<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>TV programs for children: experiences in Japan and future possibilities for international cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Sachiko, Imaizumi Kodaira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/2827">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/2827</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TV Programs For Children: Experiences In Japan
And Future Possibilities For International Cooperation

By

Sachiko Imazumi Kodaira
TV Programs for Children: Experiences in Japan and Further Possibilities for International Cooperation

Sachiko Imaizumi KODAIRA
NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute
Tokyo, Japan

Seminar on Children and Television
11/12/13 September, 1991
Jakarta, INDONESIA
TV Programs for Children: 
Experiences in Japan and Further 
Possibilities for International Cooperation 

Sachiko Imaizumi KODAIRA 
NHK Broadcasting Culture 
Research Institute

I. Introduction

Children's TV programs have been broadcast since 1953 in Japan. On one hand, animations, widely enjoyed not only by Japanese children but also by children around the world today, have been sometimes criticized because of their possible negative influence. On the other hand, educational broadcasting by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) has gained a good reputation because of its quality and effective use in schools/kindergartens all over Japan, though these programs have not been introduced worldwide yet.

From our recent international survey and also from my own experience at attending international conferences and seminars in this field, I have found that many countries are now interested in various forms of international cooperation, to maintain and improve the quality of programs for children.

In this presentation, I would like to introduce briefly the characteristics of TV programs for children, viewing habits of children, examples of studies to develop new programs for pre-school children in Japan. Then, I will discuss possibilities for international cooperation in the further development of quality programs for children.

I. Introduction
II. Trends in TV Programs for Children in Japan
III. Viewing Habits of Children
IV. Use of Television at Schools and Kindergartens
V. Studies for the Development of New Programs for Pre-school Children
IV. Future Prospects for Children's TV and Possibilities for International Cooperation
II. Trends in TV Programs for Children in Japan

In Japan, television programs for children, — both for home-viewing and for school use — began with the start of TV broadcasting in 1953.

As for home-viewing, after the first few years of trial and error, the first serialized puppet show was started in 1956 by NHK (the Japan Broadcasting Corporation), which is Japan's only non-profit, nationwide public broadcasting organization (*Kodaira, 1986).

Since the beginning of the 1960s, many kinds of children's programs have been introduced on TV, both by NHK and by commercial stations. These include puppet shows, children's dramas, family dramas, school dramas, science programs, quiz shows, children's magazine programs and news show, and so on.

In particular, the spectacular success of "Astro Boy"(1963-1966), Japan's first full-scale TV animation series, was followed by a flood of various animated cartoons, which captured the hearts of children all over Japan. Another type of TV programs which has attracted Japanese boys since the mid-1960s is the super-hero type science-fiction drama with special-effects. (These are often called "monster" or "metamorphosis" dramas.)

These two types of TV programs -- mostly presented by commercial TV, with a lot of advertisements included -- have been very popular among Japanese children, especially between three and ten years old. Recently, these types account for most of children's TV programs for home-viewing in Japan. Most of the top 10 popular programs among children ages 7 to 12 from 1980 to 1990 have been these two types of programs.

Animated cartoon series and super-hero type dramas have been very attractive to sponsors, too, since profits can be expected from the sale of related merchandise. However, these programs have often been criticized because of their possible negative influence on children.
Many adults have expressed concern about these programs' tendencies toward violence, bad language and questionable emotional content. This problem has emerged not only in Japan but also in other countries where these Japanese animations are broadcast, especially since the late 1970s.

Programs for Pre-school Children

But TV programs for pre-school children also include NHK's "With Mother," a highly educational variety series designed for viewing by young children at home with their mothers. Started in 1959, this is now the longest-running of all children's TV shows in Japan. These programs are broadcast Monday through Saturday [from 9:30 on NHK's General Channel, with a rebroadcast at 17:00 on the Educational Channel] (*Kodaira, 1987).

Each program is 25 minutes long, with different segments such as a skit by performers disguised as animals (the main characters), a game and song hosted by a brother and a sister, children's calisthenics (the audience-participation corner), a short animation, films about children's daily lives (brushing teeth, putting on pajamas by themselves). The main goals of the series are to enrich the imagination of children and help them adapt to society. Since the beginning of the 1980s, efforts have focused on developing segments designed for two and three year olds, who are now the main target audience of the program.

Previously, not only NHK but also commercial TV stations developed programs for pre-school children. At one time in the mid-1970s, there were as many as seven different series broadcast regularly by commercial stations in Tokyo area, influenced by the broadcast of "Sesame Street" (in its original English version) on NHK. However, by around 1980, almost all of these went off the air. Only one has survived today, titled "Open! Ponikki" (1973-- , Fuji TV). In fact, it is very difficult for commercial stations to find sponsors for educational programs or other kinds of quality programs for children.
Compared with the situation up to the 1970s, there has been a remarkable decline of diversity of programming for children's home-viewing, and this has come to be regarded as a serious problem. Recently, NHK, as an organization with a strong public service character, has emphasized the importance of services for children. It now provides "Time for Mothers and Children" (as of 1991, 8:00-9:00 and 15:30-18:00 on the ETV Channel). This includes rebroadcasts of seven programs for pre-school children both for home-viewing and school-use, and some other programs for pre-schoolers and children in the lower grades of primary school, such as "TV Picture Book" "Fun With English!," "I Can Do That Myself!" and "Child-rearing Calendar."

**School Broadcasting**

Today, in the one hand, around 30 hours per week of animated cartoons are broadcast (7 VHF in the Tokyo area). On the other hand, there are also around 30 hours of educational TV programs for children for school use, from the kindergarten through high school level, broadcast throughout Japan on NHK's Educational TV Channel, devoted exclusively to programs for educational purposes.

### School Broadcast Programs on Educational TV —Numbers of Broadcasts and Hours (Weekly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Broadcast</th>
<th>Rebroadcast</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Programs</td>
<td>No. of Hours</td>
<td>No. of Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten and Nursery School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School (J. H./S. H.)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0:20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0:40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excluding Senior High School Course*

*Apart from the above, 19 programs, equivalent to 4 hours and 50 minutes, including the rebroadcast, are broadcasted on Radio II Network.*
NHK is the only public service broadcasting organization in Japan and it is financed with fees collected from its audience. Thus NHK's educational broadcasting has a strong public service character, with nationwide networks. At present NHK operates four TV channels, including two satellite broadcasting channels, and three radio networks, including the FM network: educational programs including school broadcasts are broadcast mostly on the Educational TV Channel (ETV: 1959— ) and Radio II Network.

When NHK began public broadcasting in February, 1953, educational programs for primary schools and secondary schools were broadcast at the rate of one a day on six days a week. In the next few years priority was given to finding out how TV could best be used for subjects in school education; music, puppet plays, laboratory experiments, drawing and physical education. The year 1956 saw the start of TV programs for kindergartens and nursery schools. Thanks to close cooperation between NHK and school teachers engaged in education through broadcasts, school broadcasting has since spread steadily. (Radio school broadcasting, since 1935.)

Education through broadcasts is especially widespread at primary schools, with some 95% of them using NHK's school broadcasts. About half of NHK's school broadcasts are intended for primary schools; the Japanese, mathematics, science, social studies, ethics, and music. Some general subjects not specifically included in the school curriculum are also introduced in the school broadcasting.

Programs that enjoy the most popularity have been those on science, social studies and ethics (moral education). Science programs are presented in six series, for grade one through six. From its 30 years' experience, NHK emphasizes the children's thinking process. Unique characteristics of visual techniques such as observation of small objects with ultra-close-up photo, introduction of growth of plant with the use of time-lapse film, and computer graphics are fully utilized to respond to children's intelligence and curiosity.
For ethics programs, puppet show format is used for lower graders, and drama format for higher graders, and these program have played an important role to provide discussion material for classroom: friendship, family relations, life and death, and so on.

For preschool education -- for use at kindergartens (for 3 - 5 years old) and at nursery schools (for 0 - 5 years old), there are six series broadcast by the NHK, focused on the fields of health, social life and human relations, nature and environment, language and numbers, music and rhythm, and art and creativity. Each consists of 20 to 35 programs a year, with each program 15 minutes long. These TV programs and "With Mother" (originally for home-viewing) are both enjoyed at home and in kindergartens and nursery schools.

For more details on NHK's school broadcasting, including history, the contents of programs, broadcast schedule, process of program planning, and so on, the following is available in English: NHK, *NHK School Broadcasts*, 1991.
III. Viewing Habits of Children

Viewing Hours, Favorite Programs, Modes of Viewing

A survey conducted by NHK in 1979 revealed for the first time that Japanese children as young as two or three were watching television more than three hours on week days. This amount of time exceeded the average for primary and junior high school children, though it was less than that for adults. Since then, viewing hours in general have been on the decline, but the tendency continues for younger children such as three and four year olds to watch TV more than elder children.

There has been no regular nationwide large scale survey of children under six years old. A survey conducted in the Tokyo area in 1988 showed that children 3 and 4 years old were watching 2 hours and 46 minutes per day and primary school children were watching a little longer than two hours. [Fig.1] Another survey conducted in 1987 revealed that even 4-5 month old babies watched TV (or were exposed to TV at least), and the number of infants who 'almost never watched' began to decrease sharply after the age of 10-11 months (*Akiyama & Kodaira, 1990) [Fig.2]

Many one to two year olds watch with great interest the NHK's "With Mother" and "Open! Ponkikki" of Fuji TV; both are intended for pre-schoolers. They also enjoy at home NHK's educational TV series prepared for kindergartens and nursery schools. Moreover, some watch even school programs for the lower grades at primary school. Among these, "With Mother" is especially popular among Japanese children; many start watching this program even before their first birthday.

Children past age three become increasingly interested in animated cartoons, SF fantasy dramas with special effects (especially boys), and variety shows for general audiences mostly broadcast on commercial channels. Differences appear around age 3 or 4 in the program preference of boys and girls. Boys like programs which include actions they can imitate and use in play with friends later, while girls prefer family-type stories. Children of this age group tend to
watch TV more often by themselves or with other children, rather than with their parents. They often want to own toys and games, books, stationery or clothes and bags associated with favorite TV characters.

So far, almost all of the programs enjoyed by Japanese children, both educational and entertainment, are Japan-made, since generally speaking TV programs regularly broadcast have been produced mostly by Japanese organizations until quite recently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Child only</th>
<th>With mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>2:08</td>
<td>2:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>2:46</td>
<td>2:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>2:31</td>
<td>2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>2:47</td>
<td>2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>2:51</td>
<td>2:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.1. Television viewing hours per day
(NHK, 1988, Tokyo Metropolitan Area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (months)</th>
<th>TV Viewing Hours per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-5 months</td>
<td>almost never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 months</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 months</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11 months</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17 months</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23 months</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-29 months</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35 months</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.2. TV viewing hours of infants per day
(Research on Infants in the TV Age Project, 1987)
Changing Media Environment

Children are also affected by changes such as the spread of VCRs, which are now found in around 80% of Japanese households. Children are watching repeatedly favorite TV programs recorded at home and also VCR software bought or rented from shops. At the age of one to two, more than 70% of children whose family own a VCR use it. It is interesting to know that 1-2 year olds tend to use a VCR every day, more than older children. [Fig.3] Children's ability to operate a VCR is quite advanced even among pre-school children, especially among boys.

Video games (called "TV game" in Japan) has also become enormously popular in the 1980s in Japan. This "TV game boom" has been spreading recently to younger children, again especially among boys.

Such new uses of TV screens -- replaying TV programs and VCR software and playing video games -- are expected to affect trends in children's TV-viewing in ways quite different from what we have seen in the past.

---

**Fig.3. Diffusion of VCRs in families and use by children**

(NHK, Tokyo Metropolitan Area)
**Parental Involvement**

As for family rules of children's TV viewing, in the case of 1 to 2 year olds, "what to view" is the biggest concern of mothers, then as children grow, mothers' concerns move to "total viewing hours a day" and "when to view" rather than program contents. [Table I]

### Table I. Family rules on TV-viewing
(NHK, 1987, Tokyo Metropolitan Area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>what to view</th>
<th>when to view</th>
<th>total viewing hours a day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-to-4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-to-6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-to-8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quite a small number of mothers are very strict about their children's TV viewing, although many are quick to discipline their children in other areas of life, such as proper greetings, consideration for others and teeth-brushing.

One reason why Japanese parents are not very strict about children's TV viewing can be explained as follows. Since popular TV programs invariably tend to become the subjects of exchanges (through role-playing, imitating characters, and conversations) among their play group or at school, children who are ignorant about such TV programs often find themselves left out. And mothers worry that their children will be left out or treated badly by their friends.
IV. Use of Television at Schools and Kindergartens

NHK's School Broadcast Utilization Survey

The NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute has conducted nation­wide School Broadcast Utilization Surveys since 1950 to get basic data on the dissemination of audio-visual equipment and the utilization of NHK's radio and TV school broadcasts, and also to evaluate programs through teachers' observations (*Kodaira, 1989a; *Kodaira, 1989b). This survey began to include kindergartens and nursery schools in 1957, and recently, questions to study teachers' attitudes towards TV in general are included (*Kodaira, 1987). The survey covers a total of around 5,000 kindergartens, nursery school, primary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools and schools for handicapped children throughout Japan.

As of 1990-91, 95.1% of primary schools all over Japan were making use of NHK's school TV broadcasting. The rate was 65.8% for kindergartens, and 77.0% for nursery schools. [Fig.4]

Most of Japan's primary schools have TV sets in all of their classrooms, and this enables teachers to use programs easily, if they coordinate lessons with broadcasting schedules. Immediate use of programs is most common at primary schools. Those schools which also use videotaped programs still concentrate mainly on immediate broadcast use.

On the other hand, VCRs have long been widespread among junior and senior high schools; now the average number of VCRs is five at junior high schools and seven at senior high schools. The use of VCRs makes it possible for teachers to view beforehand the contents of programs, and also makes it possible to coordinate NHK's annual broadcast schedule with the school's own schedules.
Utilization of TV school broadcasts in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Utilization Rate (%)</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>9,686 ± 497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery schools</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>17,555 ± 682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>23,364 ± 348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior high schools</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>4,463 ± 361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior high schools</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>3,043 ± 158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4. Utilization rate of NHK's school broadcasting

(NHK's School Broadcast Utilization Surveys)
The results of the NHK's School Broadcast Utilization Surveys have had important implications for NHK's policy. The following is one of recent examples. NHK has changed its approach to preparing TV programs for secondary schools since 1980 when VCRs came to be owned by more secondary schools. Rather than long-term series containing more than 30 programs throughout a year, NHK prepares a lot of short series of four or five programs on specific topics, and these programs are videotaped and then used whenever needed at junior high and senior high schools.

Recent surveys indicate that teaching materials using video packages, video discs and computer software are beginning to gain popularity among Japanese teachers, and now NHK is using the results of its surveys and other studies to work out plans for educational broadcasting in the new, challenging media environment.

Studies by Experiments for Development of TV Programs

Another type of studies on school broadcasting are experiments. Experiments aiming at the scientific analysis of children's reactions to TV programs and the analysis of educational effects of the programs in relation to the composition of the programs are always very important for improvements in school broadcasting. Such studies have discussed various programs in terms of their subject, composition, mode of presentation, camerawork, editorial techniques, and so on. Various methods have been used to study the relationship between the contents of programs and children's responses, including use of a program analyzer (especially from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s).

Studies to analyze reactions of children to various types of experimentally-produced programs are very useful in developing new programs with educational purposes: one of the examples will be introduce in the following chapter.
V. Studies for the Development of New Programs for Pre-school Children

Research Project on Television Programming for Two Year Olds

In the 1980s, various studies on "young children and TV" were conducted in Japan. Several surveys in the late-1970s revealed that children of two and three years old were watching TV more than three hours a day, more than the average for primary and junior high school children, and that they seem highly susceptible to TV's influence.

At around the same time, studies of developmental psychology and cerebral physiology showed that a number of things children in this age bracket should learn can be taught through television. Producers of "With Mother" also became interested in developing new segments for younger children as part of their series, although "With Mother" was originally targeted at four to five-year-olds.

In response, NHK's producers and research members, including myself, and developmental psychologists, pedagogists and other experts got together in 1978 to form the Research Project on Television Programming (now Media) for Two Year Olds (headed by Dr. T. Shirai).

Since then, we have been working to develop TV programs for very young children. We have often adopted the method of viewing-experiments with a distractor, in an experimental room, using test programs, then analyzing various reactions of children (such as viewing attention, verbal reactions, and various non-verbal reactions including smiles). Then programs were revised in line with the results of such studies.

The first study by this project team in 1979 centered on an experiment with 61 segments from existing TV programs and commercials which adults thought would appeal to two-year-olds. These segments had a number of elements which could be considered attractive: the appearance of other children or their voices, animation rather than puppets, and active-stationary movements (such as jumping and stopping in one place, without panning or zooming in the camerawork).
Then when a new Yoga-calisthenic segment was planned for NHK's "With Mother," especially for two-year-olds, eight kinds of experimental segments were produced, using different conditions regarding the performer, the variety and the number of Yoga poses, the amount of instruction, the backdrop, and the length of segment. Through analyzing the response of two-year-old test viewers, improvements were achieved for the final production of the Yoga segment now still being broadcast. A survey conducted after the broadcasting started revealed that this segment was most popular among children aged 2 to 2 years and 5 months old, the expected target audience (*Kodaira & Akiyama, 1988).

Rough sketch of an experimental studio for television viewing.
Development of the Animation Features, "Kids Like Us"

A more recent example of program development through viewing experiment studies is the series of one-minute animation features called "Kids Like Us" (Konnako Irukana), broadcast as part of "With Mother" since September, 1986.

The members of the Research Project on Television Programming for Two Year Olds began working to develop short story series in animation, with innovative ideas for two and three year old children, based on the results of a wide range of studies since 1978. The team decided to create several characters reflecting typical traits and behavior of children in this age group -- such as tendencies to be hard-to-please, mischievous, untidy, forgetful, greedy, careless, and so on. Then, each of characters was to be featured in segments just one or two minutes long, for continuous and repeated broadcasting.

The goal of this animation series is to let children watch these characters regularly, then reflect on their own behavior, and also learn that there are various types around them, or more widely, in our society. One important point is that it was decided not to include comments such as "Don't do this" or "Do this," since learning by themselves is important for children even at this age of two.

Every member of the project team joined in discussions on the main characters, their naming, story lines and selection of narrators and animators. Using the same method as in previous experiments, a total of 96 two and four-year old children were observed while they watched the experimental programs, and interviews including memory tests were also conducted (*Akiyama & Kodaira, 1987).

The experiment lasted one week, and the results showed that the experimentally produced animated segments attracted even more attention from children than expected. Some adjustments were made for the final production: the background was made simpler, and the subsidiary characters, a cat and dog, were made smaller, to give more importance to the main characters and then to make sure that two-year-olds could understand the important message of the series. There was
also discussion about further development of the story lines and presentation (continuity and repetition). The series started with six main characters in 1986, and then six more characters were added later.

(Yadamon is playing alone in a sandbox, making a sandcastle)

- Do you know that well-known Yadamon who's always saying "No"?

- When the dog says "Let's play together," Yadamon says "No."

  (A cat comes along and points to Yadamon's bucket.)

- When the cat says, "May I use it?" Yadamon says "No."

- When she says, "Please!" Yadamon still says "No."

  (The cat leaves)

(Yadamon, alone again, makes a sandcastle)

- Then, Yadamon who always says "no" becomes disgusted with himself.

  (when his towering sandcastle collapses over his head.)

Point of lesson: Yadamon makes it a custom to say "No" to anyone who asks him to do anything. Again today he keeps on saying "No" as he plays in the sandbox. Finally he becomes disgusted with himself.
In order to survey how widely this animation series was being watched at home, and whether its goals were being achieved, surveys of a different type were conducted twice in 1986 and in 1987, after the start of broadcasting. This follow-up study was made through observation of children's reactions to "Kids Like Us" by their mothers and also some specialists. It showed that the series was very popular among two and three year olds and that their degree of understanding increased during the three months of the two surveys (*Kodaira & Akiyama, 1988).

![Survey Results Chart]

Fig. Changes in preference for "Kids Like Us"

Though a lot of manpower, budget and time is needed to conduct this type of study, it is very important for producers, researchers, parents, and educators to be seriously interested in the importance of the quality of children's programs through such cooperative activities.
VI Future Prospects for Children's TV and Possibilities for International Cooperation

There are still very many things to be done by researchers and producers -- and also by parents, teachers, and so on -- in order to develop a variety of programs for children appropriate for this rapidly changing society. For example, more intensive and long-term studies will be needed to assess the influence of TV and videos on children, and more widely, of the changing media environment around children as a whole, in order to develop the potentials of each type of media.

Another important point is that the majority of organizations producing and/or broadcasting educational programs and quality programs for children are now facing various difficulties, in common, as shown in the International Survey of Educational Broadcasting recently conducted by NHK. (*Kodaira, 1991).

The free market or competition-oriented philosophy has spread worldwide, and has had an enormous impact on educational broadcasting and children's programs, including basic policy planning and criteria used to judge programs. Those in charge of educational programs and general children's programs have a hard time increasing or even maintaining personnel and budgets. They often have to compete with other departments in their own organizations.

This seems to be true even in countries where people in various fields have worked successfully to provide a variety of quality TV programs for children, while trying not to broadcast programs which can easily attract children but are not good for their social/cultural development.

The NHK survey just mentioned, and various recent international seminars and conferences, have shown that there is now strong interest in international cooperation, not only for producing programs but also for establishing helpful mechanisms to promote a better environment for the development of quality broadcasting for children.
International cooperation, including co-production and exchanges of TV programs for children, has already become very common among European countries, especially among EBU (European Broadcasting Union) members, I believe. Today there is widespread interest in co-producing and other forms of international relations around the world.

The Prix Jeunesse Foundation established in 1964 has done much to emphasize the significance of TV programs for children and young people, to improve the quality of such programs, to promote international exchanges of programs and to increase international understanding, by regularly holding international contests and seminars and also sponsoring international comparative studies.

Experiences in Japan

Japan is a comparative newcomer in international co-productions and program exchanges. However, Japan has provided international opportunities in the field of educational broadcasting for many countries in every part of the world since the mid-1960s.

The Japan Prize International Educational Program Contest, established by NHK in 1965, has played an important role in improving educational programs, both for children and for adults, throughout the world, and in promoting international understanding and cooperation. It has done so not only by honoring a limited number of excellent programs but also by providing opportunities to exchange information and ideas through symposia.

(The Japan Prize has a sister-relationship with the Prix Jeunesse.)

In the hope that broadcasting and educational organizations throughout the world can find these examples of radio and TV programs useful and inspiring in their efforts to improve educational broadcasting, the Japan Prize Circulating Library (established in 1974), provides recording of outstanding entries in the Contest. As of 1990, the library has 130 programs in circulation for research and training purposes, through fifteen regional centers in fourteen countries: Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and New Delhi in Asia.
Another important activity done by Japan is international cooperation through supply of educational programs and dispatch of specialists in various fields to assist in development of educational broadcasting, in response to requests from abroad. With a history of more than 55 years of school broadcasting, NHK has been extending a helping hand to expand and improve educational broadcasts in Asia, Latin America and Africa, since the 1960s. Through these experiences, NHK has also learned a lot of new things.

Many countries express interest in a total system of providing and using educational broadcasting rather than individual training. In this context, interest in conducting research to find out the effectiveness of educational programs has been increased. For example, in Thailand, various NHK programs including school broadcasts have been broadcast in the Thai language since autumn, 1988. To study and evaluate the popularity and effectiveness of these NHK's school broadcast programs, especially science programs, on Thai children, an extensive survey and in-depth interviews were conducted in 1990, with cooperation from schools in three different areas of Thailand. The results of this kind of study will be very helpful for members both in Thailand and Japan, and also for other countries. (*Utamachant & Kodaira, 1991)

From Other Recent International Seminar/Conference

In the Tel Aviv Seminar 1990: ETV Broadcasting Research in the Nineties, organized by Israel Educational Television on behalf of EBU (European Broadcasting Union) especially for research members, the participants emphasized the importance of further collaboration among members around the world. They also proposed the establishment of an international association for exchanging research and information, and for conducting joint research projects, to contribute to the increased broadcasting of quality programs (*Tidhar, 1990)
Then in the International Conference on Adaptation of "Sesame Street" organized by CTW (Children's Television Workshop) and NOS (Netherlands Omroep Stichting) [Amsterdam, September 1990], the participants were producers/program directors, researchers, and officials in charge of international coordination in various parts of the world. They introduced their own versions of "Sesame Street" with background information on pre-school education, experiences in co-production with CTW, and the impacts of programs on children and society in their own countries. This was the first time for most of participants to be able to watch a variety of "Sesame Street" adaptations and to learn more about pre-school education around the world. Then they discussed the need for new perspectives and a variety of ideas for the further development not only of "Sesame Street" offshoots but also of children's TV programs in general, including the new styles of co-production. "Understanding of other people and cultures" -- both within each country and from a global viewpoint -- was discussed as one of the important topics for children's programs in the future.

Future Prospects

In this context, international cooperation by producers and researchers of different backgrounds and cultures, with new concepts or frameworks of thinking, is becoming more important in the development of new programs for children around the world. I believe there is a strong need for a variety of programs for children of different age groups, to promote human understanding as a basis of international understanding.

Children in every country love watching TV. With careful planning and production, TV can provide young children with serious information attractively packaged and give them material to help develop their own thinking. Secondly, "international understanding" or more basically, "human understanding" will be more and more important as a part of education worldwide, especially in early childhood education, amid the rapid and complicated social changes as the next century approaches.
The importance of international cooperation, however, does not simply mean the increase of "international co-productions" or "international exchange of programs" or "international comparative studies." The most important point is that people engaged in providing children's TV programs -- in planning, production and broadcasting -- and those engaged in giving children suggestions how to view TV, including parents and teachers, must themselves have global viewpoints. They must understand and respect their own and other cultures/societies and learn new perspectives from one another. For this purpose, various kinds of international exchanges will be more and more meaningful.

It is essential to think of children's growth from a global viewpoint today; education is a common task for all humanity, regardless of nationality. I believe the role of TV in such education will be especially important.
References in English


*Akiyama, T. & Kodaira, S.I. (1990), "TV Viewing by Infants in Japan," *Medienpsychologie*, Jg.2, Heft3, (Germany)


*NHK (1991), *NHK School Broadcasts*


*Utamachant, V. & Kodaira, S.I. (1991), *The Effectiveness of NHK's Educational TV Series for Children in Thailand*