting, and set slide duration to “1 second”. For the end slide, they choose the background color and wrote “END” by handwriting. The duration is 1 second.

### Writing a speech script

Students learn how to write speech scripts using the worksheet (Figure 3). The given rules are “two sentences and one question.” Beginning with “Hello, everyone. My name is ...”, students talk about their favorite things using the sentence “I like ...”. Second, another sentence is added to offer more information. Third, a question is asked to the audience. Finally, the speech is closed with “Thank you.” Students are allowed to use dictionaries and ask their classmates and the teachers for help. They can also choose between typing the script directly on Kumata, or writing on the worksheet first.

**Self-introduction Movie**

Rules: Three sentences and one question.

Hello, everyone...

◆ My name is \_\_\_\_\_

◆ I like \_\_\_\_\_

◆ \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you...

**Example A:**  
Hello, everyone...  
My name is Maho Ninomiya...  
I like cars...  
My dream car is Honda NSX...  
What is your dream car? Thank you...

**Example B:**  
Hello, everyone. My name is Aki Oyama. I like table tennis. I play it after school. Do you play sports? Thank you...

**Example C:**  
Hello, everyone. My name is Maho Ninomiya. I like cars. My dream car is Honda NSX. What is your dream car? Thank you...

Figure 3. Worksheet

### Adding images

Students who have finished writing the script start adding images. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will draw pictures, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders will take some pictures which are related to their speech content.

### Recording

In order to avoid catching each other’s voice and noise, students stand part from each other in the classroom while recording. They can try recording repeatedly.

### Presentation

Students show the movies to other classmates and teachers.



Figure 5. Adding images



Figure 6. Recording



Figure 4.  
Model slides for self-introduction

## 5. Results and Discussion

Students actively and creatively wrote scripts, added images and recorded their speech. For instance, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader talked about her favorite sport boxing (Figure 7), and a 9<sup>th</sup> grader talked about her favorite activity, which is to play the piano (Figure 8). All the students managed to complete and show their movies by the end of the lesson.

The following are the advantages of Kumata found as a sequel to the practice.

(1) The overall advantage of introducing Kumata to junior high school English classes

Some teachers may wonder why students should use Kumata while PowerPoint is also available to make scripts, speech and pictorial slides. One of the advantages of using Kumata is that it makes English presentation more stress-free.

PowerPoint enables sophisticated and powerful presentation, but it calls for various techniques such as:

- a voice of great volume
- to consider the layout of the words and pictures within a slide
- to write and memorize the script
- non-verbal communication skills, including facial expressions, body postures and gesture
- to rehearse in advance, etc.

It is fairly difficult for junior high school students to tick all the boxes at satisfactory levels, even when using a native language.

Whereas in case of Kumata, what presenters need are:

- to write a script and read it with a clear pronunciation
- to write easily-recognizable words on slides
- to draw or insert simple pictures

As less skills are required, Kumata decreases resistance to presentation, and therefore can be a suitable software for beginner English learners.

(2) Advantages of using images in English presentation

Using pictures, students were able to give presentations both verbally and visually, making the content understood more easily.

In addition, it encouraged listeners, who might not be keen on listening to an English speech, to pay more attention to their classmates' presentation.

During the lesson, however, some students seemed to have difficulty drawing pictures by hand, so it might be easier to use more online images or take pictures of the related objects as the 9<sup>th</sup> graders did.

(3) Advantages of recording

Recording of the narration is not just a means of self-expression, but also gives learners a chance to check their own pronunciation objectively. If they recognize any faults, they can either self-correct it. They can also have their teachers and classmates point out improvements in order to make the movies better. As a result of repeated correction, they can expect progress in English pronunciation.

At Asuka Jr. High School, the students only self-corrected their speech as soon as they made mistakes. Had they been given more time, they could have tried harder to speak English more fluently.

## 6. Conclusion

In the near future, more practices using Kumata should be conducted at elementary and junior high schools, in and outside the Higashikishu region, and for various subjects to find how the features of Kumata can be utilized in output-based activities and multimedia learning.

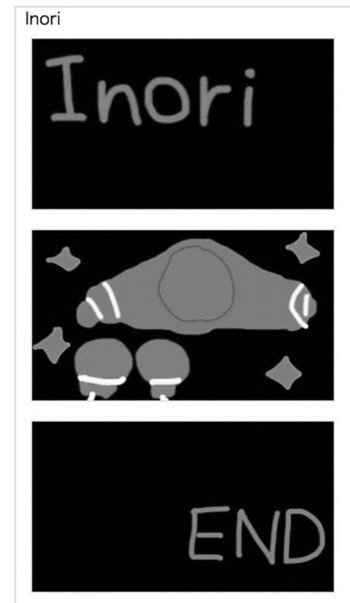


Figure 7. "I like boxing."



Figure 8. "I like piano."

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