Pan SIG Journal 2018

Edited by Debopriyo Roy
& John Blake

PanSIG is an annual conference held in May, and organized by many of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT).

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The 17th Annual PanSIG conference was held at the Toyo Gakuen University (Hongo Campus) Tokyo, Japan from May 19th to 20th, 2018. The conference was a big success attended by over 463 participants from all over Japan and abroad. The environmental initiative and theme of the conference aiming to reduce our carbon footprints made it truly special and reflective of our times. Importantly, this was a collaborative effort from 26 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). The conference enabled participants to attend presentations on a variety of topics from a wide spectrum in the fields of language teaching and learning.

This journal represents the fourth edition of the annual PanSIG Journal in its latest form–following 13 years of proceedings publications beginning with 2002-which includes a selection of articles from the 2018 conference. With a comprehensive blind and detailed peer review process, including the new policy of allowing authors to take on the role of a reviewer, dedicated reviewing and editing committees, along with motivated and professional authors, and proper time management, the quality of the articles submitted to the 2018 PanSIG Journal were consistently high. The articles finally selected for publication in the 2018 PanSIG Journal demonstrated a comprehensive and robust representation of the work presented at the PanSIG conference from a number of different SIGs on a diverse range of topics. More importantly, the range of research ideas highlight the effort and creativity of the participants of the conference and the members of the SIGs, and clearly demonstrated that PanSIG as a language research, teaching and learning community is constantly evolving and seeking to find new patterns, designs and structures in language pedagogy.

Heartiest thanks to John Blake, the associate editor of 2018 PanSIG journal for his immense help. Congratulations to all previous editors for maintaining the quality of the journal, and allowing me to take over smoothly. Special thanks to Jennie Roloff Rothman, James Dunn, Michael Hollenback, and Aleda Krause for their continuous support, feedback, dedication and commitment in reviewing and advising.

This edition of the journal truly stands out due to the commitment shown by the volunteer reviewers, authors who showed so much interest in reviewing papers from peers in the community, providing scholarly feedback for improvement, and importantly, timely submission by both authors and reviewers alike. I would also like to thank the authors for submitting their articles for this publication. The success of this collection is a cumulative effort from a number of hard-working volunteers who dedicated large amounts of their precious time into putting together such a quality journal. We hope that you will enjoy reading the articles, explore opportunities for research collaboration and gain insight for your professional development. Congratulations to all the contributors to this edition of the PanSIG Journal.

February 4th, 2019
Debopriyo Roy
Editor-in-Chief, PanSIG Journal 2018

The PanSIG is an annual conference held in May, and organized by many of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). The conference brings together leading scholars and practitioners in language education from Japan, Asia, and throughout the world. It is meant to be a smaller, more intimate conference than the annual international JALT conference (which is held each fall), and is a place where SIG members can network with each other.

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Artwork courtesy of Jim George and James Dunn

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Vocabulary Acquisition through Productive vs. Receptive Tasks

Tomoko Antle
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This mixed-method study investigated the effectiveness of productive and receptive tasks for improving productive and receptive ability. It is generally accepted that it is more difficult to acquire productive knowledge than receptive, but little research has focused on the best way to improve learners' productive abilities for targeted vocabulary words. The conclusions of this study were that productive tasks are more effective than receptive tasks for developing overall vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, the learners felt learning vocabulary through pair-work activities, using only the L2 for vocabulary exercises, having the teacher be a resource during these activities, and completing guessing from context questions are effective for vocabulary acquisition.

この混合研究法では、受容能力と産出能力の促進について、受容学習と産出学習タスクが与える影響を検証する。産出知識の獲得が受容知識の獲得よりも困難であることは一般的に認められている。しかし、目標語彙のために、学習者の産出能力を促す最善の方法に焦点をあてた研究はほとんどない。この研究結果は産出学習タスクが、受容能力及び産出能力の発達の両方に効果的であることを示している。さらに、学習者がペアワークを通した語彙学習を好み、語彙練習のアクティビティでは L2 のみを用い、教師には情報源の役割を望んでいることが明らかになった。

This investigation focused on vocabulary acquisition in English language classes. The research goal of this study was to gain a better understanding for how language learners acquire new words. Vocabulary knowledge can be divided into two types: receptive and productive. While there are several ways of differentiating receptive vocabulary knowledge, for the purposes of this study, receptive vocabulary knowledge refers to the ability to understand a word when it is encounter in a reading or listening text. Productive vocabulary knowledge refers to the ability to correctly use a word in a spoken utterance or written text.

Receptive and productive vocabulary have been widely researched. However, it is an area of second language acquisition that is in need of further investigation. Vocabulary is the foundation for all language production, and both teachers and students will benefit from a better understanding of how it is acquired.

This study also investigated how teachers can design classroom vocabulary activities and tasks, so the language learners can use the new words productively in conversation. If we give appropriate (i.e., authentic, relevant, comprehensible) texts to English language learners, it is expected they will improve their language acquisition of productive vocabulary. I measured quantitatively the differential effect between learning with productive tasks and learning with receptive tasks. Receptive knowledge and productive knowledge of targeted vocabulary words was also be measured qualitatively.

Literature Review

Language learners are continually being exposed to new vocabulary in the input they receive. With further practice and exposure, these words then are understood in greater depth, and the learner will, hopefully, eventually be able to use them productively in the future (Webb, 2008). At any given time, a learner will have receptive knowledge of words without being able to use them productively (Webb, 2008). Zhou (2010) stated:

> It is generally believed that words are known receptively first and only after intentional or incidental learning become available for productive use. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge should be regarded as a continuum on which a word grows from receptive to productive status. … it is generally believed that learners' receptive vocabulary size is much larger than their productive vocabulary size (p.14).

It is believed that a learner can productively use 50 to 80% of the words of which they have receptive knowledge (Milton, 2009). Webb (2008) also stated that the size of a learner's receptive vocabulary knowledge is an indication of the size of their productive vocabulary knowledge.

It is logical that a language learner would not be able to use a word productively if they could not understand it receptively. However, this disparity in knowledge could be minimized with an alternative approach to vocabulary instruction. Webb (2005) endorsed the use of productive tasks for vocabulary acquisition though he cautioned that productive tasks generally require more time to complete. Aizawa, Ochiai, and Osaki (2003) explained that in the early stages of language learning, students practice new vocabulary both receptively and productively, but as these learners reach higher levels, less time is spent on productive exercises. The problem with this imbalance is that it hurts the learners' overall linguistic ability; they are not able to fully express themselves.

While it is not reasonable to expect all new words to quickly move from receptive to productive, a learner can make a conscious effort to acquire this ability. Zhou (2010) explained that after students are able to recognize a word's form and meaning they can "gradually, with more practice of this word in reading, listening, writing, or some other activities, … increase their knowledge of this word and learn to use the word productively in writing or speaking" (p.16). However, Mondria and Wiersma (2004) cautioned that "productive learning is substantially more difficult than receptive learning" (p.79).

Teachers can also approach vocabulary instruction in a more effective way. Nation (2008) endorsed the use of vocabulary activities with a productive goal: "Learners may need help in bringing some of their receptive vocabulary into productive use" (p. 41). Explicit vocabulary instruction, such as world lists and the exercises associated with them, may be an effective way to improve productive ability. For academic vocabulary, combining communicative exercises with explicit instruction will help students use the targeted words productively (Zhou, 2010). Zhou expands on this idea by stating "By explicitly learning different aspects of words (such as their meanings, forms, and collocations) and being exposed to these words in other course work, students will gradually be able to use them receptively and productively" (p.17). The relationship between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and the most effective methods for teaching vocabulary are areas worthy of researchers' attention.

Methodology

Research Questions

The present study has the following research questions:

Are there any differences between the results of a receptive test and a productive test for the targeted vocabulary words learned receptively versus productively?

What are the student's perceptions towards studying vocabulary?

Participants and Setting

This study was carried out with 16 participants in total. The participants were 2nd-year students in the economics department at a private university in Tokyo, Japan. The first language of all participants' was Japanese, and each participant was at an elementary or low-intermediate proficiency level of English. They were divided into two classes based upon their proficiency scores on the TOEFL test which was administered at the beginning of the school year. The 16 participants who took part in this study consisted of 13 male and 3 female students. Their English education background had mainly been focused on reading and listening. As a result, they rarely had opportunities to speak and write in English.

Procedure

The investigation focused on receptive tasks and productive tasks. In this experiment, the tasks were introduced in only English in the handout. The instructor had students work in pairs on both the receptive and productive tasks, and they were encouraged to use only English for interacting with their partner and the teacher. The results of the receptive and productive tests after 12 treatments were compared.

Materials were collected for 12 lessons, including listening tracks and 8 to 11 target vocabulary words from each listening track. Prior to the treatment lessons, the students took a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) for the 105 target words to assess their knowledge of these words. The students' average score was 3.16 out of a possible 4.0. This score indicated they had varying levels of knowledge of these words; however, the VKS used was strictly a self-assessment, and it is likely the students over estimated their ability based upon their performance in the lessons and their performance on both the receptive and productive vocabulary tests described in the following sections.

Both the receptive and productive exercises included a warm-up question (Part 1) based-upon the lesson theme. The students would answer this question in partners. In the following section (Part 2) of both the productive and receptive exercises, example sentences for the targeted vocabulary were given and the students had to match the targeted vocabulary item with its English definition. For the receptive exercise, the following section (Part 3) included comprehension questions after a listening track. All of the targeted vocabulary words were included in the listening tracks. For the productive exercises, the following section (Part 3) included fill-in-the blank questions and speaking questions. The fill-in-the blank questions had the students use the targeted vocabulary items to complete a new set of sentences. For the speaking questions, the students were encouraged to use the targeted vocabulary words, which were highlighted in bold, in their answers.

To illustrate, the following is an example of how each vocabulary word was presented to the students. For the targeted word afford the following sentence was given in Part 2; I cannot afford a new car now, but maybe next year I can. The instruction had the students try to match the word with the definition. For afford the definition was You have enough money for something. The students were not allowed to use a dictionary during this task, but they were encouraged to look at the example sentence to see how the word was used.

For Part 3 of the receptive exercises, the students heard afford in the listening text and then answered comprehension questions. Each listening track was approximately two minutes long. The students usually listened to the entire track two times though occasionally they asked to hear the track a third time. For Part 3 of the productive exercises, the participants were given fill-in-the blank questions. The matching fill-in-the-blank sentence for afford was: It will be difficult for me to _____tuition this semester. I need to save some money. The speaking question for afford and an example answer are shown in the following. The partner who asks the question from the handout is represented by A, and B is their partner.

> A: What is something you want to buy but cannot afford right now?
>
> B: I want to get a new iPhone but can't afford one. How about you?
>
> A: I wish I could afford to buy a car. I don't like coming to school by bus.

The class time used for both the receptive exercises and the productive exercise was the same: approximately 22 minutes per exercise. In total, there were two treatments used in this study: receptive learning and productive learning. The students in both classes learned exactly the same 8 to 11 targeted vocabulary words though receptive or productive tasks. For example, Class B studied the first set of vocabulary words by doing productive exercises while Class A studied the same words but used receptive exercises. The following lesson, the students studied a new set of words, but Class B which had used productive exercises in the class now did receptive exercises. Class A also changed from receptive to productive exercises. This learning pattern continued over 12 lessons.

For the productive test, the participants were asked to try to complete a cloze test which consisted of 24 targeted vocabulary words. The sentences were the same example sentences as Part 2 of the activities. For each question, the first few letters of the targeted word were given so that there would be only one correct answer. This approach to testing productive vocabulary knowledge was used by Laufer and Nation (1999). Twelve of the items on the productive test were taken from the sets of words which the students in Class B studied through receptive exercises. For the students in Class A, this mean that they had encountered the same words but in the opposite way (receptive instead of productive and productive instead of receptive) to the students in Class B. For the receptive test, the students had to provide a Japanese translation for the targeted vocabulary words. This approach to testing receptive vocabulary knowledge was used by Stoeckel, Ishii, and Bennett (2018). The same 24 words as the productive test were used.

The participants took part in a 20-minute interview about their perceptions towards studying vocabulary through receptive and productive tasks. The interview was conducted with 11 of the participants who completed 12 treatment lessons. During the interview, the participants' voice was recorded with two recorders with their permission. It was a one-to-one interview.

Data Analysis

The data from the audio-recordings were analyzed qualitatively, and the productive and receptive test results were analyzed quantitatively. The research findings are presented in the same order as the research questions. The findings which relate to Research Question 1 are presented first. Table 1 shows the results of the productive vs. receptive test for productive and receptive tasks. The highest possible score is 12 for the productive and receptive tests. One of the students was absent for the receptive and productive tests.

Interviews

To address Research Question 2, I conducted interviews to examine the learners' perception toward studying through receptive and productive tasks. The number of participants in the interview was 11. They consisted of 9 males and 2 females. The 20-minute long interview was recorded with an audio recorder. The data from the audio recording was analyzed qualitatively. Examples of interview responses about the participants' perceptions about vocabulary acquisition are shown below.

> "The teacher's responses to our questions about the vocabulary were especially effective in helping us acquire the words."

> "I would rather rely on a classmate as opposed to a dictionary when I have trouble remembering the meaning of the new vocabulary."

> "I always try asking my teacher whenever I was struggling to remember the word during the pair work. Actually, asking my teacher and learning the word is a very effective way to remember and establish the words."

> "I really enjoy speaking exercises especially in pair-work. Even though, I do not have good English and it is not easy to keep having a conversation in English. I think I really like when I can learn new words and phrases from my partner."

Findings

The results of these interviews provided interesting comments and insights such as the following:

- Interaction with the teacher is particularly effective when learning new words.
- Pair work also had a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition in the participants' opinion.
- Even lower level students prefer not to use the L1 for vocabulary activities.
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context of the sentence is an efficient way to establish the word in the mental lexicon.

Result and Discussion

In regard to Research Question 1, analysis of the productive vs. receptive data for productive and receptive tasks suggest that productive exercises are more effective for improving overall vocabulary ability (Table 1). However, the highest score was for receptive ability for vocabulary words learnt through receptive tasks. The lowest was for productive ability for vocabulary words learnt through receptive tasks. Overall, the productive tasks lead to relatively high scores in both receptive and productive ability. These results suggest that while receptive tasks are useful for improving a student's reading and listening ability, they are not as beneficial for the student's speaking and writing. Productive tasks, on the other hand, appear to help a learner's speaking and writing ability

	N	$\bar{X}$ (max = 12)	SD	Range (min / max)
Receptive Test Score for Receptive Task Words	15	6.67	1.68	6 (3 / 9)
Receptive Test Score for Productive Task Words	15	5.80	1.57	6 (2 / 8)
Productive Test Score for Receptive Task Words	15	3.40	2.26	6 (1 / 7)
Productive Test Score for Productive Task Words	15	6.07	2.69	10 (1 / 11)

Table 1 *Receptive and Productive Test Scores for Words Learned through Receptive and Productive Tasks*

while also improving their reading and listening ability. One conclusion which can be made based upon these findings is that teachers should emphasize productive tasks if the teaching goal is to develop the students' overall vocabulary ability. However, a possible limitation of this study was the relatively small number of participants; it is unclear if these findings would be the same in a follow-up study with a larger number of subjects.

Research Question 2 focused on the students' perceptions of studying vocabulary. The qualitative data collected in this study suggest that teachers' role is very important for learners when they learn new vocabulary. In the exercises, the students were encouraged to speak only in English during the pair work even if they ask their partner or the teacher about the meaning of an unknown word. During the interviews, 10 of 11 students stated that they preferred to be immersed in English during the English class. They emphasized that they do not need any Japanese instruction for both reading and listening tasks. Additionally, a common comment was 'As soon as I see any Japanese, my motivation is gone'. Creating an English environment in which students study vocabulary through interactions with the teacher and their partner is an effective way to approach vocabulary instruction. Furthermore, the guessing from context questions were both enjoyable and useful in the students' opinion. To summarize, the students believed that creating an English environment in which there was a great deal of teacher and partner interaction, along with guessing from context questions, is an effective way to acquire vocabulary.

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Ancestor Lessons: Learning and Sharing Personal Histories in the Classroom

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This paper introduces and explains two EFL lessons focused on the topic of ancestors. It explains the rationale for the topic, what specifically to teach, how to teach the content while focusing on language skills, and finally how to deal with any difficulties that may arise in these lessons. Student feedback shows that the activity is a powerful classroom experience that generates intrinsic curiosity about their family and ancestors, and a new perspective on the genesis of students' own current life conditions. The lessons described will help any teacher who asks the question: How can I teach so that my students are engaging deeply with the English language and I am building a more genuine and personal relationship with my students?

本稿では、祖先の話題に焦点を当てた 2 つの EFL レッスンについて紹介し、説明します。 トピックの根拠、具体的な内容、語学力を重視した内容の教授方法、最後にこれらのレッスンで起こりえる問題の解決方法について説明します。 生徒のフィードバックは、その活動が、家族や先祖に対し本質的な好奇心を生み出す強力な教室での経験であり、生徒自身の現在の生活条件の創造についての新しい視点であることを示しています。私の生徒が英語に深く関わるように教え、私の生徒ともっと本物の、そして個人的な関係を築いていくように教えるにはどうすればいいですか。

The topic of family is a very common topic in English language textbooks. This is a familiar and useful topic that almost all learners can talk about at some level. This paper considers how teachers can use the topic of family in a way that engages students' interest and offers deeper opportunities for language learning and community building in the classroom. We introduce and explain two language-learning lessons focused on the topic of ancestors which allow students to explore and share their family history over multiple generations.

The rationale for using the topic of ancestors is explained and then this paper suggests how to teach the content while focusing on language skills. Talking about family can raise certain specific difficulties, and we suggest ways to deal with difficulties that may arise in these lessons. Finally, we introduce student feedback which shows that students see the activity as a powerful learning experience that generates curiosity about their family and ancestors, and offers a new perspective on the genesis of their own current life conditions.

The Topic of Family in Textbooks

The topic of family is ubiquitous in EFL/ESL textbooks for the obvious reason that almost everyone has a family and much of our lives are centered around family life, so there clearly is both content to share and an opportunity for simple language practice.

Despite the potential richness that the topic of family can bring to the language learning classroom, many textbooks deal with the topic in a rather superficial way. For example, in the popular textbook, *Interchange Intro*, Richards (2012, p. 37) shows a simple two generation family tree representing parents and children and uses this to introduce vocabulary such as husband, wife, father, mother, brother, and sister. This is followed by a simple practice for students to describe their own families using sentences like “My mother’s name is Angela” and “My brothers’ names are David and Angelo.” This is expanded on slightly in the following grammar focus section with sentences such as “My family and I live in the suburbs. My wife and I work near here, so we walk to work. Our daughter Emily works downtown, so she drives to work.”

Similar examples from other textbooks tend to focus on the children’s age and club activities, the parents’ employment, and maybe what activities the family did last summer vacation. Students may learn some new English vocabulary or grammar, but conversations often occur at a superficial level. This seems to be a missed opportunity for students to learn something meaningful or insightful about themselves, their family, and their ancestors, which could in turn support students in making a deeper connection between their own lives and the English language being used in the classroom. The aim of this paper is to offer a deeper and multi-dimensional set of activities for the topic of family which can create a more profound and genuine interest in the theme, a deeper curiosity into one’s own family past, and a deeper connection to the language used.

Below, the ancestor activity is divided over two lessons in consecutive weeks. Depending on your teaching context and how the activity relates to the rest of your course, it may be appropriate to spend more time on it. This activity has worked well with Japanese university students of mixed-ability with TOEIC scores ranging from 450 up to 900. Complete lesson plans are shown in the appendix at the end of this paper and the reader may like to refer to this throughout.

Ancestors Lesson 1 – Generating Curiosity and Setting up the Interviews

The first lesson on the topic of ancestors is designed to generate student curiosity and then to do the required preparation for them to interview their grandparents about their family history. This is explained in more detail below.

Introduce the Topic and Generate Interest

In order to engage the students in the activity from the beginning, the most important thing for the teacher to do is raise curiosity and interest in the topic. You can introduce the topic by share some interesting stories about your ancestors or family members. Then explain that the topic of the lesson and next lesson to the student will be “family and ancestors.”

It is useful to do a simple brainstorm at the beginning of the lesson to get students involved and to activate vocabulary, knowledge, and ideas about the topic. On the blackboard, demonstrate a simple mind map activity centered around the word “Ancestors,” and then have students write at least eight words connected to the word “Ancestors,” such as history, tradition, family, life, and so on. Students can then discuss in pairs why they listed particular words or explain their favorite word from their list.

It is also important to have students begin to connect emotionally with the topic. The topic of not only immediate family but we wanted students to consider the long chain of ancestors that eventually resulted in their own lives. We have found that a poem is a good way to make these emotional connections. A poem can evocatively capture the essence of a topic and usually we use the poem, *I’ve known Rivers* by Langston Hughes. This poem (shown in appendix Lesson 1, B) connects Hughes’ life to the lives of people thousands of years before by giving images of the people’s lives in different places. Also within this poem there are lines that suggest the value of learning about history and our ancestors. The vocabulary of the poem may be unfamiliar to your students, and you may need to introduce difficult words such as ancient, dusky, soul, dawn, raise, muddy, veins, and lull. Allow students to review the vocabulary list with dictionaries.

As a follow-up, reinforcing activity use the Endless Questions technique to teach and reinforce the new vocabulary (Backwell, 2005). Endless Questions simply means the teacher asks students questions about the meaning of new vocabulary. Whenever there is a vocab list to review in class there is often at least one student in the group who knows the meaning of each word. If this is the case the teacher uses a series of questions to connect the vocabulary to the world of the students. For example, if one of the new words is *raise*, you can ask the students to raise their right hand. If the next word is *ancient,* ask a student: “Are you ancient?” and then ask: “Is Mt. Fuji ancient?”. For the word, *dawn,* ask the students: “What time was dawn this morning?” Move through the vocabulary in this way. One benefit of the Endless Questions technique is that it brings new vocabulary to life, imbuing personal meaning into each new word, and students can hear how the words are used inside authentic sentences.

When students are familiar with the vocabulary, remind them again that the topic of the lesson is Ancestors and do a dramatic reading of the poem*, I've Known Rivers.* Appendix Section Lesson 1, B offers other suggestions to help students to understand and engage with the poem.

You can help them to understand the topic by asking why rivers were so important to our ancestors and eliciting answers such as: Rivers are a source of fresh drinking water, food, personal hygiene and provided travel and trade routes. Students can use Google maps to learn the location of the four rivers (Euphrates, Congo, Nile, and Mississippi) and the country which each river flows through. You can then explain the basic history of Langston's ancestors, how Langston's ancestors were free to roam by the first three rivers mentioned in the poem, but how his ancestor's voyage to America and the Mississippi river was forced by slave traders.

In order to get students thinking more deeply about their own ancestors, emphasize the meaning of the last sentence: “*My soul has grown deep like the rivers.*” When we learn about our ancestors our lives become richer. Explain that the Ancestors activity is a possibility to gain knowledge and become wiser in learning and sharing stories about our ancestors, and that everyone will share ancestor stories in the next lesson.

Preparation for Interviews

To begin preparing sharing their own ancestor stories, have students do the activities in Section C of Lesson 1 of the Appendix. This requires them to start thinking and gathering information about their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents including their names, place of birth, job, and major life events. Most students doing this activity notice quickly that there are large gaps in their knowledge about their own family, and this helps to foster curiosity.

Explain that the homework is to learn about ancestors (See Appendix Section Lesson 1, C2). The students interview a grandparent and ask about their lives including information about jobs, hobbies, and major life events. They should also find out about their parents (the students' great grandparents). Show your own family tree and tell students that they should also draw a family tree with four generations that reaches back to great grandparents.

To prepare students better for the interview and to help them to focus their questions, have them fill in the KWL chart (Appendix Section Lesson 1, C4). KWL is a useful learning format (Ogle, 1986) which stands for What you **K**now, **W**ant to know and What you **L**earned. First, in the **K** column, students write everything they already know about their ancestors, for example grandparents' names, hometown, age, hobbies. Then in the **W** column, students generate a list of questions about what they want to know such as great-grandparents names, major life experiences, how their parents met, and what education their grandparents had. Students do not fill in the **L** column until after the Way of Council activity in lesson 2. Then they write and reflect in the final column on the new information they have learned.

Ancestors Lesson 2 – Sharing Ancestor Stories

In lesson 2, students share stories about their ancestors and family members in an activity called the Way of Council. More details are shown in the lesson plan in the Appendix.

Review and Preparation

Have students review their family tree and think about the questions shown in Appendix Section Lesson 2, D. These questions are designed to help them to review the information they have learned and to practice sharing it. Students then discuss the questions with a partner. Have students change partner a couple of times to allow for repeated practice in talking about the topic. Repeated partner practice will greatly help students prepare and build confidence for speaking in the Way of Council. The teacher can circulate during partner discussions and help with any pronunciation or grammatical issues. Also remind students that because they are talking about the past, the verbs they use should probably be in the past tense and give examples from your stories highlighting use of the past tense.

The Way of Council

Instructions for setting up the Way of Council are shown in Appendix Section Lesson 2, E in the Appendix. According to Fujioka (1998), the Way of Council and the "talking stone" have been used for centuries by many Native American tribes as a means of fair and impartial hearing, and as a democratic practice for community matters such as an important topic or making a group decision. Traditionally the aim of this practice was that the voice of each member of the council (or community) was heard and respected. We use it for the same reason in the EFL classroom i.e. so that the voice of each student in the class is given the chance to be heard and respected.

There are a couple of core rules underpinning the Way of Council. First, the person who holds the talking stone talks about the topic and those who are not holding the stone listen. The stone represents the importance of the speaker. The stone is passed around the circle, and each person speaks when she or he holds the stone. The passing of the stone ensures that all members can speak and have their ideas heard. The group listens as much as possible without focusing on what they personally want to say when their turn comes. Tell students that speaking from the heart and listening from the heart are two important principles of the Way of Council.

If feasible, the classroom should be set up differently to the typical classroom in which the teacher stands at the front of the room and the students are lined up in rows of desks all facing the front. Instead, make a circle of chairs. This immediately gives the environment a more democratic feeling because no one person is in a leadership position. In the Way of Council, students are encouraged to listen and learn from each other. This takes the focus away from the teacher as the only purveyor of knowledge in the room, and it can be refreshing for the teacher to sit with the group, listen, and learn about the students' ancestor stories. On a practical note if you have a large group (15 students or more) you may like to explain the activity and then split the group into 2 circles so that the activity does not last more than 30 minutes. This will involve desk moving to clear the floor and make way for a circle or 2 circles of chairs. In total Way of Council should not last more than half an hour to keep concentration focused on each speaker.

The intimate nature of the Way of Council and the personal meaningful topic creates conditions in which students are more likely to engage in genuine English communication. Of course, they can interview their parents or grandparents in their native language, but once that is done it is our consistent experience students are intrinsically motivated to share their discoveries with others through English in the EFL classroom.

It may in fact surprise you what topics arise in Way of Council. In the most recent class students shared stories of ancestors who died fighting in China during World War 2, a grandfather who made a lot of money during the bubble and bought a mountain in Kyushu only to sell it when the bubble burst, a modern day mother who sees ghosts, alcoholics, gamblers, single parent fathers who struggle to be the sole provider and an aunt who couldn't have a baby so her sister gave her their second daughter. Some families described have 12 children and other stories focus on couples who have none. The variety of family structures and stories can be staggering. In such a class students can keep their focus and attention even if the Way of Council lasts 20 or 30 minutes simply because the speaker is telling an engrossing story.

Follow-up

You can enhance student language learning after the Way of Council by using oral mistakes which students made as mini lessons. However, it is important to remember that this topic can be emotionally charged and if you are correcting students, be careful not to appear disrespectful of them or their ancestors as that could negatively influence the student-teacher relationship. If you do this, never correct a student during the Way of Council (unless asked). Only after the council has finished should any correction take place.

It is useful to finish the lesson with a written reflection. Students can complete the KWL chart from Lesson 1 (specifically the section entitled What I Learned). Alternatively students can fill in a handout based on the four feedback questions in Appendix section Lesson 2, F. These two activities are two examples of reflective work at the end of two personal and engaging lessons which the teacher can choose to gather and mark or not.

Addressing Difficulties

A concern when teaching the ancestor activities is that all families have positive, happy stories, and at the same time all families have difficult or negative stories. With this in mind it may be wise to tell your students to only share what they feel comfortable sharing and that during the Way of Council process what is said in the circle should stay in the circle, i.e., don't share with others who were not there unless specifically given permission by the speaker. In times gone past, the Way of Council was considered a sacred practice and it should be the same in our time as well.

Another difficulty as one student mentioned in the feedback section below, is that a student may only get minimal or even no information about an ancestor. There may be several reasons for this including that particular person may be the “black sheep” of the family and has been intentionally forgotten about. Of course, there may be other reasons such as that person never having been mentioned to family members living today. This should be accepted, and although each student should be encouraged to make efforts to gather as much information as possible, teachers cannot realistically expect every student to have a complete family tree. Most students will not live with their grandparents so we suggest a telephone call or perhaps e mail. Almost all students report these are acceptable ways to make contact with their grandparents.

It is best remembered there are some students who may not want to disclose private information. Iwata (2010) claims that Japanese have lower levels of self-disclosure than North Americans especially when speaking in the classroom. With this in mind we usually teach this class later in the semester when students and teachers have built rapport and spent a more significant amount of time together. Building rapport is not a skill that is focused on in this paper although it is crucial for teachers and leaders. If you would like more extensive reading on the topic of classroom rapport building two suggested readings are: *Rapport building in language instruction* Nguyen, and *Unmasking the Structure of Rapport*, Backwell et al) For the sake of simplicity we will assume you are a teacher who has been building rapport building throughout the semester and you will understand that the key point to building rapport in these specific lessons is to share meaningful stories of your ancestors too. If you are not a teacher who feels comfortable sharing at this level then perhaps these lessons are not suitable for you however for teachers who want more self-disclosure and sharing of personal, real life stories these lessons will help such a rapport building process. Put simply, to a certain level you have to disclose too. It is our experience of teaching these lessons for more than a decade that if you build rapport, speak honestly and follow the lesson outlines these two classes will give you a powerful, bonding experience with your students. Theses classes will strengthen the bond of trust between the teacher and group members moving forwards.

Student Feedback

Some typical student feedback is given below to show students’ perspectives on the ancestors activity.

1. What new information did you learn about your family and ancestors?

- My grandfather bought a cruise boat!
- My great grandfather (father’s grandfather) was adopted.
- I knew my grandparents were doctors but I didn’t know they worked during World War II and were taught how to save injured soldiers. I was amazed.
- My great grandmother has ten children.
- My grandfather owns a mountain!!
- I learned my family knows nothing about my great-grandparents.
- My grandmother raised her children alone.

2. What was difficult about this project?

- I couldn’t collect some information about my ancestors.
- All my great grandparents are dead so I couldn’t get information about
- It was presenatting about the information to classmates.

3. Why was this a useful/interesting project?

- I learned a lot about my great-grandparents that I didn’t know before.
- I could find a stronger relationship between me and my ancestors.
- Now I want to tell my life story to my children and my grandchildren someday.
- It was interesting because without this class I would never try to learn about my ancestors.
- With this lesson we can say thank you to our family and ancestors.
- My ancestors passed away because of world war two so I realized war is a serious problem.
- Because we can know our roots and identity through this project. I feel my ancestors are close to me.
- I enjoyed myself because I could know more about my family and ancestors. At first I didn't know my great grand parents and I didn't tthink I want to know them but now I want to talk with my grand father more.

4. What more would you like to learn about your family/ancestors?

- What was my grandmother’s dream when she was my age?
- Why was my great grandfather adopted?
- How were my ancestors daily lives during World War Two?
- What were my ancestors experiences at school?
- I want to learn more about all my ancestors and make bigger, longer family tree.
- Why did my mother and father marry?
- I learned they all had different jobs. I’ve not decided my job yet that’s why I want to listen to their job life and think about my future work.
- While my great grandfather was a soldier what things happened?

Conclusion

As the student feedback above indicates, the main driving motivation in the ancestor activities is intrinsic curiosity about one’s own family and ancestors. This is not superficial interest but rather a genuine curiosity about the unknown and a sense of delving into one’s own past to learn more about family and ultimately the creation of one’s own current life conditions. As one student said in the feedback:

“It was interesting because without this class I would never try to learn about my ancestors.” Another student shared “*We can know our roots and identity through this project. I feel my ancestors are close to me.”*

As the students say in their own words, the ancestor lessons can be a powerful classroom experience. Perhaps the most pertinent student comment was:

“Now I want to tell my life story to my children and my grandchildren someday.”

We, the authors, found this comment particularly satisfying because what could be more meaningful than to teach a lesson which is carried on by students beyond the classroom and even beyond the teacher’s time on this planet?

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Appendix – Lesson Plans

Lesson 1

Materials: Vocabulary list, poem, teacher's family tree, bigger photos (optional)

A. Brainstorm

Write the word "Ancestors" on the board and have students give ideas or words connected to it, e.g. "tradition", "history", "family."

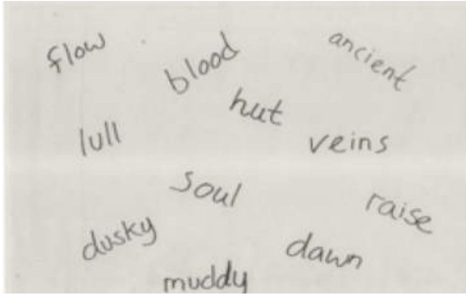
B. Generate Interest in the Topic with a Poem

1. Introduce the vocabulary from the poem below. An example is shown on the right.

2. Read the poem aloud to students with feeling and drama.

3. Have students take turns reading lines from the poem.

4. Explain the meaning of the poem. Example: "Langston's ancestors were free to travel on the Congo Euphrates and the Nile. Later, they were captured and taken to America as slaves.



5. Focus on the line: "My soul has grown deep like the rivers" and explain how learning about our ancestors can offer us wisdom.

<u>I've Known Rivers</u>

by Langston Hughes

I've known rivers

I've known rivers as ancient as the world and older

than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I swam in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and the sound of the water lulled me to sleep.

I looked at the Nile and raised the pyramids above it

I heard the singing of the Mississippi and saw this muddy river turn golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers

Ancient, dusky rivers

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

C. Preparation

1. What do you know about your ancestors?

Think about your parents, grandparents and great grandparents. What do you know about your ancestors?

Do you know their names? When they were born? Where was their hometown? What was their religion? What job did they have? What hobbies did they enjoy? What major life events did they experience? – World War 2, the bubble economy, etc.

2. Explain Homework (Grandparent interview and Family Tree)

Homework this week is to learn about your ancestors.

First interview a grandparent and ask about their lives – job, hobbies, major life events, their parents or any interesting topic. Learn about your great grandparents.

Next, draw your family tree with four generations. Start your family tree with you and your parents then include grandparents and great grandparents.

Include the information below:

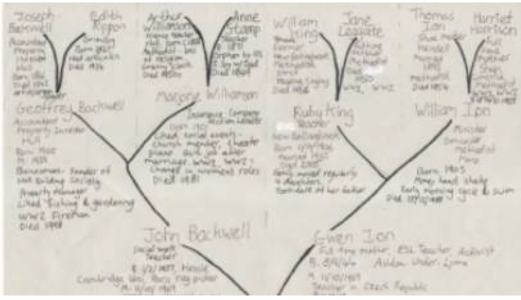
Name, birthday, hometown, job, religion, hobbies, life events, any other interesting information.

3. Introduce your own family tree (Teacher)

Share one or two of your own ancestor stories.

4. Written Preparation

Give students time to fill in the sheet below. Students write what they already know about their ancestors e.g. Grandparents names, hometown, age, hobbies. Then in the second column students write what they would like to know e.g. Great grandparents' names, major life experiences, how their parents met, what education their grandparents had.



Write details in the first two columns. Write in the last column after completing your research.

What I Know	What I want to know	What I learned

5. Give Homework

Students interview parents and grandparents (and great grandparents if still alive)

Then using A4 paper, students draw a family tree of 4 generations (themselves, parents, grandparents and great grandparents) with information of each family member – name, birthday, hometown, job, religion, hobbies, if appropriate marriage date and death date, major life events e.g. WW2 or bubble economy any other interesting information.

Lesson 2

Materials: a stone for the Way of Council activity

D. Preparation

1. Review the family tree

Look at your family tree and think about your answers to the questions below.

2. Talk in pairs

Have students ask and answer the questions below with a partner. Repeat 2 or 3 times to make students better in their explanations.

1. Where are your ancestors from?
2. What jobs did they have?
3. What major life events happened to your ancestors?
4. Who is your most interesting ancestor? Why?
5. What are you grateful for from your ancestors?

E. Way of Council

1. Remove desks and set up classroom chairs in a big circle (Way of Council)
2. Students sit in a circle (no pens, paper, textbooks, etc.)
3. Teacher focuses on the poem's line "My soul has grown deep like the rivers"

4. Teacher brings up the theme of ancestors. The power of our history, the power of our ancestors to shape our lives today.
5. Teacher explains Way of Council and passes the talking stone.
6. Each student takes turn to talk about his or her ancestors while holding the stone. They can use the warm up questions as a focus of what to talk about. Go around the group until all students have spoken.
7. Teacher finishes the Way of Council by reading *I've known Rivers* again and thanking students for sharing their stories.

F. Follow-up Written Activity

Have students write the answers to the questions below.

1. What new information did you learn about your family and ancestors?
2. What was difficult about this project?
3. Why was this a useful/interesting project?
4. What more would you like to learn about your family/ancestors?

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Towards a Graded Reader Database

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This paper outlines a project (funded by the Japanese Ministry of Sport, Science and Education with a Kakenhi JSPS Grant-in-aid for scientific research) which aims to set up a comprehensive graded-reader database that will provide information on books deemed suitable for extensive reading programmes. Ideally, the data should include information on the reading level of each book, the number of words, how much other readers have enjoyed reading it, and its availability. The database should be set up so that automatic updates can be made where possible, and it should give editing rights to a large number of stakeholders so new data can be added and updated. The authors explain both the need for such a database and the challenges in creating it. The issues discussed include: finding a standardized way to measure the number of words in a book and measuring of the readability of a text.

本稿では、科学研究費補助金により助成されたプロジェクトについて概説する。このプロジェクトの目的は、学校毎の多読プログラムや英語で多読をする個人が、多読に適した書籍のデータに自由にアクセスできるようにする包括的なグレーディドリーダー・データベースを構築することである。理想的には、データには、各書籍の読書レベル、語数、ジャンルなどの情報が含まれていなければならない。可能であれば自動更新ができるようにデータベースを設定し、多数のステークホルダーに対して編集権限を与え、新しいデータを追加して更新できるようにする必要がある。本稿の前半部分では、このような包括的なデータベースの必要性を概説し、後半部分では、これを実現するためのいくつかの克服すべき課題について説明する。本の語数やテキストの読みやすさを測ることに関する議論のように、何かを測定する標準化された方法を見つけることについて取り上げる。

If Extensive Reading (ER) is going to be a successful part of an English language course, the students will need access to books and the time to read them. Whether or not they find the time to read will depend on a vast number of factors, most of which are beyond the teacher's control. But without an adequate selection of books, the project stands no chance at all of getting off the ground. The fundamental requirement, then, is access to a library containing a stock of graded readers, and ideally other kinds of reading material, sufficient to cater to a wide range of interests and reading levels. But to benefit from such a resource, students also need accurate information on book content, readability, and level. Reliable information on book length is also important because many students and ER programme administrators use the number of words read to measure student achievement.

Having identified the need for an online support system for students and teachers, we began work on building a graded reader database that will be called ER Cloud. It will gather information and recommendations from students, teachers, publishers, and other databases such as MReader, ER Central and Xreading in order to provide a support and feedback network for students, teachers, administrators, publishers and other stakeholders in the field of ER. This is the goal, but there are numerous difficulties we will need to overcome before this goal can be achieved. Our research question at this initial stage of the project has been: What are the difficulties that need to be addressed when setting up an online ER database? Some of these difficulties will be outlined in this paper.

Difficulties in Determining Reading Levels

There are currently many different systems for measuring reading level. The first comprehensive scale within language-learner literature was the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) scale, developed by David Hill in the 1970s. The *Yomiyasusa* level (YL) indicates how easy a book is to read and was created by Akio Furukawa in 2003. It is now widely used in Japan. Since 2016, Rob Waring has been developing and refining the international 20-level Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) graded reader scale that corresponds to the ERF Learner Literature Award categories. Other ER-focused websites, such as Xreading and MReader, use their own systems. Moreover, publishers of learner literature each have their own system for determining book levels, which are based on word lists, grammatical complexity, or simply the intuition of an experienced editor.

The notion of reading difficulty has precedents in native-language texts. All texts are edited with specific groups of readers at a certain level of proficiency in mind. Indeed, some books have even been written with a single reader in mind, such as *Alice in Wonderland*. Notable attempts to produce systematic methods for determining reading difficulty include the Gunning fog index (1952) and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (1975), which are based on sentence length, word length, and the number of embedded clauses. However, there are weaknesses in these systems, such as their inability to distinguish between the clarity of a long, but clearly constructed sentence with simple, general vocabulary, and a short sentence full of specialized vocabulary with few reader-friendly signposts. They are also unable to take into account other aspects vital to reader comprehension, such as background knowledge of the content and reader interaction with a text (Carrell, 1987).

The Lexile Framework for Reading was developed in 1989 and is applied to L1 teaching materials in the US in order to match the reading level of the student with the reading difficulty of the text. A student's reading level is measured through reading comprehension tests and the score is reported as a number which is seen as a Lexile level. All kinds of reading materials (websites, articles, text books, fiction and non-fiction) have been analysed by software that measures features such as word frequency and sentence length and assigns a Lexile measure in the form of a number. This is used as a guide for teachers and students to match the readers' Lexile level to a text's Lexile measure.

It has been proposed that EFL teachers seeking maximum learning efficiency should require their students to read books consisting of a vocabulary of which exactly 98% is familiar. The remaining 2% of the words, which will be unknown, are deemed to be ripe for acquisition (Nation, 2001). Many ER advocates, however, are less concerned with the efficiency of vocabulary acquisition and more focused on increasing student motivation and fluency, which can be cruelly undermined by books that the learner cannot read with ease. Krashen (1982) posited i+1 as the next linguistic item to be acquired, where i is the most recently acquired item of language on some nominal list. In contrast, Day (2015) has recommended that extensive reading should be carried out at the level of i-1, and Takase (2007) has suggested i-2, citing research showing that students make greater gains by reading books well below their current language level.

Small differences in book level may seem trivial at first sight, but for a student capable of reading no higher than YL1.2, there will be a big difference between YL1.2 and 1.4 because the YL1.4 book may be twice the length of the YL1.2 book and include unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures that put the book beyond the comprehension level of the student.

The term 'headwords' is commonly used by publishers in relation to reading level, however the meaning of this term is ambiguous. One way to interpret what publishers mean by 'headwords' is to see the term as corresponding to the notion of 'types' employed in corpus linguistics to denote a unique word, such as "detective". A tally of 'types' will only count the word "detective" when it occurs for the first time in a text. So the number of headwords means the number of different or unique words in the text. On the other hand, in corpus linguistics, the total number of words in a text, whether occurring only once or multiple times, is given as a count of the 'tokens' in the text. In graded readers, therefore, the number of 'headwords' corresponds to the number of 'types' and the 'word count' to the 'tokens'. In other words, if we made an alphabetical list of each word appearing in the book, along with the number of times it appeared, the list would represent the number of headwords. In fact, the number of headwords in a published graded reader usually refers to a list of words that has been referred to when writing the book rather than to an inventory of the words actually in the book. There is no universally agreed list of headwords and each publisher undoubtedly has a different list. Such lists are usually not published. Editors might allow authors to use a limited number of words that are not in the list, depending on the topic of the book. To further complicate matters, it is possible that different members of the same word family are counted separately; for example, run and running could be counted as two different headwords or as just one. Also, different forms of the same word (e.g. verb and noun) are perhaps being treated differently and counted separately as, for example, in "I run every morning" and "This morning I went for a run".

None of the various grading systems is perfect in predicting how easy students will find the books, since reading difficulty is affected by other factors such as culture, plot, and the use of figurative language (Gillis-Furutaka, 2015). Holster, Lake and Pellowe (2017) found that the best predictor of a student's impression of reading difficulty was the length of the book, suggesting that word counts should be regarded as an essential component of graded reader data.

Difficulties in Determining Word Counts

Since the fundamental goal of ER is generally seen as reading as much as possible, the number of words read is often used as a measure of progress and achievement by readers, or by teachers in formative assessment. However, many ER programmes struggle to create and maintain records of word counts. The same book may have different word counts depending on whether individual words were counted, or whether the number of words was calculated using a formula based on the number of pages and an estimate of the average number of words per page. There is also the question of whether accompanying activities and exercises, or the introduction, should be included in the word count.

Data on Graded Readers

The idea of compiling a database on graded readers is not new. In the 1970s, David Hill produced a directory of graded readers, including their levels on the EPER scale, and ratings for how good the books were. Since 2003, Akio Furukawa has maintained a database of *Yomiyasusa* book levels and word counts, which is periodically published in a printed form and is now in its 4th Edition (2013). The ERF maintains an online database of graded readers, which is currently grouped by publisher. As well as the ERF scale, the ERF graded reader database includes YL and word count. MReader also has data on books, using the Kyoto scale for reading level and student responses for how easy and how enjoyable the book was. Paul Goldberg has accumulated a wide range of data on graded readers for the Xreading system, including not just word counts and levels, but also details on genre, character and plot. Barry Keith and colleagues have their own scale for the books in Gunma University, and many libraries level books using their own systems. Publishers, of course, usually allocate their graded readers to levels in their own systems, and also often give the number of headwords. Sometimes the same publisher adopts different methods for determining level for different series. For example, an Oxford Bookworms Stage Three is not the same as an Oxford Classic Tales Level Three.

The above databases are mainly designed with the goal of supporting teachers who are managing an ER programme. In addition, Calil Corporation has a freely available online database of graded readers held in Japanese libraries. This resource approaches ER from the book management perspective. However, under the guidance of Takayoshi Yoshioka, Calil has also developed Tadokunavi, a web-based system written in the open-source PHP language, which is now being reorganised for smartphones using Javascript and React Native Program Library. This will provide learners in Japan with information on which books at which levels are currently available for borrowing in the nearest libraries.

Challenges Involved in Creating a Graded-Reader Database

As can be seen, there is a wide range of data for each book. The different systems for measuring reading levels approach reading from different perspectives, but all need to be incorporated into the database if it is to be genuinely comprehensive. Although lexical measures are usually objective and produce a single value, the YL is a subjective measure and different readers will consider the same book to be more or less difficult. The SSS database, which is intended for learners, teachers and ER programme managers, gives an average YL as well as a lower and a higher YL, and recommends that practitioners consider the higher YL when recommending a book to a student. Clearly, though, there is also a need for independent learners to be able to access such vital information before borrowing or buying a book to read. Building such a dual purpose database will require careful planning.

The maintenance of such an ambitious database presents particular challenges. There is a steady flow of graded readers being published and republished in new editions, or by different publishers who have acquired an established series. In addition, the data already within a system occasionally includes mistakes, due to miscalculations, data entry errors or simply the fact that the information has not been updated. These errors would need to be identified and corrected. Furthermore, whenever data is copied from one system to another, or from one user to another, this creates a situation in which two or more versions of the same data need to be updated.

Each item in an ER database requires a key. In other words, a unique name or number is needed to identify each book. For several reasons, a book's ISBN (International Standard Book Number) would be an ideal key. Each published book has an ISBN which is associated with the title, author and publisher, and allows such information to be retrieved automatically from ISBN searches. Although the ISBN functions as a very useful means of identifying a book, there are cases where different ISBNs refer to the same book. This can happen when the book has been published in two countries or regions necessitating a second ISBN to comply with the rules of the second local library system. Another example is when titles are available in versions with or without audio CDs, in e-book format or in hardback. A third reason why the same book can have multiple ISBNs is that it has been published by different publishers or brought out in a new edition. Such versions of a book may still be identical in content and layout from beginning to end, even though the cover may have changed along with the ISBN. If we use the ISBNs as keys for our graded reader database, then we need to find ways of linking information where different ISBNs refer to the same book.

The level must then be ascertained, which could take some time. Graded readers will be published at a level, although this will usually be the publisher's level rather than on one of the scales mentioned above. Initially, difficulty levels are typically assigned to a series rather than to individual books, but of course there may be some variation in level within a series, leading to different levels, particularly on the more granular YL scale. The advantage of a universally accessible database in which learners offer an opinion about the level of a book they have read is that when more people read the books, the general consensus on the level of that book will become clearer. This takes us to the challenges of dealing with student data, which we will address later.

There is also a great deal of student data on graded readers already available, collected, for example, in the ERS database (Brierley et al., 2011), the MOARS audience response system (Pellowe, 2016), MReader and Xreading. This includes level data that can help to build a more accurate and nuanced picture of book difficulty. Student data also provides information about how good each book is, which should make it possible to determine which books should be recommended to students. Such information will enable teachers to more confidently recommend books to specific learners on the basis of their reading diet and also help independent learners decide what to read next. For these reasons, student data should also include book reviews.

Data Structure

Computer databases store data under a schema, giving names to each data field. In addition, descriptions can be added to qualify a particular piece of data. In the case of a graded reader, while a book may have a single ISBN, there may, as we have seen, be different word counts. Below is an example of the data that could be stored on a particular book using the standard technical terms, followed by an explanation of the terms used, and an example.

ISBN : varchar
YL_Upper : {varchar : float}
YL_Lower : {varchar : float}
YL_Ave : {varchar : float}
ERFLevel : float
Review : text
CoverImage : url
Pages : integer
Words : {varchar : integer}
Headwords : {varchar : integer}

"varchar" signifies that the data is a string of characters
"float" signifies a real number
"integer" signifies an integer
"text" signifies a long passage of text
"url" gives an address on the internet.

This is an example of the data for a graded reader: "Tom Sawyer".

"ISBN":"9784896840438",
"YL_Upper":[{"SSS":2.0},{"ERS":1.5}]
"YL_Lower":[{"SSS":1.0},{"ERS":1.0}]
"YL_Ave":[{"SSS":1.5}]
"ERFLevel":3,
"Review":"わんぱく少年トム・ソーヤーは、相棒で宿なしっ子のハックルベリー・フィンらとともに、いたずらと冒険に明け暮れる。いかだでの川下り、無人島でのキャンプ、そして秘密の宝探し。しまいには夜の墓地で殺人事件を目撃してしまうトムとハック。ミシシッピ川沿いの小さな町を舞台に、荒っぽいが自由で、夢あふれる子どもたちの世界を描いたマーク・トウェインの代表作。",
"CoverImage":"https://cover.openbd.jp/9784896840438.jpg",
"Pages":180,
"Words":[{"ERS":1000},{"ERF":1100},],
"Headwords":[{"ERS":500},{"ERF":450},]

Tags and Rule-Based Retrieval

The data may contain several different values for an item such as a YL or word count. Rather than editing the data to produce a "correct" level, rules can be used to choose which value to use. For example, there may be different word counts for a particular book: one from the ERF graded reader list; one from SSS data; and one from Shinshu University's ERS data. If there is only one word count in the data, then we should use that. If there are two or three conflicting word counts, we need to decide which one to use. The rule may tell us to use the SSS word count, if available, or, if not, to use the ERF word count, and if that is also not available, to use the ERS word count.

Long-Term Storage of Data

Data need to be physically stored somewhere, and the costs of storage need to be paid while the data are being used. There are various options for storage including servers located in universities, libraries, companies and foundations. A research project, such as the authors' *Kakenhi* JSPS Grant-in-aid for scientific research, could fund storage; however, the grant has a time limit, and there is no long-term support provided as these grants are awarded for creating new projects rather than maintaining existing projects.

University libraries would be a logical place to keep data on books; however, they already have their own systems installed. Companies such as Calil, which work on book data, would easily be able to store this additional data; however, there is no guarantee they will continue to maintain and update the data. Publishers may be enthusiastic about lending their resources to the maintenance of data relating to their own titles, but may be less keen to store data on books by other publishers. One long-term solution may be to seek the support of non-profit foundations dedicated to Extensive Reading, such as the Extensive Reading Foundation, or the Japanese NPO, Tadoku Supporters [*Tadoku Tacho*].

Conclusion: An Ideal Graded-Reader Database

Currently, there are many different databases that each provide a certain amount of information on graded readers. This paper has outlined the need for a comprehensive graded reader database that would combine the information available and provide administrators and teachers with more information on the books they select for and recommend to their students, and allow students to make better informed choices of what to read. The main focus has been to report on the difficulties of setting up and maintaining such a database in the long term. The ideal database we are working towards would store comprehensive graded reader data centrally, allow free access to the data, include automatic updates where possible, and give editing rights to a large number of stakeholders so new data can be added and updated. It would also be securely stored for the long term so that learners, instructors, and publishers could continue to benefit from it for the foreseeable future.

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The Reality and Necessity of Teaching Singular ‘They’

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Although the English pronoun *they* is a plural pronoun, it is also sometimes used with singular referents, especially gender-indefinite human referents. However, some people believe singular *they* negatively affects communicative effectiveness and meaning processing. This paper describes the history, grammar, and usage of singular *they*. It also describes an exploratory study of singular *they* usage with a nonhuman animal referent. In the study, participants read an article in which singular *they* is used with a nonhuman animal referent. Through interviews with the participants, it was determined that such usage did not cause meaning processing difficulties. The findings from the study, along with the history and established usage of singular *they*, confirm that singular *they* is a regular part of the English pronominal system. Because it is a normal part of the English pronominal system, singular *they* should be regularly included in the teaching of English pronouns.

英語の代名詞の they は複数の代名詞であるが、they は単数の先行詞としても使われることがある、特に人物の性別が不確かな場合である。しかし、一部の人々は単数の they が意味処理に悪影響を与えると考えている。本論文では単数の they の歴史、文法、使用法について述べている。また、人間以外の動物の先行詞として、単数の they が使われる場合の探索研究についても述べている。本研究において、研究者は参加者に、人間以外の動物の先行詞として、単数の they が使われる場合の記事を読むよう促した。そして、参加者達とのインタビューを通じて、その使用法が意味処理に悪影響を及ぼさない事が判明した。単数の they の使用法や歴史と共に、本研究の結果から、単数の they が正規の英語の代名詞である

ということを確認している。以上のことから、普段の教育現場において、英語の代名詞として、単 の they も含めるべきである。

Singular *they* (ST) is the use of the English pronoun *they* with a singular referent. A non-exhaustive list of situations when ST might be applied includes when the referent is indefinite, when the gender or sex of the referent is unknown or irrelevant, when non-sexist/gender-neutral alternatives to generic *he* are desired, and when the person being referred to has previously indicated a preference for ST over other personal third-person pronouns (Baron, 2018; Zimmer et al., 2016). Despite protestations over ST usage from some commentators (e.g. Heffer, 2014; Norris, 2015), ST is a long-established (Balhorn, 2004; Bodine, 1975; Curzan, 2003), fully grammatical (Curzan, 2009; Eberhard et al., 2005; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Sauerland et al., 2005), and frequently used (Gerner, 2000; LaScotte, 2016; Newman, 1992; Paterson, 2011) construction in English. This raises the question: Should ST be included in materials and explicitly taught in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts? This author believes it should be, a position which is explored in this paper.

There are many specific situations that we can imagine in which EFL learners could benefit from having knowledge of ST. For instance, one situation would be if an EFL university student from Japan were to study abroad in an English-speaking country. Such a student might find that certain types of inclusive language, including the use of ST, are commonplace in the speech and academic community they join (Pauwels & Winter, 2006). Many colleges and universities in places where English is the primary language in use have guidelines that affirm ST as useful and acceptable (e.g. Purdue Online Writing Lab, n.d.). It would be remiss for the EFL program at the home institution in Japan to not acquaint students who wish to study abroad with ST.

Another situation we can imagine is the case of international companies which have economic incentives to promote inclusive, diverse workforces and to appeal to diverse clients and investors. In pursuit of these goals, companies might embrace, among other measures, the use or promotion of ST in company materials and initiatives (e.g. Buxton, 2018). Thus, students who might join such companies upon graduation could benefit from knowing about ST beforehand. These scenarios emphasize the idea that teaching ST helps students to develop their linguistic repertoires for navigation in various cultural, academic, and professional contexts (Metz, 2017).

While the scenarios above are primarily related to ST's relationship to non-sexist and non-binary inclusive language, at a more general level ST should be included in English Language Teaching (ELT) because it is a feature of everyday, real-world English use (Gerner, 2000; LaScotte, 2016; Meyers, 1990; Newman, 1992; Paterson, 2011). Protests against using, and thus against teaching, ST usually center on the notion that it is grammatically incorrect, or at least non-standard, and thus should be avoided. However, this position fails to take the historicity and reality of ST usage into account. The conventional proscription of ST is based on mistaken 17th, 18th, and 19th century theories of English grammar (Bodine, 1975; Sklar, 1988), and despite the proscription, ST, at least in some form, was in use before, during, and after that period (Balhorn, 2004). There has been no time since the 14th century that ST has fallen out of common use, although some aspects of usage, such as the non-sexist utilization of ST, may have increased in salience (Blaubergs, 1980; Martyna, 1978; Miller & Swift, 1976), while forms such as ST for non-binary individuals may be genuinely recent innovations (Zimmer et al., 2016). Additionally, in some contexts ST is more common than conventionally prescriptive generic *he* (Gerner, 2000; LaScotte, 2016; Newman, 1992; Paterson, 2011). Not teaching ST not only deprives students of opportunities to develop their linguistic repertoires, but by not "adjusting practice to linguistic reality" (Sklar, 1988, p. 411), it represents a failure to teach English as it actually exists and evolves.

Beyond ST's history and frequency of use, the sense that it is a regular part of the English pronominal system, and thus deserving of explicit teaching, can be explored on psycholinguistic and processing grounds. Here, the processing of ST refers to how ST is understood and resolved in the mind of a listener or reader. For instance, do ST constructions produce too much ambiguity? How fast can the listener/reader resolve any ambiguity and link the pronoun to the correct referent? How fast is this resolution compared to when other pronouns are used? Does ST distract listeners/readers, or, on the other hand, is it unremarkable and goes mostly unnoticed? The general question of the processing difficulty of ST animates the study described in this paper. The results of this study suggest that ST, even in novel context, can go unnoticed by listeners/readers, and this is interpreted as support for the position that the construction is commonplace to the degree that it should be considered a regular part of the English pronominal system and should be regularly included in ELT.

The Processing Question

Concerns over the processing of pronouns have been investigated by other researchers. Kerr and Underwood (1984) found that readers will fixate longer on pronouns that do not align with their expectations for gender-stereotyped referents. More specifically, they found that readers are consistently slower when reading sentences in which the gender of the pronoun and the gender implied by the referent do not match.

Drawing on that work, Foertsch and Gernsbacher (1997) posit that "if using singular *they* is confusing and incurs additional cognitive processing, readers would be slowed when reading a clause that uses *they* to refer to a singular antecedent" (p. 106). They then ran experiments wherein they presented undergraduate readers with sentences featuring pronouns (including ST) that referenced antecedents often stereotyped as masculine (e.g. 'truck driver') or as feminine (e.g. 'nurse'), and antecedents which are gender-neutral (e.g. 'runner') or indefinite (e.g.

'anybody'). Reading speeds were then measured and compared. Based on their analysis of the reading speeds for the various types of sentences, they conclude that when ST is used to refer to an indefinite or non-specific (i.e. not a specified or presumably known individual) referent it is a "cognitively efficient substitution for generic *he* or generic *she*" (p. 109). They found that in a few cases, such as when the referent is a specified individual, ST resulted in slower reading times.

However, post-experiment survey data from the participants showed that a majority of the readers did not find the usage that resulted in slower reading times to be ungrammatical; the researchers posit that the readers may be slower at processing those sentences because they are reacting to what seems like an attempt to hide the gender of a person whose gender is known or implied. Overall, the researchers propose that their experiments "demonstrate that the increased use of singular *they* is not problematic for the majority of readers" (p. 110) and furthermore that the instances of reading delays for some sentences featuring ST "are due not to the pronoun's ungrammaticality or to uncertainty over the intended referent, but to the suspicious opacity of using a nongendered pronoun for an antecedent whose gender is presumably known" (p. 110).

Sanford and Filik (2007) ran a similar study using eye-tracking. Eye-tracking equipment potentially allows for more subtle measurement than the methods employed by Foertsch and Gernsbacher, and this study found a slight yet clear processing delay associated with ST. The researchers suggest this delay is caused by a mismatch between the pronoun number and the number of the referent that the reader is trying to retrieve.

However, they note that readers reliably process, or make sense of, ST much faster than cases where a singular pronoun such as *he* or *she* is used with a plural referent. In other words, in contrast to the apparently nonsensical use of singular pronouns with plural referents, ST usage "does not seem to cause problems of felicity" (p. 176) in normal patterns of communication. The researchers conclude that because ST is in common use "it is rapidly accommodated as an acceptable deviation" (p. 177) despite the number mismatch causing delays for some readers.

Taken together, the aforementioned studies suggest that people generally process and resolve ST, or at least certain forms of ST, without great difficulty because of its frequency and their familiarity with it. This author posits that when a construction is easy to process, we can expect it to 'blend in' with the linguistic context and not distract or draw overt attention. In turn, the degree of 'blending in' can signify the regularity of a construction as part of the language. For instance, it has been observed that many people who believe ST is ungrammatical or wrong in fact use it (Freeman, 2015; LaScotte, 2016; Pauwels & Winter, 2006), presumably unwittingly. In other words, it simply 'blends in' and goes unnoticed in their own productions. This 'blending in' suggests that ST is a regular construction within the English pronominal system.

This author posits that a corollary to such unwitting usage is that ST goes mostly unnoticed in many listening/reading contexts. In other words, the degree to which it is easily processed means that ST is usually an unremarkable part of any utterance and simply a regular pronominal option in some circumstances. If true, and if there is agreement that English as it actually exists and is used should inform the kind(s) of English taught in ELT (Celce-Murcia, 1999), then this buttresses the argument that ST should be regularly included in ELT.

Research

The study described below supports the position that ST is a regular part of the English pronominal system, and by extension that it should be taught in ELT, by showing that even in novel contexts ST can go mostly unnoticed. While it is common to assess processing via experimental methods using invented linguistic items (sets of sentences) and measuring reading speeds (e.g. Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1997; Sanford & Filik, 2007), the study here uses real-world material of longer length (a news article) featuring natural occurrences of ST, and uses a semi-structured interview procedure to assess whether readers of the material noticed and correctly processed ST in a novel context. The novelty of the context is that ST in the reading material is used to refer to a nonhuman animal.

The use of ST with a nonhuman referent has been observed (Brown, 2018; Fusari, 2018), but it is not common or well-established. The high likelihood of unfamiliarity with this ST usage among the study's participants forms the basis of an expectation that it might cause processing problems which would be revealed by the readers consciously noticing the usage, or being distracted or confused by it. On the other hand, if readers readily process ST (i.e. they do not consciously notice it and it does not interfere with their ability to understand the material) even when the referent is a nonhuman animal, it would lend strength to the proposition that ST is simply a regular English construction, which in turn would support its regular inclusion in ELT.

Participants

Through opportunity sampling 19 English L1 speakers were recruited and consented to participate in this study. All participants are current or former teachers of English in Japan. 14 participants are male, and five are female. The age range at the time of the interviews is 27 to 51 years old, with a mean age of approximately 38 and a median age of 36. Eight participants are from the United States, seven are from the United Kingdom, two are from New Zealand, one is from Canada, and one is from Ireland.

Material

The material is an online article from *The Metro* newspaper about dogs in hot cars (Nagesh, 2016). The article was chosen because the writer uses ST in a novel context: Whereas the typical convention is to use the pronoun *it* to refer to generic nonhuman animals, the article's author uses ST repeatedly with a generic dog as the referent. For example, one passage reads (occurrences of ST with nonhuman referent are underlined):

> Get the dog out of the car and move them to a shaded, or cooler area. Then, douse the dog with cool water and let them drink small amounts of it … If the dog is not displaying signs of heatstroke, let them rest while you establish how long they were in the car. (Nagesh, 2016)

Procedure

Participants were told that they would read an article about dogs in hot cars, and that they would be asked to summarize it. They were not told to look for grammar irregularities or ST in particular, but to do their best to read the article as if they had encountered it naturally.

After reading and summarizing the article, a semi-structured interview was conducted. Each participant was asked whether there were any parts of the article particularly difficult to understand or whether they noticed any unusual grammar. They were also asked about their familiarity with ST and if they had noticed its usage in the article. If they had not noticed it, then the excerpt in the *Materials* section above was shared and ST was explicitly pointed out. The interviews concluded with a discussion on the acceptability of using ST with a nonhuman animal referent. Each interview was conducted separately, audio-recorded, and transcribed. The sequence of interview questions and topics followed a semi-fixed sequence according to a 'decision-tree' which is available in Appendix A.

Participant responses to items in the 'decision tree' determined the paths of the interviews. For example, one interview item asked "Did you notice ST in the article?", and each participant's reply provided a data point (noticed VS not-noticed) and determined the next semi-fixed item (confirming the participant realized ST was used for a generic dog VS highlighting ST in an excerpt from the article). In some ways, this format is similar to an oral questionnaire with space made for discussing certain responses in more detail or for elaborating upon unexpected or highly nuanced responses.

Results

None of the participants noted problems reading or understanding the article and all summarized the article without difficulty. All participants stated that they were familiar with ST, and all stated that they find it at least sometimes acceptable. None of the participants said that they noticed ST used in the article, thus all participants were shown the excerpt highlighting the use of ST with a nonhuman referent. After re-reading this passage, 13 participants registered concerns about ST's use in the article. One participant declared the way ST is used in the article is wrong, stating, in regard to ST being used to refer to a nonhuman animal, that:

> I don't think you can, it's there, but, I don't think it can, it can, it shouldn't be used like that. It should be 'it'.

The other 12 who raised concerns said that it seems too strange, too informal, that they would not use it, or that it is inappropriate in edited writing. A response typical of these concerns is:

> I would probably not use it. I would probably say 'move it to a shaded area' and, uh, or continue using just 'the dog' or if you know its gender, 'him or her'.

For greater context, and as an example of the 'decision tree' in action, a transcription of the interview that the preceding statement comes from is included in Appendix B.

Six of the participants had no concerns about ST referring to a generic dog. These participants mentioned varying degrees of surprise when the usage was highlighted, yet they found it acceptable. One remarked that it seemed normal given the content of the article, stating:

> It flows. I guess it, uh, fits. Maybe the, the writer is sympathetic to the dog. Yeah, you know, I thought 'that's weird' when you, uh, first showed it, uh again, to me. But it seems alright here.

Discussion

The main question investigated is whether readers would consciously notice ST when it is used to refer to a nonhuman animal (a generic dog in this case). Of course, the size and opportunistic nature of the sample size may mean that the study is underpowered, yet it offers an initial, tentative answer: The readers did not notice ST being used even in the novel context of it referring to a nonhuman animal. This finding colors the other information gleaned from the interviews.

This other information includes the findings that, first, not only did ST go unnoticed, but also each participant was able to summarize the article without difficulty. That is, there did not appear to be any clear negative effects in relation to comprehension of the article's content. This potentially extends the finding of Foertsch and Gernsbacher (1997) that ST can be an efficient replacement for generic *he* to some cases where it is a replacement for *it* when the referent is a generic nonhuman animal. Second, even the participants who registered concerns about this usage of ST did not notice it. That is, they processed the construction multiple times without problems in the course of reading the article despite believing, post-hoc, that this usage is problematic. This observation matches those of others who have found that even when someone claims ST is problematic, it still tends to 'blend in' (Freeman, 2015; LaScotte, 2016; Pauwels & Winter; 2006).

The novelty of the ST usage in the article raises an interesting question about why someone would produce ST, and not *it* or even generic *he*, for a nonhuman animal. One possibility is that the article's author may have used ST intentionally to 'personalize' or treat the dog as a 'being', not a 'thing', while avoiding the human complications that come from using masculine generics. Alternatively, the author may have used ST unwittingly, with no larger motive than that it simply felt normal. ST does appear to be a regular part of the English pronominal system, so the article's author may have simply reached for it as a natural option in this case. These questions are beyond the scope of this study, but might be an interesting future avenue of inquiry.

As for how this study relates to the ELT classroom, the findings suggest indirect support for the position that ST should be regularly included in ELT. Since it appears that the participants did not consciously notice ST, even in a novel context, this study joins others in lending support to the position that ST 'blends in' and does not generally cause processing problems that affect comprehension. This degree of 'blending in' indirectly supports the inclusion of ST in ELT because it supports the position that ST is a regular English construction.

Limitations

However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to suggest how precisely ST should be included in ELT. For instance, should ST be taught alongside other third person singular pronouns or should it be introduced later? Another question is whether ST should be taught in the most general of terms or should certain aspects of it (e.g. non-sexist language or usage for people of non-binary genders) be emphasized? Still another question is how to teach ST to different student populations. Some students may already use languages that have similar gender-neutral or number-flexible pronouns, resulting in little interference in acquisition of ST in English, while students from other linguistic backgrounds might have more difficulty. These differing backgrounds might require different approaches for teaching ST.

There are some caveats regarding the methodology as well. First, as previously mentioned, the sample size is small. Furthermore, the sample population is not likely to be representative of English readers/listeners in general. Second, the use of ST with a nonhuman animal referent may in fact be slowing these readers down even if they did not consciously notice it; a methodology more sensitive to slight variations in processing could shed more light on this issue. Third, as there is only one researcher involved in the study, reliability in analyzing the interviews is a potential issue. The 'decision tree' used to structure the interviews is meant to ameliorate concerns about reliability by focusing the analysis on moments of clear, binary response-choices, but discursive elements of the interview format mean that responses do not always neatly fall along binary distinctions. Stronger reliability checks would strengthen the analysis.

Conclusion

The study described in this paper shows that it is possible to process ST without difficulty even in novel contexts, such as when the referent is a generic dog. This adds support to previous studies which have shown that ST is generally processed without great difficulty. In combination with other research which has demonstrated that ST is frequent, well-established, and extending into newer forms of usage, this study contributes to the argument that ST is a regular part of the English pronominal system, and thus should be included in ELT.

There are some concerns regarding the methodology of the present study, such as the representativeness of the sample population and the reliability of the interview procedure. These concerns could be addressed in future studies that adjust the sampling methodology and refine the instruments and analysis procedures. These concerns notwithstanding, the study offers tentative and indirect support for the position that ST, as a regular English construction, should be regularly included in ELT.

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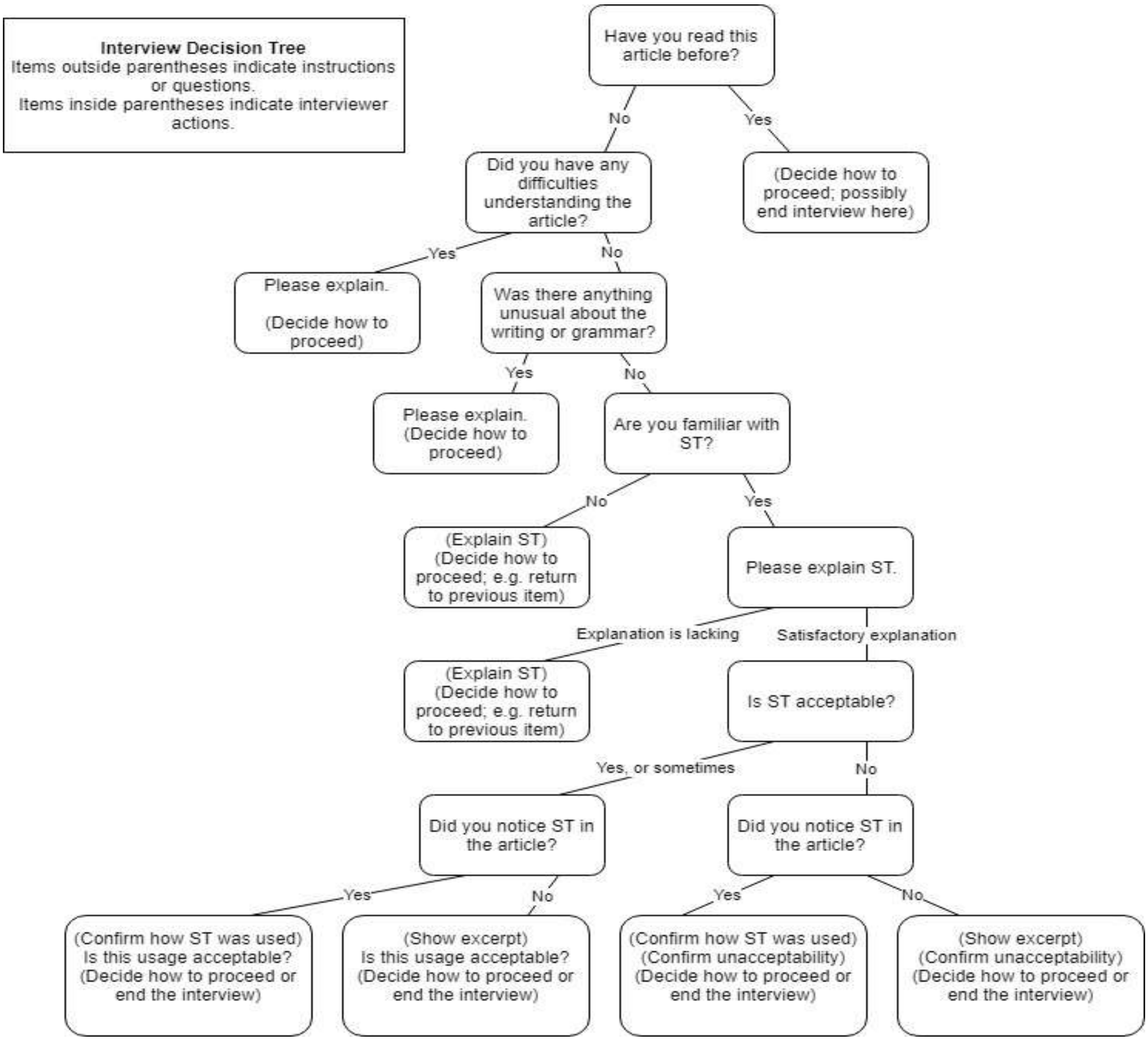
Appendix A



Interview Decision Tree
Items outside parentheses indicate instructions or questions.
Items inside parentheses indicate interviewer actions.
Have you read this article before?
No
Yes
Did you have any difficulties understanding the article?
(Decide how to proceed; possibly end interview here)
Yes
No
Please explain. (Decide how to proceed)
Was there anything unusual about the writing or grammar?
Yes
No
Please explain. (Decide how to proceed)
Are you familiar with ST?
No
Yes
(Explain ST) (Decide how to proceed; e.g. return to previous item)
Please explain ST.
Explanation is lacking
Satisfactory explanation
(Explain ST) (Decide how to proceed; e.g. return to previous item)
Is ST acceptable?
Yes, or sometimes
No
Did you notice ST in the article?
Did you notice ST in the article?
Yes
No
Yes
No
(Confirm how ST was used) Is this usage acceptable? (Decide how to proceed or end the interview)
(Show excerpt) Is this usage acceptable? (Decide how to proceed or end the interview)
(Confirm how ST was used) (Confirm unacceptability) (Decide how to proceed or end the interview)
(Show excerpt) (Confirm unacceptability) (Decide how to proceed or end the interview)

Now Ask Your Partner: Questions in Interaction

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Most ESL/ EFL students spend considerable time learning how to structure questions, focusing on word order, auxiliaries, tags and so on. However, not all questions perform the same speech act. Canonically, transactional questions seek information. A second question type, typical of classroom interactions, is the display question where a teacher asks a question to which the teacher already knows the answer. A third type of question is the interactional question, which is only superficially concerned with getting an *answer*. Rather, interactional questions are mainly pragmatic, maintaining progressivity of the interaction, suggesting possible topics for upcoming talk and so on. If transactional and display questions are the norm in classroom interactions, then learners may be poorly equipped to identify and respond to interactional questions, resulting in stilted minimalistic interactions and pragmatic failure. This paper will suggest that students should be explicitly trained to identify, produce and respond to interactional questions.

英語会話の質問場面において、多くの英語学習者は質問そのものの文法構造や語順などの言語的側面に焦点を置き、それらに多くの時間を費やす。しかしながら、実際の言語使用場面では、全ての質問が同じ言語行為とは限らず、以下の３つに分類される。１つ目は文字通りに捉えた「情報要求としての質問」である。２つ目は「標示としての質問」であり、教室内会話での教師からの質問のような既知情報の返答を促すものである。３つ目は表層的に回答を要求するだけの「相互行為としての質問」であり、主に語用論的に使用され会話の継続や維持、新たな話題の示唆などの機能を持つ。情報要求や標示としての質問のみが規範行為とされる学習環境では、学習者は「相互行為としての質問」を認識し、それに対して適切な返答をする能力が習得できず会話が成立しなくなる可能性もある。本稿では、その「相互行為としての質問」の生産力と対応力を習得することの必要性を論ずる。

The question/answer adjacency pair is a fundamental structure in spoken interaction and language learners must be able to produce comprehensible questions in the L2, and also to be able to understand questions that are addressed to them in the L2. Most students spend considerable time learning how to structure questions in the L2. In the case of English, this will mean attending to word order, using auxiliary verbs, learning about agreement in tag questions and the like. However, not all questions perform the same speech act. At one end of the scale there are simple transactional questions that seek information, sometimes termed *referential questions*. A second type of question, one that is particularly associated with classroom interactions, is the display question where a teacher asks a student a question to which he/ she (the teacher) already knows the answer. A third type of question is the interactional question which is only superficially concerned with getting an *answer*. Rather, interactional questions seek to promote social bonds between speakers, maintain progressivity in interaction, suggest possible topics for upcoming talk and so on.

Understanding the different intents of these three types of questions, and the different kinds of responses that may be forthcoming if the question's intent is perceived in one way rather than another will help both students and teachers to make better judgments about what kind of discourse they are involved in. As Cook (1989) states, "The language learner, in order to be able to operate effectively as a participant in discourse needs to be able to identify what type of discourse he or she is involved in and to predict how it will typically be structured" (p. 49).

This paper suggests that, possibly due to the preponderance of transactional and display questions in the language classroom, students may be unable to identify the intent behind interactional questions, which often leads to stilted, minimalistic responses and pragmatic failure in interaction. Habituating students to identify, produce and respond to interactional questions is vital if learners are ever to progress beyond the use of L2 purely for institutional purposes.

Transactional Questions

Although the grammar and vocabulary of questions might be perceived as bothersome to learners of English, with subject-auxiliary inversion, tag agreement, negative question formation and so on, the underlying intent would seem to be relatively straightforward. Speaker A does not know something. He/she is in an epistemic minus situation (or K-). Speaker A asks a question to Speaker B who, hopefully, provides the sought for information, thus changing Speaker A's epistemic status from K- to K+, that is, from unknowing to knowing. Examples of this kind of question would be in such situations as asking a shop clerk *Do you have these in size seven?* or asking a police officer for street directions or asking a stranger in the street if they have the time. However, these types of transactional questions are not as interactionally simple as they may seem at first glance.

Making sense of questions involves a lot of work on the part of the participants (see Schober, 1999). On the part of the questioner, he/she must understand their K- status. They must assume that the addressee is in a K+ status and they must furthermore assume that the addressee is not only able, but also willing to provide the sought for information. For example, asking a policeman in the street, *Where is the station?* satisfies these conditions. Asking the policemen, *Where did I put my glasses?* is not an interactionally competent question, as the policeman would almost certainly not know the answer. Similarly, asking a policeman on the street, *How much is the usual house price around here?* is also an interactionally incompetent question. The policeman may know the answer but it is not usually considered as falling within the bounds of a police officer's duty to answer such questions. That is, the officer may be able, but is probably not willing, to answer such a question. As we can see, asking a transactional question involves a lot of assumptions about the rights, roles and responsibilities of the interactants, beyond just the exchange of information in response to a question.

Display Questions

Questions are an important feature of language instruction, both as a legitimate means of instruction and as a way of proceeding with classroom management. Richards and Lockhart (1996, pp.185-186) give a variety of different classroom question categories. One category is "procedural" (*E.g. Did everyone bring their homework?*) in which matters of classroom procedure and routines are dealt with. A second category is termed 'convergent' in which "Language teachers often ask a rapid sequence of convergent questions to help develop aural skills and vocabulary and to encourage whole class participation before moving on to some other teaching technique." (p.186) Another category, which is relevant to the language classroom especially, is the *display question*. As with transactional questions, there are a number of interactional characteristics that pertain to this type of question. The question is usually asked by the teacher either to a nominated student or to the whole-class. In contrast to transactional questions, the questioner is not assumed to be in an epistemic minus state. That is, the teacher asks a question to which he or she already knows the answer. Also in contrast to transactional questions, it is not automatically assumed that the addressee knows the answer. That is, a student may not have understood the textbook passage or audio conversation that was the basis for the question. A further complication is that the addressee may know the answer but may not understand the question for some reason to do with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speed of delivery or the like, and thus be unable to answer the question, for reasons unconnected to epistemic status. Similarly, the student may know the answer but not be able to formulate it in the L2. Another key difference between display questions and transactional questions is that the answer may be subject to evaluation, not only for its propositional correctness, but also for its form. Thus, a teacher, after having played an audio recording of an L2 conversation to the class may select a student to answer a question concerning the contents of the recording, e.g. *OK, Yuki, what time will the man meet his friends?* The student may respond with, *The man will meet his friends at six o'clock.* This answer may be followed by an assessment from the teacher such as, *Yes, that's right. Six o'clock. Well done*. This kind of sequence is referred to as the IRF sequence (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Clearly, such an assessment is not appropriate in transactional questions. The following sequence in a shop would be considered odd or insulting.

Customer: Excuse me, how much is this?

Clerk: It's twenty dollars.

Customer: That's right well done.

Not only the content, but also the form of the answer to a display question is open to evaluation. Returning to the question above, in answer to the question *What time will the man meet his friends?* The student may answer *Six o'clock.* The teacher may then request a fuller answer, requiring the student to produce a full sentence, even though the answer given was, in strict terms, correct and sufficient. Or, a student may make a comprehensible and correct answer that is grammatically deviant and which may prompt the teacher to urge the student to use the correct form as in the following:

Teacher: What time will the man meet his friends?

Student: The man will meet his friends on six o'clock.

Teacher: On? On? On six o'clock?

Student: The man will meet his friends at sixo'clock.

Teacher: That's right. At six o'clock.

If the lesson target was prepositions of time, this prompted re-phrasing of the answer is appropriate. Even if the lesson target was something else, such as *will* for future actions, the evaluation/correction prompt may also occur. Needless to say, such prompts and evaluations in non-language classroom situations would most likely be perceived as face threatening. A final point to be made here is that due to the power asymmetries that (usually) exist between teacher and student, and the institutionally mandated goals of the language classroom, certain response options are not deemed appropriate. In answer to the question *What time will the man meet his friends?* the following responses would be deemed inappropriate: a) *I don't know, I'll get back to you later.* b) *I don't know; why don't you ask Maria?* c) *Charles already told you the answer a moment ago.* d) *It's in the book on page ten.* An answer given in the student's L1, even if it is comprehensible by the teacher and all other students, would also be considered inappropriate. Display questions provide strict constraints on answer types that may be pragmatically appropriate in other contexts.

From the above, it can be seen that asking a question is a complex interactional event, as is answering the question. Research on classroom interaction and questioning (For example, Richards and Lockhart, 1985, Long and Sato, 1983, Nunan, 1989) has identified the prominence of display questions in the language classroom and contrasted them with transactional (or referential) questions. These two types of question may contain many subtypes, but they are assumed to be the main types of question that occur in institutional language learning contexts. Given the rights, roles and responsibilities that inhere to these question genres and their prominence in classroom interactions, it may be the case that students conceive of questions in the target language as belonging to one or the other (or a blend) of these two genres and construct questions and responses accordingly. A third type of question, an interactional question, and its appropriate response, may not feature in student's repertoire of speech acts.

Interactional Questions

The central use of language in all societies is quotidian, mundane conversation. As with all other forms of interaction, conversation (and the related, partially overlapping sub-genre, small talk), is conducted with certain rights, roles and responsibilities of participants. Cook, (1989, p.51) gives the following definition of conversation:

1) It is not primarily necessitated by a practical task.

2) Any unequal power of participants is partially suspended.

3) The number of participants is small

4) Turns are quite short

5) Talk is primarily for the participants and not for an outside source.

The concept of naturalistic, “genuine” communication is also outlined by Nunan (1987, p.137):

> genuine communication is characterized by the uneven distribution of information, the negotiation of meaning (through, for example, clarification requests and confirmation checks), topic nomination and negotiation by more than one speaker, and the right of interlocutors to decide whether to contribute to an interaction or not. In other words, in genuine communication, decisions about who says what to whom and when are up for grabs.

Despite the centrality of conversation in daily life, in language learning it is often judged negatively. Indeed, Schegloff (2007, p.xiii) explains his preference for using the term *talk-in-interaction* rather than *conversation* to “circumvent the connotation of triviality that has come often to be attached to the latter term”. Far from being trivial and lacking in the kinds of structures that are more commonly associated with more prestigious kinds of speaking, such as presentations or formal debates, conversation is rule-bound and internally coherent as a genre. One key feature of conversation as a genre is the need for progressivity (See Stivers and Robinson, 2006). That is, the participants must orient to their rights and responsibilities and shoulder their fair share of the burden of keeping the conversation going.

One way in which participants in socially oriented interactions can promote progressivity is by asking questions that are interactional in intent. That is, the utterance takes the form of a question but is designed to be understood as an invitation to provide an expanded answer and move the conversation forward. (See Thompson, Fox and Couper-Kuhlen, 2015).

The following excerpt is taken from a YouTube video of an unscripted interaction between speaker S who is British and runs a cycle tour company in Japan and K and Z who are American tourists who have just taken a tour and are discussing their experiences in Japan.

Excerpt 1

Tourists in Japan. Crofts (2014)

01.	**S:**	**So how about Japanese food**
02.		**what do you particularly**
03.		**like what is your favorite?**
04.	**K:**	**I like the ramen with the**
05.		**um soft boiled egg**
06.	**Z:**	**Yeah**
07.	**S:**	**Ramen with a sof. Oh so**
08.		**it explodes an goes yellow**

((Talk about food in Japan continues for another 60 lines))

The question by S in lines 01-03 foregrounds ‘food in Japan’ which was a subtopic of the immediately previous talk. The form of the question is elaborate and unfolds over three phases. Firstly, the speaker asks a topicalizing question that would be difficult to answer without any further elaboration, i.e. *So how about Japanese food?* This is immediately followed by two further increments; *What do you particularly like?* and *What is your favorite?* The recipients of this series of topicalizing and focusing questions treat the purpose of the questions as interactional rather than purely transactional. That is, they do not provide minimalized answers such as *My favorite Japanese food is Ramen with boiled egg* and then move onto other matters primed by further questions from S. Instead, the talk continues for quite some time on the topic of food with all three participants contributing statements, opinions, repairs and the like. The recipients have interpreted S’s question as an invitation to engage in extended interaction on an accessible topic rather than a narrow request for information and they orient to this social/interactional schema.

The orientation to a social/interactional schema, i.e. conversation, would seem to be a matter of common sense and a practice that, because it obviously exists in the learner's L1, would not be relevant to explicitly teach in the L2 classroom. However, the ability of learners to identify that they are involved in conversation is not a given, as illustrated in the following excerpt of classroom interaction between two students recorded by the author.

Excerpt 2

Part time job. AEI

01.	**Y:**	**What (1.1) did you: (1.0)**
02.		**do? (2.1) weekend this (0.9)**
03.		**last weekend? weekend**
04.		**(4.8)**
05.	**M:**	**>Part time job<**
06.	**Y:**	**Oh? eh what what what job?**
07.	**M:**	**Conbini (.) ence store**
08.	**Y:**	**Eh:: where? where?**
09.		**(1.9)**
10.	**M:**	**Near (.) my home.**
11.	**Y:**	**My home? (1.0) my near**
12.	**M:**	**Near.**
13.	**Y:**	**Near eh? Seven Eleven?**
14.	**M:**	**No circle K?**
15.	**Y:**	**Circle K? Circle K**
16.		**Circle K ah ah ah:::**
17.	**M:**	**School**
18.	**Y:**	**Ok ok oh eh::: (3.6)**
19.		**oh eh what time. (.) uh::**
20.		**(2.5)**
21.	**M:**	**Four ah four hours**
22.	**Y:**	**Four hours?**
23.	**M:**	**Kana**
24.	**Y:**	**Morning? (4.5) Night?**
25.	**M:**	**(1.8) Lunch lunch**

In this sequence the two learners have been instructed only to speak together in English. No topic was given and no task was allocated and it was explained to the learners that this section of the lesson was designed to give maximum autonomy to learners to speak following as closely as possible the outline of so-called "genuine" interaction described by Nunan, above.

The conversation that resulted is typical of many conversations in my data. It contains an extended sequence of question and answer adjacency pairs, which is generally not the way in which spontaneous social interaction unfolds. The questions are minimized and stand-alone in contrast to the elaborate question illustrated in excerpt 1. The answers are likewise minimized, providing the answer to the question asked with no elaboration, evaluation, discourse marking or other commentary. There is not even an alternation between question and answer roles during this sequence. Speaker Y asks all of the questions and speaker M provides answers to those questions and nothing further. In only the narrowest sense can the questions be said to have been asked and answered and most native English speakers/ proficient L2 speakers would probably find this kind of interactional architecture burdensome if prolonged beyond a few turns.

The interaction here does not resemble normal phatic interactions held by native and proficient L2 speakers. The problem is primarily not one of lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge by the speakers as both speakers have passed rigorous university entrance exams that require much higher levels of vocabulary and grammar knowledge than demonstrated here. Neither is it a case of pronunciation rendering the interaction incomprehensible as both speakers seem to understand each other's utterances on a propositional level. Rather, it seems to be the case that the unnaturalness of this exchange is based upon issues of interactional competence. (See Hall, Hellermann, & Doehler 2011, for a discussion of L2 interactional competence.) In this particular case it might be argued that the speakers have failed to understand the opportunities open to them as autonomous interactants and are deploying question and answer sequences according to the genres of questions that they have most frequently encountered in language classrooms; transactional and display questions. A stand-alone question is produced by one participant. An answer to that question is given by the addressee of that question. The original questioner then asks another question, with minimal or zero response or reaction to the answer that has just been given beyond demonstrating some understanding of that answer, i.e. by asking a follow-up question. Although follow-up questions are a regular feature of classroom instructions, they may be viewed negatively in that they could indicate that the answer given to the previous question was somehow insufficient and failed to maintain or contribute to the progressivity of the interaction.

Interactional Questions: Purpose, Form and Position

If it is true that students are mostly exposed to display and transactional questions in the language classroom, and if it is further true that they subsequently perceive of questions in the target language as being one or the other of these genres, then it seems likely that continued focus on the traditional stuff of language classes, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation will not necessarily lead to increased interactional abilities. Explicit awareness-raising of the purpose, form and sequence placement of interactional questions will, it is suggested, help learners move towards higher levels of interactional competence.

Firstly, at the opening of a conversation after exchange of greetings and dealing with here-and-now considerations such seating, drink ordering, removal of outdoor clothing etc. a question asked on a topic of general accessibility such as recent social activities or upcoming plans is likely to be interactional in nature. A question such as *What did you do last weekend?* can be interpreted by the addressee as having the following interactional purposes: 1) The questioner wishes to have a social interaction with me. 2) The questioner does not have any particular topic at hand, or if he/she does, then she/he will defer talking about this for the time being. 3) The questioner proffers the topic of last weekend's activities 4) The questioner will accept talk on this topic but will also accept non-uptake of this topic by me, providing that if I do not take up this topic I proffer a further topic myself that is accessible and acceptable to the questioner. 5) Whatever topic I do choose to talk about, I am expected to discourse at some length on it, providing facts, supporting statements, opinions, assessments and so on. 6) In extremis, I can reject the topic proffer and turn over responsibility for further progression to the questioner, but this strategy is to be used sparingly.

That is, the addressee can respond with an account of his/ her weekend activities (*Well, I went to see a movie…),* or can switch topic (*Oh, nothing special. Actually, I'm going to Disneyland next month…*) or return speakership to the questioner. (*Oh, not much. How about you?*) This last option is to be used sparingly as it can convey an attitude of disinterest.

Apart from the placement of interactional questions, i.e. often following openings, the form may also be something leaners can notice. The form of interactional questions is often complex and multi-component. Excerpt 1 above opened with a complex string of questions. Here are some further examples of interactional questions taken from an unscripted YouTube interaction between native English speakers. (To Fluency, 2017).

Excerpt 3. (32:24)

When you were teaching in Spain did you ever have to work on an American national holiday? Like the fourth of July? I guess you're not even from the U.S. so you don't have the attachment to those kinds of, or people didn't celebrate it so you had to work on that day an' it feels kind of weird. But did you ever have to do that?

Excerpt 4. (33:01)

Do you feel emotionally connected to Thanksgiving? Coz it's an American thing.

Excerpt 5. (34:24)

Do you know if it traditionally or historically stands for something? Or it like symbolizes…

The questions are not stand-alone interrogatives like the questions in excerpt 2 but are structured as strings of questions, with commentary and exemplar answers. These patterns can be taught explicitly to students to help them both produce the questions in these forms and understand the intent when hearing them. See Appendix 1 for a classroom worksheet activity.

Conclusion

Questions and their answers are a key language skill and one that students must master. However, not all questions perform the same function. Habituation to display and transactional questions may inhibit interactional competence in learners. Overt teaching of the function, placement and form of interactional questions, in combination with other interactionally oriented language such as discourse markers, helps to avoid the minimized Q&A format and gradually learn to engage in more naturalistic spoken interactions (see appendix 2 for an example) A broad orientation to interactional considerations prepares learners to transcend the institutional language that is often the only mode of speaking that they know.

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Student Preferences for Online Discussion Forums

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In group English discussion activities, it is not uncommon for students to sit in silence or almost exclusively use L1 to communicate with their peers. Although some teachers would attribute this to a lack of motivation, another possibility is that students do not yet have enough fluency to decode and formulate messages in real time. Threaded discussion forums are one way that technology can be used to allow students more time to understand their peers and create their own messages. This study follows a mixed-methods approach, using interviews to supplement survey data. The quantitative data suggests that students who are less confident may prefer online communication. Student interviews highlight the possibility that successful interaction has a different value to students in the two modes as well as support the conclusion that students who are disinclined to interact with others tend to dislike discussion activities regardless of mode.

英語のグループディスカッション活動では、学生が静かに座ったり、又は、L1 を使って同輩とコミュニケーションをとることは珍しいことではない。一部の教師はこれをモチベーションの欠如とみなすが、もう 1 つの可能性は、学生がリアルタイムでメッセージをデコードして作成するのに十分な流暢性を持っていないことである。ディスカッションフォーラムは、時間制限を外しコミュニケーションを促す儀実の筆である。この調査は、アンケート調査を補完するための学生インタビューを使用した複合方法アプローチに従っている。定量的なデータは、自信がない学生がオンラインコミュニケーションを好むことを示唆している。学生のインタビューでは、2 つのモードで成功した相互作用が学生にとって異なる価値を持つ可能性と、他人とやり取りを好まない学生がモードに関係なくディスカッション活動を嫌う傾向があるという結論を支持している。

During in-class EFL discussion activities some students readily seek to interact with their peers. Some of those students have high English proficiency, but others readily engage in activities despite lower proficiecy, albeit with extensive use of the students' L1. There are also some students who do not participate as actively in speaking and discussion activities. Some students tend to avoid participation in group speaking tasks or participate minimally.

Based on my own personal experiences of using social media for interaction with students, I added an online discussion component to my EFL courses with the hope of making it easier for my less outgoing students to participate in discussions. Support for this can be found in the literature as well. Online discussion forums have been shown to make participation in classroom discussions more democratic in ESL university environments (Warschauer, 1996). This may also be true for EFL learners who are nervous about communicating face-to-face with their peers. More recently, Yanguas and Flores (2014), examined the impact of synchronous computer mediated communication on the quantity of communication by students studying Spanish as a foreign language. Their results suggest that students using synchronous computer mediated communication engage in more communication as measured by speaking turns. It also found that student scores on a Willingness to Communicate questionnaire were less strongly correlated with the quantity of communication for online voice communication than for face-to-face communication.

While Yangua and Flores (2014) examined the amount of communication students undertake during synchronous online discussion using audio, this study aims to measure student preferences of in-class and asynchonous written online discussions, and identify groups that have a significant preference for online format over face-to-face discussions. The current study's focus upon asynchronous rather than synhronous online communication is because of the more relaxed time constraints that it can afford students. Skehan (1998), suggests that relaxing time constraints on communicative tasks can lead to gains in linguistic complexity and accuracy. Asynchronous communication allows participants more time to both understand an create messages than face to face communication which requires messages be processed in realtime. Online discussion forums are one type of asynchronous communication. Users post and reply to messages in an electronic forum at a time of their own choosing and can take as much time as they want to read and create messages. With these two benefits of asynchronous communication in mind, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the learner individual factors of Willingness To Communicate, Linguistic Self Confidence, and Language Use Anxiety correlated with mode of discussion for EFL students at Japanese university?
2. Is there a significant difference in preferences for mode of discussion for students with differing levels of these individual factors?

A questionnaire was designed to measure student opinions towards in-class and online formats of discussions as well as several background factors, and was then administered to two intact classes of Japanese university students. The questionnaire measures three motivational variables of Willingness to Communicate, Linguistic Self-Confidence, and Language Use Anxiety.

The construct of Willingness to Communicate has its roots in Burgoon's Unwillingness to Communicate Scale (1976) which was further developed as Willingness to Communicate by McCloskey and Baer (1985). Both of these scales looked approached the construct as a rather static personality trait that was used for predicting tendencies to engage in spoken L1 communication.

In their interpretation of WTC for L2 communication, Macintyre, Donyei, Clement and Noels (1998) argued that it is not necessary to limit the construct to only a static trait, and that some of its components may vary depending upon the situation. In their six-layer model, WTC is an antecedent of communication behavior, which is in turn influenced by ten different factors ranging from situational factors such as Desire to Communicate with a Specific Person to more static traits such as Self-Confidence, which they broke down into the sub components of self-evaluation of L2 skills and anxiety when using the L2.

Learners who have greater self-confidence in their L2 are often more willing to use it for communication. Similarly those with lower anxiety regarding L2 use are generally more willing to communicate in their L2. These two constructs may appear to be mirror images of each other at first glance, but their relationship is in fact more complicated. Some people may view their proficiency in their L2 as being very low yet feel relatively comfortable using their L2 despite experiencing difficulties. Likewise, some learners may feel nervous or uncomfortable using their L2 even when they have skill using the language.

Some learners enjoy communicative speaking activities in class, yet others can experience difficulty and distress in these situations. Students who are relatively unwilling to communicate, do not have confidence in their language ability, or feel nervous when using the target language may experience more difficulty and enjoy these types of face to face communicative speaking activities less.

Method

The methodology followed in this research is mixed-method, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. This aims to compensate for the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of the other. (Dornyei, 2007) The strategy used in the quantitative part of the study is a questionnaire, while the qualitative portion is an interview. Questionnaires are able to gather data from a large number of participants, however it is difficult to adapt questions to the individual participant, as well as for participants to provide in-depth responses. Interviews can add depth, but due to their time-consuming nature it is seldom feasible to interview more than a few participants. Correlations and ANOVA calculated using the software SPSS were used for analysis in the quantitative section of the study, with analysis of coded interview transcripts used for that of the qualitative section.

Participants

The participants receiving the questionnaire were 64 Japanese first-year university students at a national university in Japan. The respondents came from two intact English communication classes that met for fifteen weekly 90-minute classes. As a part of the class, students engaged in six online discussion assignments in addition to speaking activities in small groups and pairs. The sample was predominantly male, with 45 respondents, 16 female, and three instances with no response. Nearly all the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 20, with two respondents over 21 years old. Both classes were listed as intermediate level English classes, however one class was made entirely of students from the engineering faculty and tended to have lower proficiency than those from the other class.

The interviews were conducted using a convenience sample of two questionnaire respondents who volunteered for a follow-up interview. Both of the students were male, 19 years of age, and came from the same English class composed of first year engineering students.

Instruments

For the questionnaire, multi-item scales were created to measure students' attitudes toward the two modes of interaction activities (online and in-class discussions), and three personality traits of Willingness to Communicate, Linguistic Self-confidence, and Language Use Anxiety. These three scales drew from items in the questionnaire used by Kormos and Dornyei (2004) in their study on motivation in EFL group discussions, which in turn is based upon Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) questionnaire supplemented with items for its WTC scale borrowed from McCloskey and Baer (1985). The two multi-item scales measuring attitudes toward online and in-class discussion included items related to perceived effectiveness, ability to participate, and fatigue associated with the tasks. This study does not examine the actual linguistic performance of students due to the difficulty of collecting data. Although, online discussion transcripts are readily available, it was not possible to collect data from in-class speaking tasks due to the large class sizes.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts with a total of 31 items. Items in part one used Likert scale questions and were scored from strongly agree to strongly disagree in a six-level scale. Part two items were personal information questions where the respondent chose the most appropriate response from two to six choices. After the questionnaire an invitation to participate in a follow-up interview was also used, and other than those who opted to participate in the follow-up interview no names were recorded on the questionnaire forms to maintain confidentiality. Before administering the questionnaire, it was piloted once with one adult female Japanese English speaker with intermediate proficiency. When piloted, the Japanese respondent found the sequence of choices in the Likert scales to be confusing and were reversed.

For the qualitative study, an interview protocol was developed using a list of 12 questions to guide the interviews. Questions focused primarily on participants' previous language learning experiences and their perceptions of discussion activities in online and face to face formats. (see appendix B for the list of pre-prepared interview questions).

Procedures

Students were given notice of the questionnaire one week before administering it. A brief in-class announcement was followed by an email message briefly describing the goals and content of the questionnaire. It was administered in an in-person group format using 15 minutes of time at the beginning of the normal class time. The return rate was 100% for the students who attended class on the day of administering the questionnaire. However, several students were absent, resulting in a total return rate of 91% of students enrolled in the two classes.

The student interviews were conducted two weeks after the administration of the questionnaire. After several questions about the student's general background, open-ended questions (e.g. Tell me about your image of studying foreign language.) were asked. In addition to the prepared questions, several additional questions were asked of each participant to clarify or elaborate upon their responses. These two interviews each lasted roughly 15 minutes and were conducted in the students' L1 of Japanese. The two interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and then translated into English for data analysis. The interviews were conducted face to face in an unused classroom.

Variables in the study

In this study, the independent variables are Willingness to Communicate, Linguistic Self-Confidence, and Language Use Anxiety. The independent variables are operationalized using multi-item Likert scales as described in Table 1. Items for the scales of Linguistic Self-Confidence and Language Use Anxiety both drew their individual questionnaire items from Kormos and Dornyei (2004). The individual items for the scale Willingness to Communicate were informed by Kormos and Dornyei's questionnaire but were arranged to reflect communicative situations regularly observed by the author.

To ensure that the individual items of the scales measured the same construct, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each multi-item scale. Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.7 generally indicate that the individual items of a scale vary in the same way and likely measure the same thing. Linguistic Self-Confidence and Language Use Anxiety approach or exceed this threshold. However, that of Willingness to Communicate, with a Cronbach alpha of .459 is much lower than the threshold for reliability. This lack of precision may be due to some respondents interpreting the items as referring to communication in L1 while others assumed that the items were asking about L2 communication.

The dependent variables are measured variables of Attitudes toward in-class discussion and Attitudes toward online discussion, as well as the computed variable of Preference for online discussion. Attitudes toward in-class discussion and Attitudes toward online discussion are both measured variables and operationalized with mulit-item Likert scales (see table 1 for individual items). Both of the measured dependent variables showed acceptable reliability values.

Table 1: Motivational variables

Willingness to Communicate	Readiness to speak with people in different social situations; e.g. "talking with friends at lunch time" (3 items, Cronbach a = .459, : q1, q10, q16)
Linguistic Self-Confidence	Learner's positive feeling about their own language ability; e.g. "I am happy with my English level" (4 items, Cronbach a = .699 : q4, q8, q12, q24)
Language Use Anxiety	Learner's feelings of anxiety felt when using L2; e.g. "I sometimes feel nervous when I have to speak English" (3 items, Cronbach a = .713 : q6, q17, q22)
Attitudes toward in-class discussion	Learner's positive attitudes towards in-class discussion activities; e.g. "Discussing in class makes me better at communicating in English" (3 items, Cronbach a = .663 : q9, q13, q20)
Attitudes toward online discussion	Learner's positive attitudes towards online discussion activities; e.g. "I can easily share my ideas and opinions in online discussions" (4 items, Cronbach a = .749 : q5, q15, q18, q23)
Preference for online discussion	This variable is computed as the Attitudes toward face to face discussion subtracted from Attitudes toward online discussion.

Preference for online discussion is a computed variable that subtracts the scores of Attittudes toward in-class discussion from those of Attitudes toward online discussion. The rationale for computing this variable rather than measuring student preferences directly was to avoid forcing respondents to consider two different constructs at the same time.

In the qualitative part of the study, translations of the transcribed interview data which were coded in two rounds for analysis. In the first round, individual utterances were annotated in isolation with the second round looking for themes connecting different utterances.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of motivational and background variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WTC Willingness to Communicate	64	1.00	6.00	4.11	.92
LSC Linguistic Self-Confidence	64	1.75	6.00	3.62	.89
LUA Language Use Anxiety	64	1.00	6.00	4.32	1.13
Online Attitudes toward online discussion	64	1.50	6.00	3.84	.86
In-class Attitudes toward in-class discussion	64	1.33	6.00	3.70	.96
Online preference Preference for online discussion	64	-3.17	2.50	.14	.87
Age	64	2	6	3.06	.69
SSTE School speaking task experience	63	1	6	3.06	1.39
PCSE Private conversation school experience	63	1	6	2.37	2.00
TOEIC	64	1	6	2.94	1.04
Valid N (listwise)	62				

Data analysis

For the analysis of the quantitative data, a correlational design was followed. Correlations between the dependent variables of *Attitudes toward online discussion*, *Attitudes toward face to face discussion*, and *Preference for online discussion* the independent background variables were computed and assessed. In addition, ANOVA was performed to identify significant differences between subgroups within the motivational variables. For both analyses the statistic significance level was set at $p < .05$, two tailed. This setting leaves a 5% chance of variations being due to random variation despite being being labeled as significant. Two tails means that when examining differences between groups there is no assumed direction to the change. Since the idependent variables in this study may have resulted in more or less favorable views of different discussion formats, a two-tailed analysis was used.

Results of the quantitative study

Correlations

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the motivational variables and ordinal scale background variables in the sample. While nearly all the variables show a wide range in responses, Language Use Anxiety, School speaking task experience and Private Conversation School Experience show relatively more variation in their responses as described by their standard deviation.

Table 4 shows Pearson correlations between the dependent variables of attitudes towards online and in-class discussions with the independent motivational variables and background variables. There are significant positive correlations between the independent variables of *Willingness to Communicate* and *Linguistic Self-Confidence* with the two dependent variables of

Table 3: Correlations between dependent and independent variables

Pearson Correlation

	WTC	LSC	LUA	Sex	Age	Faculty	SSTE	PCSE	TOEIC
Online	.283*	.444*	-.354*	.159	-.177	-.014	.244	.156	.188
In-class	.302*	.684*	-.517*	-.042	.025	.110	.219	.274*	.223
Preference for online	-.052	-.313*	.219	.210	-.203	-.134	-.006	-.138	-.059

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Comparison of attitude to discussion mode variables across Linguistic Self-confidence levels

	M(SD)					
	Low (n=3)	Medium (n=45)	High (n=16)	F	df	Effect size 3
Online	2.75(0.43)	3.82(0.75)	4.09(1.06)	3.31*	2, 61	.10
In-class	2.22(0.84)	3.46(0.74)	4.63(0.80)	19.787*	2, 61	.39
Preference for online	0.53(0.55)	0.35(0.73)	-0.53(0.87)	7.83*	2, 61	.20

*p<.05; 3 Eta squared.

Table 5: Comparison of attitude to discussion mode variables across Language Use Anxiety levels

	M(SD)					
	Low (n=2)	Medium (n=23)	High (n=39)	F	df	Effect size 3
Online	5.00(1.41)	4.09(0.76)	3.63(0.83)	4.34*	2, 61	.12
In-class	5.33(0.94)	4.07(0.96)	3.39(0.81)	8.04*	2, 61	.21
Preference for online	-.33(0.47)	0.02(0.72)	0.24(0.97)	0.737	2, 61	.02

*p<.05; 3 Eta squared.

Attitudes toward online discussion and *Attitudes toward in-class discussion*. This shows that students who are confident in their language abilities and are willing to speak with others tend to look at both online and in-class discussions favorably. *Private Conversation School Experience* also had a significant positive correlation with *Attitudes toward in-class discussion*. Since in-class activities are similar in nature to many of those done in private conversation schools, a positive correlation is unsurprising. Other factors such as at what age conversation school was attended may explain its slightly lower correlation strength. There were also significant negative correlations between *Language Use Anxiety* with both *Attitudes toward online discussion* and *Attitudes toward in-class discussion*. As expected, students who feel nervous about using L2 tended to have less favorable views of both types of discussion activity. *Linguistic Self-Confidence* was the only independent variable significantly correlated to a *Preference for online discussion*. Students who feel confident about their abilities in L2 may not feel a strong need to take advantage of the loosened time constraints afforded by online discussion and prefer the ease of discussing verbally rather than in writing.

ANOVA analysis

ANOVA was used to further explore the statistically significant correlations between the dependent variables of Attitudes toward online discussion, Attitudes toward in-class discussion, Preference for online discussion and the independent variables of Linguistic Self-confidence, and Language Use Anxiety (See Table 1). Scores for the independent variables were grouped into three categories of low (1.0-2.0), medium (2.01-4.0), and high (4.01-6.0) for the analysis and are summarized in Tables 5, and 6.

Linguistic Self-confidence. One-way analysis of variance indicated that there were significant differences amongst the three levels of *Linguistic Self-confidence* for online and face to face discussion, as well as the computed variable of preference for online over face to face discussion. For online discussion, comparisons using the S-N-K post hoc test showed that mean scores for the low Linguistic Self-confidence group (M = 2.75, SD = 0.43) were significantly lower than the scores of the medium Linguistic Self-confidence group (M = 3.82, SD = 0.75), and of the high Linguistic Self-Confidence group (M = 4.09, SD = 1.07). However, the two groups with higher confidence (medium and high) did not differ significantly.

In the case of in-class discussion, post hoc comparisons using the SNK test indicated that the mean scores for the low Linguistic Self-confidence group (M = 2.22, SD = 0.84), medium Linguistic Self-confidence group (M = 3.46, SD = 0.74), and high Linguistic Self-confidence group (M = 4.63, SD = 0.80) were all statistically significantly different from each other.

Lastly, in the case of preference for online discussion over in-class discussion, SNK tests indicated that the group with high linguistic self-confidence (M = -0.53, SD = 0.95) was significantly different from those of the low (M = 0.53, SD = 0.55) and medium (M = 0.35, SD = 0.73) confidence groups.

Taken together, the results suggest that students with higher Linguistic Self-Confidence tended to view both types of discussions favorably and those with low Linguistic Self-Confidence viewed them both unfavorably. This is not surprising, Students with low confidence may feel somewhat negatively about a wide range of activities that rely on them producing language. When scores for in-class discussions are subtracted from those of online discussions a slight difference in preferences for low and high confidence groups. Those in the high confidence group tended to prefer in-class discussions while those in the medium and low confidence groups tended to prefer the online format.

Language Use Anxiety. One-way analysis of variance also indicated that there were significant differences amongst the three levels of *Language Use Anxiety* with *Attitudes toward online discussion* and *Attitudes toward in-class discussion*. For online discussion, S-N-K post hoc tests showed that mean scores for the low (M = 5.00, SD = 1.41) and high (M = 3.63, SD = 0.83) levels of *Language Use Anxiety* were statistically significantly different from each other. However, that of the medium group (M = 4.08, SD = 0.76) was not statistically significantly different from either the low or high group.

In the case of in-class discussion, SNK post hoc tests showed that members in the low *Language Use Anxiety* group (M = 5.33, SD = 0.94) were significantly different from both the medium *Language Use Anxiety* group (M = 4.07, SD = 0.96) and the high *Language Use Anxiety* group (M = 3.34, SD = 0.81). However, for the same groups of anxiety level, no statsistically significantly different groups were indicated for preference for online discussions over in-class discussions.

This suggests that students who had low levels of anxiety toward using English had a more positive attitude not only toward in-class speaking activities, but also to online discussion as well. While the results are not statistically significant for Language Use Anxiety scores, they do follow a similar pattern to those of Linguistic Self-Confidence. Similar to the high confidence group, those in the low anxiety group tended to prefer in-class discussions.

Results of the qualitative study

Several themes emerged regarding factors affecting the students' perceptions of face to face and online interactions. Pseudonyms are given to the participants for confidentiality purposes and ensure the privacy of the students.

Unwillingness to approach others

The first interviewee, Kazuki, was neither comfortable talking with peers in class, nor online. While describing his university English class he said, “I don’t really like talking with other people. I would think ‘ah, we’re going to talk again’ or ‘we’re going to do something with somebody again.’” In class fluency building activities appeared especially distressing for him because of many partner changes. “I can do it with people who I talk with normally but in this class especially the seating is shifted a lot and we’re speaking with people who are practically strangers I can’t talk at all. I can’t talk at all in Japanese so how am I supposed to talk in English.”

The author originally assumed that the physical distance afforded by online communication would make interaction less stressful for students like Kazuki, but it appears to not be the case. When asked about his online discussions he replies ”There's that thing where we comment to people on journals right? I've never actually done that. I know I should, not because it's in English, it's just simply I think suddenly sending something like that to someone you don't know is well...” It was clear that for Kazuki, his communication online was just as real as that in class, and equally difficult to approach classmates that he was not well aquainted with.

Preference for ”real” English

The other interviewee, Tomoya, commented several times that he did not feel he was very proficient at English, but he also made it clear that he did not feel being proficent was necessary to be successful. ”I think it's best if you can have a conversation. If you can understand bits here and there, maybe you can do it.” A major distinction that Tomoya made was between ”real” English and ”classroom” English. Study focused on grammar and entrance exam preparation did not seem useful for everyday life to him, while activities using realia such as movies and presidential speeches were rewarding even if difficult. ”I felt like I could listen a little if I could just catch some of it.”

Tomoya's preference for ”real” English seems to have extended into his preferences for mode of discussion as well. Regarding in-class pair discussions he seemed to value being able to negotiate meaning on the spot with his classmates. ”We would both kind of work together to have a conversation... maybe our tempo was a little slow but we could develop little by little.” When asked if his feeling of accomplishment after successfully communicating face to face and online was similar, he clearly disagreed. ”When we were speaking face to face, first of all I felt it was an accomplishment to react there on the spot. When I was online I had time and I felt like I could complete a little writing in English but the feeling of accomplishment was much higher for face to face.”

It is possible that some aspects of the online communication made it more closely resemble the non-communicative activities that Tomoya was familiar with in high school. The limitation of online discussions to text only may have resulted in more formal register and a focus on correct form over communication of ideas.

Discussion

Results of the questionnaire suggest that Japanese university students studying English may prefer participating in online discussion forums if they have low self-confidence in their language abilities. The extra time available for communicating in online forums possibly makes it easier for students to check their work before interacting and help them to feel more confident that they are not making mistakes. Students can make use of tools such as dictionaries when engaging in asynchronous online discussion which are not as accessible during face to face discussions. However, results from interviews highlight the possibility that the added time available and text focused nature of the communication may cause some students to focus on writing accuracy at the expense of communicating their ideas with their peers.

Preference for online discussion does not appear to be significantly different for students who score differently for Language Use Anxiety. However, it is more strongly negatively correlated with positive attitudes toward in-class discussion than for online discussion. There were only 2 students with low levels of anxiety regarding using their L2, with widely differering preferences for discussion type. It is possible that the low number of students in the low anxiety group obscured differences between the groups of low, medium and high Language Use Anxiety.

For students who have a low willingness to communicate online discussion does not appear to be of great benefit. Although online tools may make it easier to gain time for confirming meanings before interacting, they do nothing in themselves to create a desire to communicate. For these students, modifications in classroom management may be helpful. For example, maintaining the same speaking partners for several weeks rather than changing repeatedly.

Two limitations of this study related to data collection are classroom temperature during the questionnaire and differences in gender mixes between the two classes. High temperature in the classroom caused some students to become visibly drowsy and this may have made it slightly more difficult for some students to fill out the questionnaire accurately. Balance between males and females within the sample is another limitation of the study. Females only accounted for 16 of 64 responses on the questionnaire. Also, neither of the participants interviewed were female. Since interview studies often involve few participants compared with questionnaires, it is more difficult to generalize to a population. This lack of generalizability is accentuated by the lack of female participants in the interview sample.

A research design limitation of the questionnaire is that student attitudes toward technology were not measured. It is possible that there are some students whose attitude toward online discussion is negative due to difficulties using technology rather than the form of communication. Another is that the construct of Willingness to Communicate was not accurately measured by the questionnaire as indicated by Cronbach alpha reliability tests which may have obscured relationships between discussion type preferences and Willingness to Communicate scores.

Implications for future research

The online discussions employed in this study were text based, with students typing their responses to each other. While this form of online discussion is common, there are other forms which make use of audio and video instead of text. The student preferences indicated in the present study may be influenced by students preferences regarding spoken and written communication. Although asynchronous communication of online discussions affords students time to encode and decode meanings that they want to communicate, using a written mode may make them more focused upon using accuracy than communicating their own ideas. Further research on preferences for online discussion that incorporate multi-media such as using audio and video recording may allow students to enjoy some of the ”reality” of in-class discussions while taking advantage of the increased planning time afforded by online discussion

This research is based soley on student preferences leaving investigations into language production of students for later studies. It is possible that the language behavior of students in in-class and online discussion activities do not reflect student preferences for one type over another. Several questions of interest along these lines are whether the language behavior of students differs in quantity or quality for in-class and online discussion activities. Also, is students’ better when they discussing in their preferred discussion activity type

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on communication attitudes and discussion task mode preferences

1. I talk with my friends when we are waiting for something.	6 5 4 3 2 1
2. I check my phone or quietly read something before class starts.	6 5 4 3 2 1
3. I listen to my partners when I have in class discussions.	6 5 4 3 2 1
4. I am happy with my English ability.	6 5 4 3 2 1
5. I regularly join in online discussions.	6 5 4 3 2 1
6. I sometimes feel nervous when I have to speak English.	6 5 4 3 2 1
7. I mainly use English to communicate in online discussions.	6 5 4 3 2 1
8. Learning English often gives me a feeling of success.	6 5 4 3 2 1
9. I can easily share my ideas and opinions in class discussions.	6 5 4 3 2 1
10. I'm usually quiet when I'm waiting for something with friends.	6 5 4 3 2 1
11. I sometimes use Japanese to communicate in class discussions.	6 5 4 3 2 1
12. I don't mind if I have to speak English with somebody.	6 5 4 3 2 1
13. Discussing in class makes me better at communicating in English.	6 5 4 3 2 1
14. When I have to speak English I often lose confidence.	6 5 4 3 2 1
15. I can easily share my ideas and opinions in online discussions.	6 5 4 3 2 1
16. I enjoy talking with my classmates at lunch time.	6 5 4 3 2 1
17. Unfortunately, I'm not very good at learning English.	6 5 4 3 2 1
18. Discussing online (Canvas) makes me better at using English.	6 5 4 3 2 1
19. I'm sure that I can become good at using English.	6 5 4 3 2 1
20. I feel tired when using English in class.	6 5 4 3 2 1
21. I like talking to new people I meet on the train or bus.	6 5 4 3 2 1
22. Sometimes I feel language learning is difficult for me.	6 5 4 3 2 1
23. Doing online (Canvas) discussions makes me feel tired.	6 5 4 3 2 1
24. I think I am good at learning languages.	6 5 4 3 2 1
25. I prefer studying other subjects than English, like Math or History.	6 5 4 3 2 1

Participant background information questions

26. What is your sex?					
Male	Female				
27. How old are you?					
Under 18	18	19	20	21	Over 21
28. What is your school faculty?					
Humanities	Education	Sciences	Medical	Agriculture	Engineering
29. How often did you do speaking tasks in class before university?					
Not at all	Almost never	A little	Sometimes	Often	Very often
30. Have you studied at an English conversation school?					
No I haven't	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	Over 3 years
31. What is your most recent TOEIC score?					
Under 300	301-400	401-500	501-600	Over 600	No answer

Appendix B

Interview questions

1. Please introduce yourself. Tell me a little be about you and your studies here at university.
2. What were your English classes like in junior high school and high school?
3. What types of activities did you do?
4. What share of class time did reading, writing, speaking, and listening have in your classes?
5. In your classes, were there some language activities that you liked or didn't like?
6. What type of situations made you feel especially good/bad during English classes?
7. Are your university English classes similar or different to your university classes?
8. How do you feel about those changes/similarities?
9. Your university English class has many discussions in small groups and pairs. What have your experiences been like in those activties?
10. Your English class also has weekly online discussions. How are those experiences for you?
11. When discussing online, there is less time pressure for communication. How much does that help you?
12. Do you have any questions for me, or want to say anything else that you think I should know about this topic?

Student Perceptions of Formative Assessment Tasks in Academic Listening Classes

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This paper presents the results of a questionnaire which queried learners about their perceptions of three different types of tasks in a university-level academic listening course, namely selected response (multiple-choice and true / false), written summaries, and oral summaries. All tasks were used for formative assessment, and because the main goal of formative assessment is to promote learning, the students were asked to rate improvement in their listening skills, their skills completing the three tasks, and their overall English skills over the course of one academic year. Additionally, they were asked to indicate to what extent they felt they could demonstrate their listening skills with the tasks, as well as to evaluate the level of difficulty of the tasks. The results were generally favorable for all three tasks, suggesting that they all may have a useful role to play in academic listening courses.

本稿では、大学のアカデミック・リスニングの授業における 3 種類のタスク（多肢選択・True / False 問題、筆記サマリー、口頭サマリー）に対する学生の意見を問うアンケートの結果を報告する。すべてのタスクは形成的評価に用いられたものであり、その目的はあくまでも学習の促進であるため、アンケートでは 1 年間の授業を通して聴解能力、タスク達成スキル及び全般的な英語力がどの程度向上したかを学生に問うた。それに加えて、各タスクでどの程度自分のリスニング・スキルを発揮できたかと、それぞれのタスクの難易度を評価させた。結果として、いずれのタスクも学生から概ね肯定的に評価されたため、アカデミック・リスニングの授業で役立つことを示唆している。

Listening has sometimes been called the “invisible skill” because it is difficult for teachers to determine their students’ level of understanding while they are on task. In the case of reading, teachers can at least watch their students’ eyes moving down the page, but with listening “we cannot be sure whether they are listening at all or whether their minds are elsewhere” (Field, 2008, p. 38). The invisibility of listening means that it is very important for teachers to find effective ways to check comprehension during class as part of formative assessment. Perhaps the most widely used task for this is post-listening comprehension questions, primarily multiple- choice and true / false (Wagner, 2014). Another widely used task is summarizing. Teachers can have students listen to a passage and then have them summarize it in their own words, either in writing or orally.

Although tasks such as multiple-choice questions and summaries are commonly used in academic listening classes in EFL, to date there has been relatively little research on learners’ perceptions of them. Learners’ perceptions of assessments have an impact on their performance (Scouller, 1998), so it is important to develop a better understanding of how learners perceive them. The purpose of this paper is to report on a preliminary investigation into this area. First, a brief overview of some of the connections between formative assessment and comprehension questions, written summaries, and oral summaries will be provided. This will be followed by a report on the results of a study that queried two intact classes of Japanese university students about their perceptions of the tasks. The paper will conclude with suggestions for further research.

Formative Assessment Tasks in Listening Instruction

The primary goal of formative assessment is to promote learning (Katz & Gottlieb, 2013). To some extent this necessarily involves evaluating students’ progress and level of understanding. However, its main purpose is to help learners develop their skills rather than provide a measurement of their achievement, which is commonly called summative assessment. As part of helping students develop their skills, formative assessment aims to build leaners' confidence and increase their motivation. It is an active process that involves teacher-student interaction, as well as student-student interaction.

It is important to note that what differentiates formative assessment from summative assessment is not the type of task the learners complete. Instead, it is the purpose of the task and how it is used (Katz & Gottlieb, 2013). Multiple-choice questions, written summaries, and oral summaries can all be used for both formative and summative assessment. In the case of formative assessment, grades are generally not given, nor are points awarded. For summative assessment, however, grades are very important. When used as part of either type of assessment, each task has its advantages and disadvantages. Multiple-choice questions are versatile and efficient (Downing, 2006), and are also often cited as being objective (Shin, 2017). However, they are not particularly authentic (Wilson, 2008), rely on reading skills (Wagner, 2014), and can be answered correctly by simple random guessing (Buck, 2001). Written summaries, on the other hand, are authentic because they are used in academia (Kim, 2001), and also cannot be completed by guessing. Nevertheless, they depend on writing skills. Like written summaries, oral summaries are authentic (Augilar, 2016), but they rely on speaking skills. Additionally, because of their ephemeral nature, providing feedback can be problematic unless they are recorded.

As has been noted above, multiple-choice questions, written summaries, and oral summaries have both advantages and disadvantages. Considering that assessment benefits from a variety of different tasks (Buck, 2001), it seems reasonable to suggest that all three have a place in an EFL listening curriculum. However, to date little research has been done on learners' perceptions of different types of formative assessment tasks, so it is unclear how well they do their intended job, at least from the perspective of the students. In order to begin filling in this gap in the research, the current study queried students enrolled in an academic listening course about their perceptions of the three tasks in question. The main focus of the questionnaire was on skill development, but also addressed were how well the tasks allowed students to demonstrate their skills, as well as how difficult they were to complete. The four research questions addressed in the study are as follows.

Research questions

RQ1. To what degree did learners perceive improvement in their English listening skills, as well as the three tasks, and are there any differences between the tasks?

RQ2. To what degree did learners feel that doing the tasks led to improvement in their overall English abilities, and are there any differences between the tasks?

RQ3. To what degree did learners perceive that they could demonstrate their English listening skills using the three tasks, and are there any differences between the tasks?

RQ4. To what degree did the learners feel that the three tasks were difficult, and are there any differences between the tasks?

Methods

Participants

Two intact classes of first-year Japanese students at a medium-sized university in the Kanto area participated in the study. They were enrolled in a required academic listening course taught by the author, and had 30 students each. However, due to absences there were a total of 29 valid responses for Class 1, and 27 for Class 2. The students in Class 1 were upper-intermediate, with TOEIC® scores in the 600s. The students in Class 2 were advanced, with TOEIC® scores ranging from the lower 700s to the upper 800s.

Materials

Textbook

In both classes a textbook entitled "Listening and Notetaking Skills, Level 1" (Dunkel and Lim, 2014) was used. The book is designated by the publisher as being for B1 level students in the CEFR proficiency scale, which translates to approximately 550 to 785 on the TOEIC®. The book was slightly more challenging for the students in Class 1 than Class 2, but it was an appropriate level for both classes.

As the title suggests, the textbook's main aim is to develop students' listening and notetaking skills. There are 15 units, each with a mini-lecture ranging from about four minutes to about ten minutes, and there are a number of pre-listening and post-listening exercises. The book was used over the course of one academic year in which there were 28 regular class meetings in total. Due to lack of time, only 12 out of the 15 units in the book were completed.

Questionnaire

A 25-item questionnaire was created to query students about the class, including 12 items focusing on their perceptions of the three types of assessment. The results from these 12 items will be provided here. The items were in the form of statements which students rated using a 5-point Likert scale (1. strongly disagree; 2. disagree; 3. neither agree nor disagree; 4. somewhat agree; 5. agree). The questionnaires were conducted on the second to last day of class for the academic year. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's α. For the 25-item questionnaire the value was 0.90, and for the 12 items used for the current study, it was 0.80.

Procedures

The basic class procedure was as follows. Two weeks were spent on each unit of the book. This meant that three units were not covered. In the first class meeting for a new unit, the students engaged in warm-up discussion activities with their classmates. This was followed by preview activities such as vocabulary and notetaking exercises. In the second class students listened to a lecture on CD and took notes as they listened. After listening to the lecture once, they formed pairs or small groups and talked about the content of the lecture while comparing their notes. They then listened to the lecture again and after it was over had another chance to compare notes. Following this, they answered comprehension questions in the textbook. Before going over the answers, students were able to compare their answers. After completing the comprehension questions, the students did either an oral or a written summary of the lecture. Early in the semester students were provided with guidelines about how to complete the summary tasks, and students were encouraged to ask the teacher if they had any difficulties understanding what was required. Feedback was provided orally for the oral summaries, and in writing for the written summaries.

Results

The results for RQ1 are provided in Table 1.

Questionnaire item	Class	*M*	1*	2	3	4	5
My English listening skills improved.	1	3.9	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	9 (31%)	8 (28%)	10 (34%)
	2	3.7	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	10 (37%)	9 (33%)	6 (22%)
My skills answering comprehension questions in the textbook improved.	1	3.6	0 (0%)	4 (14%)	8 (28%)	13 (45%)	4 (14%)
	2	3.6	0 (0%)	3 (11%)	10 (37%)	10 (37%)	4 (15%)
My summary writing skills improved.	1	4.2	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	3 (10%)	15 (52%)	10 (34%)
	2	4.0	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	5 (19%)	13 (48%)	8 (30%)
My oral summary skills improved.	1	3.6	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	14 (48%)	11 (38%)	3 (10%)
	2	3.7	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	10 (37%)	10 (37%)	5 (19%)

* 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree

Table 1: Perceived Improvement in English Listening and Tasks

As the table shows, in both classes a majority of students responded that their English listening skills improved. For Class 1 62% of students answered "somewhat agree" or "agree," and for Class 2 the percentage was 55%. With regard to the assessment tasks, in all but one case a majority of learners in both groups perceived improvement, the exception being oral summaries in Class 1, with 48% answering either "somewhat agree" or "agree." The greatest perceived improvement for both classes among all three tasks was in summary writing skills. In Class 1 86% of students answered that they felt improvement, while in Class 2 the corresponding percentage was 78%. The remaining two tasks had lower percentages for agreement, ranging from 48% to 59%. To test to see if these differences were statistically significant, two one-way ANOVAs were performed on this data, one for each class. In the case of Class 1, the ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference between the three tasks (F=5.45, (2, 84) p=0.006), and post-hoc Tukey HSD tests showed that the improvement in summary writing was perceived to be greater than the other two tasks (p<0.05). In the case of Class 2, although differences between the tasks were found as shown in the table above, they were not statistically significant (F=2.32 (2, 78) p=0.11). Table 2 presents the results of the ANOVAs. The results for RQ2 are presented in Table 3.

Like RQ1, in all cases except one (comprehension questions for Class 2) a majority of students reported improvement in overall English ability. Also, of the three tasks, the written summaries were considered to have contributed most to the development of overall English ability, with 90% of students in Class 1 responding with "somewhat agree" or "agree," and 78% of students in Class 2 answering similarly. The task considered by students to least lead to overall improvement was comprehension questions, with only 34% of students in Class 2 answering "somewhat agree" or "agree." For Class 1, although it was rated lower than the other tasks, still 66% of students felt that the questions improved overall ability.

The data for the differences between the three tasks was submitted to a one-way ANOVA, which revealed a statistically significant differences in both Class 1 (F= 4.07, 2(84), p < 0.02) and Class 2 (F = 10.16, 2(78), p < 0.0001). Post-hoc Tukey HSD tests showed that for Class 1 only the difference between comprehension questions and written summaries was statistically significant (p < 0.05), with the summaries being considered more helpful.

Class 1	written summaries > oral summaries, comprehension questions (p<0.05)
Class 2	*NS*

Table 2 Results of ANOVAs for Perceived Improvement

Questionnaire item	Class	*M*	1*	2	3	4	5
The comprehension questions contributed to improving my overall English abilities.	1	3.8	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	9 (31%)	13 (45%)	6 (21%)
	2	3.1	1 (4%)	6 (22%)	11 (41%)	8 (30%)	1 (4%)
Summary writing contributed to improving my overall English abilities.	1	4.4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	11 (38%)	15 (52%)
	2	4.2	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	4 (15%)	8 (30%)	13 (48%)
Oral summaries contributed to improving my overall English abilities.	1	4.0	1 (3%)	9 (0%)	6 (21%)	13 (45%)	9 (31%)
	2	3.9	0 (0%)	3 (11%)	4 (15%)	13 (48%)	7 (26%)

Table 3 Contributions to Overall English Ability

With regard to how well the tasks allowed students to demonstrate their listening skills, as the table shows, for all three tasks a majority of students responded “somewhat agree” or “agree,” but Class 2 showed stronger agreement than Class 1. The results for RQ3 are shown in Table 5.

With regard to how well the tasks allowed students to demonstrate their listening skills, as the table shows, for all three tasks a majority of students responded “somewhat agree” or “agree,” but Class 2 showed stronger agreement than Class 1. The results for RQ3 are shown in Table 5.

For Class 2, both the written ($p < 0.01$) and the oral ($p < 0.05$) summaries were seen as being more useful than the comprehension questions, but the difference between the two types of summaries was not (Table 4).

Class 1	written summaries > comprehension questions (*p*<0.05)
Class 2	written summaries, oral summaries > comprehension questions (*p*<0.05)

Table 4 *Results of ANOVAs for Contributions to Overall English Ability*

Questionnaire item	Class	*M*	1*	2	3	4	5
I could demonstrate my listening skills through answering the questions in the textbook.	1	3.8	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	14 (48%)	7 (24%)
	2	4.3	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	3 (11%)	11 (41%)	12 (44%)
I could demonstrate my listening skills through writing summaries of the lectures.	1	3.7	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	14 (48%)	7 (24%)
	2	4.1	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	5 (19%)	10 (37%)	11 (41%)
I could demonstrate my listening skills through oral summaries of the lectures.	1	3.4	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	10 (34%)	11 (38%)	4 (14%)
	2	3.9	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	7 (26%)	13 (48%)	6 (22%)

Table 5 Demonstrations of English Listening Skills

Class 1	*NS*
Class 2	*NS*

Table 6 Results of ANOVAs for Demonstration of English Listening Skills

With regard to how well the tasks allowed students to demonstrate their listening skills, as the table shows, for all three tasks a majority of students responded “somewhat agree” or “agree,” but Class 2 showed stronger agreement than Class 1. The results for RQ3 are shown in Table 5.

The percentage of learners agreeing with the statement about comprehension questions was 75% for Class 2, in contrast to 85% for Class 1. The corresponding percentages for written and oral summaries were 72% and 78% (Class 1), and 52% and 70% (Class 2). In order to determine if the differences in each class between the three tasks were statistically significant, two ANOVAs were employed. Although the percentages given above pointed to potential differences, the results showed that for both Class 1 (F = 0.94, 2(84), p < 0.39) and Class 2 (F = 1.43, 2(78), p < 0.25), they were not statistically significant (Table 6).

Table 7 presents the results for RQ4. In terms of task difficulty, for Class 1 the oral summaries were the most challenging, followed by written summaries and comprehension questions, but none were seen as being too easy or too difficult.

The results of a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between the three tasks (F = 4.07, 2(84), p < 0.02), with a post-hoc Tukey HSD test pinpointing this difference to be found between the oral summaries and the comprehension questions (p < 0.05). In Class 2, the written summaries were considered to be the most difficult, followed by oral summaries and comprehension questions. A one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between the tasks (F = 12.13, 2(78), p < 0.0001), and post-hoc Tukey revealed that all of the differences were statistically significant (p < 0.05). The results for the ANOVAs are shown in Table 8.

Table 7 presents the results for RQ4.

Questionnaire item	Class	*M*	1*	2	3	4	5
Answering the questions in the textbook was difficult.	1	3.1	2 (7%)	6 (21%)	11 (38%)	8 (28%)	2 (7%)
	2	2.5	1 (4%)	15 (56%)	7 (26%)	4 (15%)	0 (0%)
Writing summaries of the lectures was difficult.	1	3.7	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	12 (41%)	5 (17%)	9 (31%)
	2	3.8	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	8 (30%)	11 (41%)	6 (22%)
Doing oral summaries of the lectures was difficult.	1	3.8	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	6 (21%)	12 (41%)	8 (28%)
	2	3.1	1 (4%)	7 (26%)	10 (37%)	5 (19%)	4 (15%)

Table 7 Difficulties of Tasks

Class 1	oral summaries > comprehension questions (p<0.05)
Class 2	written summaries > oral summaries > comprehension questions (p<0.05)

Table 8 Results of ANOVAs for Difficulty of Tasks

Discussion

RQ1 focused on perception of improvement in English listening, as well as the three assessment tasks. A majority of students in both classes reported that they felt improvement in their listening skills, and in all but one case a majority of learners in both Class 1 and Class 2 reported having felt improvement in all three tasks. These findings are favorable because as has been explained above the main aim of formative assessment is to promote language development. In terms of comparisons between the three tasks, for both classes summary writing was found to show the greatest improvement, although for Class 2 the difference was not statistically significant between it and the other two tasks. There are a number of possible reasons for these results, but the fact that few students, in particular those in Class1, had experience with summary writing prior to taking the class may be why they felt the greatest improvement with it. With regard to oral summaries, although as was noted above only 48% felt improvement in Class 1, for Class 2 the percentage was 56%. This is encouraging because most students started the course with relatively strong speaking skills. It is good to see that even so a majority felt improvement with this task. Finally, for comprehension questions, in both classes a majority of students felt improvement. Considering that this is the task that they are most familiar with, this is a positive finding.

RQ2 queried students about improvement in their overall English abilities. Although the three tasks in the study have listening skills at their base (i.e., listening to a lecture, comprehending it, and demonstrating that comprehension), other language skills are necessarily involved due to the fact that, as was noted in the introduction, listening is an invisible skill. Like RQ1, for all cases but one (comprehension questions for Class 2), a majority of students reported improvement. In both classes, the task found to lead to the greatest perceived improvement in overall English skills was written summaries. This result is likely to be closely related to RQ1, i.e., that students' relative lack of familiarity with the task led to them feeling the greatest improvement. Another possibility becomes evident when comparing the results for written and oral summaries. In short, in a way it is harder to perceive improvement with oral summaries because unlike written summaries, there is no concrete "record" of one's output, and hence, less to actually see improvement with.

RQ3 addressed the extent to which learners perceived that the assessment tasks allowed them to demonstrate their listening abilities. It is encouraging to see that a majority of students selected "somewhat agree" or "agree" for all three tasks because as was noted above, building confidence is an important part of formative assessment. It is interesting, however, that for all assessment tasks Class 2 showed stronger agreement than Class 1. This result could be related to the levels of the classes. It may be that the more advanced students in Class 2 felt that they were able to perform better on the tasks. Nevertheless, as was noted above, learners in Class 1 also agreed that they could demonstrate their skills, so this is encouraging. With regard to comparisons between the three tasks, it was slightly surprising that the comprehension questions had the highest average responses for both classes. However, as was noted in the Results section, the ANOVA performed on the data showed that this and other differences were not statistically significant.

The results for RQ4 showed that for both classes none of the tasks was seen as being too easy or too difficult. This is encouraging. Of the three tasks, the comprehension questions were considered to be the easiest. Considering that this type is the one that learners most likely have the most experience with, this is not particularly surprising. With regard to the summaries, the individual rankings for difficulty were not necessarily surprising, but comparisons between the classes were unexpected. Specifically, although learners in Class 2 had more advanced writing and speaking skills than students in Class 1, they still rated the written summaries as being more difficult. 63% of students in Class 2 found the written summaries to be difficult, while only 48% in Class 1 found them to be so. The reasons for this are unclear and warrant further investigation.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on learners' perceptions of three types of formative assessment tasks in an EFL listening class. As was noted in the introduction, a variety of tasks is desirable, and fortunately the results did not suggest that one or more of the three investigated should be abandoned. Rather, the results for all three tasks are generally favorable, suggesting that they have a role to play in academic listening instruction. Nevertheless, due to the small scale of the study and the fact that only quantitative questionnaire data were collected, it is too early to make any firm conclusions about the use of the tasks examined. Larger studies with more participants and the inclusion of qualitative data such as that from interviews would help to develop a better understanding of the issues. Of particular interest would be studies that examine the interaction between learner levels and perceptions of tasks, as well as those that investigate additional types of tasks.

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Active Learning Through Poster Presentations

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In recent years, the Japanese Ministry of Education has strongly promoted the idea of active learning in the classroom (MEXT, 2012). This paper shares some of our experiences in promoting active learning through the use of student poster presentations. It explains a) the rationale for why poster presentations can be useful, b) what can or should be included in student posters, c) how we can have students create posters and use them as the basis of learning activities including presentations, and d) how to address any problems which arise in the poster presentation process.

近年、日本の文部省は、教室で「アクティブラーニング」の考え方を強く推進しています(文部科学省、2012)。本稿では、学生のポスター発表を通じて、アクティブラーニングを促進するための経験をいくつか紹介します。a) なぜポスター発表が役に立つのか、b) 学生ポスターに何を含めればいいのか、c) どのように学生がポスターを作成し、プレゼンテーションを含む学習活動の基本として使用することができるか、d) ポスター発表の過程で生じる問題をどのように対処するかについて説明します。

In recent years, one of the buzzwords in EFL in Japan has been 'active learning.' This is in contrast to the traditional approach of Japanese schools which have usually featured a more passive transfer of knowledge from teacher to student. This has been suggested to be a long-term structure of Japanese education which resulted from Japan's Confucian roots with its focus on respect for elders (Gray, 1999). While education systems in many countries have encouraged active learning for many years, the recent focus on active learning in Japan has been led by the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) who published an influential paper in 2012 which includes active learning as one important factor in training general-purpose abilities including cognitive, ethical, social skills, education, knowledge, and experience (Riberusuta Consulting, 2012). Some examples of active learning suggested by the Ministry include discovery learning, problem solving learning, experience learning, survey learning, group discussion, debate, and group work. In our view, a common feature of these examples of active learning is that students are engaging cognitively with the input of a lesson and demonstrating this engagement through appropriate output. In this paper, we would like to discuss how poster presentations can be another useful activity to support active learning in the EFL classroom.

We begin the paper with an exploration of the rationale for using poster presentations. Then we look at different kinds of information that can be conveyed using posters. Next, based on our own experiences, we offer a step-by-step as to how teachers can have their students create posters and effectively use them as visual props in presentations. We also offer suggestions on how the listeners can be more active during these presentations. Finally, we suggest ways of dealing with the many problems which can arise in poster presentations.

Why are Poster Presentations Useful?

A poster presentation is a common format used at academic conferences. It combines text and graphics to present information in a way that is visually interesting and accessible, allowing a presenter to orally explain something to a group of people and to receive feedback. This section explores four perspectives on why poster presentations may be useful in the EFL classroom. Later in the paper, the process of carrying out poster presentations is outlined.

Support for "Active Learning"

MEXT contrasts traditional education with active learning in the following way (authors' translation): "Unlike unidirectional lecture-style education by teachers, active learning is a generic name for a learning method that incorporates the active participation of students." (Riberusuta Consulting, 2012, p. 4). This seems to suggest at least two obvious features that constitute active learning. First, it should not only be the teacher who is speaking in the classroom. Second, the students should be participating in an active manner rather than simply responding passively to teacher prompts. Clearly, poster presentations facilitate active learning because unless the student steps into an active role, the poster presentation will not take place. While poster presentations can be useful across the curriculum, they may be particularly suited to supporting active learning in the EFL classroom. Each image or keyword on the poster can provide both a focusing prompt for the presenter to support linguistic output and a visual aid for the listeners to support comprehension.

Foster Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy can be fostered by carrying out learning activities which take place without the immediate intervention of the teacher, and this can subsequently facilitate learners to become more efficient and effective when they study independently (Najeeb, 2013). In the poster presentation activity explained in this paper, autonomy is fostered by having students choose their own topic, carry out the research, choose appropriate visual aids, and act as a teacher for other students.

Create Authentic Motivation and Feedback

The use of authentic materials and authentic learning tasks has been shown to have a positive impact on learner motivation and engagement in learning (Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014). In this learning activity, the poster presentation is based on an authentic topic connected to their academic major that the student is already interested in, so he or she is intrinsically motivated to share the information with other students. Assuming the class is for students who all share the same major then the student audience too are likely to be intrinsically motivated to listen because they will learn something new connected to their major. The feedback from other students is also authentic since they are motivated by the topic and what their classmates are sharing. Students are of course learning language, but they are also learning authentic content, and as such poster presentations can also be easily incorporated into a CLIL context as has been done in some recent EFL textbooks (e.g. Smith & Ssali, 2018). Students can be assigned research areas within the CLIL content area and can incorporate explanatory images and ideas from that area into their posters. For example, if the CLIL focus is on culture of English-speaking countries, student posters can show examples of famous buildings, festivals, and so on.

Support Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning or cooperative learning takes place when students are working to learn more together rather than by competing with each other, and it has been shown to have positive effects on both motivation and achievement (Nunan, 1992). By putting the students in the role of teacher and making the teacher simply a facilitator of the flow of presentations, the poster presentations help to remove barriers of status in the classroom and encourage students to collaborate more easily. In this way students build their own learning community by empowering students to actually teach the class and take resposibility for the group's learning.

What kind of Posters are Useful?

We have used poster presentations in a range of teaching contexts. Our students are first and second year university students with a non-English major and an average TOEIC score of 520, but there is no reason that the technique cannot be adapted for higher or lower levels. Engineering and science majors can use their posters to explain scientific theories or the working of technology. Students from the humanities can share content from their major. Posters can also be used to share culture, stories, personal information, and much more. The appendix at the end of this paper shows some examples of actual student posters which students kindly gave permission to share.

Images

Having at least three images on the poster makes the poster visually appealing and can easily show three different aspects of the topic. Hand-drawn images can be fine if the student is artistically inclined or at least able to produce an effective image. Depending on the topic, different kinds of images may be appropriate, for example graphs in a business poster or classification diagrams in an engineering poster.

Text

In general, text should be restricted to keywords. The purpose of the poster is not to explain the whole topic, but rather to provide visual and simple text cues as the presenter explains the topic. Students should be strongly encouraged from writing out full sentences as both the presenter and the listener are likely to become over-focused on them.

How Can Teachers Ensure Good Poster Presentations?

Frame the Activity Well

It is important to frame the poster presentations activity appropriately so that students realize that they are expected to become active learners and to take responsibility for their topic. Below, we offer some ways of doing this.

1. Ask the question: "How do we learn best?"

This question should already be in everyone's mind because they are at university to learn. Have students think about things they have learned at school, at clubs, or at home, and to remember how they learned in each scenario. Elicit some ideas and write them on the board. Encourage students to be specific: What exactly was it that helped you learn in these situations? Was it the immediate environment? a good teacher? your attitude? a financial reward? or something else?

2. Utilize the idea of the Pyramid of Learning to frame the poster presentation activity.

Write the following on the blackboard:

After 2 weeks, students remember X%"

Reading ____%

Listening ____%

Doing ____%

Teaching to others ____%

Elicit student guesses on the missing numbers. Then give them the numbers from the Pyramid of Learning (Reading=10%, Listening=5%, Doing=75%, Teaching to others=90%). Explain that this shows that passive learning does not facilitate learning as much as active learning. Say to students: "Doing something actively and teaching something to someone else are among the most effective ways to learn. So this is exactly what we are going to do in this class. Everyone will make a poster about a topic and teach the content to other students."

Note: The Pyramid of Learning (Sousa, 2000) is not necessarily accurate or supported by research in every situation, but provides a good reminder of the importance of active learning.

3. Turn students into teachers.

Ask the question: "Who learns most in the classroom?"

Give students a minute to think about it and one student usually comes up with the correct answer: "The teacher. I am the only one who gets paid to be here and I learn the most." Of course, this should be said humorously.

Say to students: "So we are going to flip the classroom. You are going to learn the most by becoming the teacher."

Explain the Activity

Tell students that they will be doing a poster presentation in the next lesson. To keep it intrinsically motivating, the students should choose a topic related to their major in some way. By doing this, they are also already an 'expert' in the topic and it gives them an opportunity to take on the role of teacher and to share their knowledge with other students. Show students some posters from previous years' students if available. Give them a couple of minutes to look at the posters. Then ask the students which is your favorite poster and give three reasons why you like it. This question will help students think of the criteria for a good poster and in turn how they want to make their own poster. If no posters are available, make your own examples or find some online. We have also included shown student-created examples in the appendix. You could also provide extrinsic motivation by explaining that the presentation is part of their final grade.

1. Choose a topic that is interesting for you and that you think will be interesting for other students. You will be the expert on this topic and teach other students.

2. Research your topic.

3. Plan your poster by sketching out different versions and thinking about each one.

4. Create your poster that explains or acts as a visual prop for your explanation of your selected topic.

- The paper size should be at least A3 size.
- Use colour.
- Include at least three pictures or diagrams.
- Use only key words and phrases on your poster (no long sentences).

Language and Research Support

While each poster is unique, there is a lot of language that can be pre-taught to help students to produce more natural presentations. As is commonly done in academic writing, the sequence of the poster can be introduced with linking phrases such as “first… next… then… finally.” Language to describe the location of the items on the poster is also helpful, for example, “at the top left of the page… on the right of the title…”. Depending on the experience of your students, teachers may also need to provide research hints in the form of useful websites, podcasts, books and so on. If time permits, it can be helpful to do a short one-one session with each student to motivate and assist them.

Have Students Practice at Home

One of the key aspects of ensuring smooth poster presentations is to be certain to have students practice at home before they come to class. This can make the difference between an enjoyable day in which everyone learns something and a painful day of silences and poorly produced presentations. Below, we give some tips for students.

- Remember that your teacher and friends will be watching you. Prepare a presentation that you can be proud of.
- Put the poster on the wall of your room and imagine that the audience is in front of you. Practice explaining your poster.
- Think about the listener’s perspective. If you were listening to this presentation, would you find it easy to understand? Would you find it interesting? If not, make it better! To help you prepare, you should video yourself, watch it and shadow your speech. Shadowing is a great way to memorize your speech.
- You need to talk about your poster for three minutes. Use a timer to make sure that your presentation is the correct length.
- You must not read a script when you are explaining your poster! You should prepare and memorize your presentation.
- Be sure to practice many times before next lesson, so that you can be sure that you are confident.
- After your presentation, other students will ask questions. Imagine some questions that they might ask you. How will you answer them?

Immediately Before the Presentations

1. Check that all students have prepared their posters. If there are students that have not prepared properly, we suggest that you put off their presentation to another lesson. Or have them do it anyway and then perform an improved version for the following week.

2. Decide on the order of presentation. In a small class, you can have every student presenting to the whole class. With a bigger class, it usually makes sense to divide the class into groups of 4-6 students.

3. Give the students time to practice with a partner. You can use a worksheet like the one below.

a) As you listen to your partner, write down three notes about things that you heard.

1	
2	
3	

b) Say the things to your partner that you heard.

c) Give your partner any other feedback that will help him/her to make a better presentation. For example:

- You should make eye contact more often.
- If you speak more slowly, we can understand more easily.

- Your voice is too quiet.

d) Use your partner's feedback to improve your presentation.

e) Practice with the same partner again and try to do a better presentation.

Group Presentation Time

1. Divide students into their groups.

2. Pass out blue tac, pins, or magnets (many blackboards are magnetic) for putting the posters on the walls of the room.

3. Give a handout similar to the one below. Explain that each presentation has 3 parts – the presentation, a short time for the audience to write a question, and finally a time for questions and answers. This structure is repeated to all presenters.

4. Decide who is the first presenter and then start.

Listen to the presenters in your group.

As you listen, write the name of each presenter and the topic. Take notes on the content.

After the presentation is finished, write a question for the presenter.

Name	Topic and Notes	Your Question for the Presenter

Presentation review questions

Which was the best presentation? Why?

What do you remember about it?

What was your presentation about?

Why did you choose this topic?

5.Have them decide the order of presenting in their group.

6. Remind them of the time limit. Appoint one member of the group as timekeeper.

7. Remind them to make a presentation that they can be proud of.

8. Have the timekeepers start the first presentation.

9. Walk around and listen to some of the presentations. Take note of any common mistakes.

Follow-Up

1. Congratulate the students on their presentations and tell them that they can do even better next time.

2. Elicit some comments on which presentations they enjoyed.

3. Elicit some comments on why the presentations were enjoyable and make a list on the board (e.g. interesting content, clear voice, funny gestures, and so on).

4. Remind students that they are now experts on the topic and suggest that they make the poster presentation to friends or family members. This will extend learning beyond the classroom.

Dealing with Problems

Inevitably, problems will arise during the preparation of the posters or in the presentations. We have listed some common problems below and how you can potentially deal with them.

1. *A student cannot think of a topic.*

First ask the student to try to get ideas from other students. If this is not successful, ask about the student's major and what subjects he or she is taking this year. Express interest in the subject and say that you would love to learn more about it, thus helping the student to realize that they have something to share.

2. *A student has not prepared a poster or has clearly done it too quickly*

This can be avoided in most cases by making the assignment very clear in advance. You can also give points based on the quality of the poster or require a photo of the poster to be emailed to you before class or uploaded to your school portal. If there is still a student who has not prepared sufficiently, we suggest putting their presentation off until a later date or the student presents today and does another, better performance next week – depending on your teaching principles and practices.

3. *Students are preparing their own presentation instead of listening to the speaker*.

Tell students they should only have a pen and the presentation handout that you gave them on their desk. You can also tell students that you will be collecting their papers with their notes on other presenters and that they will be graded on these.

4. *Students speak too quietly or unclearly and can't be heard properly.*

If you think this is likely to be a problem, have students practice in groups in advance of the presentations. Put the responsibility on the listeners to tell the speaker whether it is loud and clear enough. Alternatively, the teacher can sit at the back of the class and simply cup his/her ear. This gesture is quickly understood by the presenter that s/he needs to speak louder.

5. *The English contains technical words that only the presenter understands.*

Students are so used to doing assignments only for teachers that they do not take into account that other learners may not understand the content. To avoid this, you can teach them useful phrases such as "in Japanese, this means X".

6. *Student level of English is very low.*

If your students have a very low level of English, more preparation will be required to ensure that their presentations are comprehensible. In some cases, teachers may need to have students write out their speech in advance which can then be checked by their peers or by the teacher if possible. If the speech is written out in full, it is important to emphasize that it should not simply be read out during the presentation.

Student Feedback

Some brief representative student comments are given below to illustrate the positive response to the activity. Students found it enjoyable: "It was fun to listen to my friends' presentations and I learned many things" and useful for their English skills: "My presentation and English skills are better now because I could practice many times." It also seems clear that they did engage more fully in active learning than a lecture-style course: "Presentation was more difficult than usual classes and took preparation time for but I think it was useful for me and my future."

Conclusion

We have found poster presentations to be an excellent tool in the creation of an active learning environment. Students enjoy them and clearly become more confident, especially when several presentations are carried out in a semester. The advice in this paper is all based on our own experience, and we hope that other teachers will find it practical in bringing poster presentations into their own classes.

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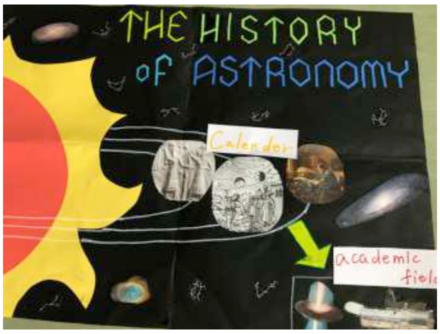
Appendix



Working Memory in the EFL Classroom: An Overview and Preliminary Study

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Working memory plays an important role in language learning but because working memory is limited in capacity and this capacity also varies individually, it can affect how much students learn. This has very important implications for language teachers and how they approach language teaching. A teaching environment that does not consider the capacity of students' working memory can be detrimental to the learning process. Therefore, this article aims to explain working memory, its limitations and its relation to language learning. In addition, a preliminary experimental study was done in order to assess whether cognitive load impacts only low capacity working memory learners in learning English gerunds. The study provides support that even a moderate cognitive load class setting negatively affects learning in low-level capacity working memory learners.

ワーキングメモリは、言語学習において重要な役割を担っているが、その容量には限界があり、個人差もあるため、学習者がどのくらい学ぶことができるかに影響を与えうる。これは、どのようなアプローチで言語教育を行うかを考えるにあたり、言語教師にとって非常に重要な視点である。学習者のワーキングメモリ容量を考慮しない教育環境は、学習過程に弊害をもたらす可能性がある。よって本稿は、ワーキングメモリとは何か、またその限界と言語学習との関係について説明することを目的とする。さらに、英語の動名詞の学習において、認知的負荷はワーキングメモリが低い学習者にのみ影響を与えるかどうかを明らかにするため、予備実験的調査を行なった。その結果、学習者にかかる認知的負荷がそれほど高くない授業であっても、ワーキングメモリが低い学習者の言語学習に悪影響を与えることを示した。

Many people differ in their ability in not only speaking a language but also in learning one. A variety of factors contribute to these individual differences such as a motivation, age, language aptitude and other socio-psychological factors. Recently, however, working memory is now being considered an important factor contributing to these individual differences (Wen, 2015).

Since research examining the relationship between working memory and language learning is becoming clear, it is important for teachers to understand working memory, its relationship with language learning, and how they can apply this knowledge to help low working memory capacity students. Therefore, the goal of this paper is twofold: The first is to give a useful overview of working memory in order to understand what it is and how it affects students in the classroom and the second is provide evidence via a preliminary study that poor instructional design can negatively affect low working memory capacity students.

What is Working Memory?

Imagine that you are in a new city searching for a restaurant you wanted to try. You ask someone for help and a stranger gives you directions. "The restaurant is two blocks down. Take a right at the convenient store, walk for about 7 minutes, you'll see a small alley. Take that road and the restaurant is on the right. The restaurant doesn't have a name sign but it's between two shops, one a ramen shop." She says. In order to find the restaurant, you must keep your goal (the restaurant is between a ramen shop and another shop) in short-term memory while continuously refreshing your mental list of directions.

This is a real-world example of working memory. Working memory interacts with various cognitive functions such as long-term memory and is also important in language comprehension and production. Working memory is the mental processes that temporarily store information and manipulate it over the course of processing. It is important to note that working memory involves both the storage *and* processing of information as can be seen the above example.

There are competing models of working memory that set out to explain the various behavioral and neurological data. The most influential model of working memory is Baddeley's Multicomponent Model (Gathercole, 2007). For this reason, I will focus solely on Baddeley's model in this paper. For those interested in alternative models, please refer to Miyake and Friedmann (1999).

Before continuing, it is important to note that though there are alternative models, they are concerned with the same data and agree on the fundamental constructs of working memory. What differentiates them are their predictions on how these constructs and data are implemented neurologically in the brain (Purves, Brannon, Cabeza, Huettel, LaBar, Platt, & Woldorff, 2008). Choosing one model over another model has no consequences on the teaching strategies or conclusions in this paper.

Baddeley's multicomponent model

The concept of the multicomponent model of working memory was proposed by Baddeley and Hitch (1974). As empirical data accumulated over the years, it has formed into its current model. Originally, it was a three-component model but in additional fourth component was added (Baddeley, 2000).

The current model consists of the *central executive*, the main controller which connects to three slave systems: the *phonological loop*, *episodic buffer*, and *visuo-spatial scratchpad* (Baddeley, 2000). The central executive is the main component of the model and controls a wide range of high-level functions such as the control of attention, temporary activation of long-term memory, and shifting. The phonological loop handles the phonological and verbal information while the visuo-spatial scratchpad processes visual and spatial information (Juffs & Harrington, 2011). The episodic buffer is committed to linking information across domains and appears to function as a passive store rather than an attention-dependent component of working memory (Baddeley, 2015). The central executive and phonological short-term memory will be discussed in more detail below as they are the most relevant to language learning and instructional design.

The central executive

The central executive is involved in many high-level functions. The following, based on Miyake, Friedman, Emerson, Witzki, Howerter, and Wager (2000), are the three most important functions important for teaching and language learning: *Inhibition, Updating,* and *Shifting*

Inhibition is the ability to deliberately suppress dominant, automatic responses to stimuli. In the language classroom, this can be seen when students respond to questions. Sometimes students respond initially with an incorrect form but quickly correct themselves while others continue use incorrect forms regardless automatically. Those who cannot correct themselves have lower inhibition ability.

Updating is the ability to monitor and code task relevant incoming information and then update as needed by replacing no longer relevant information with newer relevant information. Updating is often essential in spoken discourse and reading long texts. During the course of speaking or reading, one must not only keep the oldest relevant information in mind while new information is being constantly presented but also decide what information to forget. This can be a daunting task in a foreign language and students with weaker executive working memory can have difficult following lectures, simple conversations and have trouble reading.

Shifting refers to the ability to switch back and forth between tasks like multi-tasking. An example in the foreign language classroom would be having students look up unknown words in the dictionary during a reading comprehension task. The students are faced with two tasks: understanding and maintaining the information from the text and then looking up a specific word for its meaning.

People with higher executive working memory spans produce more grammatically complex and fluent speech and writing than those with lower spans (Bergsleithner, 2010; Guara-Tavares, 2008; Wen, 2015). Those higher span people also perform higher in complex comprehension tasks in both listening and reading (Alptekin & Ercetin, 2011; Miki 2012). In addition, higher span learners are also better at noticing new language and benefit most from corrective feedback (Mackey, 2010; Revesz, 2012). Executive working memory impacts L2 learning in a major way, and it is easy to see how those with lower executive working memory capacity can easily fall behind and struggle in their studies.

The phonological loop

In Baddeley's model, the phonological loop consists of two components: a phonological store and an articulatory rehearsal. The phonological store holds acoustic and phonological information for a brief time while the articulatory rehearsal is the ability to rehearse novel phonological information in order to prevent forgetting (Baddeley, 2003). The phonological store is limited in the amount of information it can store and word length also influences how much information can be held. This storage capacity is also affected by articulatory rehearsal in real time because rehearsal of information limits new information from entering phonological store (Repovs & Baddeley, 2006). Long sentences or short sentences containing long words tax the phonological store making comprehension difficult.

Of all aspects of working memory, the phonological store is the most researched and well-understood. It is involved in chunking language pieces out of a stream of speech and then consolidating that information into memory (Ellis, 1996; Ellis and Sinclair, 1996; Martin & Ellis, 2012). It has also been shown that a higher phonological memory predicts faster L2 vocabulary acquisition in early learning (French, 2006; French & O`Brien, 2008) and is involved in the acquisition of L2 morphosyntactic constructions (Williams, 2003). For those with lower phonological memory capacity, it will be difficult for them to discern word boundaries in speech as well as affect their ability to pick up phonetically complex morphosyntactic constructions such as the plural *`s*.

Working memory`s limits

Working memory is vital to our getting around in society and this world. Unfortunately, however, working memory does have its limits which come in the form of distractions, information overload, and demanding tasks. Distractions come in many forms such as an interruption from a co-worker. While seemingly harmless, these distractions prevent rehearsal and the consolidation of information into your long-term memory. Also, there is a limit to the amount of information that a person can hold in working memory. For example, try multiplying 3732 and 8745 mentally. It`s likely that you will not be able to get the right answer. The reason is because working memory capacity has exceeded its limit. Exceeding this limit can cause difficulty in successfully carrying out tasks. Miller suggested that working memory capacity was limited to 7 items (1956). Recently, however, it is believed that limit is about 4 chunks of information for the average person (Cowan, 2001). Demanding tasks, such as translating from your native tongue into a foreign language, also interfere with working memory because they tax attentional resources.

Working Memory and Instructional Design

Working memory capacity plays an important role in how much we can learn and retain. This has important implications for how we approach our lessons. Individual differences in working memory capacity will be found in any classroom, some being high, average, or low. Research has found that phonological memory was the only predictor of native-like abilities in immersion settings and higher executive working memory capacity students are better at integrating complex information (Foroughi, Barragán, & Boehm-Davis, 2016; Foster, Bolibaugh, and Agnieszka, 2014). But what about lower WM capacity students? Are there approaches to instructional design that affect only lower WM capacity students putting them at a disadvantage at no fault of their own? This preliminary study set out to answer the question.

Methods

Hypothesis

The study reported used a correlational design and sought to address the following hypothesis:

> In a moderate cognitive load class setting, lower working memory capacity should correlate with lower grammar scores

The study was carried out on 2 separate sessions. One session consisted of the experimental lesson and, in the second session, participants' working memory was measured via a reading span task administered by the author. For this experiment, the variables were the reading span task, motivation scores, and final test scores. Although motivation scores did not differ significantly, lower working memory has been associated with low motivation in school settings (Gathercole & Alloway, 2007). Motivation scores were used as a variable in order to assess the relationship between working memory and motivation and their effects on final test scores. Because there were no significant differences, *knowledge of the target grammar* and *years of English studied* were not included in the statistical analysis.

Participants

Participants were 29 Japanese first year high school students (F = 18, mean age = 16.06). Two participants` data was discarded because they were caught talking during the posttest. Because participants were less than 18 years old, both participants and their parents were informed via letter there would be a special class lesson and that students would be taking a non-invasive memory task. Both parents and students signed the consent form. The consent form was written in Japanese. They were also allowed to drop out of the study at any time during the lesson. Students had been studying English for 5 years. No students reported studying English outside of school, holding any English certifications, or living abroad.

Knowledge of the target grammar test

A test was given to students in order to assess their knowledge of the target grammar. The test consisted of 10 sentences students had to translate from Japanese to English. They were not instructed on what forms to use. They had to use their previous knowledge in order to translate the sentences. The test was scored for the target grammar only and scored all or nothing. For example, the sentence 「私は英語を教えることが好きです」would receive one point for being translated as *I likes teaching English* and no points for being translated as *I like teach English*. This was done so that participants were not penalized for lack of other grammatical knowledge i.e. subject-verb agreement, etc. Participants were allowed to use dictionaries, but they were not allowed consult their classmates. If participants were caught talking, their tests were scored a zero and they were removed from the study. The scores of the students (M = .931, SD = .842, Max = 2.00, Min = 0.00) indicated very little of knowledge of the target grammar. The highest possible score was ten and the lowest was zero.

Working memory assessment

A complex reading span task (in Japanese) was administered to participants to assess their working memory. The complex reading span task taps into both the storage and processing functions of working memory. It is a reliable indicator of short-term memory use, information processing and attentional control and has been verified in cognitive psychology since its creation in 1980 (Juffs & Harrington, 2011). The reading span task was scored via the partial credit method as this is the most common method of scoring in psychometrics. For in-depth discussion on scoring methods and motivations, see Conway et. al (2005).

Motivation assessment

Students were asked about their motivation to learn English on a scale from 1 to 10. The number selected acted as the scores for the independent variable *motivation scores*.

Target grammar

The target grammar was gerunds as explained in the class textbook. There were two target structures for the grammar test: 1) *V-ing + direct object + be-verb + adjective* and 2) *Someone + like(s) + V-ing + Direct Object*.

Lesson procedure

The 50-minute lesson was made to reflect a poorly designed lesson that caused a moderate cognitive load for students. Two simple factors to induce cognitive load were used: the target grammar structures and lecture style.

The target grammar structures acted as factors since participants had no knowledge of the target grammar. The reason was because grammatical structures that include new information such as the Russian case system (or in this case, changing verbs into nouns while still including a verb) tax cognitive load (Denhovska, Serratrice, & Payne, 2018). In addition, two structures were presented that were slightly different in use forcing participants to retain more information.

The lecture and it`s delivery acted as the other factor. The reason was that the lecture included elements that placed an extra burden on participants. Explanations (both in English and Japanese) were somewhat long and sentence examples illustrating the grammar point contained excessive information such as extra prepositional phrases, adverbs, adjectives as in the example sentence *My father enjoys playing golf with friends on Sunday*. As a result, participants would need to suppress (inhibition) needless information, update new information, and shift attention towards the actual target structures and ignore the irrelevant information. Example sentences were used from the textbook and other example sentences were modelled on the textbook.

English and Japanese were used for all explanations. The motivation for this was to control for participants` English knowledge. If the lesson was English only, students with higher English ability would have an advantage in understanding the explanations thereby contaminating the results.

The lesson was divided into three parts: a 15-minute grammar explanation, a 15-minute reading and review practice focusing on the target grammar from the textbook, and a 20-minute final translation activity. The final translation activity sheet consisted of 10 Japanese sentences that students needed to translate to English.

Final grammar test

The grammar test consisted of 10 sentences participants had to translate from Japanese into English using the target grammar. Five sentences consisted of the structure *V-ing + DO + be verb + adj* and five sentences consisted of the structure *Someone + like(s) + V-ing + DO*. The finaltranslation test was conducted and scored exactly as the knowledge of target grammar test.

Results

In this section, the results of the statistical analyses will be presented. A correlation analysis was used to investigate any significant correlations between the three variables. The data were analyzed in terms of normality of distribution. All kurtosis and skewness values were between -2 and +2 indicating normal distribution. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (version 24.0).

Table 1.1

Variables	*n*	*min*	*max*	*mean*	*SD*
Reading Span (WM)	29	10.50	16.60	13.235	1.579
Motivation Scores	29	6.00	9.00	7.517	0.911
Final Test Scores	29	3.00	8.00	5.517	1.404

Table 1.2

Variables	*1*	*2*	*3*
1. Reading Span (WM)	1	-	-
2. Motivation Scores	-.343	1	-
3. Final Test Scores	.718**	-.272	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1.1 shows the descriptive statistics for reading span scores, motivation scores, and test scores. The scores on the reading span task ranged from 10.50 to 16.60 out of a possible 20. The scores indicate that there were clear individual differences in working memory capacity. As for motivation, the mean scores (M = 7.517, SD = 0.911) show that students were quite motivated to learn English. There were not very big differences between the highest score (9.00) and the lowest (6.00). Test scores, like the reading span scores, showed variability as well with the lowest score being 3.00 and the highest score an 8.00.

Table 1.2 contains the correlations between the reading span scores (indication of working memory capacity), motivation scores and test scores. We can see that reading span scores highly correlate with test scores ($r = .718$, $p<0.01$). However, no correlation was found between motivation and test scores ($r = -.272$, $p = .153$). There was also no correlation between reading span scores and motivation scores ($r = -.343$, $p = .068$).

Discussion

A high positive correlation was found between working memory and test scores ($r = .718$, $p<0.01$) confirming the hypothesis. The lower one`s working memory, the lower the score on the grammar test indicating that the lesson was difficult for low WM capacity participants, and they struggled to maintain and internalize the information being taught. This is consistent with the research showing that lower WM capacity people have problems with attention, maintaining important information, and discarding needless information (Gathercole & Alloway, 2007; Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2011).

No correlation was found between motivation scores and grammar scores ($r = -.272$, $p = .153$). In the context of this experimental lesson, motivation was not enough to overcome lower WM capacity in a moderate cognitive load setting. This conclusion, however, should be taken with caution. Motivation usually bears its fruit over longer periods of time and because this lesson was a one-time shot, it is unclear whether motivation will eventually counter the effects of low working memory. For example, low WM capacity students may have scored lower on the test, but, as a result, they could put more time into studying or tutoring and eventually grasp the grammatical concept.

In addition, no correlation was found between motivation scores and reading span scores ($r = -.343$, $p = .068$). This is somewhat surprising since, as mentioned above, there is sometimes a correlation between low WM capacity and low motivation in school settings. The lack of correlation could also be due to the one-shot nature of the study.

Regardless, the statistical analysis reveals that lower WM capacity students did significantly suffer more negatively than their higher capacity counterparts as a result of the moderate cognitive load lesson and working memory capacity was a large contributing factor. This finding supports the idea that teachers need to be careful in what materials are presented (even if from textbooks), and how they are presented. Carefully designing lessons, instructions, and providing memory aides can help low working memory capacity students succeed in the classroom (Sweller, J., Ayres, P., & Kalyuga, S, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to examine if a moderate cognitive load lesson would affect lower working memory students` ability to learn English gerunds. This experimental lesson supports the idea that a moderate cognitive load inducing instructional design can negatively affect lower WM students. Although sometimes difficult, it is important for teachers to take great care in how and how much information is taught to students. Instructional design is an important tool for teachers to help combat lower WM capacity. Unfortunately, due to school policies, a control and low cognitive load lesson group could not be secured. The addition of these two groups would have given us clearer conclusions. As a result, further studies should try to replicate this study with three groups. In addition, studies with participants with clearer indications of English language abilities and language aptitude should be compared with working memory capacity.

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Correlating EIKEN and Performance Assessments in Senior High School

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The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology (MEXT) suggests that students in Japan pass EIKEN Grade 3 (CEFR A1) at the end of junior high school, and Grade Pre-2 or Grade 2 (CEFR A2 and B1) at the end of senior high school. In order to comply, schools need to take the washback from EIKEN into account. In-house English assessments have to correlate well with EIKEN results in order to ensure that students acquire the skills required by the EIKEN system. A student who scores adequately on in-house tests should score adequately on a relevant EIKEN level as well. If not, then in-house methodology, including evaluations and materials, needs to be redesigned to improve correlation. This article discusses a mini test used as a diagnostic to calibrate in-house assessments to be EIKEN compliant and to explore ways to assist students in achieving an adequate EIKEN result.

文部科学省は、日本の学生が中学校卒業までに EIKEN Grade 3(CEFR A1)を取得、高校卒業までに Grade Pre-2 または Grade 2(CEFR A2 と B1)を取得することが望ましいという方針を出しています。各学校は EIKEN の波及効果を考慮する必要があります。EIKEN システムで必要とされるスキルを学生が確実に獲得するためには、学校内の英語の評価が EIKEN の結果とよく相関していなければなりません。 学校内試験で良い結果を得た学生は EIKEN レベルでも良い結果を得るはずです。そうでない場合は、学校内の評価、教材、および方法論の相関を改善するために再設計する必要があります。 本稿は、EIKEN に準拠するための学校内評価を基準化し、適切な EIKEN 結果を達成するために、学生を支援する方法を探るための診断ミニテストについて述べます。

The Eiken Foundation of Japan, an incorporated public-interest foundation, designs and implements the 実用英語技能検定 or Basic Skills in English Test (EIKEN). This article focuses on the first stage of the Grade 3 level test. From Grade 3 to Grade 1, the test is administered in two stages. First, test takers must pass a listening-and-reading comprehension test as well as a short essay writing assessment in order to qualify for the second stage, which involves a reading aloud test and an oral face-to-face interview (Eiken Foundation, 2018).

The EIKEN system has been criticized on many accounts (MacGregor, 1997; Nielson, 2000; Piggin, 2011; Benson, 2013). Until 2003, Item Response Theory (IRT)—an instrument for calibrating the difficulty of test items using a focus group—was employed to some extent, but the results were not publicly available. MacGregor (1997) outlined the shortcomings in reliability in those years as follows: IRT reports, unpublished, were not available for comparison with other systems such as those designed by American companies like Educational Testing Services (ETS) e.g. the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), or the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR); examinees were not shown any scores, receiving only a pass or fail result with little information on how to improve; and the system seemed to limit the number of examinees who passed each year by letting the passing grade fluctuate according to how well the examinees did on average.

MacGregor (1997) also conducted an analysis on 182 first year junior college students and found that the Kuder-Richardson 20 (K-R20)—a statistic elaborated later in this article—was .82, whereas an acceptable K-R20 ranges from .85 to .95. Woodford (1992) reported that the TOEIC K-R20 reached .92 in 1992.

Since then, many reliability improvements have been made. The research section of the EIKEN website now lists numerous projects aimed at honing reliability (Brown, 2008), overall validity (Dunlea, 2010), construct validity (Yanase, 2009), concurrent validity (Dunlea and Matsudaira, 2009), and face validity (Yanase and Matsudaira, 2008). Two major improvements worth noting for the purposes of this study is the Can-do list of which the listening and writing Grade 3 level criteria are listed in Table 1, and the addition of the writing skill essays to Grade 3 and upwards.

The topics in the Grade 3 Can-do list are applicable to high school students. This level should therefore be compatible with the participants used in the investigation introduced in the next section.

A considerable amount of research has gone into making the EIKEN system more reliable. Teachers can assist this research by conducting their own investigations and by sharing their results. They can also calibrate their in-house methods and assessments to be more EIKEN compliant. This would assist their students in preparing for a relevant level of EIKEN. To this end, the following research questions have been posed.

Research Questions

(1) First, the researcher aims to gauge the viability and compatibility of a selection of twenty items from a 2017 Grade 3 EIKEN listening section using K-R20 reliability and Item Facility (IF) statistics.

(2) Second, how the students perform on this mini test will be compared to how they fared on in-house performance assessments. If the two sets of scores correlate well with an acceptable Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), then a high-scoring student in class has a good chance of being a high-scoring student on the relevant EIKEN level. If, however, there is a weak correlation, then in-house methods need to be tweaked.

(3) Finally, the researcher hopes to gain insight into where problematic areas in the EIKEN mini test hindered performance, and for what reasons.

Participants

The participants were a group of 80 (N=80) senior high school students, 31 students in the second grade and 49 students in the third grade in a private senior high school in Sendai City, Japan. The average age of the students was 17 years, ranging between 16 years and 18 years. At the start of this investigation, they were all asked whether they had taken the EIKEN Grade 3 or higher prior to the study, and those who answered in the affirmative were excluded from the datasets. The original sample included 85 participants, of which 5 were excluded.

Methods

A set of twenty items were taken from the official No.2 Grade 3 EIKEN of 2017. They were the first twenty items from the listening section of the test. The first ten items involved a short, incomplete, conversation to which students listened and which they then had to complete by choosing the best response from a range of options (complete transcript available for free by accessing the EIKEN downloads site:

http://www.eiken.or.jp/eiken/en/downloads/).

Since the first ten questions were dichotomous i.e. they had only a right or wrong answer, the K-R20 statistic could be applied to gauge the internal consistency and reliability of these first ten items (Brown, 1996):

$$\rho_{KR20} = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1 - \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{k} p_j q_j}{\sigma^2}\right)$$

where k = number of questions; Pj = number of correct answers for each j; qj = number of incorrect answers for each j; and σ2 = variance of all scores. As mentioned in the introduction, an acceptable K-R20 ranges from .85 to .95.

The Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) was also computed using the following formula (Brown, 1996):

$$SEM = s\sqrt{1-r}$$

where s = the standard deviation of all the scores; and r = the K-R20 statistic. This measure is useful for making predictions on how a student would score on the test if they were given the test again at some point. The descriptive statistics for the first set of ten questions are outlined in Table 2.

Table1 Can-do list for EIKEN Grade 3 (EIKEN Foundation, 2018)

	Can understand the following:
Listening	1. Talks and monologues appropriately paced about everyday life e.g. school, clubs etc. 2. Simple announcements about departures and arrivals, places to meet up etc. 3. Simple directions to a location 4. Contracted forms, blends, and conjugations in common expressions
	Can write simple texts:
Writing	1. A self-introduction—hobbies, likes, and dislikes 2. Short expository diary entries 3. Cards and postcards 4. Short reported messages

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Items 1 to 10

	Second graders	Third graders
Number of participants (N=80)	31	49
Highest score	10	8
Lowest score	0	0
Mean	4.2	5.1
Standard deviation (σ^2)	2.2	2.4
K-R20	.65	.89
SEM	1.4	1.08

Table 3 Item Facility of Items 11 to 20

Item	2nd Grade IF (%)	3rd Grade IF (%)	Number of coherent English answers		Number of coherent Japanese answers		Number of incorrect answers	
			2nd Grade	3rd Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
11	63.1	70	1	14	12	4	6	2
12	***10.5***	***15***	***1***	***3***	***2***	***3***	***16***	***14***
13	***5.2***	***25***	***3***	***5***	***1***	***0***	***15***	***15***
14	57.8	25	2	6	11	5	6	9
15	36.8	20	3	0	7	4	9	16
16	42.1	20	2	4	8	1	9	15
17	***15.7***	***15***	***1***	***3***	***3***	***0***	***15***	***17***
18	31.5	10	1	2	6	2	12	16
19	***5.2***	***5***	***0***	***0***	***1***	***1***	***18***	***19***
20	21.0	30	2	2	4	6	13	12

able 4 In-house Assessments and EIKEN Linear Correlation Overall

	Second graders	Third graders
Average score on EIKEN (20)	7.9	8.8
Average score in-house (100)	65.7	62
PEARSON *r*	0.77	0.52

From Table 2 it can be inferred that the third graders did better overall than the second graders, which is reassuring because the students seem to be scaffolding skills as they progress each year. If there were no differences, or worse, if the third graders were lower than the second graders, there would be cause for alarm. This set of questions were, however, not a good fit for this group of second graders—the K-R20 = .65, which is well below the .85 benchmark. The K-R20 = .89 result for the third graders was much better.

The second set of questions, 11 to 20, was approached differently. They also involved short dialogs, but instead of choosing a response from a range of options, students had to answer a question about each dialog in writing. In the official tests, subjects have to answer these questions on an answer sheet in a multiple choice fashion, but the researcher wanted to gauge the ability of the students to respond with an expression, thus in this investigation, the ability to respond in writing was added as a proficiency criterion. In the official EIKEN Grade 3, there is an essay section at the end which assesses writing, but due to time constraints, the writing element was included in this second set of questions as a written response required for each question.

Each written response was graded thus: one point for a coherent answer in English (disregarding spelling and grammar); one point in a separate column for a coherent answer in Japanese (indicating that they did understand, but could not form an English response); and a zero for no response or an incorrect or incoherent response in English or Japanese. Their English and Japanese scores were then added up for an overall indicator of amount of questions understood and responded to coherently overall. Since this approach is not dichotomous, it was not possible to conduct a K-R20 analysis on items 11 to 20. Instead, the Item Facility (IF) of each question was calculated to see the rate of acceptable answers for each item. The formula is as follows:

IF = N1 (number of correct answers) / N2 (number of answers)

Calculating IF allows the researcher to see which items were problematic. Table 3 shows which items caused the most problems for two sample classes (19 second graders and 20 third graders).

From Table 3 it can be seen that items 12, 13, 17, and 19 were most problematic overall for this sample group. The next step would be to analyze the vocabulary, syntax, and discourse in these dialogs and questions to see why they posed such a challenge.

Results

In answer to research question (1), the first ten multiple choice items were not a good fit for the second graders (K-R20 = .65); however, they were a decent fit for the third graders (K-R20 = .89). Recall that the value MacGregor (1997) found with her college students was .82, and that the TOEIC value overall around the same time was .92 (Woodford, 1992).

As for research question (2), items 11 to 20, answered in writing, had among them a set of problematic items which need to be analyzed further to see why most students struggled with these answers.

Research question (3) asked how well performance assessments corroborated the mini test scores, and PEARSON r was calculated overall with results as in Table 4. From Table 4 it is clear that there was a stronger correlation between the EIKEN mini test and the in-house assessments among the second graders (r = 0.77) than among the third graders (r = 0.52).

Problematic Items

Thus far, the first ten items proved to be more compatible and a more reliable tool for assessing the listening comprehension of the third graders; the second graders were not reliably constant in their performance on this first set. The second set, items 11 to 20, required writing skill as well as listening comprehension, and there were four items that were particularly problematic for both groups. Let us take a quick look at the most problematic items. Item 12 is a listening dialog scripted as follows:

A: The library is really crowded today, Mike.

B: Yeah. There are no free tables.

A: Let's study in the classroom.

B: That's a good idea.

Question: Why can't they study in the library today?

Since the content is perfectly matched to this sample of high schoolers, there have to be particular words and phrases that were difficult to comprehend. Perhaps the word “crowded” and the concept of something being free (not free of charge or free to be used at will) were the culprits. Item 13 involved the following dialog and question:

A: My dad is moving to Australia for his new job in March.

B: Really? What about you and your mom?

A: We’ll move in June.

B: Maybe I can visit you in July.

Question: When will the girl and her mother move to Australia?

The topic and theme are well suited to this group of participants, but the names of months can be challenging for students, and the added cognitive load of working out which is which when confronted with a set of three is particularly challenging in real time for students who first convert English names to Japanese names that count months with numbers (三月, 六月, and 七月). It is possible that this item caused confusion for students who could not sort these names for the corresponding months immediately. The next problematic item, no. 17 was scripted as follows:

A: Welcome to our company.

B: Thanks. I’m looking forward to working here.

A: Your desk is over there, next to the copy machine.

B: Great. Thanks.

Question: Where are they talking?

This topic is not exactly aimed at high school students, but it is a general introductory situation, in line with the Can-do list in Table1, and the vocabulary is straightforward with “copy machine” even correlating well phonetically with one of its Japanese counterparts, コピー機 or kopi-ki. Perhaps the students struggled with forming a general concept of where the people were talking. Those who attempted an answer generally got it right; there were no incorrect attempts, so the problem may have been that students did not understand the question or the situation overall. Item 19 was scripted as follows:

A: Do you have my bicycle key, Mom?

B: No, I don’t. Did you ask your brother?

A: Yes, but he doesn’t have it. I’ll go and ask Dad.

B: Good idea.

Question: Who will the boy speak to next?

Apart from the level of inference expected, which is quite high, the content matches the typical milieu of the sample group. Perhaps the flow of dialog was too fast, and the declaration “I’ll go and ask Dad” may have been too sudden; the researcher has often found that model dialogs in textbooks follow very predictable give-and-take patterns. This sudden declaration paired with the phrase “go and ask”, which when spoken at normal pace can be difficult to parse, may have been the hurdles.

Whatever the causes, these items were problematic throughout, and the researcher recognizes the need to include similar material in regular classes and assessments to make sure students are better prepared when they take the real EIKEN.

Discussion

The mini test used twenty authentic EIKEN Grade 3 listening comprehension questions, and the first ten were statistically not a reliable assessment for the second graders, but not a bad tool for assessing the third graders. Research question (1) therefore leads to an answer that is two-fold: the first ten items are not suitable for this sample of second graders, but they are a good tool for assessing the overall proficiency of the third graders. Concerning research question (2), although the mini test proved to be better suited to the third graders, the second graders showed a better correlation between in-house assessments and the mini test. This means that their assessments in-house coincide with the MEXT Grade 3 benchmark.

The second graders would have been at the benchmark age around 18 months prior to this investigation; however, the third graders are already nearing the next benchmark age for Grade Pre 2 and Grade 2, and their weak correlation ($r = 0.52$) with this Grade 3 material indicates that review is necessary and that classroom materials and assessments need to be tweaked for better correlation in the future.

Areas that seem to need immediate attention, the point of interest for research question (3), are vocabulary, e.g. "*crowded*" and the names of months, phrases such as "*go and ask*," and the natural flow of spontaneous discourse that does not necessarily follow predictable textbook patterns of give and take.

Conclusion

The material in Grade 3 is expected to be easier than the material in Grade Pre 2 and Grade 2; therefore, much needs to be done to get the third graders ready for acceptable scores on these more difficult levels. Their in-house assessments have shown a weak correlation with the Grade 3 mini test scores. The next step would be to design the same mini test using Grade Pre 2 material to gauge how well the third graders fare on authentic items from that more difficult level. The pedagogical implications of this study are that this kind of research, done in-house, is necessary to keep the material used in classroom assessment in line with the material to be mastered in EIKEN. Such research assists both teachers and students by raising awareness, and if it is published and shared, the EIKEN Foundation is bound to take notice as well, and to respond with more support for teachers who need help with tweaking assessment methods. Finally, it has to be conceded that the researcher added a writing component to the second set of questions, which is not the way EIKEN designed the questions to be answered. This inevitably affected the ability of the students to answer some of the items; they may have fared much better if those questions required nothing more than choosing a correct answer. Therefore, the problematic items mentioned in the previous section may pose fewer problems when answered according to the original EIKEN design.

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Fake news? Tips to help English educators in Japan navigate a post-truth world

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English instructors in Japan often assign their students written assignments or class presentation assignments that require their students to find information about a topic. Particularly, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning courses (CLIL) often have students conducting research in their respective fields to produce new original material as classwork or material to be published in university or professional journals. This paper will try to define some of the dangers students will come across while using the Internet to search for information and how English instructors can inform their students to become better users of the information they find online.

日本の英語講師は生徒に対して自分たちで選んだトピックに関する情報を収集し、それを基にレポートを書かせたり、クラスで発表をさせることがよくあります。特に、EAP（English for Academic Purposes＝アカデミック英語）やCLIL（Content and Language Integrated Learning courses＝内容言語統合型学習コース）は、それぞれの分野で研究を行い、大学や専門誌に掲載される課題や資料として独自の資料を作成することがあります。本誌ではンターネットを使用して情報を検索する際に生徒が遭遇し得る危険についてと、生徒に対してオンラインでうまく情報を集めるために英語講師がどのように指導できるかについて定義します。

"Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense" (Stein, 1946).

The term "fake news" is defined by the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus as, "stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke" (2018). This phenomenon of "fake news" has become a part of political discourse in the United States and many other parts of the world. While a spectrum of political parties argues about what is real and what are alternative realities, this paper will not focus on the socio-political issues at stake. Rather the author would like to shed some light on practical tips and considerations that English educators in Japan can use to help their students find reliable, trustworthy information when they work on English writing and presentation assignments. While the author believes this topic deserves to be investigated with a research-based quantitative report, this paper's intent is only to introduce the topic and give educators a practice-oriented resource they can use in their classrooms.

This author's university is a small (under 1,000 students) private liberal-arts university located in the southwest of Japan. The students attending the university generally come from upper-middle class families who can afford private-school tuition. Consequently, due to their relative affluent social standing, all of the students who participated in this paper's surveys have access to digital devices such as smartphones or personal computers at home. As a side note to educators who are based outside of Japan, the Japanese school system is structured in a way that private universities are usually ranked below public schools. According to a number of university-ranking sites such as "Times Higher Education Rankings", all of the top 10 schools in Japan are public universities (Best Universities in Japan, March 2018). This is mentioned to clarify that although this author's school is a private institution, its academic ranking is lower than might be expected. The top Western universities are predominately private institutions (World universities rankings, 2018). This socio-economic difference should be kept in mind when we think about the students' background and possible influences on their ability to use digital tools.

According to a 2015 OECD's broadband statistics report, Japan ranks second in mobile broadband subscriptions (OECD broadband statistics update, 19 February 2016). Needless to say, access to the Internet is widespread among all age groups and demographics. While students have access to high speed Internet at home and on their smart devices, they are not allowed to use computers, smart phones or tablets during lectures at this author's university. Japan still relies on rote memorization techniques without the aid of technology (Osumi, 2016). When the topic of digital tools in the classroom comes up with this author's colleagues, some view using those tools as shortcuts that hinder the ability of students' absorption of facts.

Despite this attitude towards using digital tools in the classroom, this author believes that students will turn towards digital sources of information to complete assignments, even if educators actively try to limit their use in the classroom. In that regard, to get a better sense of how this author's students find information, a short survey was conducted with a questionnaire administered to second year students (N=22). The students who participated in the survey are proficient enough in English to be able to understand the English questions in the questionnaire without need for Japanese translation.

As seen in Table 1, most of this author's Japanese university students access the Internet via a computer or smartphone when faced with an assignment that requires research. Out of twenty-two participants in a class survey (Table 1) twenty (90%) responded that they prefer to use Internet sources instead of library resources when looking for information. In addition, the vast majority of the participants indicated that they do not check the information they find for potential problems.

To this researcher who spent the majority of his school life doing homework and looking for information in libraries, the survey results were disheartening. Primarily due to the fact that this author believes that most of his students have not developed sufficient information literacy skills to determine the quality of the information they are going to use. When asked to provide some reasoning as to why they use the Internet to find information most students who participated in the survey responded with, "finding information on the Internet is fast and easy" or "I do not want to go to the library because it is troublesome and unnecessary". This author tries to impart on his students that, "right now, libraries have the rarest and most precious thing in the world: a respected and trusted brand" (Johnson, 2017). One of the many advantages of using a library is students can ask for the help of librarians to find information and they can rest assured the library itself acts as filter and gateway that tries to keep false information and unreliable sources out of their pool of resources.

Changing student behavior to use more library resources would certainly be one way to improve the quality of our students' work. However, this author would like to argue that instead of just focusing on changing student behavior, educators can help their students in the short term by teaching them what to watch for and

Table 1

Q1. How do you find the information you need to complete this class's assignments?

	By going to the library	By Searching Google/Yahoo on a smartphone	By Searching Google/Yahoo on a home PC
#students	2	12	8

Q2. Do you check the information you find?

	Yes, I do	No, I do not
#students	1	21

how to be more critical users of the information they find online. There are a multitude of pitfalls that await students along the way and educators need to give students the tools and skills necessary to become better informed digital users.

"Social media platforms such as Facebook have a dramatically different structure than previous media technologies. Content can be relayed among users with no significant third-party filtering, fact-checking, or editorial judgment. An individual user with no track record or reputation can in some cases reach as many readers as Fox News, CNN, or the New York Times". (Allcott, Hunt, Gentzkow, 2017).

The Oxford Dictionary 2016 word of the year was "post-truth". The adjective is defined as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). This the environment students find themselves in when they begin to look for information on the Internet. They might start a search via a browser such as Apple's Safari or Google's Chrome that leads them to blog sites or Facebook pages. The students might then use the data they have found for their classroom assignments without checking to see if the data they are using is based on reliable facts.

Japanese English Instructor's View

In order to get an inside perspective on what Japanese English instructors might have to say about students' information literacy, the author conducted an interview with one of his Japanese colleagues. The interview was conducted in English, with the researcher taking notes during the conversation. The subject, abbreviated as "JTE", has been teaching for over fifteen years at the secondary level in a private high school. He graduated from a top-ranked Japanese university and also studied in the United States for one year at California State University – Los Angeles. He has passed the 1st level EIKEN English proficiency exam and noted during the interview that he is a proponent of using technology in the classroom. Currently, he is the head of the English department at the school and is trying to implement school-wide changes that will better equip his students to become 21st century learners.

When asked about his students' information literacy he was reluctant to admit that most of his students are not taught about how to research for something using Internet resources. He reported that most Japanese English teachers including JTE regard themselves as the main gatekeepers of information for the students. The students are expected to use the information they are taught in class to complete any assignments they might have. JTE reported that, "Students are very rarely expected to use outside resources for school assignments because there might be a lack of fair access for all students". He did indicate, however, that he has been trying to engage his students' critical thinking skills by using library and Internet resources. In that regard, he agreed with this author that, "students need a repertoire of evaluative strategies" (Callison, 2009) when they are searching for information online. An example of his efforts includes having his students make a presentation about Japanese history or culture using PowerPoint, Google Slides or Apple's Keynote presentation software. For that project he asks students to evaluate what information they will need to make their presentations original and engaging to audiences. JTE admitted that while he is personally trying to improve his students' information literacy, "the school where I currently teach does not have any school-wide policies to help students learn about the Internet".

At the conclusion of our interview, JTE believed that more awareness was needed in this area and the school should hire an information science specialist who can help faculty and students improve their understanding of the issues and gain the practical skills they need to become better users. This author believes that further investigation and additional interviews at the university level with Japanese teachers of English might reveal additional insight into how schools approach the topic of information literacy.

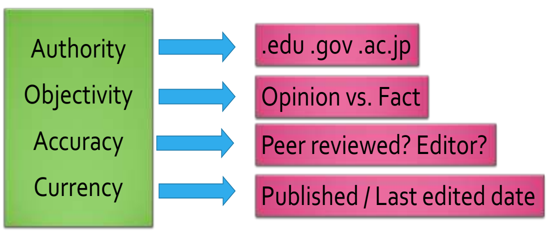
Instruction with Technology and Resources

This author believes that educators need to realize students these days are caught up in social media, instant search results and non-curated information (a celebrity blog for example). While they might be able to find something of perceived value quickly, educators need to help their students understand the use of technology. “Do they use it for schoolwork, to play games, to communicate with friends, to do research, or some of all of the above?” (Borawski, 2009). Students might have difficulty drawing a clear line between those activities. Furthermore, students are at risk to view the content on social networks as equal to curated content because they are accessing both types of data from the same device and in a similar format.

To better understand how students are accessing information, educators should also become more knowledgeable of new technologies and trends. They should learn what sources of information their students are likely to use and how to teach their students about the deficiencies and benefits of each of those sources.

As a guideline to help educators and students judge information sources, the author recommends using a rubric based on Susan Beck’s Evaluation Criteria (Beck, 1997). This checklist can help students and educators quickly determine the quality of the information they want to use in their research. The graphic in Figure 1 is explained in more detail with a numbered list.

Figure 1. Evaluation Checklist



1. Authority – Is the author associated with an education institution or other reputable organization? The URL of a website can often tell us something about the organization. For example, “...ac.jp” websites are reserved for schools that are registered under the School Education Law in Japan. This includes universities, technical schools and incorporated schools. Another example is, “…co.jp”, these websites are reserved for registered corporations that are physically located in Japan.

2. Objectivity – Is the writer’s name listed? Is the source a presentation of facts and not designed to sway opinion? When presenting facts, journalist or researches often use citations to back up their claims. Does the article have any citations?

3. Accuracy – Is there an editor or someone who verifies and checks the information? Check to see who last edited the article. If no name is listed, then it becomes more difficult to trust that the information presented is accurate.

4. Currency – Can you find when the information was published or last updated? Published by dates are usually clearly written on reputable websites. If a date cannot be found on the page then the information might be outdated or no longer true.

When using consumer-oriented search sites such as Google.com or Yahoo.co.jp, it is important to cross check the author, determine the type of server the information is hosted on and make sure the data is being produce by a reputable organization. This checklist can help students filter the websites they find online. If a student has to vet many websites it is best to make a quick pass using the above four checkpoints. After deciding on one or two information sources, the student should try to check the referenced material using the Evaluation Checklist as a guide. By using the checklist, students can be more confident they have better quality information sources. In doing so, they will be able to produce better content while also gaining the skill of being self-reflective and inquisitive learners.

Practical Applications in the Classroom

As stated earlier, students find themselves in an environment where there is an enormous amount of information available. However, it is becoming more and more difficult to verify the veracity of that data. Students should start with the *Evaluation Checklist* to quickly eliminate websites that might come up in the top of search results, but are actually heavily biased sites written by individuals are companies that do not base their findings on scientific fact. These sites usually have an agenda to push and more often than not, they also have something to sell the reader. A process that this author would like to start having his students use is the process of making an annotated bibliography. The annotation allows the student to double check once again the quality of the information source. In addition, it is a very valuable addition for the instructor to be able to read the annotations and understand the students' vetting process and why they chose that website to use in their paper.

To become better leaders in education, it is important we teach students the steps they need to take in order to be skilled users of information. Anyone can make a free website and publish it on the Internet; this presents students with a special challenge that students twenty years ago did not have to deal with. Processing information outside of a professionally vetted environment will require educators and students to have better critical thinking skills. The more students and educators know about how to check for quality the more effective they will be in producing their own original material and research.

The process of completing this article has also given the author a better understanding of how students are looking for information. The author has tried to guide his students to use online databases that are better suited for research. For example, Google Scholar or ERIC databases focus on published works from journals and other scholarly articles. Based on this author's experience, currently most students use Wikipedia or the first few links from a google.co.jp search. When students can access higher quality databases, the hope is they will try and produce higher quality English reports. Using the new information literacy skills they have gained, students will be less motivated to copy and paste whole sections of Wikipedia for their homework assignments. Of course, banning using Wikipedia is not a good option as it "doesn't teach students the skills they need to know" (Jennings, 2008). It just makes them less knowledgeable about a technology that they will encounter every day in their lives.

For a recent presentation project, the author had his students look up and report on recent J-Pop musicians and report where they were born, what they studied in school, why they became a musician and what they will do next. For that project, students were allowed to use Wikipedia and look at the bottom for good references, then go to official artist fan pages and finally try to find information about the artist from the talent agency or music label they currently work for. Introducing easy steps to the research method made it easy for the students to locate the data they needed and finish their homework assignments.

In another example, students had to research gender inequality issues in Japan. For this assignment students were required to use at least one information source that was not solely produced for Internet consumption. They had to find English newspapers, databases or other research databases that cannot be accessed by simply typing a few keywords into Google. Forcing students to do something outside of their comfort zones hopefully taught them the importance of some of the tenets of information literacy. They live in world of fast and easy data. However, quality is something they should strive for if they hope to produce quality work of their own.

Conclusion

This author does not believe that the Japanese education system can continue to be competitive in the world if it ignores the digitization of information that is happening on the world stage. According to my interview with JTE, teachers thus far have been somewhat successful in avoiding the problem altogether by discouraging the use of technology and digital sources. That cannot continue to be the way forward. We must understand the reality of how our students access information and help and guide them to be intelligent, ethical and responsible users and producers of information.

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Virtual embodiment and project-based learning with Google Earth VR

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In this pilot study, Japanese junior high school students who are studying English as a foreign language (EFL) were divided into two groups. Both groups engaged in project-based learning (PBL) activities that focused on tourism-related language. The control group used paper-based materials and the treatment group used digital materials, including Google Earth VR on the Oculus Rift virtual reality system. The results indicated that the treatment group outperformed the control group on pre- to post-test score gains and on a graded speaking task.

この予備研究では、外国語として英語を学習する日本の中学生を 2 つのグループに分けた。どちらのグループも、観光関連の言語に焦点を当てた課題解決型学習を実施。対象群は紙の教材を使用し、実験群は Oculus Rift バーチャルリアリティシステム上の Google Earth VR を含むデジタル教材を使用した。結果は、実験群が試験前または試験後の得点の増加および段階的なスピーキング課題で対照群より優れていることを示した

This paper will describe a pilot study which compared the efficacy of a treatment condition which included the use of virtual reality (VR) technology to that of a more traditional paper-based control condition within the context of a project-based learning (PBL) unit designed for Japanese junior high school EFL students. Although the sample size of the treatment group was small (n=14), statistical analysis suggests that the treatment was more effective than the control.

The upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games were used as the basis for designing a project-based learning (PBL) unit that was implemented with a group of Tokyo-based Japanese junior high school students (N=67). The students assumed the role of tour guides and they were tasked with designing a tour for a fictional group of English-speaking tourists who would be visiting Japan for the Olympics. For example, they identified a particular Olympic event and then recommended lodging and restaurants near the vicinity of that event's venue based on research that they conducted. The control group was given only paper-based materials for research, while the treatment group was also allowed to use digital materials, including brief individual immersion in the Google Earth VR application running on the Oculus Rift virtual reality (VR) system. The Google Earth VR application allows users to have a fully immersive experience of "floating" above a highly realistic three-dimensional model of the earth which includes both natural and man-made features. The user can traverse the landscape and look at it from a bird's eye view while also being able to adjust his or her altitude. The VR treatment was chosen in order to investigate the possible effect of embodied cognition on foreign language learning.

At the end of the project, the students' performance of understanding was to give a short, spoken presentation that summarized the proposed tour for their fictional clients. The speeches were evaluated using a rubric that included elements such as memorization, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and rhythm/fluency. In addition to the presentations, all of the students were given a pre- and post-test that assessed their knowledge of relevant vocabulary and also their listening and dictation skills. The relative gain scores were compared between the control and treatment groups

Background Literature Review

This section will first introduce the theoretical basis for this study, then it will give brief explanations of project-based learning and the concept of virtual embodiment.

Theoretical Basis

The present study is rooted in Mind, Brain, and Education (MBE) science. MBE is a transdisciplinary field that bridges psychology, neuroscience, and education (Fischer et al., 2007). There are two major ideas from MBE that guided our thinking while designing this study. The first is that human cognition is part of a complex dynamic system: an interlocking fractal pattern of nested and interconnected systems, which range in scale from the microscopic interplay of cells in the brain to the macroscopic churn of human social interaction (Schumann, 2006; Steenbeek & van Geert, 2015). An interesting trait of complex dynamic systems is *superposition.* This is a phenomenon in which there can be multiple seemingly contradictory theories or explanations regarding a particular system, when in reality they may all be at least partially true (e.g. the false dichotomy of nature versus nurture). In light of this, as researchers and pragmatic educators, we “eclectically and liberally borrow from several different educational approaches and learning theories, including behaviorism, cognitivism, and social-constructivism [and we are only] limited by what [we] find to be effective in [our] day-to-day interactions with [our] students” (Gorham & Gorham, 2015, p. 183).

The second major conceptual influence for us is neurodiversity. One of the most widely accepted principles of MBE science is that “human brains are as unique as human faces. While the basic structure of most human brains is the same (similar parts in similar regions), no two brains are identical” (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2018, p. 1). A successful approach to learner differences is the educational framework, *Universal Design for Learning* (UDL). UDL implores teachers to provide multiple means of presenting information and content to their students (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). Because VR is categorically different from other educational technology (e.g. books, photos, and videos), it should be considered as an alternative means of representing information and content. In the context of MBE science, complex dynamic systems, superposition, neurodiversity, and UDL’s call for multiple means of content presentation, we believe that VR technology possesses affordances which have the potential to positively affect learning and it warrants further study.

Project-based Learning

Many foreign/second language teachers and researchers believe that authenticity is a necessary component of successful teaching and learning. Moskowitz’s (1978) humanistic approach to foreign language learning emphasizes the need for using topics that are both individually relevant and truthful. Similarly, the neurolinguistic approach stresses the need for “authenticity of language and communication situations (Netten, & Germain, 2012, p. 93).

Project-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered, content-focused pedagogical approach that addresses this call for authenticity in the foreign/second language classroom. With PBL, students are tasked with taking an active role in developing solutions for real-world problems. PBL fosters student collaboration and usually requires a final project as a performance of understanding (Blumenfeld, et al., 1991; Poonpon, 2017). It can create richer and more hands-on real-world experiences for students and it can shift the educational experience from one of rote learning to one of active learning, where students shift from being passive consumers of knowledge to being active creators (Adams Becker, Cummins, Davis, Freeman, Hall Giesinger, & Ananthanarayanan, 2017). A hallmark of PBL is that students are involved in doing, creating, and demonstrating their new skills.

For these reasons and because of the possible affordance of virtual embodiment, we felt that a VR application like Google Earth VR has the potential to augment the effectiveness of PBL in language learning

Virtual Embodiment

Most teachers instinctively understand that human cognition is at the heart of the teaching and learning experience, but they might not realize that cognition is not a purely mental phenomenon; it also has an embodied element: "perceptual and motor systems influence the way we construct concepts, make inferences, and use language" (Repetto, Serino, Macedonia, & Riva, 2016, para. 3). VR has the potential ability to tap into this embodied cognition through an affordance referred to as "virtual embodiment" and it has been shown to improve language learning outcomes (Macedonia, Müller, & Friederici, 2011; Repetto, Cipresso, & Riva, 2015).

Interestingly, De Gelder, Katsyri, and de Borst (2018) argue that the power of a virtual reality experience does not necessarily stem from a hyper-realistic depiction of its virtual environment, but rather from its ability to foster a suspension of disbelief in the user. This effect can be enhanced through the inclusion of various sensory modalities, such as surround-sound audio, gesture tracking, and haptic feedback (Bailey, Bailenson, & Casasanto, 2016).

Because of the phenomenon of virtual embodiment, VR experiences can sometimes have powerful and long-lasting real-world effects on users. Research has shown that VR can be used to ameliorate acute and procedural pain in medical treatment (Won et al., 2017) and to change the way that perpetrators of domestic violence perceive fearful female faces (Seinfeld et al., 2018). In light of this body of research, it is possible that certain VR experiences may be able to add a very different type of authentic experience to language learning which employs a PBL approach.

Methods

Research question

Will the inclusion of a highly immersive VR experience in a more traditional project-based learning unit taught to Japanese junior high school EFL students result in higher learning gains on written pre- and post-tests as well as higher scores on a performance of understanding speech

Hypothesis

We hypothesized that the treatment group would show greater gains in the post-test results as well as higher scores on their presentations than the control group.

Participants

The participants (N=67) were Japanese junior high school students based in Tokyo. All of the 67 students in the study fell within the age range of 14 to 15 years old and took part in the study during their "Oral Communication" EFL class at the same school. The control group consisted of 2 classes totaling 53 students (76.9%) and the remaining 14 students (23.1%), from a third class, served as the treatment group. The gender distribution was 60% male and 40% female. All of the students were taking the same level of English classes and they were taught by one of this study's authors. We understand that the proportions of students in the trial versus treatment group is not ideal. However, we decided to proceed with the study even with a small treatment group. We considered it important to continue this research with the plan of conducting future studies with larger groups.

Materials

Both the control and treatment groups were given a pre-test before starting the unit. The pre-test assessed the students' listening and dictation skills as well as the students' ability to translate ten target vocabulary words from English to Japanese. The dictation section of the pre-test was adapted from a model of the speech that the students were later tasked with creating. The post-test that was administered at the end of the unit followed the same format. Both tests were created and administered by the same classroom teacher who is also a co-author of this study.

Students were provided with scaffolding support in the form of a printed flow chart describing the steps required for completing the project and a model of the final performance of understanding speech. They were also given a paper-based handout that featured a list of the events in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics Heritage Zone and the Tokyo Bay Zone. These two areas feature 32 of the 39 Olympic events.

The students conducted research for their projects using information from several websites: a Japan-focused mass transit scheduling site (www.hyperdia.com), a hotel booking site (www.hotels.com), a restaurant review site (www.yelp.com), and Google Maps. There is one important deviation from our original plan for providing research materials for this study. We intended for both the control group and the treatment group to spend two class periods in the computer lab to conduct web searches. However, due to scheduling conflicts that we encountered with the school's computer lab, the control group was unable to use the computer lab. Instead, students in the control group were provided with a printed packet of several pages of search results from the preceding list of websites.

Finally, every student in the treatment group was given a 5-minute immersive VR experience where they could explore the Olympic Heritage Zone and Tokyo Bay Zone with Google Earth VR running on the Oculus Rift and an Alienware 15 gaming laptop.

Procedures

For each of the classes, the study took place over the course of four 50-minute class periods spanning roughly 2 weeks. The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the first period. In the first and second class periods, the students were first randomly put into pairs and then they conducted research using information from the previously mentioned websites. In the third period, the students consolidated their research and wrote their final presentation speeches, which they then practiced and finally presented in the fourth period. After the presentations were completed, the post-test was administered.

During the three class periods of research and preparation, the students decided on a fictitious travel company name, determined a venue in the Heritage Zone or the Tokyo Bay Zone, and explained the sport or competition held at the particular venue. Next, using information from the previously mentioned websites, the pairs determined a route to their chosen Olympic venue from Narita International Airport, and decided whether a person should walk from the train station, take a taxi, or a ride a bus to arrive at the Olympic venue. After that, they found the price of a quality hotel and identified a restaurant located in the vicinity of the venue. The pairs used this information to make their speech, introducing their fictional travel company's tour plan to hypothetical foreign tourists. The speeches were evaluated using a rubric designed by this study's authors.

Results

On an aggregate level (N=67), students' average score on the pre-test was 4.79 with a range of 0 to 11 on a 15 point scale. We observed an increase in overall post-test scores at 7.34 with a range of 1 to 15. As alluded to by these measures, there was greater variance on the post-test which can be typical. Interestingly, the overall presentation grades were similar to the post-test grades.

We compared the means of the two groups

Table 1: *Comparisons of Treatment and Control Groups on Pre-test, Post-test and Presentation Speech*

		Treatment (n=14)	Control (n=53)	*t*	*p*
Pretest Mean		6.7	4.3	2.92	.005
	(SD)	(2.6)	(2.8)		
Posttest Mean		10.9	6.4	4.13	.001
	(SD)	(2.6)	(3.9)		
Gain scores	Mean	4.2	2.1	3.06	.003
	(SD)	(1.5)	(2.4)		
Speech Mean		12.6	6.3	6.86	.001
	(SD)	(1.7)	(3.3)		

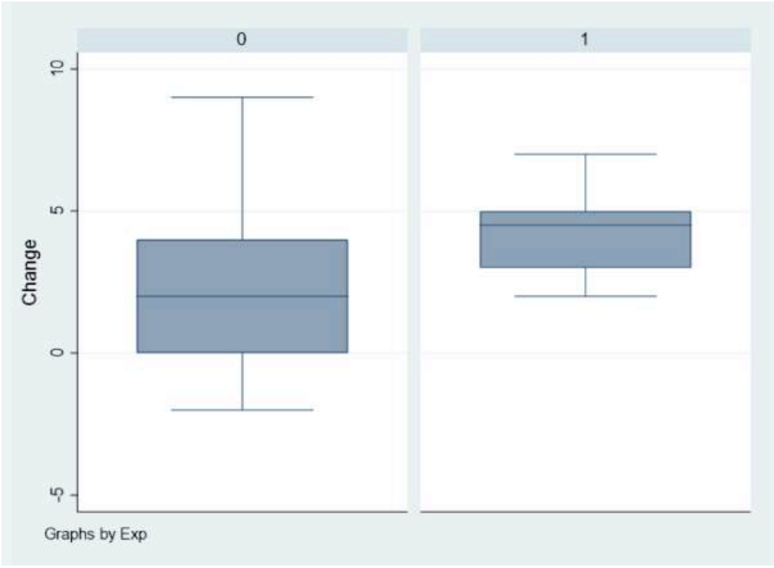

Figure 1. *Box-and-whisker plot of average gain scores for the control group (0) and treatment groups (1)*

with an independent samples t-test. As shown in Table 1, analysesof the pre- and post-tests revealed that the students in the treatment group not only scored higher on the post-test but also made larger gains and these results were found to be statistically significant (df = 65, t = 3.06, p<0.003). We took caution with this result because, as we can see, there is a significant difference between the treatment and control groups on the pre-test. Because of this we focus on the gain scores, or the amount of points the students gained on average from pre- to post-test.

It was found that students in the treatment group, on average, had gain scores that nearly doubled the gain scores of the control group (Mtre = 4.21, Mcon = 2.11). Furthermore, the standard deviations were about 1 point different, on a 15 point scale, indicating a bigger spread of scores in the control group. When examining a box plot (Figure 1), we can see how drastic this difference is. To address this concern of unequal variances between our samples, we performed an F-test and found this measure not to be significant (p>0.05). In other words, this assumption of the t-test was met. The other assumptions of the t-test, normality and independence, were also met. Of particular interest with the Figure below is that the lowest and highest gains were in the control group, but the treatment group had larger average gain scores.

When examining the presentation scores we

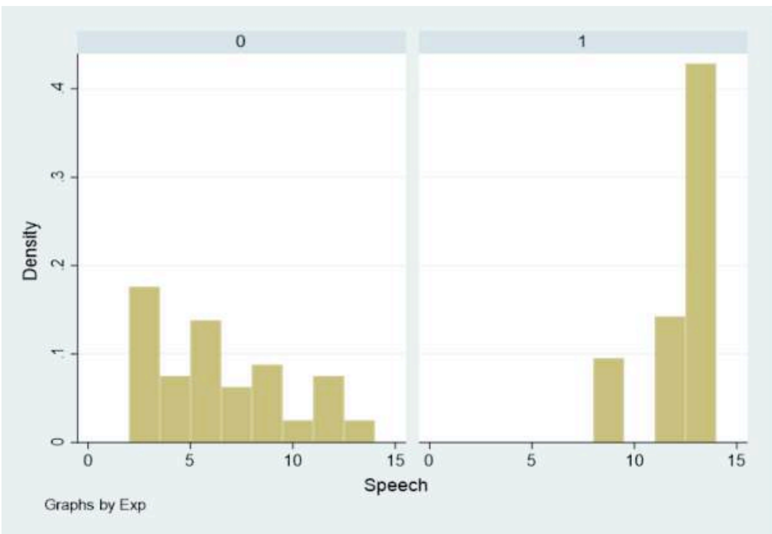

Figure 2. *Histogram displaying the Speech scores for the control group (0) and treatment group (1)*

see a similar trend; however, the variances between the groups were vastly different with many students in the treatment group clustering towards high scores and the control group having a much wider spread (M_{tre} = 12.57, M_{con} = 6.28). To help alleviate this concern, we utilized Satterthwaite's adjustment in an independent samples *t*-test with unequal variances which confirmed significant differences between the groups (df = 42, t = 9.805, $p<0.001$).

Looking at the group all together, we found a moderate positive correlation with gain and speech scores (r = 0.41, $p<0.001$). This indicates that, on average, students who scored higher on their speech tended to also achieve higher gains on the written test. Said another way, students who had lower scores on their speech tended to have smaller gains from pre- to post-test.

When comparing the control group with the treatment group here, we see a strong positive correlation with being in the treatment group and performing well on the speech (r = 0.64, $p<0.001$). We see a similar trend as we did earlier with gain scores in that students in the treatment group scored much higher in this domain, on average, and there was a wider range in the control group as shown in Figure 2. We also see that students in the treatment group tended to have higher gains on the written test, though this is a relatively small correlation by comparison (r = 0.35, $p<0.005$). Being cautious of sampling error we bear in mind that the control group and treatment groups were quite different in sample size, so the sharp distinctions we found may not be as prevalent in a larger treatment group. In either case, the findings from our analysis point to the potential educational benefits of VR.

Discussion

Based on the results of this project-based learning experiment, the intervention which included a brief immersive VR experience was found to be more effective than the control condition but this study, like any, is not without its limitations. Interestingly, often when one tries an intervention or new program in educational settings there can be bigger variances in the treatment group than the control group; and in this case, we see the opposite. The students in the treatment group tended to cluster around (B+/A-), compared to the control group which varied from (F-A), with an average of (C). This difference could possibly be due to selection bias and due to the nature of educational research it can be difficult to achieve pure randomized controlled trials. Because the treatment group had greater pre-test scores than the control group, we focused on how much students improved throughout the study, i.e. the gain scores. This way we do not focus on where a student started or ended, necessarily, but how much they improved. In looking at the gain scores it gives the impression, and reinforces the notion, that effectively utilizing technology including the Internet and VR experiences can potentially greatly improve the students' performance in the classroom.

While it may be difficult to disentangle the effects of the treatment group students' interaction with Google Earth VR from the effects of using web-based resources (like Hyperdia, Google Maps, Hotels.com, and Yelp), the results of informal surveys administered at the end of the study indicated a particularly strong interest in the use of the VR technology.

Another issue that must be considered in this study is the small sample size of the treatment group. Due to this size, we want to be careful with making inferences but nonetheless this initial study gives some promising insights for further research.

Despite these issues, it may be worth examining these findings through the lenses of universal design for learning (UDL) and Mind, Brain, and Education (MBE) science. As described earlier, teachers should understand the fact of neurodiversity among their students and the need for offering multiple modes of presenting educational content.

If we look at the range of results in the pre-test, both the control and treatment groups had very similar standard deviations on their pre-test scores, meaning that the amount of variation in the range of scores were similar. However, when we look at the standard deviations of the post-test scores, the gain scores, and the speech scores, the control group exhibits greater variability in all three. The traditional PBL unit used with the control group resulted in less consistent test results. It worked very well for some students, but it was much less effective for others. Conversely, the VR treatment seemed to have had a much more consistent effect on the students in the treatment group, resulting in smaller standard deviations. Even without comparing the control group to the treatment group, we can see that the traditional PBL unit was not effective for all the students. This should alert educators to the possibility of UDL-based curricular improvements. In other words, it may be desirable to seek other ways to present content when doing PBL.

If we look at what makes PBL an effective and desirable pedagogical choice, it may be because the students react well to the authenticity. Perhaps the addition of an immersive VR experience to PBL can, in the spirit of UDL, offer an additional means of engaging with the content and creating a sense of authenticity in more students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, through supplementing a project-based learning assignment with an immersive VR experience, the treatment group showed greater gains in the post-test results as well as higher scores on their presentations than the control group. Overall, students in the treatment group were able to demonstrate their abilities of creating fictitious travel companies and convincing foreign visitors to attend specific events for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics better than the control group. Although this experiment showed promising results for the use of VR in project-based learning, due to the study's relatively small sample size of participants in the treatment group, more studies replicating the same or similar methods are recommended.

One reasonable concern is the high cost of VR technology. However, there are new, lower-cost VR headsets that are being released, such as the Oculus Go, which may offer educators similar opportunities for virtual embodiment for less money. These developments may make future replications of this study easier to conduct

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Living in Liminality: LGBTQIA+ Identities in Japan

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This paper discusses how certain cultural dimensions, combined with the importance of marriage and having children in order to have a *place* in society, have created a unique environment for the LGBTQIA+ community in Japan. An on-going qualitative study of students at university has thus far found that low visibility of LGBTQIA+ communities at university results in interviewees describing a liminal sense of belonging between majority and minority; existing simultaneously within and outside of society. This paper introduces this emerging concept of the largely invisible LGBTQIA+ community on Japanese university campuses and their sense of belonging to a limbo space.

本稿では、社会に自らの「居場所」を形成するために結婚し子供を持つことの重要性と相まって、文化的観念の相違が、日本特有の LGBTQIA+コミュニティーを取り巻く環境の形成にどのように影響してきたのかを考察する。現在進行中の定量的研究として、マジョリティーとマイノリティーのはざまに属し、社会の内外の境界に存在する学生らを対象に、リミナリティに関する意識調査を実施した。その調査結果から、日本の大学における LGBTQIA+コミュニティーへの認知度の低さがさらに浮き彫りとなった。また、本稿では、日本の大学構内では未だ知られていない当該 LGBTQIA+コミュニティーの新しい概念および不確かな空間に属する彼らの帰属意識に関する事例を紹介する。

Those living in Japan will be familiar with the saying, "出る釘は打たれる" (the nail that sticks out must be hammered down) and with how it is often evoked in discussions about the difficulty in being different or deviant from the norm within the largely collectivist (Hofstede, 2003 & 2010; Triandis, 1995 & 2018) Japanese society. One group that keenly feels this difficulty is the LGBTQIA+[1] community living in Japan. Although on the surface Japan is relatively progressive in accepting LGBTQIA+ identities (sexual acts between consenting adults are not criminalized, transgender individuals are allowed to undergo gender reassignment surgery, some wards are starting to recognize same-sex partnerships and according to Amnesty International (2017) violence toward LGBTQIA+ people is rare) such acceptance does not translate to open LGBTQIA+ visibility within society. Although Japanese universities are increasingly starting to have LGBTQIA+ clubs or circles, the university at which I work thus far has no way for LGBTQIA+ students to connect. Additionally, two Japanese cultural factors further contribute to invisiblity in society as a whole.

The Importance of Family

The first cultural factor is the role of the family which was enshrined by the 1890 Meiji Constitution as a central organizing institution within society. Essentially, people have a deep sense of who they are and where they belong within the context of their role(s) within a family. As gay marriage is not currently legal in Japan, and Act 111 of the "Special Cases in Handling Gender Status for Persons with Gender Identity Disorder" law[2] requires transgender individuals to be sterilized before officially changing their sex, there is a limit to how deeply LGBTQIA+ individuals can create a space for

[1] This acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning / Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (occasionally "Ally"). The "+" is added to include anyone who feels a sense of belonging to the term but not with any of the mentioned labels.

[2] http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=2542&vm=04&re=02

themselves in society within the kind of family they may want.

Indirect Communication

The second cultural factor is the tendency toward an indirect, high context (Hall, 1989, 1990; Kittler et. al., 2011) style of communication. The process of "coming out" as different requires a certain element of directness. Perhaps correspondingly, a 2013 Ipos international online survey revealed that although 46% of participants worldwide said they had an LGBT friend, relative or colleague, only 5% of Japanese participants (2nd lowest among the 16 countries) said the same. Additionally, according to Tamagawa (2017), a 2005 health report on 5,731 gay and bisexual men in Japan (REACH Online 2005) reveals that over half had come out to fewer than five people.

How Do These Factors Affect Identity?

The answer to the question, "Who am I?" is held to be of deep significance to many individuals. People have a need to conceptualize their own identity and feel a sense of ownership and belonging towards that identity. Equally, each individual likes this identity to project itself effectively upon others in a way that it is understood. As Bauman (1996) clarifies:

> One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioral styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. (p. 19)

Equally, it cannot be denied that cultural factors have a significant impact on how we conceptualize our identities and the extent to which we feel a sense of acceptance within the broader culture in which we live. Ting-Toomey (1999) states:

> First, culture serves the identity meaning function. Culture provides the frame of reference to answer the most fundamental question of each human being: Who am I? Cultural beliefs, values and norms provide the anchoring points in which we attribute meanings and significance to our identities. (p. 12)

Thus, it stands to reason that the cultural factors of collectivism, the importance of family and the prevalence of indirect communication all combine to affect how LGBTQIA+ individuals living in Japan would conceptualize their sense of belonging.

Data Collection and Method

As an openly gay teacher at a private university, LGBTQIA+ students tend to find me. I teach high-level elective English content courses related to gender and cultural topics and my students tend to be open and curious. My research group, therefore, was not actively sought out but a result of snowball sampling, comprised of participants (often students or friends of my students) who voluntarily came out to me and later expressed an interest in joining the research project group.

Interested participants were given documents explaining the purpose of the research as well as an explanation of the data collection procedure. If a student agreed to participate, they signed a consent form (available in both Japanese and English) and completed a pre-interview survey. The pre-interview survey asked for some demographic information followed by multiple choice & short answer questions about the participant's gender identity and sexual orientation and their level of openness / visibility.

Subsequently, face-to-face one-to-one interviews were held (thus far with 20 participants: 10 Japanese and 10 non-Japanese) in a small classroom on campus. These interviews generally lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured with each interviewee being asked approximately 10-15 questions from a bank of 20 (student answers to the pre-interview survey informed which interview questions would be relevant to the interviewee) with follow up questions if necessary. Questions centred around the themes stories of personal identity, opinions about visibility in Japan and (when relevant) in a home country, and sense of belonging to a community and/or society at large. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Both the group of exchange students and the group of domestic students were completing their undergraduate degrees and therefore roughly of the same ages.

Although English was the native language for only two of the interviewees, all interviews were held in English as students had reached an appropriate level of English competence and fluency (Japanese students had passed our in-house writing and oral tests to be certified at the intermediate or advanced level of our elective program) and the presence of a translator was deemed inappropriate considering the sensitive nature of the interview content. The transcripts of the interviews were sent back to interviewees if any further clarification was required and then analysed by placing keywords into a theme table. In order to maintain anonymity, a list of participants was created, in no particular order, and the initials "AB" were given to the participant at the top of the list, followed by "BC" for the second, "CD" for the third and so on.

Results

Initially, interviews with research participants simply resulted in a fascinating anthology of stories and culturally affected experiences. However, upon starting to analyse the transcripts, an interesting pattern began to emerge. The ways the interviewees conceptualized their sense of belonging was different, but the majority of them could be grouped into Japanese or non-Japanese in the broad way that they were different. Nine out of ten of the non-Japanese interviewees described their process of conceptualizing their own LGBTQIA+ identity in terms of greater belonging as following three stages that I have termed, "isolation," "marginalization" and "integration."

Stage 1: Isolation

Interviewees described this as the moment they felt something different about themselves – something about their identity that may be pushing them out of a comfortable imagined circle of society. One interviewee described this feeling in the following words:

> I was like questioning about myself like from like elementary school. Then I got older and went to the junior high school and I still was questioning. And I was like what am I and also like scared, like I'm different from others. (OP)

Stage 2: Marginalization

This was described as a coming to terms with their identity and telling someone about it. Often this started with a close friend. At this stage, the interviewee began to realize that although they may not be accepted by traditional "society" (they usually considered society to be made up of the mainstream, including institutions, their parents etc.), they did belong to a minority group of people like them (LGBTQIA+ community) and sympathizers (allies). This second step of embracing a community was often described as empowering and 100% of the non-Japanese interviewees (including other Asians) described reaching this step. One interviewee described the experience of belonging to this community in these words:

> I feel really welcomed around people. They help me to become stronger and who I identify as. It shows in my every day life in how I choose to express more of who I want to be and not be insecure about these things. Really nice. It's like a family. (AB)

Stage 3: Integration

Interviewees who came from countries with greater LGBTQIA+ visibility and rights (such as Europe and the US) described reaching this stage. This was described as a realization that their minority group was actually a part of society as a whole and that there were other salient parts of their identity too. At this stage, participants described accepting their identity and moving towards being an "insider." In the words of one interviewee:

> Now, I so much think myself just normal so be like all the other heterosexual people. I make friends with around me. I realize my LGBT part is one just one part and other friend with around me do too. (IJ)

However, with the exception of one participant, all my Japanese interviewees described their identity in different terms. They described feeling different to the rest of society and therefore somewhat outside of it (isolation) and described being aware of an LGBTQIA+ minority group, but none of them described any real sense of belonging toward it. They cited a variety of reasons but a common one was connected to not being able to tell many other people and / or another

LGBTQIA+ person about their identity and therefore not being able to enter the minority community. Many did actually want to be able to access the community but felt they could not. One interviewee imagined what the benefit might be in these words, "I feel like I would have an automatic sense of friendship. Connect with someone without having to search for someone to connect to." (ST)

Another Japanese interviewee described having access to such a community whilst living overseas but not being able to gain membership of a similar community in Japan once returning.

> I met many gay people in Canada. In Canada, it was easy to come out, not only to friends, to teachers and host family too because some people have already come out. I could recognize that some LGBT are there and around that person, many people accept them and I can feel like I can be the one like him or her. When I came out to my professor, she gave me some information about her friends and LGBT people and she tried to introduce me to them and tried to get some LGBT friends in Canada. In Japan we … Japanese thinking is that we are the same and we can't be outsiders. So LGBTQ+ people are different from us so they gonna feel like we can't accept them. So that society makes it is hard to come out. (CD)

When asked directly about their sense of belonging, most described themselves as existing somewhere between the somewhat invisible, abstract LBGTQIA+ community that they were aware of but not really a member within and "normal" mainstream society. Most participants described being able to "re-enter" regular society by hiding or denying the LGBTQIA+ aspect of their identities. Most mentioned not being able to tell anyone in "regular society" about their identity. In the words of one interviewee:

> I still can't say my identity to my friends… I couldn't say even though the best friend in high school and university. Um, I think uh, for my family, my family expects me to get married with a man and have children and have an ordinary, happy, Japanese family in the future and I thought I couldn't say I don't know if I'll have a husband, I might have a wife or… Also friends are sometimes said, they said LGBT is very good because bisexual people especially could love both genders but when I ask the some certain actor or actress, I heard he or she is LGBT people or kissing with same gender people, all of them say, "I'm disappointed for them" so I feel I am not allowed to say my identity to them. I really feel the discrimination for the minority people so I'm afraid to lose our friendship. (QR)

Equally, some described being able to "briefly enter" or dabble in the minority group but usually through online anonymous forums. Many reported finding it tiring to stay in either place for very long due to feelings of guilt and societal duty (my family would not want me to be LGBTQIA+) or self-betrayal (I'm pretending to be "normal" when I'm not).

Discussion

Liminality

This unique state of belonging between the mainstream and the minority could be interpreted as a liminal sense of belonging. Turner (As quoted by Greenholtz & Kim, 2009: 67) coined the term "liminality" to describe the "state of existing in the gap between fixed realities; a state of ambiguity and indeterminacy." For this reason, I use the term to define the state Japanese participants have described for me, of existing between isolation and marginalization. Both Japanese and non-Japanese participants voice some levels of acceptance with their identity. However, the difference between the Japanese and non-Japanese experience is that while non-Japanese participants pass through (and sometimes remain at) a marginalization stage where they feel a sense of belonging to an LGBTQIA+ community, the Japanese participants did not describe this. Instead, Japanese participants discuss existing in a prolonged state of neither here nor there. Their acceptance of their LGBTQIA+ identity makes them feel periphery to mainstream society and yet they do not embrace the support of the LGBTQIA+ community. One of my interviewees illustrated the difficulty in inhabiting this space with these emotive words:

> When I noticed I was gay ten years ago, I thought I would kill myself… so I didn't think I'd still be living. I still think I might kill myself in the future, like when I'm 30… I don't want like fake marriage

like I try to pretend heterosexual and get married with a woman. Many people do that but I don't like it." (CD)

Conclusion

This research continues and perhaps, as more stories are collected, other salient patterns may emerge. Limitations placed on such research are great. It is hard to source research participants in a cultural context where being open about one's sexual and / or gender identity is rare. Further, conducting these interviews in English further limited the sample group available to me and perhaps limited interviewees' abilities to fully express their experience of belonging. Nonetheless, the snapshot gained from this collection of stories is valuable. If this small sample of Japanese LGBTQIA+ students is representative of a larger whole, it suggests that many are grappling with identity issues without much access to a supportive community. Although several expressed a longing for such a community, many also expressed a fear or discomfort with the level of self-disclosure necessary to "come out" in order to be found by others. An overwhelming message from most LGBTQIA+ participants, both domestic and international, was a call for greater awareness of gender issues in general, in the classroom. This is something that, as teachers, we are empowered to deliver. Teachers can choose to integrate gender and LGBTQIA+ topics into classroom content. Although in many teaching contexts and programs, it may not be possible to teach a complete course focusing on gender studies or LGBTQIA+ issues, many teachers still have quite a lot of control over the content they use to teach speaking-focused courses such as "Debate" or "Discussion." Further, listening oriented courses, especially those which use authentic film, music or drama are excellent opportunities to choose content which increases the visibility of such issues. Even when teachers have very limited control over the content, there are opportunities for such discussions. Highly gendered or gender normative interactions present in textbook dialogues are an excellent springboard for students to discuss stereotypes, where they come from and to what extent they are "true." Grammar classes can teach the use of "they" as a singular pronoun and when such use is appropriate. Teachers can avoid practices such as segregating their classes by gender, asking students to read out dialogues relevant to their apparent gender and asking students about boyfriends and girlfriends or the ideal marriage as the expectation is, in the words of an interviewee, "the ideal marriage should be man and woman." (CD)

Finally, simple tokens of support such as ally stickers placed on laptops or office doors can increase visibility and make LGBTQIA+ students feel more welcomed. Additionally, many teachers spend one or two of their first classes of their course shaping and collectively creating the culture of their classroom. This is also an excellent opportunity to mention support for LGBTQIA+ students as well as respect of all kinds of diversity present in the classroom.

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Pragmatic Development and Grammar in a Study Abroad Context: The Case of Japanese Learners of English

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This paper investigates the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic development in the comprehension of conventional and nonconventional implicatures among Japanese second-language learners who participated in a study abroad program in Australia. This study indicates that L2 learners with high grammatical proficiency do not necessarily develop comprehension of implicatures during their study abroad, although results of the Pragmatic Comprehension Test (PCT), which was administered both before and after the program, do indicate that participants with higher grammatical competence had higher degrees of understanding of conversational implicatures after the program. The results also indicated that among implicatures types, indirect refusals were the main types of conventional implicatures with a stronger correlation with grammar rather than routines. The paper notes that further study from a mixed-method approach could be useful in this respect.

本論文は、日本人英語学習者のオーストラリア留学環境下における慣習的・非慣習的な会話の含意の理解の発達について、語用論的能力を測る試験と一般的な英語能力を測る試験を行い、その関連を調査したものである。結果として、彼らの留学前の文法能力と、会話の含意の理解の留学環境下での発達についての顕著な相関は見られなかったが、留学後の語用論的能力試験の結果については、留学前の文法能力との相関が見られた。会話の含意の種類においては、慣習的含意のうち「決まり文句」には文法能力との相関は見られず、「間接的断り」の理解に文法能力との高い相関が見られた。更に、文法能力は他の能力（リーディング、リスニング）に比べて、会話の含意の理解との相関が最も低かった。学習者の認知過程の更なる解明のため、今後の混合研究法の必要性についても提唱する。

In discussions about the relationship between the pragmatic ability and grammar control of second-language learners, Ishihara and Cohen (2014) stated:

> Learners who can understand and produce highly accurate language forms from a grammatical point of view are not necessarily able to use language in a pragmatically appropriate manner. Even if they have flawless control of grammar, they may fail to understand the listener's intended meaning. Conversely, learners who demonstrate very little grammatical accuracy may still be able to interpret messages as intended and produce pragmatically appropriate utterances (p. 80).

It is, however, second-language (L2) pragmatics researchers' established generalization that grammatical proficiency is a critical factor in L2 learners' pragmatic competence. Several studies regarding the role of grammatical proficiency in L2 pragmatic competence explore the relationship between pragmatic production and grammar (e.g., Kobayashi & Rinnert 2003; Nguyen 2008; Trosborg 1987), and most of these studies insist that grammar has significant effects upon the developmental patterns of production.

However, as Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) pointed out, "studies of the role of proficiency in the development of comprehension and interpretation are much less common" (p. 351) than studies of production. Focusing on pragmatic comprehension and grammar, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos compared the effect of proficiency upon the production of conversational expressions, with its effect upon comprehension; they revealed that language proficiency has a significant effect on production but not on comprehension. Taguchi (2005, 2008) found that proficiency has a significant effect upon accuracy but not upon fluency, or the speed of processing, in L2 comprehension. Taguchi (2012) explored the relationship between the comprehension of several types of pragmatic implicatures and English proficiency through an original pragmatic listening test offered at an English-medium university in Japan. Conventional implicatures convey meanings with fixed forms of language, while nonconventional implicatures depend more on the context. Taguchi's criteria and examples of implicatures are as follows:

(1) Conventional Implicatures:

(a) Indirect Refusals: refusal responses to invitations, requests, and suggestions with a reason (e.g., saying "I'm busy" when refusing someone's request for help).

(b) Routines: fixed or semi-fixed expressions that commonly occur under certain situational conditions and functions (e.g., "It comes to $2" in a service encounter exchange and "That's so sweet of you" in thanking someone).

(2) Nonconventional Implicatures: nonliteral comments or opinions that do not involve conventional linguistic features or language-use patterns (e.g., indicating a negative opinion of a restaurant dinner by saying "The food was late"; Taguchi, 2012, p. 81).

Her findings indicated that not all types of implicatures are correlated with scores on the listening section of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL); while there is a significant correlation between TOEFL scores and accuracy scores of indirect refusal items, such a correlation was absent between TOEFL and nonconventional implicatures. In this study, Taguchi accounted for why these results elicited the idea that conventional implicatures are easily affected by a learner's listening skill: their conventionality reduces the learner's processing effort. Nonconventional implicatures, on the contrary, are more difficult for learners because they require more complex inference processes.

Taguchi (2012) used her original listening test because she had designed her research to investigate the processing speed of learner comprehension during ongoing conversations. However, the author's previous research (Inagaki, in press) modified Taguchi's listening test into a written multiple-choice test and adapted it to a study abroad context in an attempt to focus on learner comprehension itself. Inagaki revealed two major aspects of L2 pragmatic development during research into students enrolled in a 16-week study abroad program. First, Japanese learners of English moderately improve their pragmatic comprehension during 16 weeks of study abroad. Second, the extent of the development varies depending on the implicature types: conventional implicatures improved, but this was not the case with nonconventional implicatures, both of which support Taguchi's results. However, among conventional items, only routines—not indirect refusals—improved, which is the opposite result to that drawn by Taguchi. In order to explore the relationship between grammar proficiency and comprehension of implicatures in greater detail, this current article addresses the following two research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between learners' pragmatic development during study abroad and their grammatical competence? If so, is there any difference in the levels of correlation between implicature types?

2. How does the score for grammar skill on a general language proficiency test correlate with the score on the Pragmatic Comprehension Test compared to the scores for the other two skills: listening and reading? Is there any difference in the levels of correlation between implicature types?

Methods

Description of Participants

The initial pool of participants consisted of 152 sophomores from a university in Tokyo. Their average age was 19.4, and they had, on average, 7 years of formal English education in Japan. All participants took a compulsory one-semester university grammar course that preceded the study abroad program, in their freshman year. The study abroad program they were enrolled in was for 16 weeks at a university in Australia. Participants were divided into two groups: cycle A and cycle B. The former group studied in Australia for a term beginning in February in 2017, and the latter group studied for a term starting from August in 2017. These two cohorts had identical schedules of study; they took 9 weeks of intensive ESL courses and then 7 weeks of regular university classes. Among 152 students, 16 were unable to take the General Tests of English Language Proficiency (G-TELP); thus, the final data analysis in this research was based on data from 136 students.

Materials

The Pragmatic Comprehension Test. The Pragmatic Comprehension Test (PCT), which was used in this study, is a modified written version of the Pragmatic Listening Test[1] originally developed by Taguchi (2012). The Appendix provides partial test items and shows that the PCT is a multiple-choice test and that each item has four answer options. This test consists of a total of 40 items: 16 conventional implicature items (8 indirect refusal items and 8 routine items), 16 nonconventional implicature items, and 8 filler items. The data from the filler items were excluded from all the analyses. The duration of the test was 40 minutes for the PCT[2]. According to Taguchi's criteria of implicatures of conversations indicated in the previous section, this PCT attempted to investigate the accuracy of learners' comprehension of each type of implicature: conventional implicatures (subitems are indirect refusals and routines) and nonconventional implicatures.

G-TELP (The General Tests of English Language Proficiency). In order to measure participants' language proficiency, the G-TELP (level 3) was conducted. This test is administered by ITSC (International Testing Service Center) and consists of three sections: a listening comprehension section, a reading comprehension section, and a grammar comprehension section. The questions in the grammar section of G-TELP examine participants' lexical and syntactic knowledge. The grammar section of G-TELP (level 3) consists of 22 question items and lasts 20 minutes, the listening section consists of 24 items and lasts 20 minutes, and the reading section consists of 24 items and lasts 35 minutes. In the score reports, the original raw scores of these sections are converted so that the full score for each section is 100.

This particular test was selected for the present research from among various tests for general English proficiency measurement because the grammar comprehension section of G-TELP is independently measured; other various tests typically measure reading and grammar skills together—for example, in TOEFL, which Taguchi used in her research (2012), the reading section contains questions for grammar skills. Since this study especially focuses on grammar skills, G-TELP was considered the most appropriate.

Table 1: ***Data Collection Procedures***

Schedules	Tasks
The second semester of the freshman year	Taking a grammar course
The end of the freshman year	G-TELP (75 minutes)
Before the study abroad program	Pre-program PCT (40 minutes)
During the sophomore year	Study abroad program (16 weeks)
After the study abroad program	Post-program PCT (40 minutes)

Procedures

Table 2: *The Descriptive Statistics of Pre-program and Post-program PCT Accuracy Scores (N =136)*

	M	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Pre-program PCT				
Conventional imp (*k* = 16)	8.21	3.30	2.00	15.00
Indirect refusals (*k* = 8)	4.65	1.84	1.00	8.00
Routines (*k* = 8)	3.55	1.98	0.00	8.00
Nonconventional imp (*k* = 16)	6.57	3.10	1.00	14.00
Total (*k* = 32)	14.77	5.89	3.00	27.00
Post-program PCT				
Conventional imp (*k* = 16)	9.36	3.69	1.00	15.00
Indirect refusals (*k* = 8)	4.71	2.11	0.00	8.00
Routines (*k* = 8)	4.65	1.98	0.00	8.00
Nonconventional imp (k = 16)	7.05	2.99	1.00	16.00
Total (k = 32)	16.43	6.01	2.00	29.00

Note. *k* = the number of items; Imp = implicatures.

The data-collection procedures are summarized in Table 1. The participants took a one-semester grammar class in their freshman year, and the G-TELP was administered at the end of that year in order to investigate their acquired grammatical competence (i.e., their traits) before the study abroad program. The PCT was paper based and given both before and after the 16-week study abroad program. Test items were randomized each time.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were imported into IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 for descriptive and statistical analysis. In order to answer the first research question and discover the relationship between the gain scores of the PCT and the grammar scores of G-TELP, a correlation analysis was carried out and Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated. For the second research question, another correlation analysis was conducted to reveal the relationship between the post-program PCT scores and the scores of the three G-TELP sections (Grammar, Listening, and Reading).

Results

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the accuracy scores for the pre-program and post-program PCT and Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the G-TELP accuracy scores.

In order to address the first research question, a correlation analysis was performed. The results showed no major correlation between the PCT gain scores and the G-TELP grammar scores: for indirect refusals, $r = -.08$; for nonconventional implicatures, $r = -.10$; and in total, $r = -.15$ (see Table 4). However, for conventional implicatures ($r = -.18$, $p < .05$) and for routines ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$), small negative correlations with grammar were observed.

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics of G-TELP Accuracy Scores (N = 136)*

	M	*SD*	*Min.*	*Max.*
G-TELP				
Grammar (k = 22, full score = 100)	56.26	13.95	27.00	86.00
Listening (k = 24, full score = 100)	43.01	11.97	17.00	71.00
Reading (k = 24, full score = 100)	54.24	15.29	8.00	83.00

Note. k = the number of items.

Table 4*: Correlations between PCT Gain Scores and G-TELP Grammar Accuracy Scores (N = 136)*

	Grammar	**Conventional gain**	**Refusal gain**	**Routines gain**	**Nonconventional gain**	**Gain total**
Grammar scores	--					
Gain scores of Conventional imp	−.18*	--				
Gain scores of Indirect refusals	−.08	.84**	--			
Gain scores of Routines	−.23**	.86**	.46**	--		
Gain scores of Nonconventional imp	−.10	.57**	.48**	.50**	--	
Gain total	−.15	.83**	.67**	.74**	.82**	--

*Note. **p* < .01*; *p* < .05; Imp = implicatures.

Next, a supplemental analysis showed small correlations between the scores of the post-program PCT scores in most types of implicatures and the G-TELP grammar scores: for conventional implicatures, r = .23, p < .01; for indirect refusals, r = .28, p < .01; for nonconventional implicatures, r = .25, p < .01; and in total, r = .28, p < .01. However, only routines (r = .13) have no correlations with grammar scores (see Table 5).

Another correlation analysis was conducted between the post-program PCT scores and those of three G-TELP sections in order to address the second research question. As shown in Table 6, the G-TELP grammar section has the smallest correlation coefficient among the three sections. By contrast, the scores from the G-TELP listening section correlate the most among the three sections (r = .42, p < .01).

Table 7 shows the differences between types of implicatures. Investigating these correlations in detail shows that the correlation coefficient for indirect refusals is the largest (r = .28, p < .01) of all implicature types and there is no correlation between grammar scores and routines. The opposite result is observed for listening

Table 5: *Correlations between Post-program PCT Scores and G-TELP Grammar Accuracy Scores (N = 136)*

	Grammar	Conventional (Post)	Refusal (Post)	Routines (Post)	Nonconventional (Post)	Post total
Grammar scores	--					
Conventional imp (Post)	.23**	--				
Indirect refusals (Post)	.28**	.91**	--			
Routines (Post)	.13	.89**	.63**	--		
Nonconventional imp (Post)	.25**	.60**	.51**	.51**	--	
Post total	.28**	.86**	.78**	.77**	.77**	--

Note. ***p* < .01; Imp = implicatures.

Table 6: *Correlations between Post-program PCT Accuracy Scores and G-TELP Accuracy Scores (N = 136)*

	PCT total	Grammar	Listening	Reading
Post-program PCT total accuracy	--			
Grammar	.28**	--		
Listening	.42**	.27**	--	
Reading	.33**	.40**	.34**	--

Note. ***p* < .01.

Table 7: *Correlations between G-TELP Scores and Each Implicature Type of Post-Program PCT (N = 136)*

	Grammar	Listening	Reading
Conventional imp	.23**	.36**	.30**
Indirect refusals	.28**	.28**	.25**
Routines	.13	.38**	.29**
Nonconventional imp	.25**	.30**	.22**
Total	.28**	.42**	.33**

Note. ***p* < .01; Imp = implicatures.

scores: the correlation coefficient for routines is the largest ($r = .38$, $p < .01$) and that for indirect refusals is the smallest ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). For the reading scores, the coefficient for the conventional implicatures total is the largest ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), routines come next ($r = .29$, $p < .01$), followed by indirect refusals ($r = .25$, $p < .01$), while the nonconventional implicatures total ($r = .22$, $p < .01$) has the smallest correlation with reading scores.

Discussion

Regarding the first research question, no major correlation was observed between the learners' acquired grammatical competence and the gains of pragmatic comprehension. This indicates that learners with high grammatical proficiency—with extensive lexical and syntactic knowledge—do not necessarily develop their comprehension of implicatures *during* their study abroad. However, supplemental analysis showed that the post-program PCT scores, which are the participants' achievement scores, of most types of implicature items correlated with the participants' grammar scores. That is, learners with acquired higher grammatical competence were likely to have higher degrees of understanding of conversational implicatures after spending 16 weeks in the study abroad program. Taguchi and Roever (2017) claimed that the nature of implicatures and their processing could explain this. To process implicatures, learners are required to have higher proficiency because they have to realize an implied meaning through a flouting of Grice's conversational maxims (Grice, 1975), and lower proficiency learners would not be able to understand even the literal meaning of the utterances.

With respect to the difference between implicature types, comparing indirect refusals and routines in conventional implicatures, indirect refusals have a small correlation with grammar scores of the post-program PCT, whereas routines have no correlation with grammar. This indicates that grammatical proficiency does not seem to affect the comprehension of routines. According to Taguchi and Roever (2017), the recognition of routine formulae is less dependent on proficiency because routine formulae are short and have little formal complexity; thus, even lower proficiency learners could comprehend and produce them "since they only need to recognize and reproduce a chunk without necessarily having to parse it semantically and grammatically" (p. 141). On the contrary, comprehending indirect refusals seems to require greater grammatical proficiency.

Regarding the second research question, the G-TELP grammar scores have the lowest correlation with post-program PCT scores of the three skills. Among these skills, listening scores have the greatest correlation with post-program PCT. This could be interpreted as being a result of the learners' listening skill before studying abroad, affecting their comprehension of implicatures more than the other two skills.

As for the difference between implicature types, the correlation with grammar scores was absent for routines, as indicated above, although the correlation with listening was the highest of all types. Meanwhile, grammar and listening have the same correlation coefficients for refusals; thus, it could be assumed that both grammar proficiency and listening proficiency appear to affect the process of understanding to the same degree when learners try to understand indirect refusals. In other words, the combination of grammar and listening proficiency seems to be critical in the process of understanding them. Further research will be needed to reveal these processes.

One limitation of this study is the length of the study abroad program in which the participants were enrolled. Sixteen weeks is too short a period in which to observe abundant improvements with regard to comprehending implicatures. One of the reasons why almost no correlation was observed between grammatical competence and the gains of pragmatic comprehension may be that the gain, that is, development during the 16-week study abroad period, was too small. In Taguchi's (2012) study, the participants' English was of an advanced level, yet they took 8 months to show significant development in their comprehension of implicatures. A longer observation period might contribute toward helping us see more development regarding understanding implicatures, and the results of the correlation analysis might be different from those of the analysis in the present study. Another limitation concerns the methodological issues. Since this present study is quantitative, the real process by which the participants came to understand implicatures could not be determined. A qualitative data analysis would be effective for exploring participants' thoughts and cognitive processes.

Conclusion

This quantitative study indicates that L2 learners with high grammatical proficiency do not necessarily develop comprehension of implicatures during study abroad programs, although results of the post-program PCT indicated that participants with higher grammatical competence had improved understanding of conversational implicatures after the program. Furthermore, the results showed that, among implicature types, indirect refusals had the strongest correlation with grammar. However, this research could not reveal L2 learners' cognitive processes and thoughts and why these differences between implicature types occurred. As Taguchi's latest articles (Taguchi, 2018; Taguchi & Roever, 2017) indicate, mixed-method research is one methodological option among scholars of L2 pragmatics for explaining why certain results occurred and for revealing the thoughts and cognitive process of L2 learners. Combining the results from both qualitative and quantitative methods will contribute toward creating a fuller and larger picture of this phenomenon. Further studies should explore such processes by using stimulated recalls, verbal reports, or interviews, among other sources of data.

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Notes

1. The author of this research decided to modify the Pragmatic Listening Test originally developed by Taguchi (2012) into a written test, for two major reasons. First, the purpose of this research is to focus on the learners' competence to elicit the implied meaning of the conversation, and not their process of input. A pilot test conducted among a small number of students from the same university showed that they had difficulties in listening to the conversations and gave up before reaching the process of inferring its implied meaning. However, they did not have difficulties reading the conversations. Since the participants of this study were at the elementary level, around A2 level in CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) according to their average TOEIC score (472.32 ranging 210-845), the same results were assumed to be drawn. Another reason is an administrative issue. Since this was designed as a quantitative study, it needed a large number of participants. However, the institution to which the participants belonged did not have adequate facilities to administer Taguchi's listening test to a large number of subjects simultaneously.

2. In Taguchi's research (2012), the total test session time, comprising the Pragmatic Listening Test, the Pragmatic Speaking Test, and the Language Contact Profile Questionnaire, was approximately one hour. However, the Pragmatic Listening Test itself did not limit the participants' response times. They were allowed to take as much time as they wanted in order to respond to each item. However, since the PCT in this research was modified into a written version and did not measure response times, the duration of the test was supposed to be determined to some extent in order to investigate the participants' competence under the same conditions. To determine the duration time, a pilot PCT was administered to the students from the same university. They were allowed to take as much time as they needed to answer the question items, and the results showed that it took them approximately 40 minutes on average to finish all the items. The test duration was thus decided based on this result.

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Appendix

Sample Items from Pragmatic Comprehension Test

(a modified written version of the Pragmatic Listening Test originally developed by Taguchi, 2012)

Conventional Implicature Item (Indirect Refusal)

A: Hey Steve, you're still on the Internet. What are you doing?

B: I'm checking out some colleges to see which ones I should apply to.

A: How about this school called St. Joe's college in Indiana? They sent us a lot of information. It sounds like a neat school.

B: They don't have many majors.

1. Steve wants to apply for St. Joe's college.
2. Steve knows about many majors.
3. Steve lived in Indiana before.
4. Steve is not interested in St. Joe's college. (CORRECT)

Conventional Implicature Item (Routine)

A: Hi how can I help you?

B: Ah, could I get a small regular coffee, with milk? And a slice of apple pie.

A: For here or to go?

B: To go please.

A: Here's a large cup, we don't have small because we ran out of the small ones.

B: OK, thank you.

1. The man ordered cake.
2. The man is taking the coffee out. (CORRECT)
3. The man is having coffee in the shop.

4. The man ordered a large cup.

Nonconventional Implicature Item

A: Hey Mike, you're home. Aren't you supposed to be at work?

B: Hey Nancy. I quit that job yesterday. I just didn't wanna work in the factory any longer.

A: What? Really? Do your parents know about this?

B: When they come back from their trip, they'll be pretty shocked.

1. Mike's parents think he's still working. (CORRECT)

2. Mike's parents know that he quit his job.

3. Mike's parents just came back from their trip.

4. Mike's parents work in a factory

Using Screencasts to Teach Outside of Class

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This paper explains how to use screencasts (ie.digital recordings of screen output) to teach lecture content outside of class. Such materials have the benefit of a) freeing up class time for interactive activities b) allowing students to replay explanations multiple times c) giving the teacher a chance to monitor students discussing the screencasts and confirm understanding d) letting the teacher pinpoint the most problematic content. The results of teacher and student surveys about screencasts will be reported, showing that both feel they are useful, but need to be accompanied by worksheets to ensure that students view them. Implications from this study are that motivation plays an important part in the success of the use of screencasts to flip the writing classroom and students need to be held accountable for viewing screencasts as homework.

この論文では、スクリーンキャスト（パソコンモニターの映像をキャプチャし配信）を生かした授業時間外の教授法について言及したものである。このような教材をうまく活用することによる利点は、a)インタラクティブな活動に授業時間を割くことができるようになり、b)学習者が説明を繰り返し確認することができる他、c)教員はスクリーンキャストを元に学習者と議論しながら、学習到達度を確認できたり、または d)学習者が最もつまづきやすい学習項目を容易に見つけられるということだ。これは、スクリーンキャストに関わる調査を教員と学習者を対象に実施した結果である。この結果から、両者ともに使用しやすいと感じている一方で、授業外に実施するため、学習者の閲覧を確認するワークシートを準備する必要があるということがわかる。

Screencasts, defined as “digital recordings of computer screen output, also known as a video screen capture, often containing audio narration” (Meyer, 2014, p. 39) have great potential as an educational tool. They have a number of advantages in terms of being easy to create and capable of saving and freeing up time, though they do have some disadvantages that are largely related to the quality of the design of the screencasts and the materials that accompany them.

One of the main advantages of screencasts is that they can be created with very little preparation. Screencasts can be created using applications that are easily downloadable from the Internet, many of which are free and a computer equipped with a microphone. Screen casting can also be done without downloading or installing. Moreover, it is not limited to computers either – android phones also offer this capability. Screencasts also take very little time to create and can often be recorded within the time it would normally take to introduce content in class. They also allow the teacher to flip the classroom by freeing up class time because they allow teachers to record PowerPoint presentations that would normally be used to present content in a lecture style during class to be given outside of class, allowing class time to be used for more interactive activities. Moreover, screencasts allow greater flexibility for students because they can replay the screencast again and listen for content that they didn’t catch the first time.

The Flipped Classroom in Language Teaching

As early as the 1990s, with the introduction of learning management systems such as Blackboard, educators began providing students with access to lectures in video and PowerPoint format and using class time for more interactive activities, such as group activities, experiments, and interviews. This process was dubbed by early researchers of this phenomenon as the classroom flip or the inverted classroom (Baker, 2000; Lage & Platt, 2000; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). Although this concept is by no means new, the bulk of research regarding it has focused on subjects such as science and mathematics and, until very recently, very little has been done regarding the application of the flipped classroom in language classes.

A number of studies have provided positive evidence that the flipped classroom is beneficial for language learning. In an experimental study comparing the flipped classroom approach with the traditional approach in preparing students for writing tasks 1 and 2 of the IELTS test, Farah (2014) found a statistically significant difference in the improvement of the writing skills in students instructed using the flipped classroom method. In a similar comparative study focused on grammar acquisition, Webb and Doman (2016) also found that students in the experimental group performed better. Han (2015) reported that the flipped classroom approach led to significant gains in learner autonomy. Sung (2015) observed that student attitudes toward the approach were largely positive, though they needed to have some time to get used to the new learning style. Despite these positive results, however, it should be noted that all of the above studies involved participants who were highly motivated to learn and do not provide much insight into how successful the approach would be for students with lower levels of motivation.

Indeed, holding students accountable for work they are expected to do on their own is an especially challenging aspect of the flipped classroom approach. Even some of the studies mentioned above reported some difficulties in this regard. For example, Webb and Doman (2016) observed a decrease in student motivation to complete out of class assignments towards the middle of a 13-week course. In another study, Kang (2015) observed negative affect in students who had not completed the out-of-class assignments during the in class components of a treatment comparing flipped and traditional methods. This indicates that ensuring students actually do the work is crucial to the success of the flipped classroom approach. Both Correa (2015) and Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2014) observed that course design, both in regards to the quality of the screencast content and supplementary materials to be provided with the screencasts, needed to be considered carefully. Students were highly likely to lose interest in poorly designed screencast assignments, especially those that didn’t require students to actively engage with the content.

Research Questions

This paper aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Can students understand the instructions of writing tasks given in the form of screencasts?
2. According to students, do screencasts help them understand writing tasks?
3. Do students think that screencasts are easy to do as homework?
4. Do teachers feel that screencasts are easy to assign as homework?
5. Do teachers feel that screencasts free up class time to do more interactive activities?

Methodology

Participants

The total number of respondents was forty-four (N=44). Of those respondents, thirty eight were students (N=38) and six were teachers (N=6). Students in these classes were between A1+ and A2 level on the CEFR scale. Students were invited to complete the surveys voluntarily. In a program of one hundred and forty-two students, the response rate was 27%. The teachers surveyed were teachers in the pre-Intermediate program. Out of eight teachers, six completed the survey, making for a response rate of 75%.

Program

Students received six 90-minute lessons per week in an integrated skills course. The writing component, which this study focused on, consisted of four writing assignments, two comparison essays and two advantage and disadvantage paragraphs each with content based on interviews with classmates about topics such as hometowns, festivals, weather, and dream jobs. Before each writing assignment, students were given homework exercises to be completed outside of class and around 30 minutes of class time was taken to review the content in class.

Table 1: *Summary of Screencasts*

Writing Task	**Screen-cast topic**	**Homework tasks**	**In-class tasks**
Compare Home Towns	Home Town Key Words	Students use the vocabulary from the screencast to write about their home town and make questions	Interview a classmate asking the questions and sharing the information about home towns
	Topic Sentences	Identify topics, controlling ideas, as well as words that signal similarities and differences from worksheet	Review the answers to the questions
	Reasons, Examples, Names, and Numbers	Watch video and take notes	Work with a classmate to find missing information and label it a reason, example, name, or number
	Transitions	Fill in missing transitional phrases in a paragraph on a worksheet	Review the answers to the questions
	How to Correct Mechanics Errors	Look at example titles and correct punctuation and capitalisation errors	Review the answers to the questions
Compare Home Town Festivals	Festival Key Words	Students use the vocabulary from the screencast to write about their home town festivals and make questions	Interview a classmate asking the questions and sharing the information about home town festivals
	Con- junctions	Find and correct vocabulary, mechanics, and conjunction mistakes	Review the answers to the questions
Weather Pros and Cons	Weather Key Words	Students use the vocabulary from the screencast to write about the weather of their home town and make questions	Interview a classmate asking the questions and sharing the information about home town weather
	Pros and Cons and Cause and Effect	Students are prompted to pause the video and consider the difference between 3 sentences that use cause and effect language	Students work together to read a paragraph and choose the correct cause and effect phrase
	Quotations	Students are prompted to pause the video and rewrite quotations they see on the screen in the correct format	Review the answers to the questions
Dream Job Pros and Cons	Job Key Words	Students use the vocabulary from the screencast to write about their dream job and make questions	Interview a classmate asking the questions and sharing the information about dream jobs

Materials Design

Using a flipped classroom approach, students viewed screencasts that explained writing assignments and gave instruction about writing in a pre-Intermediate English class. This mode of presentation was chosen over others, such as embedding audio into a PowerPoint, because the screencasts could be uploaded to YouTube and shared with students as a link.

The materials themselves consisted of screencasts of PowerPoint presentations in which the author and a colleague gave short lectures explaining important class content for each of the four writings. The videos were accompanied by tasks in which students were required to either complete fill-in-the-blank or short-answer activities, or produce interview questions or notes based on the screencast content. Table 1 outlines the main details of each screencast, such as the assignment they relate to, the related skill, the homework tasks to be completed while watching the screencast and the follow up tasks to be carried out in class.

At the end of the semester, students and teachers in the Pre-Intermediate level were invited to complete a survey about the screencast materials. The student version of the survey was bilingual, English and Japanese, and inquired about the clarity of the activities, the extent to which the screencasts helped them understand the writing tasks, and the extent to which they made the writing activities easy to do as homework. Students responded to statements based on a four point Likert scale: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. A four point scale was used to obviate to tendency for students to choose the neutral opinion. The teacher's version elicited the extent to which teachers felt that students understood the screencast activities, whether they felt the screencasts freed up class time, if the screencasts were easy to assign as homework, and if they allowed time in class for more interactive activities. Teachers were asked to give responses on a five point Likert scale with 1 meaning Strongly Agree and 5 meaning Strongly Disagree. A 5-point Likert scale was chosen for teachers because they are less likely to choose the neutral choice. Teachers were also invited two write a brief comment about the screencasts to which two teachers would respond.

Survey Results

Student Responses

As can be seen from Figure 1, the vast majority of students believed that the instructions of the activities were clear, though there was one student who did not think so at all. Also, a very high number of students felt that the workshops helped them understand the writing tasks. The point upon which there was less agreement was whether they felt the screencasts made the writing

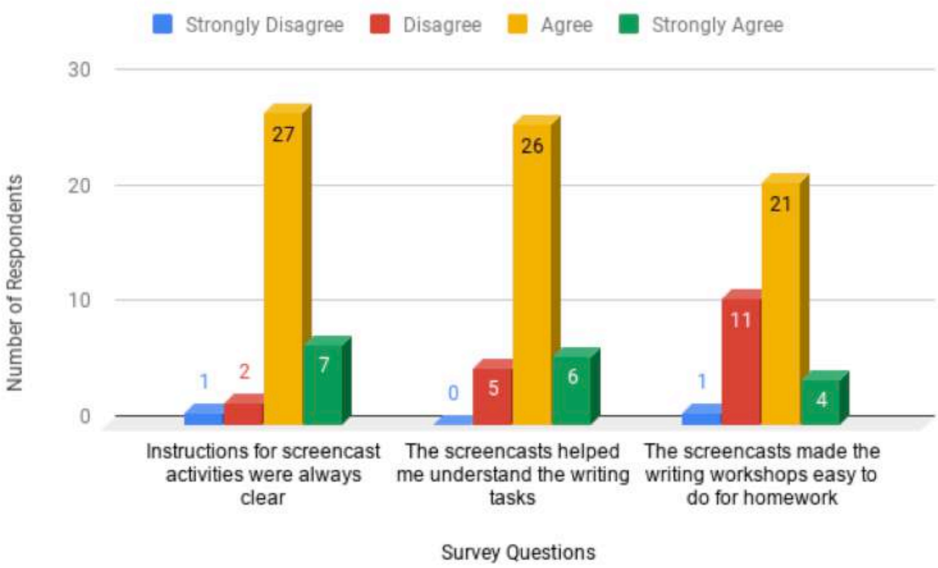

Figure 1: *Student Responses*

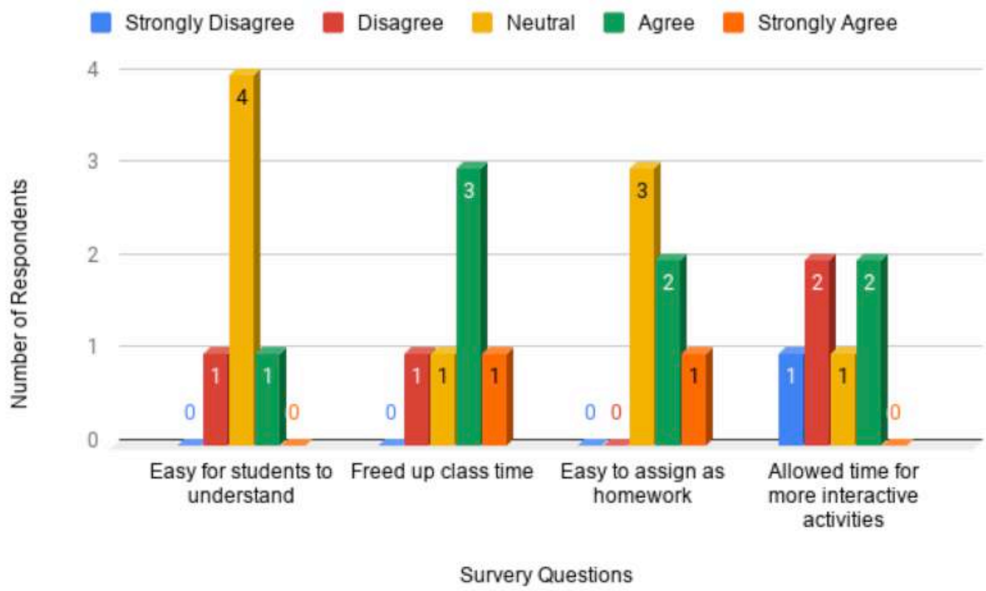

Figure 2: *Teacher Responses*

workshop activities easy to do as homework. Though a clear majority of students felt that this was the case, there were significantly fewer students in agreement with this than with the previous questions.

Teacher Responses

In regards to teachers' responses, Figure 2 shows that teachers were slightly less positive about the screencasts than the students. They were largely neutral about the extent to which the screencasts were easy for students to understand, but largely in agreement that screencasts freed up class time. In regards to whether the screencasts were easy to assign as homework, half of the teachers felt that they were, while the other half had a neutral opinion. The question that showed the most divided opinion was the question of whether or not the screencasts allowed for more interactive activities in class. Though two teachers agreed that they achieved this, none did so strongly and one teacher strongly believed that they did not, while two others also felt that they did not.

In addition to the Likert scale questions, two teachers also volunteered to give a brief comment about the screencasts. One teacher stated:

> The screencasts are a great resource and if the students conscientiously worked through them they were really helpful. Getting them to watch the screencasts was the difficulty. Perhaps if the associated worksheets/activities forced them to watch intently and more frequently fill in a gap/answer a question, this problem could be alleviated. I think cutting down the writing to one paragraph per quarter will mean that you can space out the assignment of the individual screencasts and spend a little more time focusing on particular components of the paragraph.

This teacher believed, although the screencasts were generally helpful, the extent to which students made full use of them depended largely on their own motivation. There was a suggestion that the accompanying worksheets and activities to be completed alongside the screencasts were insufficient. There was also a general feeling that there were too many writing assignments in the course and cutting down on them could help students focus more.

Another teacher made the following comment:

> Please remember that my students were repeaters and motivation took extra effort. I am however confident in this approach and would have likely responded more positively to the survey questions in a class with more willing students. I felt the videos offered a good deal of extra support students could rely on if they had questions and wanted to view them again.

It should be noted here that the term “repeater” is a term used in the institution where this project took place to refer to students who have failed the course at least once and are taking it again. As it is implied by this comment, these students were generally believed to have lower motivation than other students. It is also implied that, due to his this factor, this particular teacher responded to the survey questions less favorably than he or she otherwise would have.

Discussion

Overall, it can be seen that the outcome of this project agrees well with past research and indicates that, although the general idea of using screencasts to teach writing in an English as a foreign language class is sound, there are a few flaws in the current materials and in-class practices that need reworking or elaboration. As observed in the literature review, the studies that reported a high degree of success in applying the flipped classroom approach, also had subjects that were highly motivated (Farah, 2014; Han, 2015; Sung, 2015; Webb & Doman, 2016). A corollary of this, very strongly implied by the teachers’ responses, is that screencasts are not as successful when presented to students with lower degrees of motivation, as they are much less likely to do their homework. As the screencasts are largely the basis of the lessons, this can lead to a number of problems when doing in-class activities that are designed with the expectation that students have done their homework. This also suggests that the materials which students must complete for homework and the in-class activities that follow them, do not hold students accountable enough for their learning.

These deficiencies become quite clear when looking at Table 1: Summary of Screencasts. There are accompanying activities to each of the screencasts in which students need to identify mistakes, fill in gaps, or make corrections based on information learned in the screencast, but the directions for the in-class tasks are generally quite vague, stating that the answers to the questions will be reviewed in class. This makes it quite easy to see why students were less positive when responding to the question of whether or not the screencasts were easy to do as homework and especially why teachers were split about the extent to which the screencasts allowed for more interactive activities in class. It may be true that the follow-up classes had the potential to be interactive, but the materials themselves did not allow for that and the method of reviewing the materials was left to the teacher’s discretion. It may be that the teachers who reacted positively to the question did so because they felt that they had come up with good interactive ways to review the materials despite the absence of direction. Indeed, only the vocabulary activities at the beginning of each writing task correspond with a clearly interactive interview activity. All of the other activities could be completed individually or in a dry teacher-led exposition of the answers. This gives a clear indication that screencasts need to have well-designed accompanying materials and tasks to ensure the realization of the main objection of the flipped classroom: increased time for interactive engagement with content and language learning.

Limitations and Implications for Further Research

Although screencasts are a great way to present information to students outside of clas, this technology is not without its drawbacks. Some screencast software can be of poor quality if you use the free version. For example, the free version of Screencastify is fairly low resolution and has a time limit of 10 minutes for each screencast. These problems, however, can be easily overcome either by investing in better software or breaking content down into shorter presentations. The biggest problem that was uncovered in this project was that students need to be held accountable for watching the screencasts. As a result, there are a number of considerations in screencast activity design that have to be addressed, both in terms of the quality of the video itself and the design of tasks that students will be asked to complete while watching the video and reviewing the screencast content in class.

Though the responses were largely positive, they also revealed a number of limitations of the screencasts and their accompanying materials and tasks, which need to be given greater consideration in order to ensure that students get the most out of them. Moreover, the materials were developed and piloted over a single semester. More time needs to be taken for these materials to develop and improve, though this study itself has been a positive step in that direction. Also, the data that was gathered to evaluate the success of the project was based on a fairly small sample size. It would be beneficial to conduct this study over a longer period of time and with a larger group of respondents. Moreover, the information gathered by the study can sometimes be slightly ambiguous. For example, it is not clear what the students thought it meant that the homework was easy to complete. For some, this could mean simply copying answers from a classmate which is, of course, of little or no pedagogical value, though students might view it as positive because it is convenient for them. Also, teachers are not really able to objectively assess things like the extent to which students understood the screencasts. This could, however, be objectively assessed by an experimental study in which one group is taught the writing material using the screencasts and the other is taught using a traditional classroom lecture format. Such a study could discern not only the extent to which students think they have learned from the materials and the extent to which they were engaged by them, but actually give an objective look at how the materials helped them improve.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that screencasts offer a very low cost way to flip the classroom, in regards to both money and time. They also give learning opportunities to students not afforded by the traditional classroom structure, such as the ability to replay content when viewing it outside of the classroom and a greater amount of time to engage with and practice the content in an interactive way when in class. This objective is more easily attained in some classes than in others, depending on student motivation. In any case, in order for this to be done effectively, the screencasts, supporting materials, and in-class follow up activities need to be carefully designed. It may be that the materials will take some time, and trial and error, to develop. However, given the benefits in terms of both time and potential to enhance chances for interactive engagement, it is well worth the effort.

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SALC Rainbow Forum:Establishing a student community group to discuss LGBTQ+ themes

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Many students are interested in learning more about gender and sexuality, and in discussing their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. However, while LGBTQ+ groups are a well-established feature of many campuses around the world, there are significantly fewer at Japanese universities. This article outlines an initiative to address students' need for an on-campus LGBTQ+ community group, providing a platform for discussing LGBTQ+ themes, sharing information, support, and social events. It will outline the rationale and context for this initiative, and give some insight into the logistics of establishing and managing a student community (SALC Rainbow Forum) in the context of a Japanese International Studies university, including some practical ideas for discussion topics, events, and student-led activities. Reflecting on the successes and challenges of SALC Rainbow Forum so far, it will make suggestions for how initiatives such as this can be developed to more effectively support students' needs in future

多くの学生はジェンダー・セクシュアリティについて学び、自身の考え、感情、経験について話し合う事に興味を抱いています。しかしながら LGBTQ+ グループは、世界における多くのキャンパスでは定着しているにも関わらず、日本の大学においては著しく少数であるのが現状です。本論文は、LGBTQ+テーマに関する話し合い、情報、サポート、ソーシャルイベント共有プラットフォームを提供する、キャンパス内での LGBTQ+ コミュニティグループに対する学生のニーズを示すための取り組みに関する概要です。また、本取り組みの論理的根拠、背景を概説し、議論トピック、イベント、生徒中心のアクティビティに関する実用的なアイデアを含む、日本の外国語大学という背景における学生コミュニティ（SALC レインボーフォーラム）の設立、管理の流れに関する見解を提供します。本論文は、これまでの SALC レインボーフォーラムの成功と課題を熟考し、本取り組みが今後の学生ニーズをより効果的にサポートするため率先し展開できる旨を提案します。

Representation of LGBTQ+ identities in schools and universities

LGBTQ+ student groups have become increasingly recognised features of university communities around the world. From the early days, in the late 1960s, of the Student Homophile League (SHL) of Cornell and Columbia Universities in New York, which engaged in gay rights activism at the time of the Stonewall movement, to the widespread representation on many campuses today, student groups have played an important role in LGBTQ+ history and liberation movements (Beemyn, 2003). In addition to affording students an active relationship with the wider LGBTQ+ community and events, campus groups are also vitally important in providing support to young LGBTQ+ people in terms of their specific social, educational, and personal needs.

A 2017 survey conducted by the National Union of Students (NUS) in the UK found that LGBTQ+ students are more likely to drop out of their course (especially if they have experienced harassment), do not feel their experiences are represented in their curriculum, and are less likely to participate in sports or club activities (Smithies & Byrom, 2017, p. 15). It also suggests that the mental health difficulties faced by LGBTQ+ students may reflect discrimination and exclusion experienced from wider society and in educational institutions during their upbringing. Such research points to the need for schools and universities to develop an understanding of the social, educational, and mental health implications of LGBTQ+ identity and experience, and to provide resources, support, and opportunities for LGBTQ+ students to form groups and communities according to their needs.

In Japan, awareness of LGBTQ+ issues is beginning to gather momentum, with some high-profile events and public awareness campaigns (Ryall, 2017). There has also been limited but important progress in terms of legislation and representation. Steps towards marriage equality in some municipalities started with the first ordinance recognizing same-sex partnerships in Tokyo's Shibuya and Setagaya Wards in April 2015 (Sechiyama, 2015). However, there continues to be a general taboo surrounding LGBTQ+ issues, and LGBTQ+ rights are still not represented in anti-discrimination legislation. According to Amnesty International, pervasive discrimination is still the reality in the daily lives of LGBTQ+ people, which results in many hiding their identities ("Human Rights Law and Discrimination," 2017, p.6). Furthermore, a culture of intolerance is perpetuated by explicitly homophobic statements made by some politicians and government officials, such as LDP lawmaker Mio Sugita's recent argument that taxes should not be spent on LGBTQ+ people, as they are "unproductive" members of society (Osaki, 2018).

The Japanese social and political climate is reflected in the school system, which Human Rights Watch reported as being rife with homophobic bullying ("Japan: Bullied LGBT Students Unprotected," 2016). In a comprehensive report on the issue, Knight (2016) explains that 'hateful anti-LGBT rhetoric is nearly ubiquitous [in Japanese schools], driving LGBT students into silence, self-loathing, and in some cases, self-harm" (n.p.). The report also found that Japanese teachers were often ill-equipped to respond to LGBTQ+-specific bullying, and sometimes reluctant to be associated with LGBTQ+ issues, leading to an "information vacuum [in which students] who have questions about gender and sexuality are left in a harmful lurch." (Knight, 2016, n.p.) In a step towards promoting tolerance in the Japanese education system, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) anti-bullying policy was updated in 2017 to better protect gender and sexual minority students, and promote teachers' understanding ("Japan: Anti-bullying Policy to Protect LGBT Students," 2017). However, as Tomoya Hosoda, City Councillor of Iruma, Saitama and the first trans person to be elected into office in Japan, explains: "Teachers' lack of knowledge of LGBT issues is a problem and, for some, it is still impossible for them to talk with LGBT students." (cited in Ryall, 2017, n.p.)

Stonewall Japan currently lists 114 LGBTQ+ student groups at 97 universities ("LGBT University Groups," n.d.). Hartinger (2011) recounts, using examples from Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) groups in the US, that many LGBTQ+ student groups have historically struggled to be afforded the same rights as other clubs. Similar struggles could be expected in the Japanese educational system, but the increasing tolerance towards LGBTQ+ identities in the media and government suggest that the climate may be becoming more welcoming for new student groups to form.

Establishing an LGBTQ+ group (SALC RAinbow Forum) at a university in Japan: The author's experience

The inception of SALC Rainbow Forum was serendipitous, with students and teachers coming together at a time of when each had been separately motivated into action. Having noted the lack of provisions for LGBTQ+ students on campus, the author and her colleague, Jackie Holowczyk, wanted to offer support in some way, agreeing that student voices were essential for any progress in this area. During a consultation with one of Kipling's former Freshman students (then a Junior), who had previously shown an interest in LGBTQ+ issues, the topic came up. This student was enthusiastic about the prospect of starting a group of like-minded people, and was excited to report that they had recently discovered that another student had, in May 2016, started an unofficial Twitter account, KUIS Rainbow, hoping to reach out to other people interested in LGBTQ+ issues.

This was an encouraging start, and in June 2016 Kipling and Holowczyk invited the former student and the Twitter account holder (plus any other interested students they wanted to invite) to an informal meeting in one of the teachers' offices, in order to discuss possible collaboration in a student community group. Five students and the two teachers came to the first of what would become weekly meetings, during which attendees would talk about LGBTQ+ issues, personal situations and questions, as well as discussing future possibilities for establishing an official group, and planning public and social events for members. During this first meeting, the student with the Twitter account explained that they had started to apply for KUIS Rainbow to be recognised as a university Circle, which would afford it official status and certain permissions for publicity and presence at university events. However, the complex Circle application process required endorsement from a tenured faculty member, which Kipling and Holowczyk, being untenured, were unable to help with, and which the students struggled to obtain elsewhere. In the meantime, KUIS Rainbow continued its activities in its unofficial state, holding small group meetings in the teacher's office on a word-of-mouth basis.

In this unofficial capacity, KUIS Rainbow started to build momentum during the next year (2016-2017), using weekly meetings to plan activities such as movie nights (both on campus, using projectors in classrooms, and off-campus cinema visits), participation in Yokohama Pride and Tokyo Rainbow Pride Parades, and an (unofficial) presence at the university festival. Student members oversaw the design and production of t-shirts and badges. In addition to discussing practical and logistical issues for events and initiatives, members continued to use meeting times to share ideas on how to promote the group, and raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues at a wider university level. From these discussions, and from increasing interest and participation in events, student members made it clear to the teachers that there was a growing demand for an *officially recognised* community for students to feel safe and comfortable talking about their own experiences, meet people who shared an interest in LGBTQ+ issues, and find out information about LGBTQ+ issues, news, and events (both in Japan, and globally). Kipling and Holowczyk continued to liaise between KUIS Rainbow student members and university management, trying to find out viable alternatives to establishing a Circle, which had run aground as an option.

Fortuitously, new initiatives in the university's Self Access Learning Centre (SALC) provided an opportunity for establishing an officially recognised Rainbow group on campus. After discussing this option with student members, and a SALC Learning Advisor who agreed to advocate for them, Kipling and Holowczyk applied for, and were granted, permission to form a SALC Learning Community, SALC Rainbow Forum, which was officially launched in November 2017. The purpose of SALC Learning Communities is to bring together 'a group of students (and teachers) who share common academic goals or interests, and meet regularly to learn with and from each other.' ("Learning Communities," n.d.) Although occupying a different status to Circle group activities in terms of campus-wide social acceptance, the Learning Community identity fit the more general purposes of KUIS Rainbow well. Furthermore, the SALC management and staff provided refreshing encouragement and support, in terms of morale as well as more practical matters. As a Learning Community, SALC Rainbow Forum gained access to resources such as meeting spaces and poster printing, and assistance with publicising the group's meetings and events through their website and notice-boards around the SALC.

Due to the increased publicity afforded by being a Learning Community, as well as word-of-mouth and a fresh influx of students at the start of the 2018-19 academic year, spring semester 2018 saw SALC Rainbow Forum becoming more established and widely recognised by both students and staff. By the end of the semester, there were 36 contacts in the group mailing list, consisting 8 teachers, 19 KUIS students, and 9 exchange students. Social media and word-of-mouth had drawn attention from the Student Affairs Coordinator for one of the university's exchange programmes, who offered to publicise SALC Rainbow Forum amongst their students, leading to increasing diversity in the form of exchange student membership. In addition to a larger presence at events such as Tokyo Rainbow Pride in June 2018, and bi-weekly movie viewing and discussions, the expanding membership and fluid attendance at weekly meetings meant there were new experiences and ideas to share, exciting opportunities for cultural, language, and information exchange, and fresh logistical challenges for group infrastructure and project management.

Coordinating SALC Rainbow Forum: Some observations

Since SALC Rainbow Forum has been established, there have been a variety of practical and logistical matters to consider regarding administration and membership, and the practicalities and purposes of regular meetings and events. Although SALC Rainbow Forum is still in its nascent state, some observations regarding the practicalities of coordinating an LGBTQ+ student group might be generally applied.

In terms of membership and communication, SALC Rainbow Forum has been administered by Kipling and Holowczyk on an ad hoc basis, building up a mailing list in their institutional email accounts and manually adding new members on request. Since Kipling and Holowczyk share the duty of Teacher Liaison for the group, this means that they must coordinate carefully to keep the contact lists up to date. This is only workable for a small group size, and will soon be replaced by a multi-user mailing account with a centralised list. Group mailings are sent out as bcc, to maintain privacy within the group membership. Membership is open to anyone at the university, including permanently-enrolled students, international students, teachers, advisors, and staff. There is no obligation to attend meetings or participate in group activities, which means that regular email updates and announcements enable less active members, or students who are overseas during study abroad etc., to be kept updated on the group's progress. Student members have also set up group chats in the messaging app LINE, which has been helpful in providing more mobile contact during unofficial off-campus events and social activities.

During the Spring semester 2018, SALC Rainbow Forum was joined by a number of exchange students from the US. This created a new dimension to the group's membership, with additional opportunities for cultural and language exchange. In addition, some of these new members had previous experience of LGBTQ+ groups, as well as event planning and leadership experience, and were motivated to take a more active role in managing the group. This had an interesting impact on the group dynamic. On the one hand, the increased diversity in membership developed an added interest for permanently-enrolled students seeking opportunities to make international friends. On the other hand, it was a challenge to maintain a comfortable platform for students who were less confident in talking about LGBTQ+ issues, or group speaking more generally, who had been used to a more moderated 'turn-taking' meeting style. Another issue was that, due to the limited time available to exchange students, it was difficult for them to commit to some long-term projects that they had suggested. As each semester brings a new group of exchange students, and since attendance and membership is fluid and voluntary, a 'wishlist' of future projects is currently being developed for students and Teacher Liaisons to coordinate according to individual talents, interests, and availability.

One of the main considerations in coordinating SALC Rainbow Forum has been to provide a safe and comfortable environment for students to share their thoughts and ideas, and participate in group activities without judgement or obligation. An ideal location to hold regular meetings would be freely available, and have a variety of furniture and resources to allow relaxed conversation as well as more focused meeting time and project work. Issues of privacy and confidentiality for individuals also need to be balanced with the visibility and presence desired by the group as a whole. The first meetings of the *unofficial* group were held in a teacher's office during a koma time that was free to all members of the small group. This took the shape of a coffee-talk, round-table, format, with a closed door but 'Rainbow Meeting in Progress' sign to welcome anyone who wanted to join.

In Spring 2017, a departmental move meant that teachers had new offices, where students were not allowed access, so the meetings moved to a classroom space. This move corresponded with a growth in membership, and a more fluid attendance at meetings. The meeting time was moved to a lunch time to accommodate more people, and students voted on the most convenient day to hold meetings. The classroom location provided space for more people to join meetings, and greater flexibility in terms of group dynamics, as well as desks, whiteboards and projectors for more focused activities. However, some students commented that the less casual environment may detract from the appeal of what is primarily a social group. Following this feedback, meetings started to move out of the classroom and into the SALC communal area towards the end of the 2018 Spring semester. The group will continue to trial locations in the coming months, in a search for a space that might satisfy the dynamic needs of such a group.

The basic function of the regular weekly meetings is to provide a forum for people to get together for informal discussions about LGBTQ+ issues. At the beginning to the Spring semester 2018, a provisional Code of Conduct was discussed and agreed between teachers and students, to ensure that meetings were a safe and mutually respectful environment for students to share their thoughts. Key points in this provisional Code of Conduct are:

- Come as little or as much as you want.
- You don't have to be out, or feel pressured to come out in this group.
- Respect the privacy of others.
- When telling a story, remember you can always use "my friend" and avoid naming others.
- Sharing is ok! Feel free to share as little or as much about yourself as you want to.
- Be careful with direct and personal questions to others.
- Be considerate of using people’s preferred personal pronouns.
- Don't speak for others or on behalf for a whole identity.
- Be prepared to talk and/or ask questions about the topic

It was agreed that this Code of Conduct could be edited and adapted over time as new points become apparent. In addition to the mutually-agreed rules, all Learning Communities are required to conduct at least part of their meetings in a language other than Japanese, and students are encouraged to use whatever language they are comfortable expressing their thoughts in. Since the terminology used to talk about gender and sexuality is often culturally loaded and contentious, this provides interesting points for linguistic discussions. The content of meetings varies depending on who is in attendance and what people want to discuss or prepare for at any given time. Students have used meeting time to plan and organize events, including Yokohama Pride (2016), and Tokyo Pride (2016, 2017, 2018), to design and sell t-shirts, to research information, and to brainstorm ideas for future projects. Students can also anonymously share ideas, ask questions, or make suggestions and discussion topics for future meetings, by putting them in a star-shaped, rainbow-decorated suggestion box (AKA the Magic Rainbow Box of Ideas). These ideas often drive the content of these informal meetings, and the Teacher Liaisons follow-up on these suggestions by sourcing short videos or articles to provide a stimulus for future meetings, where appropriate.

SALC Rainbow Forum also gathers bi-monthly in a small TV stage in the communal area, to watch and discuss movies related to LGBTQ+ themes. The SALC Admin staff has been very accommodating and encouraging of these meetings, even offering the use of bean-bags to make them more relaxing and welcoming. Movies are agreed in advance by teachers and students, and advertised by email and on posters on the SALC noticeboards. A database of LGBTQ+ themed movies, with basic information and links to trailers, has been created and shared, for group members to add their own suggestions and vote on what they would like to watch next. To provide variety and balance, these viewings have included movies from a range of countries and languages (either subtitled in English or Japanese, depending on availability), serious and light-hearted fiction, documentaries, classic and contemporary works. Regardless of content or quality, these movies have invariably provided rich stimulus for the reflective discussion that follows.

Suggestions for future development of SALC Rainbow Forum

In the past two years, SALC Rainbow Forum has grown from an informal collaboration between students and teachers who felt that LGBTQ+ students deserved acknowledgement and support within the university community, to an official Learning Community with administrative support and access to facilities and publicity. This has involved a steep learning curve, and there is a great deal of scope for improvement in the coming months and years. Some of the following ideas have already been put into motion. Some ideas, while seemingly aspirational at the moment, might be realised in the near future as the political and social climate becomes increasingly aware, and accepting of, LGBTQ+ issues.

Community building is a priority for the future of SALC RAinbow forum. The group is now afforded a range of advertising and PR opportunities, and will continue to take advantage of the SALC's facilities, website, and poster advertising, as well as the SALC Rainbow mailing list. It is hoped that the future will see increased student autonomy, and gradual handover of group coordination tasks from the Teacher Liaisons to a student leadership team. Ideally, an entirely student-led group would receive additional recognition as a Circle, which would afford a larger campus-wide profile, including representation at university events and festivals, and publicity in student newsletters. Contact has already been made to Stonewall Japan to request that SALC Rainbow Forum be added to their list of LGBTQ+ student groups in Japan, to make contact with the wider Japanese student community.

Accessing and providing clear and useful information regarding LGBTQ+ issues, news, and events has so far been done on an ad hoc basis, as and when students have raised specific questions or queries to address. A more consistent platform needs to be available for students to access a variety of information in their own time, without having to attend all meetings. A website is currently under development for this purpose, which will include a FAQ page and a noticeboard for updates and event information, as well as links to useful online resources, news pages, and other university community groups. The movie database will continue to be added to, as well as a list of useful discussion topics and themes that students can use either in meeting times, or to stimulate discussions in their own time. The group is also looking into the possibility of inviting guest speakers from LGBTQ+ community and student groups, depending on logistical and economic feasibility, and preparing presentations to explain key themes and topics to the wider student body.

Providing appropriate facilities and support for our students is a key priority, and there is still a lot of be done in this respect. As mentioned previously, ensuring that students have access to a safe space that is both conducive to sharing ideas and experiences on sensitive topics, and visible and accessible to all, is a complex and changeable requirement. Ideally, a designated area that is fit for all the purposes of the group would be made permanently available to SALC Rainbow Forum. Since this is practically impossible at the moment, the group will continue to use communal areas, hopefully settling in a space that is comfortable enough for the majority of group members. Meanwhile, the group will continue to liaise with SALC Admin and Management regarding useful resources that can be made available to all students.

Another key priority is making sure that teachers and university staff are equipped to support students regarding LGBTQ+ issues in their training and education. Marine and Nicolazzo (2014) outline some of the challenges faced by educators in promoting an inclusive environment, especially with regard to trans identity, while Knight (2016) explains that even when teachers are compassionate and supportive towards their students' needs, students are often faced with improvised knowledge and subjective views from teachers who have not received appropriate training in LGBTQ+ issues. The Human Rights Watch report concludes with the recommendation that all teacher certification programmes should include "mandatory training on working with diverse students" as well as information about gender and sexuality in the national sex education curriculum (Knight, 2016, n.p.). The Teacher Liaisons for SALC Rainbow Forum are independently pursuing greater knowledge and skills to facilitate their roles in the group, with the hope that at some point in the future, education and training will be available, for all teachers.

Conclusion

SALC Rainbow Forum is one example of how an LGBTQ+ student group has established in a Japanese university. It would be interesting and useful for other student groups to share their experiences, successes, and challenges, in order to pave the way for similar groups to become the norm in universities across the country. Administrative support, facilities, and training are key factors towards satisfying the needs of diverse students regarding issues that are sometimes sensitive and taboo. As media representation and social attitudes towards LGBTQ+ identities become more positive, there is hope that legislation and educational policy will acknowledge and represent LGBTQ+ people.

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We Think We Have to Speak English Perfectly

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In this paper the author describes the results of a pilot study to test the appropriateness of an interview protocol. The pilot study is part of wider research that investigates how the concept of self-efficacy from social cognitive theory can be used to understand the reasons for Japanese university students' low speaking fluency. The author discusses how semistructured interviews were used to examine how students' learning experiences at junior and senior high school contributed to their current self-efficacy levels. Four major commonalities in responses emerged from the data. These were foreign speaker effect, lack of feedback, negative reactions, and passive learning. Finally, the author suggests how each of these issues could be addressed through classroom practice and reflects on how an interviewer's style of questioning impacts on the quality of responses.

この論文は、インタビュー・プロトコルの妥当性を確認するための予備調査の結果を紹介しています。この予備調査は、どのように社会認知理論における自己効力感の概念が、日本の大学生が英語を流暢に話せない理由を理解するために用いられるかを調査する幅広い研究の一部です。本論文では、中学校と高等学校での学習経験が、現在の自己効力感のレベルにどのように貢献したかを調査するために、半構造化面接法をどのように使用したかについて説明します。データから 4 つの大きな共通点が明らかになりました。これらは、外国人の話し手の効果、フィードバックの欠如、否定的な反応、受動的な学習であった。本論文は、これらの問題それぞれが、教室の指導に与える影響を考察しています。

In this paper, I report the findings of a pilot study into the sources of Japanese university students' self-efficacy to speak English as a foreign language (hereafter speak EFL). The pilot study was conducted as part of an ongoing mixed methods study to design a new inventory of Japanese university students' speaking EFL self-efficacy.

Raising the speaking fluency of students is a key concern of educators in Japan (Amaki, 2008) because competency to communicate in English as a foreign language serves as a gateway to global employment and academic opportunities (Baker, 2016; Breaden, 2014). However, improving fluency levels is challenging because not only do Japanese students tend to have low speaking proficiency (Hamada, 2008; Rogers, 2007), but also according to some measures their proficiency is falling behind that of their Asian neighbors (Education First, 2018). Research has posited that Japanese university students' low proficiency at speaking EFL stems from low motivation and a lack of willingness to communicate (Munezane, 2015; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004); other studies indicate that students lose motivation and confidence due to teaching pedagogies at junior and senior high schools (Kikuchi, 2009). Therefore, understanding the factors that cause Japanese students to lose confidence in speaking English has significant consequences for raising their speaking proficiency levels.

I teach general English to 1st year students at a rural, civic university in Japan; the students are enrolled in economics courses. Enabling my students to reach their full potential as speakers of English is a primary goal of my teaching. However, through informal discussions with students and through reading student class reflections, I realized that although students wanted to become fluent speakers of English, they did not feel confident in their ability to achieve this goal. This led me to suspect that a leading cause of students' low proficiency was low self-efficacy. Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy refers to the degree of confidence that an individual has about the likelihood of them completing a specific task, and it has been found to be a powerful indicator of success across domains (Zimmerman, 1995).

Literature Review

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy developed from Bandura's social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory holds that people have the power to influence their own action through the interplay of behavioral, environmental, and personal determinants (Bandura, 2012). A person's belief that they can successfully execute a behavior is controlled by their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy itself is determined by four sources: mastery, social modelling, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states (Bandura, 2012). Mastery experiences are those of successfully completing the task in the past, social modelling experiences are observing similar others successfully completing the task, social persuasion experiences are the verbal and nonverbal feedback from others about task performance, and finally physical and emotional states refers to how people interpret their emotional feelings and physical reactions associated with the task.

Rather than being a general personality trait, self-efficacy is domain specific so that a person may have high self-efficacy in one area, yet low self-efficacy in another (Zimmerman, 1995). Self-efficacy is believed to influence academic achievement in a mediating role by encouraging students to try more difficult tasks and have fewer negative reactions to the task (Zimmerman, 2000). We can anticipate then that students with low self-efficacy to speak English are likely to refrain from engaging in communication and to feel anxiety when pressed to do so. Self-efficacy levels are formed by the accumulation of learning experiences; this means that not only do past experiences form present self-efficacy levels but also that they can be developed by transforming current teaching practice.

Although there have been studies that explore sources of self-efficacy in mathematics (Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1991; Usher & Pajares, 2009) and of student teachers (Phan & Locke, 2015; Poulou, 2007), there are few studies that deal with sources of EFL self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy in Foreign Language Learning

Self-efficacy in language learning has thus far been studied as an aspect of motivation (Dörnyei, 1999; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011) with studies pointing to self-efficacy as a powerful indicator of foreign language learning success (Burrows, 2016; Templin, Guile, & Okuma, 2001). Nevertheless, research so far has concentrated on how self-efficacy correlates with other motivational factors rather than concentrating on generating actionable results for classroom practice. Additionally, the area of self-efficacy in foreign language is still relatively new and existing studies have concentrated on reading, writing, or listening skills rather than on speaking.

Speaking EFL Self-Efficacy in Japan

Studies that focus on the Japanese context have tended to center on reading and listening self-efficacy. Studies that address speaking confidence of Japanese learners have done so from other perspectives such as self-perceived communicative competence (Lockley, 2013), language learning beliefs (Toyama, 2015), or foreign language anxiety (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Also, to my knowledge at the time of writing, there is no empirically tested inventory to determine speaking self-efficacy levels of Japanese students. I hope that the development of a specific inventory will help teachers design learning programs that are attentive to students' self-efficacy levels, improve both the self-efficacy levels and the learning outcomes of their students, and also enable further research in this area.

Method

In this paper, I report the results of a pilot study that was conducted as part of a larger mixed methods project to design an inventory of Japanese university students' speaking EFL self-efficacy levels. In the design, semistructured interviews will be used to explore students' experiences of learning to speak English at junior and senior high school. This information will determine themes to include in the inventory. Finally, the inventory will be administered to a sample of Japanese university students and then be tested quantitatively for validity and reliability. The pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the interview protocol for the semistructured interviews and to establish tentative themes to guide the main study. The interview protocol is added as an appendix to this paper.

Pilot Study Research Design

The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the reliability and usefulness of the interview protocol, to establish tentative themes to inform the analysis of the main study's qualitative stage, and also to give me practice at conducting qualitative interviews. In the pilot study, students were invited for an interview after completing a selection questionnaire of EFL speaking self-efficacy scales and demographic questions. This questionnaire was adapted from that of Mills' (2004) French foreign language self-efficacy scale. I choose this because it has been found to be reliable and been widely used in subsequent research. From the questionnaire results, I invited eight students to participate in the interview. I constructed the interview protocol to draw out students' learning experiences at junior and senior high school in relation to Bandura's four sources and also to self-regulated learning, which has been forwarded as a fifth source by Usher (2009). The completed protocol was reviewed by a professional educator and then translated into Japanese by the author. The translated protocol was then sent to two native speakers for comments with amendments made where appropriate.

Procedure

The site of the pilot study was a rural, civic university in Japan. I administered the selection questionnaire to 104 first-year economics majors enrolled in general English classes. An explanation of the study and informed consent were distributed with the questionnaire. I requested students to include their student number at the top of the questionnaire if they were willing to be interviewed. I then ranked the responses by totaling the self-efficacy scores and divided the responses into low and high self-efficacy groups. I asked two males and two females from each group to be interviewed yielding eight participants. However, one male student later dropped out of the study this meant the final number of interviewees was seven, four female and three male. The demographic data of the participants is included in Table 1. The interviews were held in an office at the university with just the student and myself present and took an average of 30 to 40 minutes to complete. The interview was conducted in Japanese and audio recorded with two voice recorders and then was translated and transcribed by the author. The data was anonymized by removing student numbers from the questionnaires after the analysis was completed and by students choosing an alias to use in the study.

Main Findings

Deep reading of the interviews was performed to determine common themes. However, since the sample was relatively small, it is unlikely that saturation was achieved with the number of interviews. Consequently, the following main findings from the pilot interviews should be regarded as commonalities between responses rather than actual themes. The four main topics that repeated frequently across interviews were *foreign speaker effect* when students indicated that they needed to converse with foreign people to improve English speaking skill, *lack of feedback* when students said that they had no recollection of receiving feedback on speaking performance from peers or teachers, *passive learning* when students recalled speaking practice as being restricted to reading aloud from the

Table 1: Demographic Data of Interview Participants

Alias	Age	Gender	Self-Efficacy	TOEIC
Karen	18	Female	Low	245
Lisa	18	Female	Low	325
Mika	18	Female	High	450
Saori	18	Female	High	390
Riku	18	Male	Low	445
Hiro	18	Male	Low	230
Joe	18	Male	High	245

textbook or reciting speeches, and finally *negative reactions* when students reported feeling bored or embarrassed by speaking practice.

Foreign Speaker Effect

Students felt that speaking with foreign people was an essential factor in becoming good English speakers. A lack of social modelling through observation of similar others such as teachers and peers using English communicatively in class may have reinforced the impression that they need to speak to a foreign person to learn to speak English well. There is also the sense that lessons with a foreign teacher involve more active tasks; Joe said, "We had a teacher from America we did easy games together. It was fun." Conversely, students had a negative impression of their Japanese teachers' English abilities, for example, Riku complained that "the Japanese teacher's pronunciation was not good."

Lack of Feedback

Japan is a collectivist society and as such receiving support and confirmation from ingroup members such as teachers and peers is essential for the development of confidence and self-efficacy (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It is concerning that students said they never received any feedback or support about their English speaking ability. For example, Saori's response that "I've never been told anything" was typical. Of course, just because students do not recall receiving positive feedback, it does not mean that teachers never gave it, but rather that it was insufficient to leave a lasting impression. This idea was reinforced by Mika who commented that students "need more individual feedback, to hear what we can and can't do well."

Passive Learning

Students reported that speaking practice at junior and senior high school was limited to either reading the textbook aloud or performing memorized speeches. Karen said that she had no memory of communicating in English at school at all, commenting, "Conversation? I don't think I did any conversation at all in lessons." This issue is worrying because it appears that for some of the students, experiences of learning to speak English were restricted to forming the sounds and intonations necessary for good pronunciation.

Negative Reactions

As students reported that their speaking experiences were restricted to reading the textbook aloud and performing memorized speeches, it is not surprising that they reported negative feelings such as boredom and embarrassment about speaking activities.

A tendency to strive for perfection may also have negatively affected students' reactions to speaking English. As Riku explained, "We think we have to speak English perfectly or fluently, if we speak clumsily we are embarrassed. If we can't show our true ability, we are embarrassed." Students consistently said that they did not like desk-based study and wanted more opportunities to talk with friends about everyday topics.

Reflections

In this section, I will first suggest how each of the above issues could be addressed through classroom practice and then reflect on the impact my interviewing style had on the quality of responses.

Implications for Classroom Practice

The main findings from the interview prompted me to consider their impact for classroom practice in Japan. In the following, I introduce some ideas for how teachers may address foreign speaker effect, lack of feedback, passive learning, and negative reactions.

Foreign speaker effect. Students' belief that they need to talk with a foreign speaker to improve their English speaking proficiency could stem from lack of social modelling by Japanese speakers of English. Therefore, students' social modelling experiences could be increased by Japanese teachers using English for everyday communicative tasks in class, and by teachers, irrespective of their first language, using materials that feature Japanese nationals using English effectively.

Lack of feedback. Students said that they did not recall receiving feedback about their speaking ability. Feedback is most effective when it is genuine, relates to a specific element, and also offers steps for further improvement (Krenn, Würth, & Hergovich, 2013). Therefore, a generic "good job" or "well done" is unlikely to affect students' self -efficacy. I suggest that teachers ensure that feedback is individualized and focuses on what students can do to improve.

Passive learning. Students reported a focus on passive learning, such as recitation and pronunciation exercises. These skills are of course essential, but they need to be taught as part of a range of communicative skills and conversation practice so that students can gain an assortment of mastery experiences of communicating in English and thereby improve their self-efficacy.

Negative reactions. Feelings and reactions towards a task influence how we perceive our ability towards that task because we tend to attribute these reactions to our own ability rather than to the quality of the activity. Negative feelings of anxiety or boredom lead to feelings of incompetency, whereas feelings of interest and engagement lead to feelings of capability (Usher & Pajares, 2009) . Negative feelings could be ameliorated by having students practice conversations with friends rather than in front of the whole class. Moreover, interest could be increased by providing students with a variety of discussion topics, using a range of activities, and alternating between group, pair, and individual tasks.

Interview Style

In light of the pilot test, I was able to both improve the interview protocol and to become more aware of my interviewing style. Concerning the protocol, although the questions themselves stayed the same, I changed my manner of asking the questions. The phrasing of qualitative questions often employs phrases such as "Tell me about a time when you …" or "How did you feel when...." (Merriam, 2014). I found that this style of questioning did not yield lengthy responses from the students with many responses limited to "No, nothing." or "I don't remember that." This made me conjecture that these kinds of questions might have been threatening to them. Therefore, after the first two interviews, I decided to change the structure to twostep questions where first I asked an easy question such as "Have you ever….?" and once I had elicited an answer, I followed up with more probing questions such as "Can you tell me more about that …" or "What did you think about that?" I found that when I gradually led them into the topic, I could get richer responses from them.

Also, I found through the course of the pilot interviews that I began to identify some key phrases that indicated students might have more to say. One was *da kedo* (however or but), and the other was *ma* (well); both indicated that students probably had a different opinion to what they were actually telling me. In the later interviews, I learned to push the students to explain more often by prompting through repeating the phrase back to them "*da kedo*?" Finally, on a practical note, I realized that it is best for the interviewer to say as little as possible; it soon became tiring having to transcribe all the little encouraging comments I had made in the interview such as "really", "wow", and "oh." Again, in later interviews, I learned to keep encouraging responses to smiles and nods, which were just as effective in getting students to elaborate and less bothersome when it came to transcription.

Limitations

As this was a pilot study, the motivation was to test the suitability of the interview protocol rather than to produce definitive conclusions. Therefore, there are significant limitations to the study. The results should be treated with caution and cannot be expected to adhere to covenants of reliability and replicability. They are presented here to encourage dialogue and discussion in the exciting area of educational psychology and in the hope that they may be of immediate use to educational practitioners.

Conclusion

The pilot study yielded some noteworthy results that suggest that the participants of the study had not experienced sufficient positive experiences at junior and senior high school to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy to speak EFL. Particularly, students' mastery experiences were limited to recitations and reading aloud with little exposure to less structured communicative tasks. Students also had not experienced positive feedback and evaluations from teachers and peers. Neither had they developed an image of Japanese people as English speakers, which had led to a preoccupation with the need to converse with foreign people to improve speaking proficiency.

Finally, students had developed negative feelings towards speaking English through an overreliance on whole class activities such as reading aloud and speech giving. I hope that these results can be further expanded and validated in the main study.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

Date ____________________

Interviewer ____________________

Interviewee nickname ____________________

Age ____________________

Academic Year ____________________

File code ____________________

Theme 1: General Background

1) Tell me about yourself.
   a) *What do you like to do in your free time?*
2) Tell me about yourself as a student.
   a) *What do you think is your favorite subject?*
   b) *What is your least favorite subject?*
3) I'd like to ask about your history of speaking English.
   a) *Have you studied English outside of school? Where? For how long?*
   b) *Have you ever travelled to English speaking country?*

Theme 2: Opinion Towards Learning English

4) I'd like to ask you about your opinion towards learning English.
   a) *What do you think of the English course at this university?*
   b) *Could you describe the kind of activities you would like to do in an ideal English course to me?*
5) Tell me about your goals for learning to speak English.
   a) *What do you want to learn English speaking for?*
   b) *How do you imagine yourself using English after you graduate university?*
   c) *What areas do you especially want to work on?*
   d) *How important is learning to speak English to you?*

Theme 3: Learning English Experiences (Mastery + Self-regulatory)

6) Tell me about the kind of English speaking activities you did at senior high school.
   a) *Which ones did you particularly enjoy? Why?*
   b) *How would you rate your ability as an English speaker from 1-10?*
   c) *Did you perform tasks in front of: the whole class, a few classmates, just the teacher*?
7) Tell me about a memorable occasion of speaking English at school.
   a) *How well did you do?*

b) Why do you think you could /could not do well?

8) Tell me about the kind of practice you did to help you speak English.

a) What experiences do you have of speaking English outside of class?

b) What kind of homework did you do for English speaking practice?

c) Did you do any other activities to help you speak English?

Theme 4: Support Received from Teachers, Parents and Classmates at Senior High School (Social Persuasion)

9) Tell me about someone who helped you to learn English speaking.

a) What kind of things did they do to help you?

10) Tell me about what others have told you about your English speaking ability.

a) What kind of feedback did you receive from teachers?

i) What kind of feedback did you receive from parents?

ii) What about your friends?

b) How did your teachers make you feel about your English speaking ability?

c) What other things do you think teachers could have done to make you feel more confident and motivated about speaking English?

Theme 5: Emotional Reactions to Speaking English at Senior High School (Physiological States)

11) I'd like you remember the speaking activities you did in high school, in general how did they make you feel?

a) How did you physically feel? Alert, energetic, tired, etc.

b) How did you mentally feel? Anxious, engaged, bored, etc.

c) What factors do you think made you feel so?

Theme 6: Influence of Others on English Speaking Ability (Vicarious Experiences)

12) Tell me about how you prepared for speaking tasks in class.

a) Did you listen to CDs, videos, teacher's reading, another students' reading?

b) Who or what did you find most useful to listen to?

13) Tell me about someone you think speaks English well.

a) Where are they from?

b) What's your relationship to them?

c) How about your teacher or classmates?

14) Is there anything else you think I should know about your experiences of learning to speak English at senior high school?

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions.

Getting Creative in Writing Classes

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Many teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) struggle with writing classes. It can be a challenge to get students writing in English, let alone to be creative with their writing. To make a change from the more traditional paragraph, essay and email writing, the author used two lessons in a semester on creative writing, using Storybird, an online software program enabling students to be inspired by art and apply creativity to write a story in English. Students were able to share their stories in an anonymous class library, and talk about the stories they enjoyed or thought were interesting and well-written. Students enjoyed the Storybird activity the most in the entire course, and the researcher felt it was an immensely worthwhile project with countless future possibilities.

英語を外国語として教える(EFL)多くの教師がライティングの授業で困難を抱えている。学生に英語で文章を書かせ、創造的にさせるのは課題になりうる。従来の段落やエッセイ、e メールのライティング活動から離れ、著者はストーリーバードというオンラインソフトを用いたクリエイティブライティングの授業を学期に 2 回行った。学生は匿名のクラス図書館で自分たちの話を共有し、楽しんだ作品、興味深かった作品や優秀な作品などについて話し合った。学生は一年を通じてストーリーバードの活動を最も楽しんでおり、無限の可能性を秘めた非常に価値のあるプロジェクトだと思われる。

Technology has become a major aspect in all of our lives. The impact it has had in various shapes and forms has been a major game changer within the education sector, and its use should not be ignored in the classroom. Technology needs to be incorporated into EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes, not only to meet the student's needs, but also to work towards achieving the standard that the students themselves are seeking (Prensky, 2007). It is clear that teachers need to move with the times, evolving their teaching techniques with technology. The value of its use in the classroom cannot be underestimated. However, Sadik (2008) said that "the use of technology can only be effective if teachers themselves possess the expertise to use technology in a meaningful way in the classroom" (p. 487), so it is essential that the teacher selects technology which is within their own technological capabilities.

Since the beginning of time, humankind has created stories and pictures to pass down culture and history, to relay myths and legends, and also as a pastime for entertainment. Long before writing systems existed, there were stories, many of which were augmented by simple drawings and pictographs. In the past decade or so, the emergence of digital storytelling has changed the way writing is taught, and it has gained momentum and popularity amongst teachers and students (Menezes, 2012). Leslie Rule of the Digital Storytelling Association has said "Digital Storytelling is the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling... Stories have been adapted to each successive medium that has emerged, from the circle of the campfire to the silver screen, and now the computer screen." (as cited in Menezes, 2012. p. 299). Digital storytelling has provided educators with a tool that is both effective for student learning (Mohamed, 2017) and enjoyable for students (Koelzer, 2017). If you try digital story telling techniques right from issuing assignments, through writing and onto reading, you will find that even the most relcuctant students will be motivated and inspired by a product like Storybird.

What is Storybird?

Storybird (www.storybird.com) is free online writing software that can be used to create a story in just a few simple steps. The platform is easy to use, and even the technologically-challenged instructor will be able to create accounts for themselves and their students and manage the process of incorporating the software into their teaching strategy. With professional artwork, students are inspired to create original stories, poems, along with short and long picture books.

Although originally designed as a writing platform for K-12 native speakers, Storybird has also been used successfully in EFL classes (see Christensen & Koelzer, 2016, Giacomini, 2015; Koelzer, 2017; Poth, 2016; Zakaria et al, 2016). In fact, there has been a positive response to the use of digital storytelling in general in the EFL classroom (Christiansen & Koelzer, 2016). Storybird is currently used in over 190 countries by more than 400,000 educators, and 5 million students who have published more than 15 million stories within the Storybird platform (Storybird, 2018a; Storybird, 2015).

Storybird is a great pedagogical tool partly because students do not even feel like they are learning. In Japan, the traditional English education system is designed to prepare students for examinations and advancement to the next level of their education, and so there is rarely room for creativity, particularly in the latter years of formal education (Lewis, 1986). However, research has shown that students in Japan love using technology, particularly their smartphones and whilst they readily adopt this technology into their lives for communication or entertainment, they are reluctant to use devices for educational purposes (Mills, 2014). That said, the author witnessed even the reluctant students becoming more motivated and engaged when using this platform. Moreover, research also shows that information retention is enhanced by the use of pictures, and that vocabulary acquisition increases with the use of digital storytelling tools (Burmark, 2004; Christiansen & Koelzer, 2016).

Setting up an account

At the time of writing, Storybird only exists as a website, and there are currently no apps that can be downloaded to mobile devices; however, this may change in the future as the platform evolves. Setting up an account with Storybird is completely free for both educators and students, and to make it even more compelling, it is free to use and publish within the platform indefinitely.

After an account is setup, you will receive an email, and when you click on the link for confirmation, the account will be created. You are then free to produce and read Storybirds, which is the name given to a story that was created using the platform. After confirming your own account, you can log in and create a class account. From here you can invite students to your class; the number of students and classes that an educator can create is unlimited.

Once the teacher in this study had set up an account, she explored the online writing platform until she felt comfortable with it, writing her own sample story to show the students what was expected of them. She then set up accounts for her students within a class account; a separate class account was set up for each of the three writing classes which were using Storybird during the semester.

While setting up student and class accounts as outlined above is relatively simple, as an alternative, students can set up their own accounts, then join the class via the Storybird class-code provided by the educator.

Creating and reviewing work

Storybird *studio*, is a section of the website that was created purely for educators. The *studio* tab, which can be found on the dashboard, allows educators to set up assignments for their students. Assignments can be given a description or explanation, and the teacher is even able to add specific vocabulary that they require the students to use in the assignment. The due date can also be included, and this will appear as a reminder on each student's dashboard when they use Storybird. The teacher is also able to comment and grade student work within their account.

As with any online platform, there may be concerns around privacy, so it is important to note that Storybird includes a number of features designed to protect students' privacy. Firstly, student stories are confined to the Storybird "class", and are not publicly available within the Storybird community. Even within the Storybird "class", each student is assigned an anonymous username based on the educator's chosen class name, so that they can remain anonymous to their peers, although the teacher can still identify them. Students can view one another's work anonymously, make comments and even "heart" their work, which is the equivalent of liking something on Facebook or Twitter.

As their anonymity is assured amongst their peers within the digital class, there is no reason to feel embarrassed or self-conscious about their English language abilities. Furthermore, if they are feeling more confident, they are able to change their usernames to a pen name, nickname or their first name, in which case they will be known to one another.

Storybirds can be searched across a number of criteria including age, format, category, new or popular, and students are also able to save a copy of the story, keeping it on their virtual bookshelf, or they can bookmark stories that they want to read at a later date. All of this can be done within their account. This is particularly useful if they need to refer back to a certain story for assignments or reports. They are also able to subscribe to accounts belonging to their friends, authors and artists, which is similar to *following* someone on social media. This will also let the student know when someone they are following publishes a new story.

Possible Problems and Challenges

It's worth noting that while Storybird worked incredibly well in the classroom, it was not without a few issues, although most have acceptable workarounds.

A few students had trouble accessing their account with the information generated by Storybird and provided by the author. This is most likely a technological glitch that at times cannot be avoided. When setting up student accounts, the author would recommend to creating a few extra in case this problem arises, so if you have 25 students in your class, create 30 student accounts. If one or more have trouble signing in, they can be provided with another account to try. The teacher can then amend their names via the class account.

Another aspect of Storybird that students may find limiting is that once they choose their art, or an artist that they like, they have to stay with that particular art or artist. However, there is a workaround for this: if the user searches for a certain theme or word, the platform will display all related art, allowing a user to use art from various artists.

Furthermore, the Storybird text editor is not as advanced as other word processing software. For instance, you cannot change the font's style or colour. However, it does contain an automatic spell check, with all misspelled words appearing with a red underline. This is an immensely valuable tool for EFL students. As the platform was designed for students as young as five, it is very simple and user-friendly. The students in this study had no problems when creating their stories, besides the usual writer's block or lack of ideas.

Method

To provide a break from the more formal styles of writing, such as essay, paragraph, letters and emails, the author spent two periods in a semester on creative writing using Storybird. The 55 students came from three classes, and they were all economics and humanities majors at a private university in central Japan. As part of their final portfolio assessment they were required to make a ten-page digital picture book using Storybird. The writing class took place in a computer room, and each student had an individual computer. That said, the software is available for use on any Internet connected device (Storybird, 2018a).

The students were shown an example of a Storybird, and they were given time to familiarise themselves with the platform. During this time, the author monitored progress and circled the classroom, helping students who were having difficulties. Once the familiarisation process was complete, the students were ready to begin browsing the millions of available artworks to produce their own Storybirds.

Students clicked on *create* to write a story, and they chose from options including poems, short-stories and long stories. When the students found artwork that they wanted to use, they dragged it and dropped it onto their canvas, which they had opened in their account. By moving the mouse they could position images, leaving an open section where they could write a part of the story to go with the artwork. They could then create any number of new pages and repeat the process as they built up their story.

When they wanted to save their work, they simply hit the *save* button; however, Storybird automatically saved their work after two to three minutes, with the time of the last save appearing on the student's dashboard.

Results

As some of the students had never written a story in English, it was a challenging task, but it was also a rewarding one, with the majority of the students enjoying the process. The initial response to Storybird was extremely positive, with students being impressed with the high standard and quality of the available artwork. When they were first introduced to Storybird they made comments like *sugoi* (Wow!), *ii ne* (This is great!), *kawaii* (Cute!) and *kore wa omoshiroi ne* (This is fun!). In fact, in a post-class survey (see Appendix) 78% of the participants claimed that using Storybird was the most fun activity in the semester-long writing class. Some of their comments in the survey were "Making my story was very fun", "It's fun because its pictures are so cute" and "I could express freely my thoughts in pictures".

The students were all successfully able to complete their stories, and there were numerous genres amongst them. After completion, they published their stories in a digital class library. They then read their classmates stories and had group discussions around which stories they liked best, giving their reasons, as well as receiving feedback from their peers.

Future Possibilities

Whilst this project only used Storybird for creative writing, there are many future possibilities to use the platform in both reading and writing classes. With millions of stories already created by others within the Storybird platform, it could also be used for extensive reading. Students could comment on, and heart Storybirds that they particularly enjoyed. All public Storybirds along with comments on them are monitored for "safety and age-appropriateness", and they can all be accessed for free provided you're a member of the Storybird community (Storybird, 2018b). As well as focusing on creative writing, additional lessons could be spent reading, with tasks set around reading Storybirds, rather than traditional books and exercises for individuals or discussions in pairs and groups could be assigned. Students could also be provided with a particular grammar point, or a list of vocabulary to use within their writing. These tasks could be completed in class time, or even set for home learning, assignments and projects (Mohamed, 2017).

Students could also present their stories, and explain how and why they were inspired by the art they chose. They could also create advertisements, fliers, and posters, or even write a journal. The platform also enables students to collaborate, creating stories together and providing feedback and scaffolding for one another, so a story could be created in pairs or groups with classmates, students from other classes, or even students in another country (Menezes, 2012). The class as a group could collaborate on a story, creating a literary chain, with each student adding a sentence or a page. If they felt confident enough with their work, they could even publicly publish it on the Storybird platform with millions of potential worldwide readers who may also provide feedback, or "heart" their stories.

The platform also provides an opportunity for writers to purchase their work in a digital or printed form. Whilst the printed form is probably too expensive for students, given the added cost of postage from the United States, it is only a few US dollars to buy the digital version. Stories could be made and purchased as a keepsake or gift for special events like Mothers' Day, Valentine's Day or Christmas. Furthermore, Storybird awards their members with *crowns* the more they write and publish in the digital class library. More *crowns* are rewarded to those who write the longer and more numerous stories. The *crowns* can then be used to purchase a digital copy of a story or poem, so often no money is needed. This is an ideal opportunity for students to be able to get a digital copy of their stories or poems for free.

Conclusion

Whilst originally designed for younger English-speaking learners, Storybird is currently used around the world in numerous countries and in many languages.

Furthermore, it can be used with more mature learners in university, and with EFL classes in a myriad of ways. As research shows, visual images and digital storytelling help EFL students to develop their English. As educators, we should be making more use of this free, feature rich, and inspiring creative platform. Take a break from the traditional writing classes and inspire your students through art, allowing them to show you their creativity in English. With Storybird, the sky is the limit and your students are the birds, able to explore and create freely.

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Appendix

Student Portfolio Reflection

Name: ________________________

Student number: ________________

1. Which assignment was easiest for you?
2. Which assignment was the most difficult for you?
3. Which assignment was the most fun? Why?
4. What improvements have you made in your writing this course?
5. Which assignment do you think is your best work? Why?
6. How do you feel you did in this class? Do you feel you worked hard or are you satisfied with how you did?
7. What grade do you think you deserve/ or will get?

By John Howrey of Nanzan University

Preparing for Extensive Reading in an English Communication Course: An MReader Solution

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As of April 2018, Reitaku University has made (ER) a compulsory part of its English for Communication classes. This reflects the reforms in modern education in Japan. MReader is presented as a solution to a standardized platform for implementing ER by using existing university library resources. This paper gives background and documents the first step to introducing MReader as a university-wide ER platform for English for Communication. The paper considers data of seventeen teachers' beliefs of ER and the obstacles faced when using ER at Reitaku University. These teacher beliefs are discussed regarding the decision to implement MReader to standardize the ER program.

2018 年 4 月より、麗澤大学は多読をコミュニケーション英語の授業の必須項目にしている。これは近年の日本の英語教育改革を受けてのことである。MReader は標準化されるプラットフォームの解決策として、既存の大学図書を使った多読の実施を行う。本稿は背景知識を与え、コミュニケーション英語の大学規模の多読プラットフォームとして MReader 導入の第一段階として記録される。本稿は麗澤大学における 17 名の教員の多読の信念と多読を利用した際に直面する障害の資料を考察する。これらの教員の信念は、多読プログラムの標準化に向けて MReader の実施決定に対して討論される。

Universities in Japan are under pressure to standardize their courses. This is true now more than ever due to the Ministry of Education's (MEXT) efforts to reform higher education, in the run up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics games (MEXT, 2018). Like many universities in Japan, Reitaku relied on individual teachers to implement extensive reading (ER). Often these teachers had their own varying approaches to ER. This lack of standardization caused confusion regarding what was being taught and the level of quality of the ER being implemented. This confusion made it difficult to quantify to stakeholders what was being done in class in regards to ER. Therefore, Reitaku University decided to standardize many of their courses, including ER, in order to have a common understanding of their program and students' progress. However, this is not a straightforward task and Walker (2016) discovered that one initial problem over implementing an ER program at Reitaku University was the confusion over the definition of ER.

The decision to standardize the university courses and the ER program came from the university. However, it was for the teachers to discover the best means to implement the program. As of April 2018, all first-year English for Communication classes have a standardized ER program as part of their curriculum. This paper discusses how the implementation of a standardized ER came into fruition and benefitted from using the online website Mreader.org (MReader). The paper discusses the trialing process of the ER program and the initial research which discovers teachers' beliefs about ER in general.

MReader hosts ER quizzes online which students can take after they have read a book. It keeps logs of their word count and what books students are reading. The paper reveals how MReader effectively supports teachers who are implementing a standardized ER program. It gives reasoning behind the decision to use MReader and how it fits in with the current curriculum at the university. The small-scale research of teachers' beliefs in this paper was conducted before the MReader trial was introduced to the university. It was used to help understand the beliefs of the teachers so that the faculty was sure that MReader provided the best solution.

The paper documents the standardization of an ER program which uses a system aimed at improving student motivation, autonomy, and use of the on-campus library. Cost was also a concern, and the ER program is one which has no additional costs. Finally, workload is also considered, and effort is put in to providing a solution without increasing teacher or student workload beyond what is manageable.

If readers are unfamiliar with MReader, this paper serves as a brief introduction. It is the hope that sharing this standardization method will make it easier for existing teachers to implement ER. It also offers an accessible method for new teachers to implement ER. From an administrative perspective, the standardized implementation ER using MReader will allow for more accurate record keeping on students' progress through MReader.

Literature Review

Extensive Reading in English for Communication

Waring & McLean (2015) of The Extensive Reading Foundation, suggest that ER should be "easy, fast, silent, pleasurable, individual and self-selected, and involve reading as much as possible while guided by a teacher as a role model" (p.161). Yamashita (2013) states that exposure to ER will positively influence "L2 learners' attitudes towards the culture" (p.250). The standardized ER program for Reitaku University needed to be part of the hectic English for Communication curriculum, which is a four-skills course held twice a week for first and second-year university students. English for Communication has a lot of blended cultural learning content in the forms of videos, reading, English grammar exercises, projects, listening and speaking practice. On top of this, English for Communication students need to do ER. Therefore, the logistics of implementing ER on students with heavy workloads and alternative priorities had to be considered before a standardized program could be decided. Waring & McLean's suggestion was chosen as the definition for the ER in English for Communication since it suggested reading as much as possible, promoted enjoyment, and did not focus on increasing the teacher workload. The autonomous nature of the student selected books took pressure off the teacher to decide the books. Being an individual task allowed the ER to be done outside of the already busy 90-minute class.

If we consider Yamashita (2013), Waring & McLean's (2015) suggestions, then the goal of the English for Communication ER program is to create a positive attitude towards English culture while offering a pleasurable ER experience. This method of focusing on ER for pleasure is supported by notable ER experts (Cheetham, Harper, Elliot and Ito, 2016; Tien, 2015; Yamashita, 2013; Susser & Robb, 1990).

MReader

In 2017, one Reitaku University lecturer offered an ER program that was both "transparent" and "easier to track or observe" compared to paper-based ER reports used by other teachers (Walker, 2017, p. 337). The route chosen was through using the commercially available Xreading platform (Xreading.com). Xreading offers an online library of books and quizzes, however, the physical university library has had substantial financial investment, and the stakeholders would like it to be used. Within the university library there are over 900 physical graded readers which can be used for ER. An ideal solution for implementing ER for English for Communication would be one which gives students access to graded readers and avoids investing money in other means such as Xreading. This led to MReader being used in the standardization of ER.

MReader is a free website that offers quizzes to graded readers. Unlike Xreading, MReader has no online books. However, much like Xreading, MReader contains quizzes for graded readers aimed at verifying that students have read and understood a graded reader. MReader compliments the existing university library by encouraging students to take out physical books, but it also reduces the labor-intensive teacher marking physical graded readers offer.

Assigning Graded Readers to the Right Students

The number of quizzes available on MReader for graded readers far exceeds the number of graded readers available in the Reitaku University library. The library has graded readers from many different publishers such as

Oxford, Cambridge and Macmillan. These publishers also use their own in-house method of giving quizzes for their books.

One problem with having many publishers is they all have different levelling systems for example, Macmillan Starter is for students with a 250 score on TOEIC and Cambridge Starter is for students with a 320 score on TOEIC. Although these books are both 'starter' level, they have different levelling systems. MReader provides one website which encompasses quizzes for many graded readers over various publishers. MReader (2017) uses The Kyoto Scale which "is loosely based on reported headword counts but further adjusted by close inspection of the text series, with reference to the "Yomiyasusa Levels", created by Akio Furukawa" (mreader.org), this makes it easier to find a standard level across publishers. Having a common level makes the MReader a more streamlined option as the website shows the level and all the publishers' levels collectively associated with the MReader level (https://mreader.org/mreaderadmin/s/html/Kyoto_Scale.html). Referring to Oxford Starter and Cambridge Starter, the Kyoto Scale shows that the levels are one and three respectively. The Kyoto Scale also shows that Oxford Starter is the same level as other publishers, such as Foundation Series-Levels 4,5 and Penguin Readers level 1. This makes MReader a compelling way to standardize ER evaluation as publishers of the same level can be organized together to make booklists.

Graded Reader Booklists

MReader has a database of all the book quizzes it hosts on its website (https://mreader.org/viewbooks.php). This database was matched with the books in the university library. This correlated database showed all the graded readers in the library which have quizzes on the MReader website. The database was filtered using the level of the book and the TOEIC level for that class. This allowed books lists to be made of titles and publishers which are in the library and are of the relevant reading level of the class. Teachers give these level appropriate book lists to students who then find the book in the library to read. This makes it easy for students to find graded readers which are of the appropriate level.

One limitation faced was the library rule of only having one copy of each title. This means if the book is already taken out by one person another person cannot take out the book until it has returned. Having multiple copies of popular titles would allow alleviate this problem.

MReader Trial

Before ER was a standard part of English for Communication, the system was trialled by four teachers over the second semester of 2017. There were eleven classes which took part with a total of 199 English language students in their first and second years enrolled on the MReader trial program.

There were two types of classes which were included in the program, English Workshop class and Writing class. English Workshop class focused on academic reading and writing and prepared students for conducting research. Writing class focused on students writing and had a heavier focus on academic writing skills. These classes were chosen as none of the students overlapped with any other teachers and so to avoid enrolling the students on the MReader program twice. These students were also taking English for Communication classes too, but currently the English for Communication course is shared over many teachers. This would skewer the results of this trial as some would be trialing ER and some would not.

Signing up to the MReader online system was tested with dummy accounts before it was deemed suitable for the students to use. There are three levels of access to MReader, admin, teacher and student. Admin can see students' names, emails and classes as well as the teacher information, but they cannot see passwords. Admins make the classes and give the class code to the teachers to give to the students. The class codes were a mix of upper and lower-case letters and numbers. Some of these were a little difficult to read as the font does not distinguish clearly between an upper-case 'I' and a lower-case 'l'. Teachers can see their own class, student names and student progress. Students can only see their own information. Teachers were satisfied the signup process was both easy and secure.

Signing Up Students

Signing up the students to MReader for the trial was quick and done in class orientation time with the teacher going through the process with the entire class. The MReader website can be used on computers and smartphones, which many students have with them in class. There is also the option of sending students names and numbers to MReader and letting them make the classes. However, there were concerns about privacy.

Initial signing up took about 10 minutes of class time, and many students opted for the smartphone method, this allowed the teacher to be sure all students were clear on signing up. For the username the prefix 'rei-' to signify Reitaku was used, and the students used their student numbers. Sometimes students could not log in because they forgot their usernames or passwords. Teachers can tell students their usernames, but the password needs to be recovered through the password recovery system.

Cheating

There is an issue of cheating where a student could take the same test as another student. This is avoided by using the MReader cheat checking feature which allows the teacher to check if any tests were completed with a short timeframe of each other. The 10 questions on Mreader are also taken from a larger pool of 20 or 30 questions to make it less likely for questions to repeat in quick succession. Although this issue never came up, it is a useful addition to the website which is another less concern for the teacher.

Goals of the ER Program

Since goals are "closely associated with motivations and attitudes" (Grabe, 2009), to motivate the English for Communication students to read, manageable goals were set by the teacher. Nakamura & Czikszentmihalyi (2009) discussed the concept of flow which Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) applied to L2 motivation. As a motivational concept, flow considers "enjoyment as the main reason for pursuing an activity" (p.89). The 12 characteristics of flow experiences taken from Grabe (2009) are the following:

1. Tasks must have a reasonable chance of being completed.

2. Concentration on the task must be possible

3. The task has clear goals.

4. The task provides immediate feedback.

5. The person has interest in the task

6. Involvement in the task precludes worries and frustrations from ordinary life.

7. The person is able to exercise a sense of control over his / her actions.

8. A concern for self-disappears

9. A sense of duration of time is altered.

10. A sense of accomplishment is felt in the task completion.

11. An increase intrinsic motivation results.

12. The ability to carry out tasks at higher levels of complexity increases.

It has been noted in previous studies that a vast amount of reading is needed for students' L2 skills to improve in a significant way (Nishizawa, Yoshioka and Ichikawa, 2017; Carney, 2016; Storey, Gibson and Williamson, 2005; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Sakai, 2002). Sakai (2002) has previously suggested setting one million words as a milestone. However, Nishizawa et al. found that even one million words was not enough to reach 550 on TOEIC. It would be difficult to expect the English for Communication students to read such vast quantities as the course is not a dedicated ER class and students have other priorities. Therefore, a more reasonable word count based on the students' workloads had to be agreed upon. While ER was still in the trial stages at Reitaku University and with there being little reliable evidence on ER contributing significantly to TOEIC scores, 10,000 words was set as a reasonable entry level goal per semester.

In previous studies, having students read voluntarily has been met with poor results. Van Amesvoort (2016) and De Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok (2013) had great difficulty in their study of implementing ER which involved students with other priorities and offering no credit for their reading. Completing the 10,000-word target of the MReader trial did contribute to 10% of their final grade for the year, and teachers reminded the students regularly. Offering the credit helps to avoid the pitfalls experienced by van Amesvoort (2016) and Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok (2013). This satisfies flow characteristics one, two and three, it also satisfies characteristic six. However, the teacher may need to assist students with signing up. The students will take short quizzes on MReader satisfying characters four and ten. Students will be able to choose the books they like which they find interesting, satisfying characteristics five, seven and eight. The semester lasts 15 weeks, and the students can read the graded readers anytime over that period which satisfies characteristic nine. For characteristic eleven, there is hope that the students will grow a habit of using the library and find further joy in reading. Characteristic twelve can be achieved throughout the course; they will acquire the skills through the English for Communication class plus reading for general comprehension. How the students respond to this theory will be part of an ongoing study.

Reitaku University Teachers' Beliefs on ER

In 2017, research was carried out regarding the belief's teachers have about ER. The research was conducted due to a lack of information in the implementation of ER in their classes. The aim was to get some insight into how teachers felt about ER before launching the MReader trial. The following questions are addressed in this research:

1. What do teachers at Reitaku University believe are the benefits of ER?

2. How are teachers at Reitaku University implementing ER in their classes?

3. What is stopping teachers at Reitaku University from implementing ER in their classes?

Methodology

Before the MReader trial, a survey was designed for the teachers at Reitaku University teaching English Communication Studies, English for Liberal Arts and None majors. It was designed to aid in our understanding of ER among the faculty. The data from that survey presented in this paper shows the skills which teachers believe will be improved as a result of ER. It also reveals how many teachers are doing ER and how they are doing it, but also shows why other teachers are not doing ER. Finally, the survey invites all the participants to define ER to obtain a universal understanding of how the teachers believe should be defined.

Data Collection

The survey was distributed in English via email using the internal mailing system The provider of the online survey was SurveyMonkey. (surveymonkey.com) as it one that the researcher has used in previous studies.

The questions where all quantitative multiple-choice with questions 3, 5 and 6 adding an 'other' option and invited the participant to specify their answer qualitatively in their own words. The final question, question 7, invited the participants to define ER in their own words and is thus qualitative data. Qualitative data is used for this final question as it allowed the researcher to understand how this paper's belief of ER and the teachers' beliefs of ER differs. The qualitative data is given in appendix A of this paper.

Participants

A total of 43 university teachers who teach English for Communication Studies, English for Liberal Arts, and Non-Majors at Reitaku University were invited to take the survey (*N=43*). These teachers were chosen as these would all be teaching the ER course in 2018. Of the total of 43 teachers, 17 participated in the survey *n=17*. Using a confidence level of 95% *(z=1.96)* there is an 19% margin of error. $z \times \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$

The teachers were mixed nationalities including Japanese and non-Japanese teachers. The teachers had no obligation to take the survey, and it was completely anonymous. Coding has been used in this manuscript to protect the identification of the teachers participating. The coding will be the question and number represented by Q# and the teacher and number as T#; for example, Q3T1 being teacher 1's answer to question 3. The full answers given for the qualitative answers can be found in appendix A.

Data Analysis

1. Student Benefits of ER

The first question reveals that all the teachers in this research agree that ER would be beneficial to English for Communication (ECS, ELA or N) students. This can be found in figure 1 where we can see that ER has the support with the participants. The second question revealed that all participants believe that ER would be beneficial to students studying English for Communication.

With figure 1 showing that all the participants support the benefits of ER it is essential to understand what areas those teachers see those benefits lie. Figure 2 shows the areas where the teachers expect language skills to improve through extensive reading. Here the participants could choose more than one response. Out of the seventeen who participated in this question, fifteen believed 'vocabulary' would be expected to improve after ER. Twelve teachers believed 'reading speed' would improve and nine believed 'writing' would improve. 'Grammar' had less than half of the teachers' belief in its benefits from ER with only six. The lowest responses were 'speaking' and 'listening' which got four and one response respectively. 'No improvement' got no response which means that all teachers believe ER will give some improvement. A couple of teachers added that they believed ER benefitted students "reading simply" (Q3T1) and "motivation" (Q3T2).

2. Current Implementation of ER at Reitaku University

Only four of the seventeen teachers who answered Q4 are doing any kind of ER in their classroom (figure 3). Despite only four answering that they do ER in class, seven teachers revealed how they do ER in class (figure 4). Therefore, we can assume that seven teachers are doing ER. However, despite this error in the data collection, the data shows that 39% of teachers who participated are implementing in ER in class. The results showing how these seven teachers implement ER are shown in figure 4. The figures show that a couple of the teachers are using their own material. However, five of these seven teachers are using the university library as a source for ER.

Since 35% of the teachers are not doing ER, it is equally important to understand their reasons. This is especially interesting as it was seen that all teachers agreed ER was beneficial. Figure 5 shows the reasons why thirteen teachers are not implementing ER in their class. The teachers could give more than one response and some teachers answered both 'yes' and 'no' in Q5 and Q6 repeatedly. None of the teachers find ER too time-consuming to teach or grade, but five find it difficult to set up. Three teachers do not know the books in the university library, and one does not know where to find ER books.

The 'other' response encourages the teachers to offer answers in their own words. These six responses reveal that one teacher is concerned that they do not know if the students are doing another teachers ER and does not want to implement more ER on those students. Following that response, two teachers call for a better system of ER implementation. Another teacher believes the selection of ER books in the university library is old and there is a demand for more books for lower level students. One teacher reveals they are not teaching ER, and the last teacher suggests somewhat cryptically "Inertia" (Q6T1), possibly calling for more change and an ER system to be implemented.

3. What does ER mean to you?

Question seven is qualitative and asks the participants to answer in their own words what ER reading means to them. For this question *n=15.* Five of the teachers believe ER is about improvement be it either vocabulary improvement, reading improvement or English in general. Three of the teachers believe ER is about enjoyment. A couple of the teachers believe ER is about both improvement and enjoyment. One teacher believes it is something that needs to be introduced "under certain coordination by the faculty" (Q7T2). Another teacher suggests ER should start as "a small scale" and "develop into an organized program" (Q7T5). Finally, one teacher believes ER can "develop learner autonomy" (Q7T8).

Discussion

1. *What do teachers at Reitaku University believe are the benefits of ER?*

Teachers believed in some way ER could benefit all the suggestions put forward in the questionnaire. Most notable 'Vocabulary', 'Reading' and 'Writing' would improve. However, one teacher suggested "motivation" (Q3T2) was a benefit, and this supports previous research by Yamashita (2013) who suggests ER can increase motivation.

In the qualitative question seven, five of the respondents mentioned reading for pleasure or to enjoy reading. By giving students the freedom to choose their books from the library, it is hoped they choose the books they like. By being clear on the level of the book, students can also enjoy reading books at a suitable level. Therefore, they have the chance to get the best understanding of the book and enjoy reading the content.

Such unanimous positive belief in the benefits of ER cannot be ignored.

2. How are teachers at Reitaku University implementing ER in their classes?

Some teachers are using other resources such as their own material or Xreading. Xreading or own materials should have their merits, and they can be used by teachers. However, with MReader being the standardized platform it means it will be the one used by all teachers in their English for Communication classes. Any other materials would be extra content for the class.

3. What is stopping teachers at the university from implementing ER in their classes?

Although none of the teachers found ER too time consuming to teach or grade, there were five who found it difficult to set up. With the databases of Mreader quizzes and the corresponding database of books in the library, teachers can know the graded readers how many words are in the book and its level in a standardized system. These databases allow teachers to give reading lists to students based on their level and know how many words the students are reading. This takes a lot of the work out of setting up the ER program.

A teacher was concerned that they did not know if students were doing another teachers ER. As a standardized program, MReader also holds a database of students' progress and what titles they have read. The website shows the student and which teacher is teaching that course. Other teachers can log on a see what students are doing other classes. This kind of data can be useful for understanding how much students can read and what other teachers are doing.

With a teacher being concerned about old books in the library, MReader can lead to a solution to that problem. The library can know which books are more popular than others and invest more in popular books. This will make more sense than wasting money buying books which students do not like or cannot read. Hopefully in the future, the library can change its policy and order more than one title of each book.

In question seven, teachers suggested that an ER program should start small and develop under certain coordination by the faculty. This is precisely what has happened with this MReader trial.

Finally, a teacher believed that ER will develop learner autonomy. Teachers can use MReader to create an autonomous motivational ER learning platform in which students can choose the books they desire and read at their leisure.

Conclusion

The research regarding teachers' beliefs is limited by the amount of responses and some unclear answers such as answering yes and no to implementing ER in class. However, this paper has shown that there is indeed a positive feeling towards ER at Reitaku University. Since the university already has a library of graded readers, and with the teachers calling for an ER system which uses the library and offers a easy to use platform, this paper shows that MReader would be the best way for a standardized ER platform. The MReader quiz database can be used with the books already available in the library. The Mreader database can make it easy for teachers and students to find the right levelled book and keep records of word count read.

It should be noted that standardizing a program requires lots of trial and error. English for Communication course is the one being used currently; however, it may be better to move ER to a reading and writing course in the future. Having a standardized program allows this ER to be moved easily.

In this trial, a word count of 10,000 words was settled on. However, some teachers at the university have had recent success with 40,000 words, 50,000 words and 60,000. A trial of varying wordcounts is currently underway, with 60,000 words a year (30,000 a semester) being considered for 2019. Further tweaking of the system will possibly continue indefinitely as new ideas are implemented. Having a good standardized system should allow for this.

Finally, it is the hope that other educators who are looking to implement an ER program consider the benefits of MReader as a way to offer standardization. Every student, teacher and institution is different and only by collecting data, experimenting, and sharing can we understand how to implement a suitable ER system.

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Appendix A:

Qualitative answers to the following questions:

Q3 If you do believe extensive reading would be beneficial to ECS and ELA language students, what areas of language skills would you expect to improve?

Q3T1: Reading simply

Q3T2: Motivation

Q5 If 'yes', how do you implement extensive reading in your class?

Q5T1 I encourage students to read about things that they're interested in. I often give them short 'interviews' on what they've read recently.

Q5T2 Inertia

Q6 If 'No', why not?

Q6T1 Inertia

Q6T2 I don't know how I can review and evaluate their extensive reading works. And, I don't know if other teachers for the same students assign them extensive reading. If anyone does, these students are to be evaluated doubly for the same tasks.

Q6T3 not currently teaching reading skills

Q6T4 Have a common platform of what extensive reading means.

Q6T5 Books in the library are rather old, and I think we need more books for the lower level students.

Q6T6 Don't seem to find the time to organize it systematically

Q7 What does extensive reading mean to you?

Q7T1 Extensive reading will help students pick up incidental vocabulary and structure and can be beneficial in their writing. Motivating students to spend time reading significant amounts of English if their own accord has been successful in only a small percentage of the class.

Q7T2 Stepping into Another World

Q7T3 It must be something very effective to our students. Also, it is something we need to introduce under certain coordination by the faculty. Perhaps we need more FD discussion how to use it in our Enshu classes.

Q7T4 a good way to enjoy English

Q7T5 I think it's good for academic skills in getting their speed up, and for vocabulary building, too. I also think it's positive in developing critical thinking skills and encouraging a love of books.

Q7T5 Should start in a small sacle and then develop into an organized program.

Q7T6 Students read English, understand what they are reading, look up for difficult words they encounter and eventually are able to apply the words in their daily interaction or writing. Extensive reading can be just 15 mins of reading each day but with the above aims.

Q7T7 Improvement

Q7T8 Reading for pleasure….

Q7T9 One way to develop learner autonomy.

Q7T10 Extensive reading helps students improve reading skills.

Q7T11 Vocabulary development

Q7T12 getting learners to read for enjoyment and to develop their skills

Q7T13 reading basically for general understanding and above all for enjoyment

Q7T14 It supplements intensive reading and gives students what they will talk about in a pair activity called "oral book report."

Examining Japanese High School Students' Beliefs about Learning English

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This paper investigates L2 (English) beliefs in Japanese high school students. The aim is to determine areas of L2 learning weakness where teachers can help students improve as learners. In order to determine student's beliefs about learning English, a survey based on the Beliefs About Language Learning Institute (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1988) was administered to 79 Japanese high school students. Results indicate the main areas of weakness are: a lack of self-confidence and learning strategy use, and a potential lack of motivation. Suggestions on how to help students improve in these areas are included.

本稿は、日本人高校生の第２言語（英語）学習に対する学習観を考察する。その目的は、第２言語学習プロセスの弱点を解明し、生徒たちが学習者として成長するのを助けることである。生徒たちの英語学習に対する意識を明らかにするために、高校生 79 名を対象に、Horwitz (1988)の Beliefs About Language Learning Institute (BALLI) に基づくアンケートを実施した。その結果、上達を妨げる要因は、自信の欠如と学習方略の活用不足、および潜在的な学習意欲の低下にあることがわかった。調査結果の分析に加え、これらの問題点改善のための指導案も提示する。

The role of individual learning beliefs in language learners' learning experiences has been researched in second language and foreign language for over three decades since Horwitz's (1988) ground-breaking study introduced the Beliefs About Language Learning Institute (BALLI) as an instrument for measuring learner beliefs. Now, learner beliefs about second or foreign language learning are considered to be a key element in the success (or failure) of a student's mastery of a foreign language (Rifkin, 2000). Benson and Lor (1999, p. 462) conclude that beliefs "can be understood as cognitive resources on which students draw to make sense of and cope with specific content and contexts of learning". In the context of L2 learning, beliefs influence learners' attitudes toward the language (Riley, 1996), its specific nature (White, 2008), the process of acquisition, and their individual goals and expectations (Brown, 2007). Furthermore, researchers have concluded that context (Benson & Lor, 1999; Rifkin, 2000) and nationality (Siebert, 2003; Prudie, Hattie, & Douglas, 1996) can affect learner beliefs. Therefore, considering:

- Learner beliefs influence what students are prepared to do in order to learn an L2 (Ellis, 2008; White, 2008),
- Learner beliefs can hinder or improve the L2 learning process (Horwitz, 1988; Bernat, 2006), and
- Learner beliefs are dynamic and changeable (White, 1999; White, 2003),

learner beliefs are a valuable resource for teachers to help their students improve as L2 learners. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to use the results of a survey administered to Japanese high school students about their beliefs on English language learning. The goal is to determine areas of L2 learning weakness where teachers can help students improve.

The survey is based on the BALLI (Horwitz, 1988) which has been widely used to investigate the beliefs of L2 learners (e.g., Kuntz, 1996a; Yang, 1999; Rifkin, 2000; Bernat, 2006; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Altan, 2006). Although the validity of the BALLI has been criticized (see Kuntz, 1996b), Nikitina and Furuoka

(2006) conclude it is a suitable tool for researching language learning beliefs in different socio-linguistic settings. The survey contains 38 items to assess student beliefs in six areas of L2 learning: 1) language learning difficulty; 2) self-assessed proficiency; 3) language aptitude; 4) nature of language learning; 5) learning strategies; and 6) motivation.

Method

The survey was administered to 79 Japanese high school students (56 female and 23 male) aged between 15 and 18. All of the students have completed at least 3 years of grammar-focussed English language instruction in the public school system. The participants are all in an English intensive stream at their high school and receive an extra 2-4 hours of English instruction per week plus the 6 hours per week all students receive.

The survey was uploaded to an online survey website (www.surveyplanet.com) and students completed it on school tablets. The questions were written in English and Japanese to avoid misunderstanding. The English and Japanese versions of the survey can be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Students read each item and indicated a response from strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. None of the questions were compulsory and some students did not answer all of the questions. There is no single composite score from the survey; rather, responses to all of the items are tallied individually.

Results and Analysis

This section presents the results for each of the survey's six categories. The tables show the full English text of the items and the total number of responses for each option. When discussing results, the totals for 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses are combined, as are the totals for 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' responses.

Difficulty

Items 4, 6, and 14 concern the difficulty of learning English. The responses to these items are reported in Tables 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Table 1: *The Difficulty of Learning English (Item 4)*

		Very difficult	Difficult	Moderately difficult	Easy	Very easy
4.	English is a (……….) language to learn.	12	32	28	7	0

Table 2: *The Difficulty of Learning English (Item 6)*

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6.	I believe that I will be able to speak English very well in the future.	31	25	19	4

Table 3: *The Difficulty of Learning English (Item 14)*

		Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	You can't learn English in 1 hour a day
14.	If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak English very well?	2	26	25	23	3

Regarding the difficulty of learning English, 8.9% of students find English to be an easy or very easy language to learn, 35.4% find it to be moderately difficult, and 55.7% find it to be difficult or very difficult. However, 70.9% of students agree they will be able to speak English very well in the future. Item 14 asks how long it would take to learn English studying one hour a day. 35.4% of the students feel it would only take up to two years to become fluent in English, 31.6% believe it would take 3-5 years, 29.1% believe it would take 5-10 years and 3.8% believe English cannot be learned in one hour a day.

These results indicate an unrealistic expectation on the difficulty and length of time it takes to acquire an L2. Student judgments about the difficulty of language learning are critical to the development of their commitment to it (Rifkin, 2000). Although only 8.9% of students indicated English is an easy or very easy language to learn, 35.4% of them believe they can learn it in less than two years. Horwitz (1988) argues these students will become disappointed with their progress, and become less motivated to learn the L2. Conversely, the 29.1% who believe it takes a very long time to learn English may find that discouraging and cause them to make a minimal effort. This indicates a potential lack of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, learners who hold unrealistic beliefs about language learning are more anxious than those who hold more positive and realistic beliefs (Bernat, 2006).

Finally, although 55.7% of students believe English is a difficult or very difficult language to learn, the majority of students (70.9%) believe they will ultimately be able to speak English well. This indicates optimism and motivation.

Students' Abilities

Item 36 reports the length of time the students have been studying English (Figure 1) and item 38 reports the students' self-evaluation of their English ability (Table 4).

The students have been studying English for 3 to 16 years (with the majority studying for 4 or 6 years). However, only 5 students rate their English ability as high intermediate and none as advanced. The majority of students (46.8%) rate themselves as low intermediate, with 22.8% describing themselves as beginners. Of the 37 students who rate themselves as low intermediate, 35 have been studying English for 4 or more years, and of the 18 students who rate themselves as beginners, all have been studying for 3 or more years. Despite their optimism regarding their ability to speak English very well in the future, these results could indicate a lack of

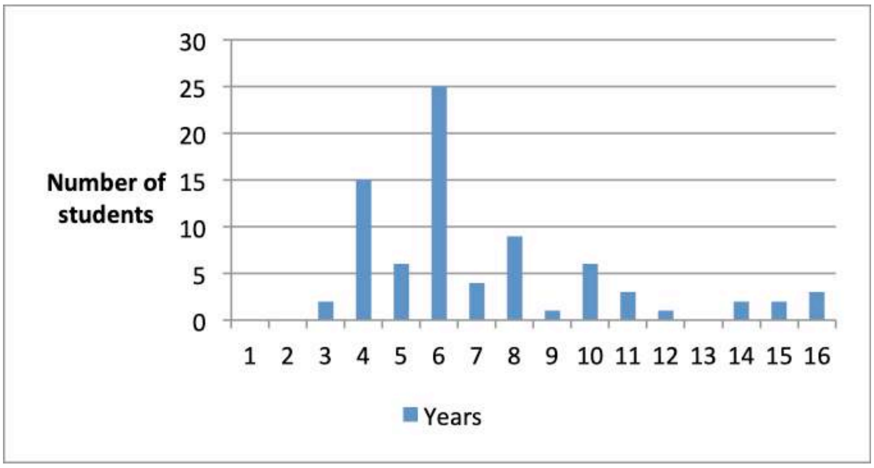

Figure 1. Students' length of English study

Table 4: *Students' Self-evaluated Levels of English*

		Beginner	Low intermediate	Intermediate	High intermediate	Advanced
38.	My level of English is:	18	37	19	5	0

self-confidence.

Table 5: *Aptitude*

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2.	Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	50	28	1	0
15.	I have a special ability for learning English.	2	19	46	12
33.	People in Japan are good at learning foreign languages.	2	15	46	16
34.	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	21	49	7	1

Table 6: *Nature of L2 Learning*

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8.	It is necessary to know about English speaking cultures in order to speak English.	22	50	5	2
11.	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	37	36	6	0
16.	The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary words.	9	48	22	0
20.	The most important part of learning English is learning the grammar.	6	34	38	0
25.	Learning English is different from other school subjects.	15	37	27	0
26.	Learning English is mostly translating from Japanese.	8	14	48	9

Aptitude

Items 2, 15, 33, and 34 relate to student beliefs about a special aptitude for L2 learning. The responses to these items are reported in Table 5

Regarding language aptitude, 99% of students agree that there is a special ability for learning L2s, however, only 27% believe they have this aptitude. Furthermore, 78% believe Japanese people are not good at learning L2s, however, 90% of students agree everyone can learn to speak an L2.

The responses to these items indicate a negative self-assessment of the students' language learning abilities, even though the high percentage of students who believe everyone can learn an L2 indicates the belief that an average ability is adequate to learn a language. This negative assessment is also seen in the low self-assessment of their English skills and indicates a lack of self-confidence.

Nature of Language Learning

Items 8, 11, 16, 20, 25, and 26 concern the nature of the L2 learning process. The responses to these items are reported in Table 6. First, with reference to the role of cultural contact in the language learning process (items 8 and 11), 91.1% of students believe it is necessary to know about English-speaking culture in order to speak English and 92.4% believe it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country. This reflects an understanding of the importance of culture in effective communication (Bernat, 2006).

Second, regarding the view of how English is learned (items 16, 20, 25, and 26), 72.2% of students grammar and 27.8% believe it is a matter of translating from Japanese. However, the majority of students

Table 7: *Learning Strategies*

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7.	It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation.	30	41	7	1
9.	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	0	1	30	48
12.	If I heard someone speaking English I would talk to them so I could practice speaking English.	6	20	43	9
13.	It is OK to guess if you don't know a word in English.	31	44	4	0
17.	It is important to repeat and practice speaking a lot.	58	20	1	0
18.	I feel shy when speaking English with other people.	14	42	18	4
19.	If you are allowed to make mistakes in English in the beginning, it will be hard for you to speak correctly later on.	12	32	25	10
21.	It's important to practice listening (listening to English CDs, TV shows, movies, etc)	59	20	0	0

Table 8: *Motivation*

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I like learning English.	30	42	4	3
5.	Studying for university entrance exams is the most important part of learning English in high school.	11	22	33	13
23.	If I learn to speak English well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	37	31	10	0
27.	If I learn to speak English well, it will help me get a good job.	44	32	2	1
30.	People in Japan feel that it is important to speak English.	21	41	17	0
31.	I would like to learn English because I would like to get to know English speakers better.	23	32	22	1

believe the most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary words, 51.3% think it is learning (65.8%) believe learning English is different from other subjects. Horwitz (1988) argues preoccupations with learning vocabulary words, grammar rules and translation distract learners from more important language tasks such as building communication strategies. These results indicate these students may be investing the majority of their time memorizing new words and grammar rules. Furthermore, students who believe L2 learning consists of rote memorization and translation are unlikely to adopt the strategies associated with successful language learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Therefore, these students may not be using enough effective language learning strategies.

Learning Strategies

Items 7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, and 21 address L2 learning strategies as reported in Table 7.

The great majority of students understand the value of oral repetition (98.7%) and listening practice (100%), however, only 33.3% of students are willing to practice speaking English with English speakers. The great majority (94.9%) also indicated agreement that guessing a word in English is permissible, and 98.7% disagree that you should only speak English if you can speak correctly. However, the majority of students (55.7%) believe mistakes should be corrected for beginning students, and 89.9% stressed the importance of excellent pronunciation. The majority of students (71.8%) reported feeling shy when speaking English.

These results indicate support for communication activities (their willingness to guess and practice speaking), however, the preoccupation with error correction and proper pronunciation may impede some students' participation in communication activities (Horwitz, 1988). Furthermore, their feelings of shyness may prevent students from communicating in English.

Motivation

Items 1, 5, 23, 27, 30, and 31 relate to student motivation for studying English. Responses to these items are shown in Table 8.

The majority of students (83.2%) enjoy learning English, and 87.2% believe they will have many opportunities to use English. Moreover, 96.2% associate learning English with better job opportunities, and 78.5% believe it is important to speak English in Japan. However, 70.5% of students learn English to get to know English speakers more and 41.8% believe the most important part of learning English is to pass their university entrance exam.

The responses indicate this group of students has high levels of motivation to learn English, with higher levels of instrumental motivation than integrative motivation, and much higher levels of intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation.

Discussion

From the analysis it seems students have areas where they can improve as L2 learners. The main areas of weakness found were: a lack of self-confidence and learning strategy use, and a potential lack of motivation. This section outlines some measures the classroom teacher can take to help these students improves as language learners.

Lack of Self-confidence

Students' lack of self-confidence was seen in the low self-assessment of their proficiency, their perceived lack of language aptitude, and their shyness in speaking English. Self-confidence is important because high self-confidence is linked to increased motivation (Saville-Troike, 2012) and increased achievement (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

According to Brown (2001) techniques to promote student self-confidence include using a variety of activities in class so students who are weaker in one area but stronger in another have a chance to show off their abilities; reminding students you believe in them; and having them make lists of their strengths. Furthermore, activities like guessing games, role plays and group work helps lower inhibitions about speaking English in front of others. Incorporating these activities and creating a welcoming and positive learning environment can boost student self-confidence (Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

Effective Use of Learning Strategies

Students may not be using learning strategies enough or effectively as indicated by their responses regarding the importance of translation and memorizing new vocabulary words and grammar rules in learning English, and in their preoccupation with error correction and proper pronunciation.

According to Oxford (1990) effective language strategy use can be taught, and making students aware of the variety of strategies available to them and encouraging them to choose the ones that suit them should be a priority.

Given that 72.2% of students think learning new vocabulary words is important, introducing strategies to improve lexis is a good starting place. Nation (2001) suggests planned review, use of dictionaries and note-taking are all useful strategies to improving lexis retention. To that end, classes should include activities such as making and using vocabulary notebooks or flashcards to promote those strategies. Training can start with simple recording of L1-L2 word pairs, and then move on to include other aspects of word knowledge, such as pronunciation, collocates, roots and derivatives. However, these students should be made aware that although learning new vocabulary is important, being able to use it in conversation is also important. Therefore, speaking activities to use new vocabulary, and guessing activities that encourage students to guess the meaning of new lexis from the context should be included.

Finally, strategies to help students understand the value of errors should be introduced. To do that, Brown (2001) suggests incorporating peer-evaluation, as well as recording students speaking English and having them identify errors, and Ferris (2003) suggests having students make lists of their most common errors and teaching them to edit for these errors in their writing. By encouraging students to see errors as learning opportunities, and teaching students how to assess and self-correct their errors, teachers can help these students become better English learners.

Motivation

Although students all reported high levels of motivation, the survey results revealed two potential areas of weakness. The unrealistic time expectations students have regarding English fluency and their perceived lack of L2 learning aptitude could both lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation. One of the best ways to increase motivation, especially regarding time expectations, is to help learners set realistic goals to manage their ideas on how long it takes learn a language. These goals "should be specific, hard but achievable, accepted by the students, and accompanied by feedback about progress" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 276). Moreover, such goals lead students to use the kind of useful learning strategies that aid learning performance (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Therefore, teaching these students to set weekly goals in class with specific time commitments would help them monitor and become responsible for their progress, and stay intrinsically motivated.

The overwhelming percentage of students who believe a special L2 learning ability exists coupled with the low percentage of students who believe they possess that ability could have a detrimental effect on their motivation. Studies show students are more likely to give up if they ascribe L2 failure to low ability rather than poor effort or insufficient learning strategies (Dörnyei, 2003). By increasing students' self-knowledge through strategies like using peer-evaluation in the class and teaching students to view failures as instruments for self-diagnosis, Brown (2001) argues students can use this self-knowledge to stay motivated.

Additionally, motivation is such an important factor for L2 success (Dörnyei, 1994) and learners' motivations can change or suffer unless they are well-regulated (Ushioda, 2008), that teachers should constantly be teaching students to foster their own motivation. Therefore, periodically asking students about their motivations allows the teacher to both determine which parts of L2 learning are especially valuable for students in order to include activities that foster these aspects (Oxford & Shearin 1994); and encourage students to engage in intrinsically motivating activities that reinforce their enjoyment of learning the language (Ushioda, 2008). For example, the high levels of agreement to items 23 and 27 (which assess students' belief in the benefit of speaking English) indicate these students value the skill of speaking English, and the high levels of agreement to items 8 and 11 (which assess the role of cultural contact in learning English) indicate these students value English-speaking culture. Therefore, including classroom activities that promote speaking, and encouraging students to find and participate in enjoyable English-speaking cultural activities will help students maintain their intrinsic motivation.

Therefore, by reminding students of their goals and why they like studying English; teaching them to monitor their progress and achievements; teaching a variety of learning strategies; and incorporating activities that promote high value skills, teachers can help these students stay motivated while fostering their ability to manage their own motivation.

Concluding Remarks

This paper examined Japanese high school students' beliefs about L2 learning and offered suggestions on how to improve their self-confidence, use of language learning strategies and motivation. Given the impact learner beliefs have on language learning, it is believed that by adopting these suggestions these students could improve as language learners. However, three limitations need to be mentioned. Firstly, this study was carried out with a relatively small group of learners, and it is uncertain whether these findings are applicable to other learners. Secondly, there was an imbalance between female (71%) and male (29%) participants. Thirdly, there are limits to what can be learned about learner beliefs through questionnaire items. Questionnaires do not allow participants to describe the reasons, sources, or behavioral outcomes of their beliefs, nor do they allow them to address beliefs not included in the questionnaire. Further studies could widen the scope of participants and include more male participants as well as include either open-ended questions or interviews in order to provide data qualification.

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Appendix A

Survey on student beliefs on L2 learning (English)

Students read each item and choose one from the following: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ unless otherwise indicated.

1. I like learning English.
2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.
4. English is a (..........) language to learn. (very easy, easy, moderately difficulty, difficult, very difficult)
5. Studying for the university entrance exam is the most important part of learning English in high school.
6. I believe that I will be able to speak English very well in the future.
7. It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation.
8. It is necessary to know about English speaking cultures in order to speak English.
9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
11. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.
12. If I heard someone speaking English I would talk to them so I could practice speaking English.
13. It is OK to guess, if you don’t know a word in English.
14. If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak English very well? (Less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, you can’t learn English in 1 hour a day)
15. I have a special ability for learning English.

16. The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary words.
17. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.
18. I feel timid (shy) when speaking English with other people.
19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in English in the beginning, it will be hard for them to speak correctly later on.
20. The most important part of learning English is learning the grammar.
21. It's important to practice listening (listening to English CDs, TV, movies).
22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.
23. If I get to speak English well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
24. It's easier to speak than understand (listening) English.
25. Learning English is different from other school subjects.
26. Learning English is mostly translating from Japanese.
27. If I learn to speak English well, it will help me get a good job.
28. It's easier to read and write English than to speak and understand (listening) it.
29. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.
30. People in Japan feel that it is important to speak English.
31. I would like to learn English because I would like to get to know English speakers better.
32. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.
33. People in Japan are good at learning foreign languages.
34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.
35. I am (female, male)
36. So far I have been learning English for (......) years.
37. My age when I first started learning English:
38. My level of English is: (beginner, low intermediate, intermediate, high intermediate, advanced)

Appendix B

Survey on student beliefs on L2 learning (Japanese)

１　英語が好きだ。

２　外国語学習を得意とする人はいると思う。

３　ある言語はほかの言語よりも簡単だと思う。

４　英語は、（　　　　）な言語だ。（とても難しい、難しい、まあまあ、簡単、とても簡単）

５　大学入学試験のために勉強することが、高校英語において最も大事なことだ。

６　自分は将来、とても上手に英語を話せるようになると信じている。

７　すばらしい発音で英語を話すことは大切だ。

８　英語を話すためには、英語圏の文化について知ることが必要だ。

９　正しく言えるようになるまでは、英語を使って何も言うべきではない。

１０　すでに外国語を話せる人にとって、また他の外国語を学ぶことは簡単になる。

１１　英語圏の国で英語を学ぶことは一番良い。

１２　英語を話している人を見つけたら、会話の練習のために話しかけに行くと思う。

１３　ある英単語がわからないとき、その意味を推測してみることに問題はないと思う。

１４　もし毎日１時間を英語の勉強に費やしたとすると、その人がとても上手に英語を話せるようになるまでにどのくらいの期間がかかると思いますか。（１年未満、１～２年間、３～５年間、５～１

０年間、毎日１時間英語を勉強することはできない）

１５　わたしは英語を学ぶのが得意だ。

１６　英語学習において一番大切なことは、英単語を覚えることだ。

１７　スピーキングにおいて、繰り返し声に出したり練習したりすることは大切だ。

１８　他の人と英語で話をするとき、少しおどおどしたり恥ずかしいと感じたりする。

１９　英語を学び始めた頃に間違えた英語を使うことを許されていれば、後になって正しい英語を話すことは難しくなると思う。

２０　英語学習において最も大切なことは、英文法を学ぶことだ。

２１　リスニングの練習をすることは大切だ。（英語の CD やテレビ、映画などの音声を通して。）

２２　女性のほうが、男性よりも外国語を学ぶのが得意だ。

２３　英語を上手に話せるようになったら、英語を話すたくさんの機会ができると思う。

２４　英語を聞き取ることよりも、話ことのほうが簡単だ。

２５　英語学習は、学校の他の教科とは違っている。

２６　英語学習は、ほとんど日本語を英語に訳す作業ばかりだ。

２７　英語で話せるようになれば、それは良い仕事を得ることにつながると思う。

２８　英語を読んだり書いたりすることは、話したり理解したりする（聞き取ったりする）ことよりも簡単だ。

２９　数学や理科に強い人は、外国語を学ぶことには弱いと思う。

３０　日本の人々は、英語を話すことは大切だと感じている。

３１　英語を話す人ともっと知り合いたいので、私は英語を学びたいと思っている。

３２　一か国語以上の外国語を話す人は、とても頭が良いと思う。

３３　日本の人々は、外国語を学ぶのが上手だ。

３４　外国語での会話のしかたは、だれでも学ぶことができると思う。

３５　私は（女性、男性）です。

３６　これまで私は（　　　）年間、英語を学んできました。

３７　英語を学び始めたときの年齢は：

３８　私の英語レベルは：　初心者、準中級者、中級者、中上級者、上級者

Reflective Practice through Duoethnography

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This paper will draw from original research to advocate for the emerging methodology of duoethnography as a new approach to add to the reflective practice repertoire. Duoethnography utilizes dialogic communication to gain insights into the nuances and complexities of individual experiences. In this paper, we first share details of our duoethnography research project, including a dialogue excerpt, to discuss different aspects of our teacher identities as they relate to our professional trajectories. We will then illustrate how undertaking this project has impacted on our teacher identities and practices as a result. Finally, we will also encourage other teachers to adopt a duoethnographic approach to aid in professional development through reflective practice.

本論文では近年注目されているデュオエスノグラフィーが反省的実践のレパートリーとして有効な方法論であることを独自の研究の結果を通じて報告する。デュオエスノグラフィーは対話的コミュニケーションを用い、個人の経験のニュアンスや複雑な側面への洞察力を得ることを目的としている。本研究では筆者のデュオエスノグラフィーのプロジェクトを通じて語学教師としてのアイデンティティーの様々な面がどのようにキャリアの軌道と関連しているかを実際のデータからの抜粋例を含め、議論する。また、このプロジェクトが結果として教師の信念と実践にどのような効果をもたらしたかを報告する。最後に、デュオエスノグラフィーのアプローチが反省的実践として専門的能力開発を促進するものであるという論点を踏まえ、更なる語学教師による活用を奨励する。

Reflective practice has been an essential component of professional development in the educational field for several decades. However, until relatively recently, reflective practice has often been carried out by individual teachers on an ad hoc basis and in teacher education programmes via checklists and unidirectional trainer feedback (Mann & Walsh, 2017). This perfunctory approach to professional development fails to make use of empirical data and does not take into account the 'social' nature of reflective practice and teacher development. By linking professional development to Vygotskyian (1978) sociocultural theory in which a mediator provides scaffolding and support in order to aid development, Mann and Walsh (2017) stress the social and dialogic nature of reflective practice, asserting that "new understandings might be derived first through discussion with another professional and then internalized following reflection and consideration at a slight distance" (p. 11).

In this paper we first review reflective practice from an historical perspective, both in general terms and also within the specific context of the ELT (English language teaching) field. We then go on to introduce the qualitative research method of duoethnography, which utilizes dialogue within a multiperson, social, dynamic setting, and make the case for its use in reflective practice for ELT professionals. We go on to offer and example dialogue excerpt from our own research and explain the impact that the project has had on our identities as teachers and our teaching practices.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice was first promoted by the educational philosopher John Dewey. He refers to reflective thinking as “the kind of thinking that consists of turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration” (1933, p. 3). In order to engage in reflective thinking effectively, he emphasizes the difference between regular (and random) thoughts and reflective thoughts. He claims that on one hand, our daily, random thoughts can be chaotic and unanalyzed, which can often cause people to jump to conclusions. He points out that this action unintentionally leads individuals to adhere to authority, which makes them unable to advance in a productive way. On the other hand, reflective thoughts require a higher level of thinking, such as critical thinking and involves specific steps toward a concrete goal, utilizing specific evidence and proof. Therefore, by doing so, individuals would be able to challenge authority and grand narratives, thus bringing about productive changes in their actions and behaviors (Dewey, 1933). Dewey also mentions that although his model of reflective practice largely entails cognitive aspects, it is also imperative for individuals to retain certain attitudes, including being open-minded, responsible, and whole-hearted (Farrell, 2015).

Another philosopher, Donald Schon (1983), based on Dewey’s philosophy, reiterates the significance of reflective practice and also advocates that teacher educators and teacher trainees need to include more critical forms of reflection. He illustrates two important approaches to reflective practice; reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action entails reflecting on a specific issue on the spot, as it unfolds (Chien, 2013). It aims to construct a new theory and approach based on the unique situation in the moment. The second approach, reflection-on-action refers to reflection on an event after the fact and focuses on how our previous knowledge has led to this situation and how it could be changed for the future. Lastly, a third model of reflection, reflection-for-action, was later incorporated (Killion & Todnem, 1991), where teachers have specific intentions to direct future changes in the classroom. These three approaches to reflection are useful tools for teachers to employ so that they can analyze where their teaching belief comes from, which, in turn, helps them reflect their current status quo, and strategically build valuable development in their actions and behaviors for the future.

Reflective Practice in ELT

Reflective practice has gained momentum in the field of ELT because of the overall shift in teacher education from knowledge-transmission style to more teacher-centered style where teachers’ knowledge, teachers’ identity, and teachers’ narratives are brought to the forefront (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Kanno & Stuart, 2011). One of the pioneering authors in this field, Thomas Farrell, has brought the aspect of reflective practice to the fore for teacher education and professional development in TESOL in order to encourage language teachers to be reflective practitioners, where teachers know what they are doing in the classroom and are able to practice what they believe in as teachers (Farrell, 2004, 2015). He also provides a five-step comprehensive framework for any level of language teacher to conduct evidence-based and data-based reflective practice (Farrell, 2015).

Another book by Mann and Walsh (2017) aims to review and move forward with fresher ways of engaging with reflective practice. They also focus on the data and evidence-based approach to reflective practice but provide more specific methods and examples in detail. They also advocate for a more collaborative approach to reflective practice rather than it being done individually, and promote more dialogic and spoken forms of reflective practice instead of conventional written forms. These renewed characteristics have played a significant and active role in our current project, especially employing duoethnography as a methodology.

Duoethnography for Reflective Practice

Duoethnography is an emerging qualitative research methodology in which two (or more) researchers use dialogue and narrative to juxtapose their own lived experiences in order to shed new light on given topics and to interpret and reinterpret their own identities and practices (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Given the focus on individual experience, duoethnography can be seen as the perfect complement to reflective practice (Sawyer & Norris, 2016) as it builds on its principles, as they have been outlined above, whilst also answering some of the criticisms of reflective practice as it exists in its current form in the field of ELT (Mann & Walsh, 2013, 2017).

In duoethnography, researchers engage in recorded dialogues around a topic. These recordings are then transcribed and coded by more specific emergent themes and the transcripts are then reconstructed into semi-fictional dialogues to form cohesive narratives (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). As Sawyer and Norris (2016) state, "part of the difficulty in acknowledging the complexity of practice may stem from the lack of an enquiry language to access the relationship between self and practice" (p. 2). Duoethnography provides space for this language to emerge between two researchers through mutual trust, the courage to be vulnerable (Norris & Sawwyer, 2017), open-mindedness, and wholeheartedness, as recommended by Dewey (1933) as essential ingredients of reflective practice (Brown & Barrett, 2017).

Another characteristic of duoethnography is its focus on analysing the actual lived experience of the researcher, a form of 'reflection-on-action' (Schon, 1983), allowing researchers to examine their own practice from within the experience, "but through the eyes of one distant to it - to provide a new a destabilizing lens" (Sawyer & Norris, 2016. p.3). As such, duoethnography encourages researchers to reach far back into their own identity construction to examine their own current beliefs and practices, which seem natural and taken-for-granted, but all contain underlying sources and reasonings.

It is also provides a way to engage in 'reflection for action' (Killion & Todnem, 1991) as examining the past through the lens of “anOther” allows us reconceptualize our perspectives and actions (Norris & Sawyer, 2017, p. 1). This can be on the practical day-to-day classroom level, but can also encompass our own fundamental deep-seated beliefs about teaching and the role of education.

The final area of reflective practice that is addressed by the use of duoethnography is Dewey's concept of reflective practice as a challenge to authority and the disruption of the status quo of our everyday existence as teachers. This is concurrent with one of the main tenets of duoethnography as outlined by Sawyer & Norris (2013), which is that it should seek to disrupt grand narratives and question accepted wisdom.

Duoethnography for Reflective Practice in ELT

Duoethnography also aligns well with engaging in reflective practice in the ELT field. It fits Farrell's (2004, 2015) overall framework of making use of empirical data (the reconstructed transcripts) that provides a focused, data-led approach to reflective practice. It also answers Mann & Walsh's (2017) call for a dialogic approach that takes a free-flowing spoken form and gives reflective practitioners the opportunity to engage in deep reflection, rather than a surface, tickbox approach that passes for reflection in many teacher education courses.

As Brown and Barrett (2017) state in regard to the use of duoethnography for reflective practice: "Within our personal curriculum we become engaged with ourselves through the other as we interrogate our past in light of the present with hope to transform our future" (p. 87).

Project Overview

The initial idea for the project presented in this paper came about through a mutual interest in critical issues and concepts of identity that we discovered we had after Luke interviewed Yuzuko for a separate research project that he was involved in. Our original intention was simply to take the template of duoethnography and utilize it as an exercise in ‘reflection-on-action’ type reflective practice.

Data collection consisted of six face-to-face sessions, amounting to just under 11 hours of conversation. We each came into the sessions with an initial list of possible discussion topics that reflected our own personal interests. For Yuzuko these included educational background, previous work experience, gender, language, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class/family and age, whilst Luke’s list added social class, native-speakerism and culture. However, due to the nature of duoethnography, these initial topic lists were often abandoned shortly after the beginning of the session with conversation going in a number of different directions.

These conversations were recorded and analysed for prominent themes, with the themes that finally emerged covering two broad areas: our identity as teachers and our teaching practices. Under the general heading of ‘identity as teachers’, topics covered included: our career paths, native-speakerism, race, gender, sexuality, future plans and emergent bilingual/bicultural identity. For teaching practices, the topics discussed included: beliefs VS practices, heteronormativity, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) issues, critical issues, English-only policies, feminist pedagogy and queer theory. (We cover issues surrounding gender, sexuality, race and native-speakerism in more detail within the framework of intersectionality in a forthcoming paper [Anonymous, in press]).

In the following sections we present a short excerpt from our data and narrate the impact that the dialogue and the reflections that it engendered subsequently had on our identities as teachers and our teaching practices.

Dialogue

In the following excerpt, after coming out to Luke for the first time as a reaction to what Yuzuko perceived as a heteronormative discourse in the discussion, we went on to discuss our experiences (or lack thereof) of discussing these issues as part of lesson content and creating inclusive classrooms.

***Yuzuko:** I don’t know if I told you, but I’m actually bisexual.*

***Luke**: Right, I didn’t know.*

***Yuzuko**: Well, I don’t really talk about it with anyone at work. I think I try to be as heterosexual as possible.*

***Luke**: Hmm… do you think if there were another gay or bisexual teacher here that you would be more open?*

***Yuzuko**: Probably, yeah. But even when I was in the States, I have to say I didn’t really openly talk about my sexual orientation to straight people… because in my experience, they either do not have the understanding of bisexuality or hold hypersexualized misconceptions about it, which was made worse because of the fact that I am an Asian woman, so I just didn’t really want to bother.*

***Luke**: Do you ever talk about these issues in the classroom?*

***Yuzuko**: That is something I would love to do, to explore, because I’m sure it’s a relatable topic to a lot of students whether they are LGBTQ members or not. But, when I came back, I was quite surprised that people are not as homophobic in the classroom, they kind of casually joke about each other, and it’s not taken too seriously.*

***Luke**: Maybe it’s because they don't think of homosexuality or bisexuality as a real thing. It’s like a joke. For example, I’ve heard male students calling their friends “gay” in order to make fun of each other. I’m sure it’s the case in a lot of countries, but it seems like they just don’t have any understanding of these kinds of issues.*

***Yuzuko**: Do you think that prevents them from coming out?*

***Luke**: Yeah, definitely. And I think that as teachers, we need to make it part of the content of our lessons. For example, I have discussions about things like gay marriage in my classes. It depends who you speak to, but most people basically say that it shouldn’t be allowed.*

***Yuzuko**: Oh wow, really! I don’t think I can take it, I think I would freak out if I did that!*

***Luke**: I deliberately put in these kinds of topics. I suppose part of me just wants to get a reaction out of them. So, I’ll often talk about married gay friends and things like that because I want to see how they react.*

***Yuzuko**: I think in the past few years teaching here, maybe I’ve given up a lot of things that I originally wanted to do in class. It’s maybe partially because of the students’ limited level of communicative competence in English, but I think I just keep choosing really easy ways and that has made me become more like an entertainer. And I don’t like it, but at the same time, students seem to like that more.*

***Luke**: I think you are right, but I also think it’s possible to get a balance. I went on a similar journey to you, having these ideals and then getting in the classroom and realizing first of all that they often didn’t have the skills to do it, and second, that they didn’t seem to care. I hope this doesn’t come across like I am patronizing my students, but for example, I will say something like “What did you do last weekend?” and I’ll consciously try to say something casually like “I had dinner with a gay couple that I know”, just something to make them think. I try to sneak it in, but I think it’s probably not enough.*

Impact on Our Identity and Teaching Practice

Yuzuko’s Case

Identity as a teacher

Some of the topics that we discussed the deepest throughout this project were regarding gender and sexuality. In a working environment where these topics would be considered controversial, I found juxtaposing our life narratives pertaining to these topics insightful and it helped me reconstruct my identity in relation to these aspects of teacher identity. One of the most significant impacts on my identity as a language teacher is that this project helped me heighten my awareness of my self-identification as a bisexual, bilingual, bicultural Japanese woman. As it shows at the beginning of the excerpt, I came out as bisexual for the first time at work as we discussed heteronormativity and LGBTQ issues not only in ELT but also in society in general. Since then, I have found myself more open and honest about my bisexuality both toward my students and coworkers. Although I do not consider my or anyone's sexual orientation to be a topic of classroom discussion, I have started to recognize it as an important part of who I am as a language teacher along with other more pertinent social categories such as gender and ethnicity. In addition, although I had regarded myself as an advocate for social justice and equity before, I had not been able to find a way to incorporate critical contents into my lessons. This discussion made me realize that utilizing feminist pedagogy implicitly in conducting lessons was important, but not sufficient. This realization gave me opportunity to critically reflect where the difficulty that I experienced stemmed from and what I could do to make my lessons more critically-oriented. In the end, this collaborative dialogue and self-exploration afterwards have fundamentally helped me shift the way in which I prepare for my lessons so that my teaching philosophy and beliefs could correspond with my actual teaching practice, taking into account critical beliefs such as what I want to achieve through a lesson and how I hope it will help my students in a long run.

Teaching practice

One significant shift in my teaching practice is the strategic use of my first language, Japanese, and translanguaging. Although English-only policy has been implemented in the program that I work at, our dialogue has brought a variety of changes into my language choice. Not only has it helped my teaching become more efficient and productive, my decision has helped in building a more tightly-knit learning community by choosing to build more rapport with my students through our mutual first language. Additionally, I have started to explicitly teach gender-specific aspects of English grammar and vocabulary which reflect critical feminist values such as gender-neutral pronouns and progressive labeling for relationship status, in order not to reinforce societal assumptions of heterosexuality in our daily conversations. Lastly, this discussion has helped me overcome my hesitation to incorporate more critical contents and discussion topics into my classes, especially in terms of English language, so that students have more opportunity to reflect on their language learning experience by critically co-examining with their classmates questions such as why they learn English, why it matters, and where the importance comes from. It is obvious that these direct and indirect impacts on my teacher identity and teaching practice are not the end result and I believe they will continue to affect my identity and teaching as a process in the future.

Luke's Case

Identity as a teacher

For me, the 'reflection for action' instigated by this (and other) conversation(s) took a practical approach. The final clause of this excerpt: "but I think it's probably not enough" stayed with me as I engaged in reflective journal writing (Farrell, 2015) later that same evening. The following day I set up a Wordpress blog in order to explore issues in critical ELT that I was interested in in more depth, followed by my first Twitter account a few days after. This had the follow-on impact of connecting me with the wider ELT world and bringing me into a community of like-minded teachers and researchers that I had hitherto largely avoided. It also helped old acquaintances and colleagues to see me in a new light as a serious researcher, which led to increased communication and subsequent research collaboration. Furthermore, although the thought had been at the back of my mind for a short time before this, this realisation that my commitment to exploring these issues was "not enough" prompted me to undertake formal postgraduate study in order to explore the issues of identity that this project had brought to the surface.

Teaching practice

In terms of teaching practice, as a direct result of this reflection (and others) I have become more aware of diversity issues in the classroom and created a complete critical English course. Awareness of diversity is reflected in the wording that I use in my interaction with students and the worksheets that I provide in class. For example, as briefly touched upon in the above dialogue extract, being aware of heteronormativity and gender stereotypes in pronoun choice and examples led to me adopting a more neutral and less gendered daily classroom discourse. In addition to this, and again as recognition that simply "sneaking in" critical issues was "not enough", I requested to teach an advanced elective course. I used this opportunity to create a complete 30 lesson course dedicated to critical issues. The process of creating and teaching this course has also spilled into my other classes and the previous off-hand classroom comments as identified in the dialogue excerpt above has been replaced by a more structured approach to introducing issues pertaining to race, gender, sexuality and other critical issues into classroom discourse. Also, just as Yuzuko reports strategic use of her L1 (Japanese) in the classroom as a result of the reflections of this research project, it prompted me to be more confident in employing my L2 (Japanese) in my own lessons. As well as adding an extra dimension to my classroom repertoire, it has also affected the way I see myself (and perhaps how the students see me) in terms of my teacher identity as a 'native speaker' and stereotypical notions of monolingualism that often accompany such categorisation (Ellis, 2016).

Closing

As is clear from the examples above that reveal changes in our teacher identity and teaching practice, duoethnography as a tool for reflective practice signals fruitful possibility of significant transformation as language teachers. However, we recognize that not all teachers may be comfortable sharing their histories and lived experiences in the intimate and revealing manner which duoethnography demands, which can be seen as a limitation of the methodology. While we would like to encourage teacher educators and other language teachers to utilize duoethnography to become reflective practitioners (Farrell, 2015), we would also like to emphasize the significance of reflexivity and criticality in our duoethnographic dialogues. It is our hope that collaborative dialogue through duothnography will be a powerful catalyst for many language teachers to critically connect their lived experiences with wider social contexts which can lead to potential changes for the purpose of social justice and equity in the ELT field.

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Changing Role of the English Course of Study

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A nationwide long-term English Education Reform Plan, led by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) accelerated in 2014. It aims to enhance learners' four English language skills and develop communication ability to response the globalisation (MEXT, 2014). As a survey in 2014 shows that learners first start to feel being poor at English between the first half of the 1st year and the latter half of the 2nd year in Junior High school, reform of the English education at this level is crucial. The English section of the new Course of Study at Junior High School level (MEXT, 2017a) underwent remarkable changes. Key features of the new curriculum guidelines for English education at Junior High school include putting a stronger emphasis on learners' attainment of practical targets which, as argued here, will enhance learners' motivation, encourage students to take an active role in more learner-centered classes, and offer learners opportunity to improve their thinking ability to tackle the issues related to pertinent and relevant social topics.

文部科学省は世界のグローバル化に対応するため 2014 年から長期にわたる様々な英語教育改革に取り組んでいる。ある調査によると、苦手と感じる最初の時期が、中学 1 年生の前半から中学 2 年生の後半であることなどから、本稿では、特に中学校の学習指導要領に注目する。2017 年に改訂された学習指導要領では、例えば、学習者は自身の英語運用能力上達を確認することで動機づけが進み、さらに、学習者の中心の授業運営、関連のある、社会的な課題を扱うことで考える能力を強化、英語学習の包括的な向上が期待される。

The MEXT commenced implementation of the "English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization" (MEXT, 2013) in 2014 to improve the educational environment corresponding to globalisation from the elementary to junior/high school education stages. To steer this long-term project to success, the revision of the English section of the Course of Study, which is a governmental national curriculum standard play an important role.

A survey in 2014 by Benesse (Benesse, 2014) shows interesting results. For instance, the amount of writing and speaking activities in class reaches its peak at 2nd year in Junior High School and that learners first start to feel being poor at English from the first half of the 1st year to latter half of the 2nd year in Junior High school. It is therefore important to review the English Education at Junior High School level in particular.

The English section of the new Course of Study at Junior High School level (MEXT, 2017a) changed remarkably. Three key features of the new curriculum guidelines for English education at junior high school include putting a stronger emphasis on learners' attainment of practical targets which will enhance learners' motivation, encourage students to take an active role in more learner-centred classes, and offer learners opportunity to improve their thinking ability to tackle the issues related to pertinent and relevant social topics.

The Gap between the Government's New Target Levels and Learners' Actual Levels

Despite the various efforts to improve English language ability of Japanese young learners over the past years, it has been argued that sufficient improvement has not yet been seen in the English abilities of learners in junior high schools (MEXT, 2015). For instance, the Government expected that 50% of students at junior highy schools would pass the Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) Grade 3 test, which is equivalent to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) – A1 or above level, but according to surveys conducted by MEXT since FY2011, only 34.7% of students had either 'passed' or 'probably passed' the target level in FY2014. Nonetheless, this was an increase of 2.5 points from the previous year.

Ongoing English Education Reforms

Since 2014, the English education as a whole is undergoing a significant process of various reforms in Japan. This section briefly describes main points of the ongoing English education reofrms at each level: elementary, junior high, high school and university entrance exam.

Reforms at Elementary school level

At the elementary school level, foreign language activity classes for 5th- and 6th-graders have been compulsory (35 class hours per year) since FY2011. From FY2020, the grade level of students will be lowered, and thus foreign language activity classes will become mandatory for 3rd- and 4th-graders. At this stage, the main focus will be on listening and speaking. For 5th- and 6th-graders, English will be upgraded to a formal subject, and will be involving 70 class hours per year. Approximately, there will be two English classes per week for 40 weeks which is 200 school days in a year. In addition to listening and speaking, students will also learn reading and writing skills (MEXT, 2016).

Reforms at Junior High School Level

MEXT officially revealed the new Course of Study at junior high school level in March 2017. Specifically, the reform plan aims to ensure that learners at Junior High Schools nurture the ability to understand familiar topics, carry out simple information exchanges, and describe familiar matters in English. Each school is expected to set concreate objectives, and practice English communication in meaning full contexts. In order to make a smooth transition to the English education at high School Level, the new Course of Study states that English classes are to be conducted in English in principle. For the number of English class hours in an academic year will remain the same at 140.

Reforms at High School Level

New Course of Study for high school is scheduled to be introduced in stages from FY2022. The new guidelines require "English Communication I" as the compulsory subject, . They newly introduce elective subjects which are expected to promote learners' skills to understand and convey information and their opinions appropriately (equivalent to B1 level of CEFR).

New University Entrance Exam System

In order to realise this drastic reform in English education, the university entrance exam system will also be reformed. As of yet, there remain some specific points to be finalised. The current National Center Test, which is a multiple-choice test, will be abolished in FY2020. At this point, a new unified exam system will start. This new system will measure all four basic language skills (including speaking skills for interactions and presentations). Individual universities can choose either the Common Test for University Admissions which will be available from FY2020 (selection for admission for the FY2021) to FY2023, or/and some designated private-sector English tests, such as the TEAP, GTEC, STEP, TOEIC, and IELTS. In the case of private-sector English tests, the test companies will send the test results to the National Center for University Entrance Examinations, and the centre will pass on the test results to universities on behalf of the test takers (National Center for University Entrance Examinations, 2017).

Course of Study

This section explains the backgound, how the objectives and content of school courses are set. The first Course of Study was tentatively introduced in 1947. Since 1958, Courses of Study have been announced under the name of the Education Minister. They have been revised approximately every 10 years since then.

The enforcement regulations of the School Education Act stipulate the standard number of classes for subjects taught at elementary and junior high school over each year. Thus, Course of Study have a legally binding power in relation to compulsory education. Schools involved in compulsory education are required to refer to and abide by them, regardless of whether the public or private.

Course of Study sets the objectives and content for each subject taught at elementary, lower, and high school. The Course of Study for junior high school includes the following subjects: national language, sociology, mathematics, science, music, art, health and physical education, technical arts and home economics, and foreign languages. Chapter 9 of the Course of Study focuses on learning foreign languages, but in fact, is mainly about learning the English language. Individual schools design their own curriculum to reflect the relevant Course of Study at junior high school level.

The Course of Study for English at Junior High Schools

Along with the changes in various educational stages, the course of study for junior high school has been revised accordingly. MEXT also issued an explanatory guide (MEXT, 2017b) as a supplementary guideline for foreign languages which was mainly about learning English. As this is not required under any specific laws, the explanatory guide has no legally binding power.

MEXT revises Course of Study based on reports submitted by the Central Council for Education (Benesse, 2008). As for Course of Study revising process, MEXT and the Central Council for Education undertake the main roles and they usually spend substantial time making revisions.

Schedule for Implementation of the New Guideline

Regarding the schedule of implementation, the new guideline for junior high school is scheduled to be introduced in stages from fiscal 2018 and are set to be fully implemented from FY2021 (Figure 1).

Comparisons between the Old and New Objectives

To better understand the aims of the ongoing reform of English education, it is useful to compare the objectives for the current and the new Course of Study for English at ljunior high school level.

Main Objectives of Learning English in the 2008 Course of Study

The objectives (MEXT, 2008) are set under four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing as follows:

Figure 1: *Schedule for Implementation of the New Guideline Based on MEXT (2017c)*

<table>
<tr><td>Fiscal Year</td><td>2018</td><td>2019</td><td>2020</td><td>2021</td><td>2022</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Elementary School</td><td colspan="2">Transition period</td><td colspan="3">Full implementation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Texts to be authorised</td><td>choose+ provide texts</td><td>Start using new texts</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Junior High School</td><td colspan="3">Transition period</td><td colspan="2">Full implementation</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Texts to be authorised</td><td>choose +provide texts</td><td>Start using new texts</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">High School</td><td></td><td colspan="3">Transition period</td><td>Start of implementation in stages</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Texts to be authorised</td><td>choose +provide texts</td><td>Start using new texts</td></tr>
</table>

1) To enable students to understand the speaker's intentions when listening [emphasis added] to English.

2) To enable students to enable to talk [emphasis added] about their own thoughts using English.

3) To accustom and familiarise students with reading [emphasis added] English and to enable them to understand the writer's intentions when reading English.

4) To accustom and familiarise students with writing [emphasis added] in English and to enable them to write about their own thoughts using English.

The Main Objectives of Learning English in the 2017 Course of Study

On the contrary, in the 2017 Course of Study for English at junior high school, the objectives are described in more detail. The objectives are listed under five basic language skills. Each of the five language skills lists concrete objectives in the form of, for example, "the student is to become capable of ~" which are actually concrete CEFR Can-Do list.

These learning attainment targets can be used as an indicator for what required in English learning and for evaluation, and also present a mean to integrate teaching and evaluation. Each school decides upon their own objectives by referring to the stated objectives, the contents of the Course of Study, and so on. This process helps instructors to improve their classes according to their students' specific needs. The main aims (MEXT, 2017b, pp.17-29) of each skill can be summarised and translated as follows.

In terms of listening skills, the main aims are to become capable of identifying and comprehending a). the necessary information, b) the outline of discussions about daily topics if the speaker speaks clearly, and c). The key points of short explanations about social topics.

For reading, the main aims are to become capable of a) reading about daily topics which are written in simple phrases and sentences or short sentences, b) understanding necessary information or understanding the outline, and c) catching the key points of short sentences written in simple phrases and sentences about social topics.

As for speaking (interaction), the main aims are to become capable of a) talking to others spontaneously using simple phrases and sentences about the topics the learner has an interest in, b) organising content of facts or the learner's thoughts about daily topics to convey these to others, and respond to questions from others, and c) exchanging with simple phrases and sentences learners' thoughts, feelings and its reasons about social topics.

For speaking (presentation), the main aims are to become capable of a) speaking spontaneously using simple phrases and sentences about the topics the learner has an interest, b) organising content about daily topics and speaking about this using simple phrases and sentences, and c) speaking about thoughts, feelings, and the reasons for these, using simple phrases and sentences.

Finally, for writing, the main aims are to become capable of a) writing about daily topics using simple phrases and sentences or short sentences, b) organising content about daily topics and writing about this using simple phrases and sentences, and c) writing about thoughts, feelings, and the reasons for these, using simple phrases and sentences.

Three Key Features of the Objectives of the 2017 Course of Study

There are three key features of the objectives in the English section of the new Course of Study for ljunior high schools. Key features of the new curriculum guidelines for English education at junior high school include putting a stronger emphasis on learners' attainment of practical targets which, will enhance learners' motivation, encourage students to take an active role in more learner-centred classes, and offer learners opportunity to improve their thinking ability to tackle the issues related to pertinent and relevant social topics.

Goal Setting Theory

Locke and Latham presented a goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2006, p.265) which proposes that "specific, high (hard) goals lead to a higher level of task performance than do easy goals or vague, abstract goals such as the exhortation to "do one's best"". The term "goal" can be defined as "attaining a specific standard of proficiency on a task, usually within a specified time limit" (Locke, Shaw, Saari & Latham, 1981, p.130). For the second language (L2) learners, their ultimate goals would be to acquire the target language and to communicate with others through the language. For those L2 learners who spend more than several years to attain a basic knowledge of the target language, that is to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) environment, setting a specific short-term goal would be particularly important.

Furthermore, Dörnyei (2001) explains that goals are not only outcomes to aim for, but also standards by which students can evaluate their own performance and which mark their progress. He also states that “Proximal goal-setting also contributes to the enhancement of intrinsic interest through favourable, continued involvement in activities and through the satisfaction derived from sub-goal attainment. Attainable sub-goals can also serve as an important vehicle in the development of the students' self-confidence and efficacy (Dörnyei, 1994, p.276)”. Thus, these lists of attainment learning targets in the 2017 Course of Study should help enhance the motivation of learners. The associated attainment lists should also encourage learners to express desires, such as, “I want to be able to ~”, or “I aim to be able to do ~”.

In addition, the new version of the Course of Study will offer learners greater autonomy and confidence, which should enhance their motivation. These attainment learning targets should not promote competition among classmates, but instead rather encourage achievement as, with sufficient effort, they are obtainable. Therefore, it can be expected that learners will continue to try learning English after they finish school.

Discussion

As stated above, one of the main features of the objectives is that the new Course of Study for Egnlish education at junior high school contain lists of attainment learning targets, meaning that the new guidelines help learners identify what they need to strive for. While some kinds of tests could act as goals for learners, there may be test-takers for whom motivation is impaired rather than boosted through their comparison with others. That said, attainment lists, in general, encourage achievement because, with sufficient effort, the standards are obtainable. And setting specific goals may be more effective than making vague goals for people to take action (Lockke & Latham, 1990).Thus, using specific and concrete CEFR Can-Do list can be a very effective way to enhance learners’ motivation as each school tailermaid such list according to the students’ level.

Furthermore, the new version will allow instructors to place a greater emphasis on learners’ substantial targets and this could lead to more learner-centred classes. The content of the new Course of Study focuses more on the practical use of English than on preparation for university entrance exams. The changes in the entrance exam system, which in the near future will require learners to demonstrate a balanced acquisition of four key skills, will be significantly influenced by the new Course of Study. In addition, comprehensively acquiring four key language skills will help learners to develop their communication abilities so that they can practice conveying their thoughts and opinions to one another as they would in a real-life situation. It will be also an essential skill for learners to enhance their ability to identify problems and try to solve them through discussions with peers. As Japanese learners tended to be passive in teacher-centred class styles, active learning will be extremely beneficial for them.

Finally, learners are expected to understand basic information about social topics and exchange their views in English. Therefore, the new guideline promotes learners’ English learning while broadening their visions. It is both useful and beneficial for young learners to develop an interest in social and global issues and to have time to think independently about them. Thus, learners gain the benefit of coming into contact with different ideas and ways of thinking, and to appreciate the need to respect foreigners and foreign cultures. Learning the contents of other subjects while being instructed in English may have a positive effect on learners’ understanding of global issues, and ultimately, may inspire their motivation to learn more about the English language. As most of Japanese learners study English as ~~in~~ a foreign language, they would enjoy the realising that their learnig of the language is actually very meaningful and usful tool to research and improve their understanding of various issue not only in the country but also the events in the overseas. As Colye, Hood and Marsh point out that ”CLIL can offer learners of any age a natuaral situation for language development which builds on other ofrms of learning. This natural use of language can boost a learner’s motivation towards, and hunger for learnig language (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010, pp.11-12). As the new Course of Study will invite learners to talk about variety of global issues which are authentic materials, it can be expected to raise their awareness of cultures and the global citizenship agenda.

With regard to materials for language activities, instructors should choose that which satisfies learners’ interests, and should use the contents which learners have studied in science, music and other subjects in their mother tongue. This is a extremely practical approach for both learners and instructors. Since many of the incumbent English instructors themselves may not have learned English through English at schools, they might find it difficult to teach English by directly instructing in the language. If learners already have a pre-existing knowledge about the topic they are going to learn in English, the knowledge will compensate for their understanding to some extent despite the level of their language proficiency.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have looked at the English section of the 2017 Course of Study for ljunior high schools focusing on its roles as a guideline. Important features of the roles of the new guideline are: 1).To provide the learning attainment target lists which should help learners acquire four language skills comprehensively. Attainable sub-goals can also serve as an important vehicle to enhance the students' motivation; 2). Helping learners become more active and autonomous so that they are more likely to sustain their learning beyond the classroom 3). Supporting learners to become more interested in social topics and broaden their views. Older versions tend to state the objectives and content of English learning, the new version, however, also describes the objectives in relation to other subjects.

It is suggested that in the future, more research into the effectiveness of educational reforms, and/or teaching approaches or techniques that align with the potential benefits of education reforms.

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Study Abroad Destination: The Case of Beijing

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The scope of study abroad destinations is wider than ever. However, China is not in the sights of Japanese college students unless they are Chinese majors. This paper describes the benefits of study abroad programs in Beijing, China; they include (a) business practicality and (b) affordability. This paper is unusual in that the author, an instructor of English, points out those benefits. The benefits overcome the following problems of many study abroad programs in major English-speaking areas that the author has observed—that is, they are often (a) less related to career development and (b) expensive. An additional argument is that traveling to Beijing would give students considerable motivation to study English as well as Chinese. Some downsides of study abroad programs in China are also addressed so that the readers can make good decisions.

留学プログラムは多様化しているが、中国は一般の大学生の視野には入っていない。そこで本稿では、留学プログラムの渡航先としての北京の利点を紹介する。この論文の大きな特徴は、これらの利点が英語教員によって紹介されている点にある。北京の大きな利点は１）キャリア教育と密接に関連した学びが期待できる、２）英語圏と比較して費用が安い、の二点である。これらは英語圏での留学プログラムでしばしば見られる問題を解決する。英語圏への留学プログラムは学生に人気がある一方、１）観光に近い内容になりがちであり、かつ２）高価である。北京への渡航は、中国語ばかりでなく英語の学習に対する動機づけにもなる。しかし、中国には特有の問題があることも事実である。本稿では、学生の渡航先として中国を選ぶ際に考慮すべき問題も合わせて紹介する。

The purpose of this paper is to promote Beijing as a promising study abroad destination for Japanese college students from the viewpoint of an instructor of English. When Japanese college students think of study abroad destinations, China is usually not among their options. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (n.d.), only 5.8% of Japanese college students who study abroad choose to do so in China. Another data by Japan Association of Overseas Studies (2018) shows that only 2.3% of Japanese who studied abroad in 2017 either via school-organized programs or private programs chose China as their destination. Despite the fact that China has the second largest economy in the world, Japanese college students do not pay much attention to their neighboring country.

However, China has other, less well-known benefits for college students as a study abroad destination. In this paper, I narrow my focus to Beijing, the capital city of China, because China is a very large country with many regional differences; thus, it is difficult to make generalizations. I argue that study abroad programs in Beijing provide excellent opportunities for Japanese college students because they have certain characteristics that are missing in programs in English-speaking areas. To be more specific, experiences in Beijing will be directly related to the career development of Japanese college students. Furthermore, the total cost of a Beijing program is far less than the typical cost in major English-speaking areas. In a nutshell, programs in Beijing are characterized as “low cost and high return.”

The organization of this paper is as follows. First, I discuss some downsides of study abroad programs in major English-speaking areas. Then, I discuss the benefits of study abroad programs in Beijing. I also point out drawbacks of the programs in Beijing, many of which apply to China in general.

Descriptions of Beijing in this paper are primarily based on my observations as a visiting instructor of Japanese and Japanese Linguistics at the University of International Business and Economics (Beijing) from May 2015 to January 2016, as a student of the Chinese language at Beijing Language and Culture University in August 2016, and as a visiting instructor of Linguistics at the University of International Business and Economics (Beijing) in July 2018. I have also observed students enrolled in the Beijing Course of the Global Career Program at Tokyo Keizai University since 2006 as a faculty member there.

Problems of Study Abroad Programs in Major English-Speaking Areas

Less Relevant for Career Development

The idea of China as a promising study abroad destination stems from my own experience as an instructor of English. I have been involved in organizing study abroad programs for Tokyo Keizai University for more than 10 years. Such programs in English-speaking areas have always been popular among students. However, there are typical problems that we expect with these programs.

One issue involves the contents of the programs. For instance, a typical college-organized summer English program consists of English lessons in the morning and excursions in the afternoon, with language and culture as the main targets of learning. However, they can easily turn out to be college-organized sightseeing trips, as excursions often involve visits to popular tourism spots. For many students, such programs are great substitutes for a vacation abroad because they are often subsidized and, thus, more affordable than personalized travel plans. Though such programs play a certain role in college education, there should be other options that are useful for students' career development.

Costs

For students, the biggest obstacle to studying in major English-speaking areas is the cost. For example, the summer English program in the UK organized by Tokyo Keizai University costs around 500,000 JPY. This expense is not quite affordable for Japanese college students, many of whom take out loans to attend college. The Japan Student Services Organization (November 2017) reported that one Japanese college student out of 2.7 takes out a student loan through its services (p. 10).

Benefits of Study Abroad Programs in Beijing

Business Practicality

The biggest benefit of study abroad programs in Beijing is their business practicality; they directly help students progress toward their careers. For example, students who are interested in the hospitality industry will have opportunities to observe Chinese tourism practitioners at work. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization, foreign visitors from Mainland China represent a quarter of the total number of foreign visitors, and visitors from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong represent nearly half of the total visitors (Figure 1).

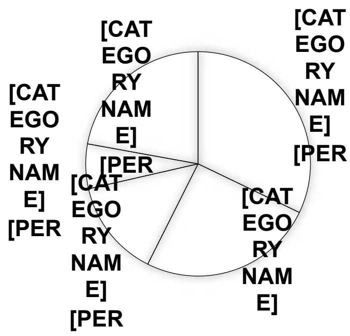

Figure 1. Foreign Visitors to Japan in January 2018. (*N* = 2,502,000) (Source: Japan National Tourism Organization, February 21, 2018.)

When employees of Japanese firms have business trips abroad, they are likely to go to Chinese-speaking areas instead of English-speaking areas (Table 1). For Japanese college students, getting to know major Chinese cities such as Beijing will definitely help their future careers.

Table 1: *Business Trips Abroad Among Japanese Firms*

Ranking	Destination
1	Shanghai
2	Seoul
3	Taipei
4	Bangkok
5	Hong Kong
6	Singapore
7	Beijing
8	New York
9	Paris
10	Frankfurt

Source: Japan Travel Bureau, August 23, 2013.

The high demand of business trip to Chinese speaking areas reflects the trade relation between Japan and China. In 2017, China was the largest trade partner for Japan (Table 2).

Table 2: *Japan's Trade Partners in 2017: Total Trade (Exports and Imports combined) in Billions of JPY*.

Ranking	Country/District	Total Trade
1	Mainland China	33,740.6
2	USA	23,365.3
3	South Korea	9,259.2
4	Taiwan	7,453.4
5	Australia	6,313.4

Source: Ministry of Finance, Japan, n.d.

The city of Beijing is full of learning opportunities for current Asian businesses. From the first day in Beijing, Japanese college students will see things that are ubiquitous there but they do not see in Japan. Electric payments and bike sharing are just a few examples among many. It is quite common for local college students to go out without wallets since making purchases while shopping and eating can be paid for using apps on their smartphones. (*WeChat* and *Alipay* are the two biggest players.) Students also move from one building to another via shared bikes (*Mobike*, *Ofo*, and others). For the local people, life without these services is hard to imagine. However, it is difficult to envision the potential for these services in Japan. Other common services that are missing in Japan include ride sharing (*Didi* and others. See "China's Didi faces new challenge from new rival Meituan," 2018 for details.), and food delivery (*Ele-ma*, *Meituan-Dianping*, and others. See Shi, 2018 for more.).

Beijing and other big cities in China are hot spots for new businesses, and Beijing is particularly known as a center of new high-tech startups ("Chuugoku, sougyou ni tiikisyoku: kousyuu=aribaba kei, shanhai=kinyuu, sinsen=seizou, pekin=haiteku," 2018). Japan's younger generation should not miss the opportunity to observe what is happening there.

Needless to say, the local lifestyle in general provides much insight for Japanese college students. Both men and women have jobs; grandparents take care of young children; and restaurants are full of noise. Even a short visit to a 7-Eleven store in Beijing would be a useful experience in order to see the differences between convenience stores in Japan and those in Beijing (Chiba Bank, 2018).

When it comes to networking, there is a large variety of Japanese groups in Beijing that Japanese college students can join. There are *kenjinkai* (associations of people from the same prefecture) for all prefectures and alumni associations of many Japanese universities. These groups usually have regular meetings, and they welcome new students. When I was in Beijing in 2015, I participated in monthly meetings of the *kenjinkai* of Aichi prefecture, and I met people who work for Japanese firms in Beijing. They are role models for Japanese college students who are interested in working abroad.

Associating with foreign students in Beijing is also important for understanding global business. Among the 112 National Key Universities of 211 Project, 23 universities are located in Beijing (Japan Science and Technology Agency, n.d.). These universities attract exchange students from all over the world. In 2017, the top 10 home countries of foreign students in China were Korea, Thailand, Pakistan, the US, India, Russia, Japan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Laos. The diversity of foreign exchange students in Beijing reflects the economic ties with their home countries. Students from central Asian countries who are partners of China's One Belt, One Road Initiative comprised 65% of the total foreign student population in 2017. ("Chuugoku, 17 nen no gaikokujin ryuugakusei ga 48 man 9200 nin ni," 2018) The Chinese government is eager to invite students from many key regions for their economic strategies including Russia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands, and provides scholarships. In 2016, 40,022 foreign students received scholarship from the Chinese government to study in China (Wang, 2017, p.167). Beijing is a hub of international business and politics, and its global human network is priceless.

Unlike foreign students in language schools in major English-speaking areas, business is the primary focus of foreign exchange students in Beijing. Many of them are looking for opportunities such as internships and job interviews in Beijing. They continuously exchange job information on SNSs. By associating with foreign students in Beijing, Japanese college students have a chance to observe activities in the global business arena.

Among Japanese universities, programs in China that are focused on business are not major options yet but have been growing. Some of the universities that offer such programs in China include Asia University, Aichi University, Tokyo Keizai University, and Ritsumeikan University.

Affordability

The total cost of a study abroad program in Beijing is much more affordable compared to such programs in major English-speaking areas. The total cost is hard to estimate, but just to give the readers an idea, a week-long program in Beijing could cost 100,000 JPY, and a month-long program at a language school in Beijing could cost 300,000 JPY including air fare, tuition, accommodations, and food.

Presently, Japanese passport holders without visas can stay in China for 15 days. For programs that are longer than 15 days, the most common option for Japanese students is to apply for a language program. As shown in Table 3 below, the tuition price in a language school in Beijing is also affordable compared to prices in major English-speaking areas.

Table 3: *Tuition Prices for One-Month Programs in Language Schools*.*

One-month study abroad examples	Local cost	Japanese yen
Beijing Language and Culture University, China	3,500 CNY	60,000
Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia	1,600 AUD	135,425
Chichester College, West Sussex, UK	780 GBP	150,000
Pace University, NYC, US	1,500 USD	160,000

*Tuition prices and exchange rates are based on those in May 2018.

Living costs in Beijing are considered very high in China. Nevertheless, they are within an affordable range for Japanese college students. For instance, the price for a single room in student dormitories at Beijing Language and Culture University can be 100–200 CNY (1,700–3,400 JPY) per night. In any school cafeteria, a dinner can be easily purchased for 15 CNY (250 JPY) at any school cafeteria.

Motivation for Learning Languages

Chinese

As an instructor of English, I have observed that many Japanese college students are tired of English. After years of English lessons, their English abilities remain at the novice to intermediate level. However, this does not apply to the Chinese language; it is a great option for students who would like to choose a foreign language other than English. Thanks to *kanji* (Chinese characters), which is used in common in written Chinese and Japanese, Japanese speakers learn the Chinese language relatively quickly.

At Tokyo Keizai University, students in Beijing's Global Career Program begin taking Chinese lessons when they enter college. Within 2 years of study—including one semester abroad in Beijing—, many students attain

Level V5 of the HSK, the Chinese equivalent of TOEIC. Level V5 is categorized as C1 by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), requiring a vocabulary size of 2,500 words. This category could correspond to TOEIC 800 in English.

During my stay in Beijing in the 2015–2016 academic year, I interviewed instructors of Chinese as a foreign language at the University of International Business and Economics (Beijing). Many pointed out that Japanese speakers are one of the top groups among Chinese language learners.

If students are reluctant to study Chinese just because China is not their favorite country, they should consider Chinese as a global language. Chinese is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Many Asian countries have large Chinese-speaking populations (e.g., Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia). In any country they visit, there is usually a Chinatown. As more Chinese people travel globally, services in Chinese are available in many stores.

Bridge to Better English

Going to China does not mean that students will abandon English. Rather, the opposite situation is typical. Going to China provides a bridge to better English abilities for Japanese college students. English is the lingua franca anyway, and foreign students in Beijing use English as a means of communication in their communities. Therefore, unless Japanese college students speak some English, they will lose valuable opportunities to be part of the global human network present in Beijing.

When Japanese students do not speak Chinese with some proficiency, English is usually the common language for interactions between Japanese and Chinese students. The English level of college students in Beijing is much higher than that of Japanese college students. Thus, studying there can be motivating for Japanese college students who desire to work on their English. For Chinese college students, good English is required to graduate from college and land their dream jobs. In most Chinese universities, students do not obtain college diplomas unless they pass the College English Test (CET) Band-4 in China, which roughly corresponds to Step Test Grade 2 – Grade Pre-1 on Japan's EIKEN test (Okano, 2017; Honna 2007). Many students pursue CET Band-6 (Grade Pre1 – Grade 1 in EIKEN) for better job opportunities. Research suggests that Chinese college students may study eight to 10 times more English than Japanese college students do (Ichikawa, 2009, p.2).

Note that this trend of better proficiency in English among Chinese college students applies to Japanese majors as well. In fact, it is known among Japanese companies that Japanese majors in China speak better English than Japanese college students in general. Some Japanese firms hire Japanese majors from China to work in Japan as translators of Chinese, Japanese, and English ("Chuugoku kara no daigakusei, dounai no rizooto de tanki syuugyou, kyaria banku ga syoukai, hounichikyaku no taiou ni," 2015).

Problems of Study Abroad Programs in China

The Internet

I will also address some problems associated with programs in Beijing and China in general. Internet regulation is the biggest problem. It is well-known that many websites are banned in China (e.g., Google, YouTube, LINE, Facebook, Dropbox). Not having LINE for a month could be a nightmare for many Japanese college students. Students who have never been to China are encouraged to start with a short program of a week or less and get ready for a longer program.

Foreign students usually use virtual private network (VPN) services to avoid regulations by the Chinese government. However, the regulations are getting tighter. The use of VPNs is not banned—a common misunderstanding—, but services can be obtained from only a limited number of service providers (Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China, 2017). Skype service is still available as of August 2018, but its app has been removed from the Chinese market since 2017 ("Chuugoku de sukaipu haishin teishi," 2017).

To communicate with counterparts in Beijing, the best option is to use WeChat, the so-called Chinese equivalent of LINE. Taking advantage of free email addresses in Chinese is also useful. For instance, NetEase offers three kinds of free email addresses (163.com, 126.com, yeah.net). They are acceptable as formal contact addresses. Many universities in China do not provide students or employees with email addresses, so they use free email addresses.

When they use WeChat or Chinese email services, however, Japanese students should keep in mind that their posts could be censored (Tanaka, 2018).

Private Information

There is much less sense of privacy in China than in Japan. I have seen multiple times that a list of students, their student ID numbers, and their phone numbers is put on a classroom wall so that people can share the information. Administrators would often ask you to submit a copy of your passport, and it is often visible on the desk. They all raise the risk of identity theft. When it is necessary, students need to raise their voice. Otherwise, people would not notice your concern. Chinese citizens have personal ID cards issued by the government called *shenfenzheng*, and they are used to submit their ID numbers whenever required.

Many internet services (*Alipay*, *Mobike* and others) request you to upload a photo of your passport. It would be wise for students to minimize the services they use until they get used to the life in China instead of randomly giving out their passport information.

Historical Issues

Some sentiment against Japan still remains in China due to the history of the two countries. It is advised to remember some memorial days of the year that are related to Japan. They include July 7th for the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, September 3rd for the Victory Day of Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, and September 18th for the Manchurian Incident.

Nevertheless, Japanese students should not be intimidated in associating with the local people. Bilateral relations between Japan and China have been stable for the last couple of years, and there will not be any harassment against Japanese students as long as they behave in a sensible manner.

Health, Safety, and Other Practical Issues

Air pollution in Beijing could be a problem in winter months for students with respiratory illnesses, but air quality is far better in summer. There are fewer problems related to hygiene in Beijing than in the past.

Except for cases of potential fraud, Beijing is much safer than many major cities in the world, with surveillance cameras all over the city, as well as police stations on the streets just like in Japan.

Currently, Beijing lacks affordable housing, and arranging accommodations can be a headache. Tokyo Keizai University and I came across cases in which counterparts in Beijing were not able to provide information about accommodations until a few days before departure.

Students and administrators involved in China programs will need to get used to the way the local people arrange schedules. In Chinese culture, it is quite common for appointments to be arranged the day before and cancelled on the day of an appointment.

Unexpected obstacles may originate with parents of Japanese college students. Parental understanding of China varies, and parents may or may not be in favor of their children’s visits to the country. I came across a case in which a student wanted to participate in a China program with the US students (Council On International Education Exchange, n.d.) but her parents did not approve. Nevertheless, they approved a similar program in Korea.

Overall, obtaining updated information is crucial for successful study abroad programs in Beijing and other areas in China. Unfortunately, there are not many good printed resources that have comprehensive information about study abroad programs in China. One of few is Watanabe and Wagabahashi (2010). However, the Chinese society has been changing rapidly, and printed information becomes outdated quickly. At this point websites and word-of-mouth can be much more useful than printed resources. For general statistics, a website called *Science Portal China* by Japan Science and Technology Agency contains reasonably updated and trustworthy information about China in Japanese.

Conclusion

From the viewpoint of an English instructor, I have argued that Beijing provides valuable learning opportunities for Japanese college students; these advantages are sometimes missing in programs in English-speaking areas. In Beijing, students have opportunities to learn about current Asian business and two global languages—English and Chinese. As many Japanese companies conduct business with China, their experience in Beijing directly helps the career development of Japanese college students. Beijing provides opportunities to be connected to the world as it hosts many foreign students. These opportunities are open to Japanese students and cost much less than programs in major English-speaking areas.

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Eliciting Student Answers: Finding What It Takes

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Classroom silence is a commonly misunderstood aspect of English language teaching in Japan. Teachers who use communicative approaches can be frustrated and confused by students' unwillingness to participate, respond, or communicate. The cultural bases of classroom silence are largely understood by researchers, but whereas some suggest that coming to terms with and adapting to student reticence is the most appropriate response, others argue that it is in students' best interests that teachers teach and then insist upon greater communicability and interactivity. This article describes a pre-emptive approach to classroom silence that resulted in students coming to participate comfortably in direct teacher-student communication. By raising students' consciousness to the problem of classroom silence, casting it in a negative light, and describing and demonstrating more efficacious communicative practices, the author came to have confidence that his students would respond to his questions without the anxiety and reluctance so familiar in Japanese classrooms.

教室の沈黙は一般的に誤解されている日本における英語教育の側面である。コミュニケーションを多用するアプローチを採用する教師はフラストレーションを溜め、生徒の授業への参加、反応、コミュニケーションにおける消極性に戸惑う事がある。教室内の沈黙の文化的基盤は研究者らによって大きく理解されているが、生徒たちの消極性を受け入れ、それに合わせるべきだと言う意見もある一方、教師が教える事でコミュニケーション力や対話性を要求するべきだという主張もある。この論文では教師と生徒が直接的にコミュニケーションを快適に取り、積極的にクラスへの参加を実現させた教室の沈黙に対する先制的なアプローチを説明する。教室の沈黙という問題に対する生徒の意識を高め、否定的観点を投げかけ、より効果的なコミュニケーションの実践を論証する事で、著者は不安や嫌気を感じる事無く生徒が質問にしっかりと答えてくれるという自信を得た。

It is not uncommon for foreign English language teachers in Japan to be surprised and frustrated by non-communicative tendencies that students frequently display in the classroom, particularly low-level and low-motivation students for whom our classes are compulsory. Activities can fail and whole lessons can be rendered largely pointless if teachers make the mistake of depending too heavily upon students eagerly participating or actively seeking out communicative opportunities. Miller (1995) warned that "Western teachers new to Japan quickly come to realize the extent to which Japanese cultural norms are indeed at variance with Western norms where classroom interaction patterns are concerned" (p. 32). Student reticence is perhaps most apparent in cases of teachers verbally asking students questions, either one-to-one or openly to an entire class. Even apparently easy, reasonable questions to which the students almost certainly know the answer can be met with little more than uncomfortable drawn-out silence and avoidance. Therefore, utilising a communicative teaching methodology that depends on speedy and efficient teacher- student interaction can be enormously challenging.

After years of trial and error in adjusting my approach to eliciting responses from my university students, trying different strategies and approaches so as to mitigate the stifling discomfort and stress that my questions seemed to elicit, mid-way through a recent semester I began to notice that I was having consistent success in getting prompt and relaxed answers to my questions. To my surprise and delight, I observed that my students seemed receptive and comfortable when being asked questions, and that I could have confidence that my questions were not going to cause the kind of anxiety or reticence that they so often had throughout my years of teaching in Japanese universities. I had, as always, put in a great deal of effort throughout the early weeks of the semester preparing and training the students for the kind of simple and easy communicative exchanges I'd be asking them to join me in; perhaps after years of searching I had found what it takes to get students on board with a communicative approach. Reflecting on the preparatory work I had done, and the literature on the cultural basis of classroom reticence, I identified several factors that had apparently come together serendipitously and given rise to an environment in which, more than ever before, my students seemed comfortable and at ease in direct teacher-student communication.

Eliciting

Trainee teachers on the Cambridge CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching for Adults) course are taught to elicit answers and responses from students, rather than to dictate answers and content from the front of the room. Responses are elicited at many stages throughout a lesson. When pre-teaching vocabulary, for instance, a teacher might illustrate the concept of the target word by such means as realia, image, or explanation, and then ask if any student knows the word, pausing to give them a chance to provide it. Only if nobody provided the word would the teacher overtly teach it. In a speaking lesson, following any kind of fluency activity, one or two pairs or groups will be asked to give a brief account of what they discussed or of what their partners had to say. After students have completed a written set of comprehension questions as part of a listening or reading lesson, rather than giving the answers to each question, a teacher will elicit them from individuals or groups, then confirm or correct their answers. Eliciting answers and responses from students is an integral part of the CELTA's very communicative and student-centered teaching methodology. It keeps students actively involved in the lesson, and acknowledges and utilises their existing knowledge.

Having attained the CELTA in 2004, my own ELT career began with 4 years of teaching in Australia, with highly-motivated students from around the world. The methodology of the CELTA formed the basis of my teaching throughout those years. Upon coming to Japan in 2008, and especially upon starting to teach compulsory courses in universities the following year, I very quickly discovered that the communicative approach I had used with success in Australia was entirely alien to the students I was now teaching. My questions, no matter how reasonable and easy I thought they were, suddenly elicited little more than silence and embarrassment. My teacher-training and prior experience had not prepared me to deal with reticence and passivity, and I found myself unequipped to teach in a way that encompassed a reluctance to communicate and participate actively. My not wanting to give up on a pedagogical approach in which I believe means I have spent a great deal of energy seeking ways in which to reconcile, as best I can, a communicative English teaching approach with a classroom culture that instinctively resists it.

Classroom Silence

Brown's (2004) experience, reported in a study involving 210 first-year Japanese university students, is likely familiar to many foreign teachers. The overwhelming majority of the subjects had endorsed statements regarding the worthwhileness of English, the benefits of learning it, and the personal effort required to acquire it, yet in what Brown called "bafflingly counterproductive learning behavior" (p. 15), many students declined to participate in classroom activities that required oral production. He cites McVeigh's (2001) observation that students often fear making mistakes in view of their peers, and indeed standing out in any way, including positively. Students are in a double-bind of wanting neither to be seen to have made a mistake nor seen to be correct. Silence when called upon in a classroom is an attractive option that serves students well.

Language education researchers are divided in terms of how to respond to classroom silence. Some have aimed to demonstrate that the problem may lie in foreign teachers rigidly adhering to an ethnocentric (Western) perspective rather than attempting to understand and adapt to the culture of their students.

Harumi (2011) observed differences between Japanese and British teachers' responses to video footage of classroom silence, with British viewers quick to attribute the silence to disinterest, boredom, or laziness, but Japanese observers interpreting it as either face-saving, a 'difficulty-avoidance strategy', or a potentially productive silent request for help. She describes the "positive value of silence as showing appropriate listening behaviour and its active role in communication" (p. 261), and urges non-Japanese teachers to be open to different interpretations of classroom silence and its many functions. Miller (1995) is sympathetic to this view to an extent, explaining that "Newcomers to Japan may be surprised to learn that a student's reluctance to respond quickly is a deeply ingrained response which accords with sociocultural norms; it is more an act of politeness than one of recalcitrance" (p. 32). Do foreign teachers simply need to learn to adapt?

It helps to have a broader understanding of national cultures generally in order to understand the basis and specifics of Japanese classroom culture. Hofstede and Hofstede (2010), looking worldwide, identified six dimensions of national culture: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term orientation, and indulgence. The first three dimensions are particularly relevant to an understanding of the education culture of Japan. Power distance refers to the degree of inequality between authority figures and ordinary people, or in terms of education, teachers and students. Teachers in Japan are granted a much higher degree of respect than they are in many Western countries, where teachers and students tend to relate on a more equal footing. The second factor, individualism vs. collectivism, is expressed in Japanese students' tendencies towards forming and operating within a group or groups. Speaking up or volunteering participation would violate group harmony expectations, therefore "… it is illogical to speak up without being sanctioned by the group to do so" (p. 117). The third factor, uncertainty avoidance, also rates highly in Japan; it is visible in students favouring learning situations with precise objectives and a single correct answer at which to arrive. In lower uncertainty-avoidance cultures, open-ended learning situations with vague objectives are preferred, along with discussion, reflection, and experience- or process-based learning.

Despite such preferences and tendencies being at odds with the educational norms of many Western countries and, indeed, being largely incompatible with modern communicative language teaching methodologies, it is ignorant in the extreme for teachers to expect that students' behaviours can simply be changed or switched off at a teacher's request. However, simple acceptance of the largely non-communicative Japanese classroom, and adjusting one's teaching approach so as to accommodate it, is not an agreed-upon response whatsoever. Elsewhere in his 1995 article, Miller states that "Lessons in how to express oneself actively in ways that would please a Western teacher would seem to be particularly valuable to Japanese learners of English,… especially as the classroom is often the sole setting in which many EFL students have occasion to use English" (p. 33). Is this a culturally-insensitive or even a culturally-imperialistic view? Far from it. He is one amongst many researchers who argue that it is in the students' interests for teachers to insist upon new behaviours and even adopt more overtly "Western" classroom styles when it comes to language education. Banks (2016) for instance views student reticence as a problem that should be addressed overtly and remedied. The communication difficulties that the students in her case study expressed resulted largely from their declining to take advantage of the teacher's invitations to request repetition, or to express confusion or even slight negativity. In her view, the cultural misunderstandings that gave rise to the less-than-optimum outcomes she observed had been the responsibility of the students: "Asking a question about the instructions, clarifying meaning and seeking help are not troubles in an EFL context,Without realizing this, the students would remain silent, compromise what they need, and keep wondering why they cannot speak well" (p. 71). Banks boldly and refreshingly asserts that it is in students' interest that teachers not merely acknowledge and accommodate the tendency towards silence, but that they actively teach students ways to overcome it.

It is important to teach students how to ask questions for their growth and own goals. Such skills are important not only to improve English fluency, but also to participate in intercultural, global society with many different people from various backgrounds… Simply trying to put a positive face on communicative trouble spots, acting as if no problems have occurred, would not improve our mutual understanding. (p. 71)

Foreign teachers who are concerned with achieving good outcomes for their students are justified in attempting to introduce into the language classroom far more interactivity and communication than students are accustomed to or even initially comfortable with. Failing to incorporate expectations in regards to communicability that reflect more non-Japanese (or overtly "Western") ideals and rather simply accommodating prolonged silences and other impediments to natural discourse is to commit a disservice to one's students. Indeed, it is precisely because of the cultural differences that researchers have identified that alternative classroom behaviours ought to be taught and expected. We are not, after all, helping our students towards the ultimate goal of communicating in English with polite and patient English language teachers, nor with their own compatriots. If our students are ever to utilise the English language skills we're teaching, it will most likely be with people who are, culturally speaking, not as accepting of long drawn-out silences, and who will expect swift communication even despite incomplete knowledge or low confidence. Students need to be prepared for communication in English with people who communicate much more actively and interactively than is characterised by Japanese classroom experience.

Finding What It Takes

As stated earlier, mid-way through a recent semester I noticed that my students were more comfortable responding to my requests for communication than I had seen in many years of teaching in Japan. I appeared to have finally persuaded my students to feel comfortable participating responsively in teacher-student discourse, rather than to act out familiar avoidance strategies. After reflecting on how I might have managed to bring about this happy circumstance, I identified four main factors as having contributed. These are presented here as guidelines with examples that others might follow.

1) Get out ahead, and raise students' consciousness

It is essential that the problem of classroom silence be addressed before it happens rather than in response to it happening. Certain non-communicative tendencies should be staked out from the outset as inappropriate and, if possible, odd. Addressing the problem proactively puts the teacher in a position of leadership, rather than playing catch-up when things start to go wrong.

My introductory class for courses in which I'm going to be attempting to elicit answers consists mostly of a slide presentation in which, amongst other things, I attempt to use humour and exaggeration to present classroom silence as an unwelcome aberration. In an attempt to get out ahead of my students and to raise their consciousness to the existence of the problem, I bring three major themes surrounding classroom silence to their attention, as follows:

a) My asking you a question is never an attack, and fear or anxiety is an absurd overreaction.

Some students respond to teacher questions with anxiety, believing them to be tests designed to single them out, expose their lack of knowledge, and cause embarrassment. My questions will be nothing of the sort, and I make that clear before I ever ask one. Amongst my slides is one that visually conflates my classroom with a prison or dungeon in which my prisoner-students will be unwillingly exposed to certain terrifying horrors. What horrors, exactly? The screen goes black, and the words slowly appear, one by one: "I… TALK… WITH… MY… STUDENTS." A terrified face appears, lampooning a fear of something that upon a moment's reflection, is mundane, common, and harmless. I continue, dramatically warning them that it gets even worse: "I… WANT… STUDENTS… TO… TALK… TO… ME.", with the screen then erupting with images of fearful and terrified faces. These two sentences remain on the screen as I explain that they describe the most terrifying circumstance that the students will encounter in our course. The point, obviously, is to exaggerate what might be an unconscious conditioned anxiety response to teacher questions, and to re-frame teacher questions as an unremarkable and innocuous element of a safe environment.

b) My asking you a question is not a grammar test or an IQ test.

Students tend to expect that a question from a teacher will be difficult. I act out, dramatically, a classroom experience I once had in which a student paused for a full 20 seconds before giving an answer to an easily-comprehended question about her travel experience: “Where did you go on your high school trip?” (The pause was a matter of her busily attempting to compose and rehearse the grammatically-perfect response she thought I was demanding.)

The 20 seconds of silence in my re-enactment is terribly awkward, followed as it is by her short unremarkable answer. I ask students to try pausing for such a duration before answering a friend’s question at lunchtime— the thought of doing so is discomfiting enough! This and other similar examples and demonstrations stake out prolonged nervous silences as being as strange in my class as they would be in a conversation with friends.

c) “I don’t know” is an acceptable and welcome answer.

Admitting a lack of knowledge seems to be all but forbidden in Japanese classroom culture, and students can spend a great deal of time grappling for something to say in response to a question to which they don’t have an answer. To preempt this consistent source of classroom silence, I have created a stick-figure cartoon sequence that I display on-screen. In it, two friends sit at a cafe enjoying a conversation. At one point one asks an innocuous question: “So, what time are you going to go home today?” His partner panics! He doesn’t know the exact answer! His eyes bulge, he sits bolt-upright in his chair, he looks around for help, glances wide-eyed at his partner, before looking at the ground, then at the table, then at the ground, then at the table… It goes on and on, going nowhere, with the questioner simply waiting for an answer while his friend suffers terrible anxiety, unwaveringly determined to not admit that he doesn’t know, but unable to find anything whatsoever to say.

Students more often than not laugh very satisfyingly at my scratchy representation of familiar classroom “rules” being juxtaposed onto a casual friendly context. My point, and I demonstrate it often in the following few weeks, is that I am a teacher that welcomes “I don’t know” because the rules of ordinary conversation apply, and thus anxiety over not knowing an answer is both unnecessary and unwelcome.

2) Carry out a practice and disarming stage

Having made these claims about what kinds of communication will and won’t be accepted, I quickly want to allow students to test them. A very fast and simple exercise facilitates this, one that demonstrates that my questions are unencumbered by hidden agendas, and convinces them to relinquish their resistance. As a warm-up activity at the start of each of the next few lessons, students seated in groups of between four and six are asked to determine, for example: “Who in your group has the next birthday?” Using Japanese if they prefer, groups have a minute or so to determine their answer and prepare a response using English words. After that, I will ask a group to give their answer, then the next group, then the next, until it is determined who in the class has the next birthday. That’s it.

As simple as it is, this exercise can and often does fail spectacularly. Such occurrences present fantastic “teachable moments,” as the familiar impediments to communication come into play. Sometimes, inexplicably, groups will not have come close to arriving at a group answer when called upon and will flounder nervously under the spotlight as they grapple with the communicative practicalities of the task. At other times, groups might stall, unable to determine which member will announce their answer, with no student volunteering and a time-consuming stand-off ensuing. In such cases those groups receive a very tempered admonishment by way of the obvious contrast with groups who were able to determine and deliver the requested information in a timely manner.

The exercise is ideal in that it makes a clear request and has a single goal, it’s fast and easy to repeat, and can elicit genuinely interesting information. I have a number of such easy questions prepared and can practice it as an exercise until the answers come promptly. Carrying it out to a satisfying point also provides a reference for any time later in the semester when eliciting answers fails: I am able to remind students that they managed to discover and convey who had the next birthday, who lives furthest from the university, or who has the largest number of cousins, proving that arriving at and communicating an answer is achievable.

3) Be prepared to make an impact—judiciously

Occasionally, non-communicative classroom habits re-emerge egregiously during a semester. At such times, it may be appropriate to make it clear to students, subtly or not-so-subtly, that their behaviour is at odds with the lowest benchmarks of reasonableness. Judiciously making a strong impact can have long-lasting benefits.

As an example: I have an vocabulary-learning activity that requires that I elicit a short list of random English words from students for a memory game. So as to avoid the appearance of cheating, it's essential that the students, not I, provide the 12 English words, of any kind, which I type into a table on the computer (visible on the screen). I ask students to simply call out any English word, cat, dog, eat, drink, anything. I await their words, poised at the computer. More often than not, the response is awkward silence. Again, I request, "One word, just one word, any word of English, just one," and wait. This can go on for minutes at a time. At the point of absurdity, when the collective has irretreivably usurped any individual's willingness to speak even a single word, I make my point.

To my students' surprise, I have already prepared slides in anticipation of this precise moment. I switch to my presentation application, and onto the screen flash the words that I have just been saying: "ONE WORD. I am asking you to say ONE WORD." Some students squirm or smile as they realise I have gotten ahead of them and correctly predicted their non-responsive behaviour. The slides continue: "ONE WORD. ONE. ONE WORD. SAY ONE WORD." Often this is enough to open them up, their disproportionate resistance to such a minor request having been exposed as such. At other times, I continue on with the slides I've prepared, the message getting stronger: "This is a SPEAKING CLASS. If ONE WORD is too difficult, you WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PASS THIS COURSE."

Such a measure undeniably errs towards condescension, but the logic is beyond dispute. The students are confronted with an uncomfortable truth: The awkwardness of the preceding few minutes of reluctance and silence, which their teacher was able to predict, hinged entirely upon their unwillingness to rise to even the most minimal effort, and an absurdly disproportionate fear of something utterly harmless held them back.

4) Establish elicited answers as a non-negotiable part of the class

Twenty-five percent of each student's final score reflects their ability to respond communicatively to my questions. This is applied to groups: Each member of a group receives the same weekly group score with regards to elicited responses. Groups change week to week, so 25% of each student's score is an average of how well their groups responded to my questions each week. If a group is unable to give an answer within a reasonable response time, they lose a point. Just like in regular human interaction, students come to see that there is a price to pay for prolonged silence and unresponsiveness and that communicative readiness is rewarded— even if the response is "I don't know."

Conclusion

By utilising the combination of strategies and approaches outlined here, it appeared that I was successful in making students feel comfortable enough to participate in direct teacher-student interaction in the classroom. They appeared to have been relieved of the familiar anxieties that hold students back and that present impediments to a communicative teaching approach. Culture is a powerful force, and students must be appealed to from multiple angles to examine and question certain behavioural norms and be made to feel safe enough to drop certain avoidance strategies. Doing so will allow them to take advantage of modern communicative language teaching approaches. It is in our students' interest that we teachers make efforts to disabuse them of the anxieties and fears that give rise to non-communicative behaviours and to prepare them instead for confident and competent intercultural exchanges in English.

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Menus, Movie Clips, and Online Restaurant Review Websites: Exploring Authentic Materials via a Restaurant Unit

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Teachers are generally encouraged to integrate authentic materials into the curriculum. This essay explores how that can be done in the context of a unit focusing on a restaurant. The authentic materials introduced include movie clips, restaurant menus, and online restaurant review websites. Furthermore, this essay goes beyond the typical definition of authentic materials simply being those materials, which are made by the L2 community for the L2 community for a specific social purpose. The author asserts that there are four additional conditions: In order for authentic materials to be truly authentic, they must not be selected or altered for pedagogical purposes, they must be used in their natural context and they ought to be used for their original social purpose. In addition, this paper describes many of the benefits of using authentic materials while still urging teachers to give priority to pedagogical goals.

一般的に教師はカリキュラムにオーセンティックな教材を取り入れることが推奨されている。この論文は、それがレストランに焦点を当てた単元においてどのようになされるのかを検討したものである。オーセンティックな教材として使用したのは、映像とレストランのメニュー、レストランレビューウェブサイトである。加えてこの論文は、単に特別な社会的目的で第二言語のコミュニティーによって第二言語のコミュニティーのために作られたものを教材として扱うというオーセンティックな教材の典型的な定義を超越したものである。著者は、オーセンティックな教材が真にオーセンティックとなるためには、それが教育的目的のために選択されたり変えられたりしてはならず、自然な文脈で使用されなければならず、本来の社会的目的のために使われるべきだという 4 つの付加的条件があると述べている。さらに、この論文は教師に教育的目的の達成を優先するよう促しつつ、オーセンティックな教材を使用することの数多くの利点を記述している。

Teachers are generally encouraged to integrate authentic materials into the curriculum. This notion may be reinforced in postgraduate education programs, among colleagues sharing curriculum choices, or by official government standards. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) stops short of specifically calling for the use of authentic materials, however, their standards do imply that the use of them has value. For instance, MEXT recommends that students "should be able to perform language activities in which they have to think about how to express themselves in a way appropriate to a specific situation and condition" (p. 3, 2011). Authentic materials are a logical way to create opportunities to create such situations and conditions to practice in. More pertinently, regarding materials, MEXT asserts that "materials should be useful in deepening the understanding of the ways of life and cultures of foreign countries and Japan, raising interest in language and culture" (p. 8, 2011). Authentic materials are perhaps the most suitable types of materials achieve this objective. Considering these guidelines and the enhanced access to authentic materials brought about by the continued spread of the Internet, this practice-oriented essay seeks to investigate the nature of authentic materials and show how to integrate authentic materials into a restaurant unit of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course. It defines authentic materials not within a binary paradigm (authentic vs. inauthentic), but rather as a spectrum in which authenticity is measured by the extent to which authentic materials fulfill various characteristics of authenticity in practice. This paper will also include a discussion on the value of authentic materials.

Defining Authentic Materials

The many definitions of authentic materials tend to revolve around the ideas that they are materials produced not for pedagogic purposes (Nunan, 1989; Wallace, 1992), but rather by the L2 community for the intended consumption of the L2 community (Morrow, 1977; Harmer, 1983), and for a specific social purpose (Little & Singleton, 1988; Peacock, 1997). However, merely fulfilling these characteristics is not sufficient for authenticity. Widdowson coined the term 'genuineness' to refer to this level of authenticity. Distinguishing between the two terms, Widdowson (1978) said, "genuineness is characteristic of the passage itself and is an absolute quality. Authenticity is a characteristic of the relationship between the passage and the reader and it has to do with appropriate response (p. 80).

Using Widdowson's distinction, I would like to further explore the necessary conditions for materials used in the classroom to be considered authentic. Beyond being produced by the L2 community for the L2 community for a specific purpose, I would like to introduce four more conditions for materials to truly be considered authentic. They must 1) not be selected for pedagogical purposes, 2) not be altered for pedagogical purposes, 3) be used in their natural context, and 4) serve the social purpose they were intended to serve.

They must not be selected for pedagogical purposes.

In real life situations, language learners will not have simpler, level-appropriate language materials chosen for them. They will need to make meaning from the language surrounding them as they traverse various situations in the L2 community. Billboards, menus, and radio traffic reports are rarely made with the language learner's interests in mind. Therefore, even if the materials that a teacher has selected are genuine L2 artifacts, the very act of curating materials at an accessible level for the student reduces the authenticity of the material. The learner is receiving materials based on pedagogical purposes in a pattern inconsistent from what s/he would receive within the L2 community.

They must not be altered for pedagogical purposes.

When teachers cannot find materials that are completely suitable to their students' needs, many will take a genuine material and simplify it, add target language, or amend it in some other way that leads to a pedagogical end. With each amendment, the material loses authenticity.

They must be used in their natural context.

In most cases, the materials that language teachers are taking from the L2 community to be used in their classroom are being presented in a decontextualized state. A restaurant menu comes without the additional signage in the restaurant, knowledge of the type of restaurant, the clientele, or numerous other factors that would alter the linguistic reality of the situation. Similarly, an excerpt from a book that is distributed to students does not allow them to understand the overarching context of the entire book, nor the culture from which it came. While the teacher could take pains to explain the context of any material being used, the learner is not receiving the full authentic experience. The advent of online communities has made it possible for learners to engage more fully in certain texts where much of the context is located within the online community itself.

They must serve the social purpose they were intended to serve.

Returning to the example of a restaurant menu, we must recognize that each text has a social purpose. In this case, a menu is used as a means for appraising food and drink choices at a restaurant and selecting the desired items to be brought out for consumption. However, when a language learner uses a menu, regardless of whether it is from an actual restaurant or not, s/he does so with no expectation of receiving any food or drinks. The menu is genuine, but the interaction with the text is not authentic. Texts serve functions and if learners are not using the texts to perform those functions then the experience is not authentic.

Viability and Value of Authenticity

The list of conditions needing to be fulfilled in order for a material to be truly authentic is exceedingly difficult to achieve, if not impossible. It is perhaps more valuable to look at degrees of authenticity rather than viewing authenticity as a binary entity. While it is nearly impossible to truly recreate authentic experiences with authentic materials, lessons may become enhanced when bearing elements of authenticity.

Although we may not be able to replicate in absolute terms authentic materials in the classroom, there is great value in providing learners with texts and opportunities that come close. This notion is supported by Bacon & Finneman (1980), who noted, "learning to deal with authentic input is the true measure of language proficiency" (1980, as cited in Ciccone, 1995, p. 204).

There are numerous benefits to using authentic materials. One of the most important may be that these types of materials can instill confidence in the learners that they can successfully engage with real English. Simply realizing that they can cope with real English can be motivating for students (Cross, 1984). This may be especially important in Japan, where English language learners may not get as many opportunities to interact with real English due to it being taught as a foreign language rather than a second language and the fact that many schools still focus on explicit grammar instruction and university test preparation (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009).

Another benefit is that learners can learn language that actually exists out in the wild, rather than merely textbook English and the grammatical structures that rarely exist outside of entrance examinations. There are many idioms and nonstandard forms of language use that exist throughout all English-speaking cultures. Understanding these phrases can help the learner to better understand the culture and to communicate with greater nuance and ease.

The interaction with authentic materials in an authentic way can also lead to top-down processing. As previously mentioned, a lot of English education in Japan has historically relied on teaching grammar and vocabulary using bottom-up methods. Carrel and Eisterhold (1988) define bottom-up and top-down processing as follows: "Bottom-up processing ensures that the listeners/readers will be sensitive to information that is novel or that does not fit their ongoing hypotheses about the content or structure of the text; top-down processing helps the listeners/readers to resolve ambiguities or to select between alternative possible interpretations of the incoming data" (p. 221). They note that especially proficient learners are encouraged to engage in more conceptually driven top-down processing.

Finally, Yashima (2013) points out that "it is crucial for learners to be able to imagine or visualize the target community they are relating to in order to develop intercultural competence" (p. 35). Interacting with authentic materials in an authentic way allows learners the opportunity to imagine themselves as part of the target community. Learners can imagine themselves in L2 contexts and increase their understanding of what it means to interact with a particular L2 culture and how they want to position themselves in regard to that L2 culture.

Authentic Materials in a Restaurant Unit

In accordance with the premise of this essay, four sets of authentic materials for use in a restaurant unit will be presented. None of these materials are completely authentic in perfect alignment with the conditions stated above. It is nearly impossible to use an authentic material in a fully authentic manner. Instead, we must look at the various benefits offered by authentic materials and figure out how to achieve those benefits using materials with the highest degree of authenticity that we can. Classroom use of authentic materials is not the goal, but rather a vehicle that helps to drive learners toward the goal of being able to use the language and cultural knowledge for their own needs beyond the classroom. As Senior (2005) asserts, teachers using authentic materials "need to have a clear pedagogic goal in mind: what precisely they want students to learn from these materials" (p. 71). When possible, the teacher should use authentic materials that 1) further the pedagogic goals of the class; 2) activate background schema in the learners; 3) provide an interesting and accurate glimpse into the target culture; 4) afford learners the opportunity to use the target language in a meaningful way when interacting with it; 5) be used with the same goals and purposes as it is normally used; and 6) allow for interaction with the target culture. While not all of these characteristics can be attained with each use of authentic materials, those that embody many of the characteristics are likely to increase the probability that the materials will be well-received and resulting in successful lessons.

Cultural comparison of restaurant scenes via movie clips

To introduce the topic of restaurants, I try to activate students' background schema of restaurants in Japan while simultaneously preparing them for the notion that the act of eating at a restaurant may not be completely the same abroad. First, I show learners a clip of a restaurant scene from the movie, Tampopo (1985). In this scene (JonathanBX, 2008), a group of Japanese businessmen file into a French restaurant. The youngest worker commits multiple social mistakes in this scene. He casually attempts to sit down before his seniors and is held up by the scruff of his collar to make sure he does not finish the offensive blunder. The waiter goes to the most senior member of the group and asks if he is ready to order. Unable to read the French menu, he simply says he wants something light. The next oldest member also defers. Finally, the third oldest, who is able to understand the menu, orders something that he believes fits the cues that the eldest member of the company desires. The eldest member of the company orders the exact same food, as does everyone else until the waiter reaches the youngest member of the group. He asks the waiter probing questions showing off his knowledge of French cuisine and wine.

A link is posted to the video on the class website with a list of discussion questions. I ask the students to talk about what the young man did that violates rules of Japanese culture, if they notice anything else in the video that reflects Japanese culture, any ideas they have of other ways eating out in Japan may be unique from eating at a restaurant in another country.

The second scene was a restaurant scene from an American movie, The Blues Brothers (1980). In this scene (THESSALONIAN31N, 2014), the two main characters are trying to create a disruption in a fancy restaurant in order to embarrass the maître de so he quits his job and rejoins their band. Students are asked to list their various rude behaviors and to use their background knowledge and the video to guess how eating at a restaurant in the United States is different from eating at a restaurant in Japan.

Both of these videos are posted online as homework to grant students the ability to watch and re-watch at their own pace. Learners engage in an online discussion based on the following questions:

Movie	**Discussion Questions**
Tampopo	1. What does the youngest member do that is considered bad in Japanese culture? 2. Is this type of scene still a part of Japanese culture? 3. What would you have done if you were the young man?
Blues Brothers	1. What are some of the things these two men do that are considered rude? 2. Are some of the things considered rude in the United States but not Japan? 3. How is this restaurant style different from restaurants in Japan?

Table 1. *Discussion questions for each movie scene.*

The pedagogic goal of this activity is not a timed assessment of cultural understanding. Instead, it is meant to instigate fruitful discussion. Both Japanese and English are permitted in the discussion to ensure learners the ability to share their thoughts. The pedagogic goals are to activate schema and to get students to think about what is unique about restaurant culture in Japan and what may be different when eating abroad. This also offers learners who have experience eating abroad to contribute their own funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) to the class. Educators can read the online discussions, highlight and expand upon student contributions, and correct any misunderstandings in class.

Restaurant Menu

As previously stated, the use of a genuine restaurant menu in a classroom does not lead to an authentic experience. Students engaging in a restaurant role play are not using the menus because they are hungry or want to meet with friends over drinks and their interactions with the role-playing waiters, who are not performing their task to receive wages, will not produce any food or drinks. Short of finding a nearby restaurant owned by English speakers in Japan who do not understand Japanese, it is unviable to create a truly authentic experience. However, there is still value in using genuine restaurant menus, especially when the alternative is the over-simplified types of menus often found in English textbooks. The menu I use in my classrooms is from the American restaurant, Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen (2017). This specific menu was selected for pedagogic reasons. While this further reduces the authenticity, the pedagogical goals of the course supersede the level of authenticity of materials used. In this case, the menu was used because it 1) offers many dishes typical to American restaurants, 2) does not use many words or phrases coined by that particular restaurant, 3) has descriptions of each item to aid comprehension, and 4) existed on the website as an easy-to-print pdf file.

To prepare for use of the restaurant menu, learners first do a teacher-created worksheet that goes through a typical restaurant role play. Students look at a teacher-created menu that is more complex than most textbook menus, but simpler than the genuine Cheddar's menu. The teacher prepares a presentation with pictures of the different types of food, introduces common restaurant phrases, and learn about various systems common to American restaurants (tipping, choosing side items, etc.). After performing a practice role play with the simplified menus, learners then are given the Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen menus. They are given ten minutes to look over the menus and to research on their phones or to ask the teacher about anything they do not understand. Questions are shared with the entire class to ensure understanding. Then, learners do an improvised restaurant role play using the language and cultural knowledge they have acquired using the genuine menus.

Reading online restaurant reviews

In addition to using authentic materials such as videos and restaurant menus, it is important to show students the access they have to various types of authentic materials and target language communities online. Actively participating in such communities can push learners toward longer-term entry into the target language and culture (Blake, 2011). In these next two activities, I increase learners' genre awareness of online written restaurant reviews and assign their entrance into the online community of one of either Yelp or TripAdvisor, interactive websites that host user-produced restaurant reviews. Learners are introduced to the online written restaurant review websites, Yelp and TripAdvisor. Most students are already familiar with the concept due to the popularity of similar websites in Japan, such as Tabelog. The instructor chooses four popular restaurants in Japan that the students are likely to be aware of. The students read one restaurant review selected by the teacher from each restaurant and in groups try to figure out what restaurant the review was discussing. This activity encourages learners to engage in top-down processing and focus on the meaning of the text over the structure. It also helps to develop the important skill of understanding words based on context. For example, one of the restaurant reviews contains the phrase "quail eggs". Before beginning the activity, very few students know this word, but after seeing the term in the context of a review of a restaurant that they were familiar with, nearly all students could understand the meaning of the phrase. Finally, this activity introduces students to the actual idioms and nonstandard English written in more casual genres. Students come into phrases like "This restaurant is the bomb" or "I went to this restaurant with my bff." A short discussion can ensue about when and how such language is used.

Writing online restaurant reviews

Using Yelp or TripAdvisor to share restaurant reviews in English is perhaps the most authentic use of English in this essay. Learners are creating their own authentic materials by entering the L2 community and creating content posted for the consumption of that community. Students choose a local restaurant that they want to review and write a review. By writing about their own experiences, Perl (1980a) found that students write with greater fluency and satisfaction (pp. 30-31). Additionally, the students are afforded the opportunity to write for a specific audience. As Zamel (1982) asserts, "students should learn to view their writing as someone else's reading" (p. 165). Any English-speaking traveler who comes to the region and searches for a restaurant to eat at may read their review or, at the very least, take into account their rating. Incorporating online authentic materials into a curriculum can result "in environments where learning [is] independent, social and student-owned (Erbaggio et al., 2012; p. 30). Writing restaurant reviews cultivates confidence in students that they can not only passively observe and understand the language, but also that they can actively engage in the community and provide something of value to it.

Conclusion

Pool (2018) used the analogy of viewing animals in a zoo versus in the wild to compare classes taught exclusively with a textbook to the use of authentic materials. If you knew nothing about a lion and went to the zoo, you would get a distorted view of the majestic beast's nature. You may watch one in isolation pacing back and forth in its constricted confines or lazing the day away in apathy. Only by viewing the animal in its natural habitat and seeing how it interacts in its natural setting can you truly understand and appreciate it. Similarly, authentic materials give learners a glimpse of the language in its natural setting and that allows for greater understanding.

Authentic materials instill learners with confidence, aid in top-down processing, and provide learners access to the target language and culture. Thus, the use of authentic materials in authentic ways has a net positive outcome. Yet, the issue is muddled by the numerous conditions required to make authentic materials truly authentic. Rather than simply focusing on accumulating materials that contain a higher degree of authenticity, we ought to reflect upon our pedagogical goals and decide how and when authentic materials can help us to achieve them.

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The purposes of images in ELT textbooks reexamined

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Previous research into the roles images play in language learning textbooks have largely focused on a binary classification system of either decorative or useful (Hill, 2003; Romney & Bell, 2012, Roohani & Shari, 2015), but researchers have noted that this system seems inadequate (Romney & Bell, 2012; Romney, 2012). This paper reports the results of using the three-category classification system of decorative, instructional and supportive proposed by Romney (2017). Images in three ELT textbooks were analyzed. Results show that the majority of images were neither decorative nor instructional, but were connected to the content and may help reinforce learning. These types of images are best classified as supportive, demonstrating the need for a more robust classification system.

言語学習の教科書において画像の果たす役割に関する以前の研究では、装飾目的またはあるいは有用性の 2 つのいずれか判断することに主に焦点を置いていたが(Hill, 2003; Romney & Bell, 2012, Roohani & Shari, 2015)、研究者らはこのシステムは不適切であると指摘している(Romney & Bell, 2012; Romney, 2012). この論文では 装飾的、指示的、補佐的という 3 つのカテゴリーの分類システム(Romney, 2017)を用いた研究結果を報告する。3 つの ELT 教科書の画像を分析した。結果、画像の大部分の意図は装飾的でも指示的でもなく、教科書の内容に関連しており、学習を強化するのに役立つ可能性があることを示した。このタイプの画像は、補佐的な分類に最も多く所属しており、より堅牢な分類システムが必要であることが実証されてた。

ELT textbooks are increasingly becoming more multi-modal and contain more images than ever before. In the past textbooks were mostly text with small images inserted here and there; now textbooks often feature large photographs with small snippets of text superimposed on them. These new full-color, vivid, visually rich ELT coursebooks have been likened to magazines (Bowler, 2004) with Cook (2013) going so far as to describe recent ELT textbooks being more like “fliers for takeaway food” (p. 304) than textbooks. So what are teachers and students to make of this? Many teachers have expressed concern that images can be distracting (Evans, Watson & Willows, 1987; Petrie, 2003; Clark & Lyons, 2011) and some students have resisted graphics in ELT materials (Tang, 1991). As Prowse (2011) asks, is the ever growing number and size of images increasing the “effectiveness of learning, or merely insuring that one book is purchased rather than another?” (p. 162). This study attempts to answer this question by trying to determine if the images found in three ELT textbooks were just decoration or if they had any connection to the content and thus contributed to learning.

Image purposes in ELT Coursebooks

One of the first people to look at the role that images play in ELT coursebooks was David A. Hill. In two studies, one in 2003 and a follow-up in 2013, he reviewed images in general English textbooks used in Britain using a twofold coding system of decorative and useful. In his 2013 study he explained that he coded images as useful if students used the image to do something, for example “finding objects from a written list in the picture” (p. 177) and decorative for everything else. In 2003 he found that 55% of the images were decoration and 45% were useful; in 2013 he found that 47% of the images were useful and 53% of the images were decorative representing only a small 2% adjustment towards useful, but still an overwhelming majority of images in the studies were coded as decoration.

Romney and Bell (2012) working off of Hill's (2003) study looked at 15 Business English textbooks using a similar binary coding system. They coded images as either being instructional or decorative. Their determining factor was similar to that of Hill (2013). If there were instructions to the student to use the image it was instructional and if there were no instructions it was decorative. Romney and Bell (2012) found that 73% of the images were decorative and just 27% were instructional, again showing that the majority of images in coursebooks were only decoration. However, they felt that there should be a third category between the two categories for images that did not ask the students to directly use it for a learning activity, but were connected to the text and might help students to better understand the content, activate schema, etc.

Again in 2012 Romney, working solo, tried to address this issue of a third category by applying J. R. Levin's (1981) typology of images in learning materials to three general ELT coursebooks. Levin's (1981) typology, while not specifically created for language learning materials, but for all types of learning materials, consists of eight possible roles: decoration, remuneration, motivation, reiteration, representation, organization, interpretation and transformation. Romney (2012) found that images in ELT coursebooks could be organized using Levin's (1981) typology, as he found images for all but the transformational category, including 308 decorative images (18% of the total), but he felt that this typology still lacked conciseness and that language learning presented some unique challenges not addressed by Levin (1981).

In 2014 in an attempt to reduce the 73% of images in business English coursebooks they classified as decorative, Romney and Bell looked again at the 1655 decorative images and applied Levin, Anglin, & Carney's (1987) revised typology. Levin, et al. (1987) reduced the purposes of images in learning materials from eight to five by combining the decoration, remuneration and motivation categories to decoration and the reiteration and representation categories to representation. By applying Levin, et al.'s (1987) typology Romney and Bell (2014) were able to reduce the number of images classified as decorative to 577 representing 25% of the total, a significant reduction. However, they still felt that there was more to the remaining 577 decorative images than just being merely ornamentation and wondered if there was not still a more descriptive way to understand how images are used in language learning materials.

Roohani and Shari (2015) analyzed two ELT coursebooks used in Iran. They found, unlike Hill (2003 & 2013) and Romney and Bell (2012 & 2014) that only 8% of the images were decoration and 92% were useful. However, they used Lohr's (2003) definition of decorative images as not having "a strong association with the instructional content" (p. 16) and coded images that had any kind of connection to the text, whether there were instructions to the students to use the image or not, as useful. The two examples shown in their study would have been coded by both Hill (2003 & 2013) and Romney and Bell (2012) as decorative.

In summary, the three studies by both Hill (2003 & 2013) and Romney and Bell (2012) found a large number of decorative images in the ELT coursebooks they reviewed and expressed concern that these types of images were not the most effective. Romney (2012) and Romney and Bell (2014) tried to resolve this concern by applying Levin, et al.'s (1981 & 1987) typologies but met with only limited success. Roohani and Shari (2015) revised the definition of decorative and were able to more or less resolve the issue of too many decorative images but were only able to do so by using the broadest definition of useful.

Therefore, in 2017 Romney proposed, but did not test, a new three category, four role typology of images in ELT coursebooks. He advanced the idea that images can be either decorative, supportive, or instructional. His new typology is based in part on a three category typology suggested, but undescribed, by Jones (n.d.) of decorative, supporting and central. Additionally, this new typology uses a more refined definition of decorative images by applying both Lhor's (2003) definition of decorative, used by Roohani and Shari (2015), as well as Clark and Lyon's (2011) definition of decorative images. He proposed that decorative images should be defined as images that do not contribute to language learning in any way. He further suggested that instructional images, much like that of Hill's (2003 & 2013) useful and Romney and Bell's (2012) instructional, are images that have instructions to the student and/or teacher for using the image for learning. New to his typology was the third category of supportive images. These are images that provide support to the learning by being connected to the content "by offering context or by providing another channel for information reception" (Romney, 2017, p. 275).

Romney (2017) further breaks down supportive images into two sub-categories of weakly supportive and strongly supportive. Weakly supportive images might include things like an image of a person on the phone accompanying a script of a telephone conversation. An image like this, while related to the content, does not provide students with much information unless they do not know what a telephone is or they have never used one. Strongly supportive images, on the other hand, provide significant context and "an additional modality for understanding" (Romney, 2017, p. 275). For example, if students are reading an article about sightseeing in New York and included with the article are images of the sightseeing spots they are reading about, students would be better able to understand what they have read.

The study described in this paper tests the three category, four role typology proposed by Romney (2017) by reviewing images in three ELT coursebooks much in the same way that Hill (2003 & 2013), Romney and Bell, (2012) and Roohani and Shari (2015) have done.

Methodology

The images found in three general English coursebooks commonly available in Japan published by international publishers were studied: Empower B1+ (Doff, Thaine, Puchta, Stranks & Lewis-Jones, 2015), Top Notch 2 (Saslow & Ascher, 2015), and World English 3 (Chase & Johannsen, 2015b) . All three coursebooks were reported by the publisher to be at the CEFR B1 (intermediate) level, and all three were published in 2015, the most recent year available at the time of data collection.

The study used the three category, four role typology proposed by Romney (2017). Images in the coursebooks could be categorized as either: decorative, weakly supportive, strongly supportive, or instructional.

Each textbook was surveyed page-by-page, image-by-image. For each image encountered the following questions were asked: First, are there instructions to the student or teacher to use the image in a learning task or activity? If the answer was "yes" then the image was coded as instructional and the survey moved to the next image. If the answer was "no" an additional question, "does the image support the learning?" was asked. If the answer was "no" the image was coded as "decorative" and the survey moved to the next image. If the answer was "yes" the image was coded as strongly supportive. If the answer was "maybe,"

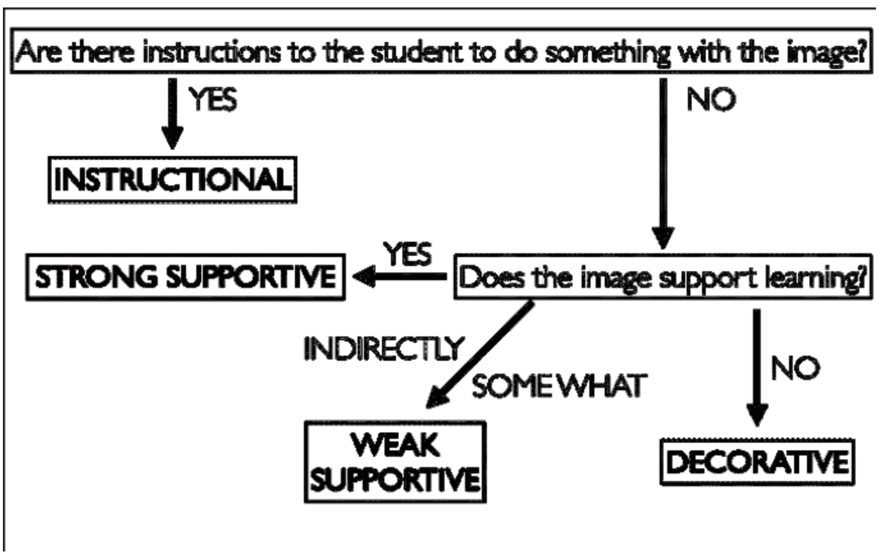

Figure 1: *A graphical representation of the methodology*

"indirectly," or "somewhat" the image was coded as "weakly supportive" and the survey moved to the next image. Figure 1 demonstrates the process graphically.

images being instructional. If both instructional images and strongly supportive images can be seen to impact learning, than combining these two categories together to form a super category yields nearly 83% of images in

Table 1: *A Summary of Results*

	Decorative	Weakly	Strongly	Instructional	Total
Empower B1+	0	58	81	220	359
Top Notch 2	5	77	298	89	469
World English 3	3	37	89	67	196
	8	172	468	376	1024

Table 2: *Comparison to Previous Research*

	Not Beneficial		Beneficial	
Study	Decorative	W. Supportive + Decorative	Useful and/or Instructional	S. Supportive + Instructional
Hill (2003)	55%	n/a	45%	n/a
Romney & Bell (2012)	73%	n/a	27%	n/a
Hill (2013)	53%	n/a	47%	n/a
Roohani and Shari (2015)	8%	n/a	92%	n/a
Current Study	0.8%	17.6%	37%	82.4%

the coursebooks reviewed are beneficial, or useful, to learning. This stands in contrast to previous studies. Hill (2003) reporting 45% useful, Romney and Bell (2012) 27% instructional, Hill (2013) 47% useful. Furthermore, this result is similar to Roohani and Shari (2015) who found roughly 92% of the graphics to be useful.

In contrast, roughly 17% of the images were weakly supportive and less than 1% were coded as decorative. Combining these two categories together to a super category, roughly 18% of the images were not beneficial, or only slightly beneficial, for learning. Once again this stands in contrast to previous studies: Hill (2003) 55% decorative, Romney and Bell (2012) 73% decorative, Hill (2013) 53% decorative. However, it is similar to Roohani and Shari (2015) who calculated that roughly 8% of the graphics in the two books they

Results

In total, 1024 images were reviewed. 359 images from *Empower B1+* (Doff, Thaine, Puchta, Stranks & Lewis-Jones, 2015); 469 images from *Top Notch 2* (Saslow & Ascher, 2015), and 196 images from *World English 3* (Chase & Johannsen, 2015b). Eight images were coded as decorative, 172 images were coded as weakly supportive, 468 images were coded as strongly supportive and 376 images were coded as instructional. These results are summarized in Table 1.

Discussion

The first thing that this data set indicates is that the majority of images in these coursebooks, 46% of the total, are strongly supportive followed by 37% of the reviewed to be decorative. These results are summarized in Table 2.

These results indicate two possibilities: First, that the instruments used to measure the roles of images in language learning are getting more sophisticated. Second, that publishers are less likely to use images that do not support learning. First, the instruments used to measure the purposes of images in ELT coursebooks are more sophisticated. Hill (2003 & 2013), Romney and Bell (2012) and Roohani and Shari (2015) used only binary coding. This study had four possible outcomes for images. However, the outcome categories can be combined into two meta-categories, decorative/weakly supportive and strongly supportive/instructional, thereby essentially making the current study also a binary survey albeit a more sophisticated one. However, weakly supportive images are not strictly decorative. While they do not support learning in a clear and direct manner, they do relate to learning and are not completely without justification.

It is also important to note that the categorization of weakly supportive is subjective. A picture of a person talking on a telephone next to a scripted conversation of a phone call may not activate a student’s schema, or provide useful comprehension clues, but it is not unrelated. In fact, for certain students it might very well aid in their ability to understand the conversation. It is the subjective projection of the researcher that the image may not be very helpful to an average student. To truly test the notion of whether or not images can be either strongly or weakly supportive of learning would require feedback from students as to whether or not they found the image useful.

Second, while the outcome category of weakly supportive does suggest that the image was primarily included to fill-up space or to increase the visual appeal of the coursebook, the image is not completely divorced from the content, and, as noted above, may in fact be useful for some students. This, therefore, does provide a justification, albeit a limited justification, for its inclusion and suggests that publishers are less likely to use images that are purely decorative. This, once again, stands in sharp contrast to previous studies that found the majority of images in coursebooks were decorative. To truly test the hypothesis that publishers are using less decorative images than before, it would be necessary to review the same coursebook overtime as it has changed. For example, to take the first edition of the coursebook and compare it to the second, third, and so on, editions. Additionally writers, editors, and designers could be interviewed about the process of image selection. Who chose the image? How it was chosen? Why was it chosen? Et cetera. Prowse (2011) notes that while some authors have complained about their lack of contribution to the visual design, there has been an increasing awareness that the visual design of a coursebook is an important part of its commercial success and that authors are more likely to take an active role now then before.

Finally, it is tempting to write off decorative images and weakly supportive images as useless and a waste of space, but as Tomlinson (2011) rightly notes that language learning materials should have an impact on the learners and should make learners feel at ease and including images in materials is one way to accomplish both of these goals. Furthermore, it is not just language learning materials that are becoming more visual, but all types of written communication, whether it is web log posts or graphic novels, students these days are more accustomed to visually rich materials (Lai, 2010) and many students expect their language learning coursebooks to be so (Brinton, 2014).

Conclusion

This study, in contrast to other studies, has shown that images in ELT textbooks are less likely to be merely decorative and to have at least some connection to, and purpose for, language learning. It suggests that the more robust typology proposed by Romney (2017) is more accurate and useful for analyzing the images found in ELT coursebooks. Finally, that teachers, administrators, and students should be encouraged that the ever increasing visuals in ELT coursebooks are not just decoration and serve to improve student outcomes.

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In-house Journals as a Form of Program Development

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In-house journals are a feature of many university English language departments and centers, providing teachers with a forum to publish articles primarily of interest to their institutional colleagues. More specifically, journals can play an important role in formalizing teachers' professional development and hopefully help improve the quality of learning for students. This paper will describe the benefits of producing an in-house journal from a program development perspective, as well as key steps to follow when overseeing such a publication. These will be exemplified by a current in-house journal co-edited by the two authors.

紀要集を出版することは、多くの大学の英語学科や英語センターの特徴である。それは教師たちに論文を出版する場を与えると同時に、主として、供に働く同僚にとっての情報交換の場でもある。特に論文集は教員たちの専門的な成長を明確にするために重要な役割を果たす。それは同輩との共同研究においてや、最終的な目的である学生の学習の質の向上においても有益である。この論文は、プログラム開発の観点から紀要集を作ることの利益について説明する。またそのような出版物を刊行する為の、いくつかの重要な段階について書かれている。この二人の作家によって編集された紀要集を例にして説明している。

It is a common feature of university English language departments, colleges, and centers worldwide to produce in-house journals as a forum for their members to publish articles. These may cover a variety of topics, including classroom practice, teacher identity, critical issues, and data-based research projects. Writing these as journal articles can be viewed as the final stage in the process of formalizing a particular aspect of teaching practice. And while this may occur as professional development at the individual level, it is also a way to engage with, and contribute to, the wider language-teaching community.

Program Development can be defined as any action taken to assess and improve various components of a program. These components generally consist of goals and objectives, teaching materials, assessment procedures, and classroom teaching (Brown, 1995). In some cases, the program may also include a system of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers. Developing any of these as a means to strengthening the program can be conducted in a principled way by academic managers collecting data through student and/or teacher feedback, applying relevant evidence-based theory, and implementing manageable changes that are themselves subject to evaluation.

Case Study

In order to exemplify how producing an in-house journal may contribute to the development of a language program, the following section describes one such journal that is co-edited by the authors of this paper in their capacity as program managers. This journal, *New Directions in Teaching and Learning English Discussion* (hereafter, *New Directions…*) most overtly addresses the development of the teachers' CPD, although it may also affect other components of the program.

Program Outline

To provide context for the *New Directions…* journal, the program which produces it will first be described. The Center for English Discussion Class (EDC) (Hurling, 2012) is part of a private university in Japan and administers a compulsory course taken by all of the approximately 4,500 first-year students. As class size is relatively small, with an average of eight students per class, 42 full-time instructors are required to meet the demands of the teaching load. Their duties are to plan and teach up to 14 lessons a week, and to take part in the center's professional development system, which includes lesson observations, faculty development sessions, and a series of professional development projects written up as articles for potential publication in *New Directions…*. These non-teaching responsibilities are quite unique because they are part of the contractual duties of the position. However, they are deemed necessary due to the EDC course employing a strongly unified curriculum. This means that all instructors share the same course and lesson aims, assessment procedures, materials in the form of an in-house textbook, and methodology. Four program managers, whose duties include curriculum design, overseeing instructors' CPD, and program evaluation, support the instructors and the standardization of the curriculum.

New Directions in Teaching and Learning English Discussion

This journal publishes annually in March at the end of the Japanese academic year. The journal was first published in 2012, while the sixth volume was published in March, 2018. Contributions are currently accepted only from instructors, program managers, and professors who teach, or have taught, the EDC course. The journal's mission statement is "to improve the quality of learning for EDC students by providing a forum for instructors to reflect on teaching and learning, design and share classroom activities, and advance an understanding of communicative language teaching in practice and theory." For readers, this is intended to convey the understanding that the journal's articles are oriented towards the EDC course, while also being potentially of interest to any classroom practitioner involved in teaching spoken communication skills.

Article Types

The journal features five sections, the first four of which directly relate to the different types of CPD projects that EDC instructors may undertake.

Teaching journals. First-year instructors are asked to keep a journal to reflect on student performance in class. They note changes in performance and possible reasons for them. Typically, instructors focus on students who are considered "difficult", because of either poor class performance or behavior. However, some instructors keep notes on classes that they deem successful, as a way of investigating what factors have led to this success. Resulting articles are written up with reference to relevant journal entries and what they possibly reveal about the student performance. This process is intended to aid teacher's CPD by asking them to focus on their students and to consider relevant teaching methodology and language-learning theory.

Classroom activities. Second-year instructors are tasked with identifying some of their own teaching principles and then designing a classroom activity based on one or more of those principles. This project is designed to help instructors think about the EDC course aims and how best to meet them with their own students. The final published article features a procedural outline for conducting the activity and the specific principles that support it. It is intended that other instructors can read the articles and decide if they want to try the activity in their own classrooms. Example activities include presenting target language and helping students generate ideas for extended discussions.

Classroom research. Third-, fourth-, and fifth-year instructors are given more freedom in their CPD project when designing and conducting a piece of classroom-based research. They are expected to collect data for this research, which may be qualitative, quantitative, or a mix of both (Brown, 2014). Data types include audio and/or video recordings of student and/or teacher behavior, class notes, and student/teacher questionnaires. Example topics have included student motivation, L2 use, and teacher beliefs. The journal article is structured as a traditional research paper, featuring a literature review, methodology, results and, a discussion of the results, and a conclusion. This can contribute to teachers' CPD by improving skills of writing research questions, survey design, and data collection and analysis.

Reflective practice. The above three PD project types all involve a large amount of oversight by EDC program managers. However, more experienced teachers may opt to complete a reflective practice task of their own design, with minimal manager input. Farrell (2015) defines reflective practice as "a cognitive process accompanied by a set of attitudes in which teachers systematically collect data about their practice, and […] use the data to make informed decisions about their practice both inside and outside the classroom" (p. 123). Therefore, this type of article is a more self-directed piece of professional development that potentially results in promoting teacher autonomy, for example in classroom decision-making skills or through further reflection on teaching principles.

Program development. The journal is also used as a forum for the EDC program managers to provide the perspective of those involved in developing the program. Articles in this section include evaluation research projects conducted to help improve various aspects of the course. They may also provide documentation of procedures, both as a way to keep a formal record of them and as a reference source for others. Finally, some articles by managers may be a means of explaining and justifying to teachers relatively large program changes. This is important to help maintain teachers' investment in the program as a whole. In previous journal volumes, program managers have included an article that details how faculty development sessions are designed (Lesley, 2017) and one that explains a re-conceptualization of aspects of the course's target language (Schaefer, 2018).

Benefits of In-House Journals

Producing an in-house journal may result in a variety of benefits for all stakeholders of an academic program (Bunker, 2003). These benefits can be seen most obviously with regards to teachers, but the following sections will also consider advantages for students and at the managerial level.

Teachers

Although contributing an article to an in-house journal may be seen as an imposition on teachers' time that could be spent planning lessons, there are several benefits of doing so that have a strong impact on the classroom and beyond. Livingston & Moroi (2015), in a survey regarding EDC's CPD program and in-house journal, found that instructors agreed with a range of benefits, including improved learning outcomes and critical reflection on teaching. The two broad areas of development can thus be defined as *practical* and *theoretical*, though additional benefits from a *vocational* point of view have also been identified.

Practical. Although all conscientious teachers strive to develop their classroom practice, undertaking the process of more formally reflecting on what they do or designing and evaluating principled activities may help carry out this process more efficiently, leading to increased awareness of ways to maximize students' learning opportunities (Farrell, 2018). In addition, collaboration that occurs through peer and content editing en route to preparing the finished journal article provides space for ideas to be discussed and means that more than one perspective can be applied to any consideration of classroom practice (Mann & Walsh, 2017).

Theoretical. As part of the process of researching for and writing journal articles, teachers are required to conduct background reading to help connect their ideas to the broader field. This results in them potentially increasing their knowledge of language teaching theories and principles. As a result, they may reconsider aspects of what they do in the classroom (Corlett, 2004) and/or find new and interesting avenues to explore in the future (Crandall & Miller, 2014).

Beyond the above benefits, practical and theoretical gains can also come from the journal as a forum for documenting and sharing ideas. In the most recent journal edition (Brereton, Lesley, Schaefer, and Young, 2018), 15 of the 39 contributing authors cited, collectively, 33 articles published in previous editions, suggesting a "cascade" effect (Hayes, 2000) of professional development. (These figures do not include citations of Hurling (2015), which is considered a foundational text of the course and is often referenced when describing the program.)

Vocational. Not all language teachers have extensive experience writing journal articles. Therefore, doing so, in the relatively accommodating context of an in-house journal, gives them the opportunity to develop academic writing skills with the support of peers and managers. This is especially advantageous for instructors with limited experience of teaching and carrying out research, and may have the added benefit of putting them in a position to be better prepared to submit articles to out-of-house journals and/or to undertake a graduate degree program. Moreover, having articles that can be listed on their CV, or freely accessed online, is helpful when job-seeking in the future (McCrostie, 2010; Rose, 2015). Articles in the most recent edition of *New Directions…* (Brereton et al., 2018) were downloaded from the university's web-based repository system an average of 32.7 times (excluding four outliers whose download numbers were in the hundreds).

The process of preparing for and writing a journal article can also be one way to fight job dissatisfaction or disillusionment derived from staleness or stress. For more experienced instructors, stress has been identified as a demotivating factor that connects to a drop in classroom performance (Aubrey & Coombe, 2011), which may occur after several years in the same position. Thus, conducting some kind of reflective task, activity design, or classroom research can help instructors find a new perspective or challenge and therefore "re-charge the batteries" to offset potential frustrations or feelings of burnout (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001).

Students

The benefits for students of an in-house journal are clearly linked to many of the benefits for teachers. In other words, if teachers improve their classroom practice through CPD, students should receive a higher quality of lesson. Similarly, if teachers are more motivated and engaged in the classroom, they are likely to deliver more engaging lessons. Feedback from students in end-of-semester surveys suggests that instructors are successful in this endeavor. Results from the surveys consistently reveal positive findings related to improved discussion skills, greater speaking confidence, and support for EDC's lesson style and structure.

Academic Managers

Managers who are tasked with overseeing the CPD of language instructors may also benefit from producing an in-house journal in two key ways. First, the process of overseeing teachers' projects and editing their articles exposes them to a variety of ideas and perspectives that contribute to their own CPD as teachers and program designers. Second, it lightens the load with regards to teacher training. This is because, as teachers become more self-directed, their expertise in lesson planning and in-class decision-making becomes more selective, autonomous, and flexible (Tsui, 2003). When more experienced teachers in the program pass on their collective wisdom, the sharing of best practice not only benefits the instructors (Hayes, 2000; Richards, 2001), it may also mean less oversight is required on the academic managerial side.

How Does a Journal Get Written?

The process of creating a journal begins at the planning stage, moving from drafts of first to final versions of submitted content, each of which must be proofread and edited according to fixed, standardized guidelines. What follows is a short overview of the key stages carried out by authors and editors to bring each edition of *New Directions…* to publication.

Schedules and Deadlines

Care is taken to ensure that important deadlines are staggered to make the editing team's workload more manageable given time and human resource limitations. Hence, the starting point for all published articles begins with the creation of a project plan. This outlines points when key elements of the instructor's current research project or reflective investigation need to be completed and when progress needs to be reported. It also highlights dates scheduled through the semester for faculty development sessions where instructors discuss matters with and receive input from peers and program managers. Throughout the year, harder deadlines are set for the submission of the article outline, the full first draft, and the final draft. Considerable time and needless effort on the part of the author and editor can be salvaged if misdirected write-ups are intercepted early, which is an advantage of the in-house structure. Overall, deadlines are important for helping everyone stay on schedule. Ones that feature early in the process can be somewhat flexible, whereas latter ones are generally immovable. Of course, when deadlines are missed, it is sometimes necessary to have difficult conversations with instructors, but these are easier when acceptance criteria are made explicit from the start and the consequences of missing deadlines are clearly conveyed.

Publication Criteria

Publication criteria fall into one of two categories: content and format. It is vital that all parties understand and adhere to these, and on the editorial and peer-review side for them to be consistently and fairly applied (Turner, 2003b), as they ultimately determine which submissions will proceed to publication. Key questions that need to be answered are:

- *Does it meet the general project brief?*
- *Does it fulfill all given task requirements?*
- *Does it fall within the acceptable page count range?*
- *If used, has data been appropriately handled and presented?*
- *Are sources referenced and cited according to our guidelines?*
- *Is formatting correct?*

If the answers to any of the above are not in the affirmative, then revisions will be required, providing time to do so remains. If the criteria are still not met by the final deadline, the paper will not be published. Ultimately, the right to publish is never guaranteed, although the right to fair and equal treatment through the submission and review process certainly is (Corlett, 2003).

Templates

To assist the writing and editing process, an in-house template into which instructors are asked to type their first drafts is used. This helps increase the chances that what is submitted subscribes to prescribed formatting requirements, including, among others, page layout, fonts, and section names. It also provides sample charts, figures, and tables, with examples of in-text citations and referencing. As with other aspects of template formatting, the provision of guidelines is useful, but not foolproof. Naturally, careful checking on the editing side is still an absolute must.

Proofing

Concerns regarding submissions and modifications that need to be made are documented on the original using a "track changes" function. As required, comments and suggestions are left for the author to review and respond to. There is much debate surrounding the ethics and appropriacy of double-blind peer reviews (Lee, Sugimoto, Zhang, & Cronin, 2013) with calls for anonymity to be removed in a bid to place greater accountability on (unduly harsh) reviewers (Turner, 2003a; 2003b; Osterloch & Kieser, 2015). Yet, others warn against such disclosure for fear of inviting academic impartiality or retribution (Brown, 2007; Corlett, 2003, 2008). In our own context, the fact that authors and reviewers are known to each other provides scope for feedback and recommendations to be discussed and/or challenged in person, which we see as a significant benefit for the clarity and immediacy of any follow-up interactions. With no such veil to shield authors from knowing that their reviewers are their immediate managers, we feel better placed to avoid issues of unfairly critical or potentially humiliating feedback (Conner & Schwartz, 2014). This is because a managerial approach taken with humility and an eye to supportive collaboration is a standard premise for a healthy working relationship between teachers and academic management. In short, it would be counterproductive for it to be anything but mutually cooperative, respectful, and sensitive to the avoidance of face-loss. All feedback and follow-ups happen in advance of the deadline for compiling all of the submissions.

Compiling and Printing

Once checked and approved, all drafts are placed into a master template for the entire journal. These are sorted by project type, put into appropriate sections, and arranged alphabetically by author. Section breaks and page numbers are added, as are headers and footers. This leaves the table of contents and cover pages to be updated to reflect the current year of publication, before final hardcopies are printed. These are given to all authors to check again before the master document is sent to the publisher. In time, the publisher returns a proof version. This is checked thoroughly, in advance of the final print request. After publication, all instructors receive a full hard copy of the new journal. Additional copies are placed in the university's two libraries, as well as in the national library, which is searchable online. Digital copies of individual articles are also stored, with authors' consent, on the university's repository system.

Process Evaluation

Over time, the journal production process inevitably undergoes changes, and efforts should be made routinely to fine-tune procedures and make matters as smooth as possible for all participants. The end of the academic year, when the newest journal reaches publication, is a good opportunity to reflect on the most recent production schedule and to document suggested changes to improve it for next time.

Although there is no fixed system for evaluating the editing process, the four editors of *New Directions…* routinely discuss all aspects of the journal, reflecting on their own experiences interacting with, and informal feedback from, contributing authors. One example of a change to the journal production process made as a result of such reflection refers to the article outline stage. After an instructor submitted a first draft that was deemed unsuitable according to the set criteria, the editors added this stage to help avoid such drafts from reaching the submission stage.

To aid the journal writing process, it would be beneficial for the editors to systematically gather feedback post-publication from contributors to help appraise and improve procedures for the future. As with any process, regular evaluation will ensure that it continually moves towards providing a smoother and more transparent system. This is ultimately for the benefit of all involved – authors and editors alike.

Conclusion

While in-house journals may be viewed by some as a “lesser” forum in which to publish an article (Kamada, 2007), they still provide numerous benefits for students, teachers, and managers. Moreover, in addition to helping develop classroom practice and furthering knowledge of the field within a university department or center, at the institutional level, in-house journals document ways in which instructors have tried reflectively to improve their teaching and learning outcomes. As the number of volumes grows, it creates an archive of instructors' academic investigations and endeavor. Due to the growing availability of online access to university repositories, this is valuable not just to an institution's own teachers and students, but hopefully to the wider EFL community too (Crandall & Miller, 2014). It is hoped that the ideas offered in this paper might provide some insight and encouragement to others in similar contexts, or those considering pursuing the introduction of a journal for in-house purposes.

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Developing Learner Autonomy through Proofreading: Do Students Perceive a Benefit?

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This paper presents the results of a survey on attitudes towards proofreading given to undergraduate students who completed a one-on-one academic writing course in English at a university writing center in Japan. Students were divided into a survey group that received personalized guidance on checking their own writing for mistakes similar to ones they had made previously, and a control group that received no such feedback or guidance. Survey results showed that students in the survey group checked their writing for mistakes with greater frequency and were more satisfied with instructor advice than those in the control group, but did not have greater confidence in their ability to find their own mistakes nor see greater value in making the effort to proofread their own work.

本稿は、当大学でマンツーマンのアカデミックライティングコースを修了した大学生を対象に行った、英文推敲の取り組み方の調査結果に関するものです。学生は、テストグループとコントロールグループに分かれます。テストグループは、以前と同じような間違いに関して個別に指導を受け、コントロールグループは、そのようなフィードバックまたは指導を受けません。調査結果は、テストクループのほうがコントロールグループよりも頻繁に推敲をするようになり、またインストラクターのアドバイスにより満足していることを示しました。しかし、テストグループは自分の間違いに気づく能力や、自分の文章を推敲する努力に対する価値というものに、より強い確信を持っているわけではありませんでした。

Writing effectively in a second language is a highly demanding skill, even for those who have successfully obtained oral fluency in that language. Second language (L2) writers must grapple with issues of coherence, format, grammar, and language sophistication that they may otherwise overlook when speaking in the non-native tongue. Moreover, readers tend to be far less forgiving of errors than listeners are (Hacker, 2002), and errors in writing can even be stigmatizing when readers evaluate them harshly. Therefore, it is essential that writing instructors help their L2 students to make progress in eliminating problematic error patterns in their writing over time (Ferris, 2017, p.147). This aspiration provides the motivation for the current study, which will investigate possible effects of providing guidance to students on proofreading their own written work.

A review of the literature finds relatively little that has been published on the efficacy of having L2 students self-edit their own texts. O'Brien (2015) considered ways to improve L2 writers' ability to proofread their own work, and found that focusing lessons on correcting specific classes of common errors resulted in significant improvement in student writing performance. The results of an earlier study conducted by Fathman and Whalley (1990) similarly indicated that drawing writers' attention to their grammar mistakes resulted in fewer similar errors in subsequent rewrites. Ferris and Roberts (2001) likewise found that students who received feedback on their errors showed greater ability to successfully edit their own texts than those who received no such feedback. These viewpoints are consistent with the research and experience of Frodeson and Holten, who argue forcefully that error feedback helps L2 writers "develop self-editing skills by focusing their attention on the patterned nature of their errors" (2003, p. 147).

One major obstacle L2 writers face when self-editing is that they are often either unaware of or unable to recognize their own errors (O'Brien, 2015, p.85). Thus, an essential part of the proofreading process must be raising students' awareness of the kinds of mistakes that they tend to commit. Foss and Waters (2007, p.2) recommend that writers create their own personal style sheet containing a list of errors that they make most frequently. Personalized feedback and guidance from a teacher can be of great help to L2 students when creating such a list. However, such an endeavor takes valuable class time. While classroom settings with multiple students may or may not afford teachers the time to give students sufficient individual attention for this task (Ferris, 2003, p. 121), one-on-one settings such as those available at many university writing centers offer greater potential.

Contextual Overview

From their origin in the United States, writing centers have spread to universities all over the world (Chang, 2013, p.1). However, they are a relatively recent phenomenon in Japan, where the first writing center was established around 2004 (Johnson, Yoshida, & Cornwell, 2010, p.693). Currently, the Writing Center Association of Japan website lists 14 writing centers that exist in the country ("WCAJ - Writing center resources"). The Toyo University Language Center (LC), established in 2013 and based in the university's Hakusan, Tokyo campus, offers free individualized writing assistance, one-on-one tutorials, and other English-learning programs to the school's entire student body. Unlike many other writing centers in Japan, it employs dedicated teaching staff who primarily work as writing instructors in the center.

In the spring and fall semesters, the LC offers two different individualized writing programs where students may have the opportunity to complete one or more essays. Both programs are completely voluntary, non-credit bearing, and consist of six 30 minute one-on-one sessions with an LC instructor. The Conference Writing (CW) program follows a module system, with students attempting to complete one module per semester. Six modules exist in total, with students being placed into a module appropriate to their skill level based on either the results of a placement test or on their past performance in the CW program. Each module offers students the chance to try different genres of academic writing, such as process writing (module two), compare and contrast writing (module three), and argumentative writing (module five). In addition to composing a minimum of one essay in the genre of the module, CW students must also complete 10 online journals of at least 120 words each in the genre. Journals are checked by the instructors online and are not discussed during the six face-to-face sessions.

In contrast to CW, the Special Academic Writing (SAW) program has no journal requirement or module system. Instructors assess the individual needs of each student and offer a custom academic writing program that often, but not always, includes the completion of one or more essays by the student.

Due to the voluntary and non-credit nature of both CW and SAW, students who take these programs tend to be highly motivated to improve their written English and often have dreams of studying or working abroad. In both programs, students who attend at least four sessions and complete all the required work are rewarded in two ways: they are eligible to take a writing program again the following semester, and they additionally receive three Toyo Global Points that count toward the school's Global Leader program.

The instructional goal of both CW and SAW is to help students develop writer autonomy. As opposed to functioning as proofreaders, instructors aim to assist students in gaining the skills to evaluate and improve their own work. Therefore, these programs offer teachers an excellent opportunity to help individual students discover, recognize, learn to correct, and ultimately eliminate their own recurring mistakes related to grammar, organization, and style. The attainment of this ability has the potential to help students improve their overall language proficiency in addition to their writing skill. This objective motivated the researcher to attempt offering explicit proofreading guidance to a portion of his students and to objectively compare these students' level of improvement with that of the remaining students who did not receive such guidance. However, given the difficulty in determining whether specific improvements in student writing could be explicitly linked to whether or not proofreading guidance was given, the decision was made to focus the study on students' subjective opinions on proofreading their own work as opposed to the collection of objective measurements. The research questions this study therefore attempted to address were:

Would students who received explicit guidance on proofreading their own essay for mistakes they had made in the past…

1. proofread more than those who did not receive such guidance?

2. be more confident in their ability to find their own errors than those who did not receive such guidance?

3. think that proofreading was more worthwhile than those who did not receive such guidance?

4. be more satisfied with instructor advice on their essay than those who did not receive such guidance?

Methods

Participants

The study was conducted in the LC in the fall semester of 2017. At the start of the semester, 37 students (25 CW and 12 SAW) were assigned to meet with the instructor once every other week for twelve weeks. Upon attending their second session and bringing a first draft of their essay's introductory paragraph, students were randomly and unknowingly placed in either a control group (CG) that would receive no explicit proofreading guidance, or a study group (SG) that would receive such guidance. This placement occurred for all CW and SAW students on attendance of their second session, with the exception of one SAW student who was given another kind of writing support as opposed to completing an essay and was therefore left out of the study. Factoring out this student as well as two others who did not attend any sessions, the instructor had an initial combined SAW and CW pool of 34 students, who had been divided evenly into a 17 student control group and a 17 student study group. Nine of the students in the SG and six in the CG had taken a writing program with the instructor the previous semester. All other students were taking CW or SAW for the first time. From this point on, no distinction will be made between students taking SAW or CW as all students in the CG and SG were tasked with completing an academic essay, the subject of the end-of-semester survey.

The main aim for both CG and SG students was to progressively complete an academic essay of five paragraphs or more by their final session. At the end of each session, students were typically instructed to write one new paragraph for homework, although students occasionally were encouraged to or elected to write more. During each session, all students in both the CG and SG received similar guidance and feedback on their essay that was intended to aid them in developing the skills to evaluate and improve their own work. For all students, the instructor drew attention to errors and elicited corrections from the students themselves. However, an additional layer of guidance was given to students in the SG. In their second session, SG students were given an unfilled-in Proofreading Checklist sheet, of which the instructor kept a copy (See Appendix A). In every lesson except for the first and the last, the instructor would help the student become aware of one or two repeated errors that they had made on their essay. A rule to check for this kind of error was then created and written down by both the student and the teacher on their respective copies of the checklist. A model of this type of error along with a corresponding correction was written next to the rule when appropriate. So, by the student's fifth lesson, both teacher and students had an identical custom checklist that contained a list of up to eight rules that corresponded to errors that this particular student had made when writing their essay. Common rules that ended up on many students' checklists were to check for subject-verb disagreement mistakes, singular-plural problems, and verb tense errors. At the end of sessions two through five, students were told to proofread the next version of their essay before class by looking for and correcting any errors correlating to those on their checklist as well as any other mistakes that they could find. Students were advised to proofread by reading once silently, and then a second time aloud as this would help them find errors they may have missed when first reading in silence (Madraso, 1993, p.33).

Survey

At the end of the course a survey was prepared that aimed to measure student attitudes toward proofreading as well as their satisfaction with the advice they received on their essay (See Appendix B). Google Forms was used to convey the anonymous eight question survey. Five questions required students to respond according to a four-point Likert scale, and three necessitated a response designating frequency of action. Questions and responses were written in both English and Japanese. Two identical digital copies of the survey were created, one to administer to students in the CG and another to students in the SG. In order to ensure surveyed students had adequate opportunities to work on, receive feedback on, and proofread their essay, only those who had successfully completed an essay and attended at least five of the six scheduled sessions were deemed eligible to participate in the survey. This whittled down the initial pool of 34 students to 28, of which 13 were in the CG and 15 in the SG. All students in this pool were Japanese undergraduates, with the exception of one undergraduate from Myanmar in the CG. English level among those in both groups varied widely, with TOEIC scores ranging from 450 to 900.

The instructor informed eligible students about the survey at the end of their final session, presenting it as a personal research project. Students were told that the questionnaire was anonymous, non-compulsory, and would not affect their grade, and were therefore encouraged to answer honestly should they choose to respond. Next, the instructor provided the student with a written hyperlink to the survey, taking special care to

Table 1: *Survey Results*

#	Statement/Question	Control Group (n=11)	Study Group (n=12)
1.	This semester, I met with Smith Sensei for a writing lesson ____ times	5.54	5.83
2.	I think that checking my English writing for mistakes on my own is a useful way to improve my English	97.0%	86.1%
3.	I feel confident in my ability to check my English writing for mistakes on my own	42.4%	33.3%
4.	This semester, I silently read my essay to check for mistakes ___ time(s) on average before each lesson	1.37	1.92
5.	I feel I was able to find and correct mistakes in my essay when I read my essay silently before each lesson	56.7% (n=10)	52.7% (n=12)
6.	This semester, I read my essay aloud to check for mistakes ____ time(s) on average before each lesson	0.9	1.25
7.	I feel I was able to find and correct mistakes in my essay when I read my essay aloud before each lesson	66.7% (n=6)	63.6% (n=11)
8.	How would you rate the advice your instructor gave you on your essay this semester?	90.9%	97.2%

Notes. Statement 2, 3, 5, 7 possible responses: disagree, somewhat disagree, agree, strongly agree; Question 8 possible responses: not useful, a little useful, useful, very useful; Statements 5 and 7 only administered if value greater than 0 given in response to previous statement ensure that the link corresponded to the appropriate copy of the questionnaire depending upon whether the student was in the SG or the CG. Students then departed the LC and could complete the optional survey on their smartphone, tablet, or computer at any time and location of their choosing.

Eleven students in the CG and 12 students in the SG opted to complete the survey. The satisfaction rate of the SG was slightly higher (Question 8), which could indicate that the additional feedback on recurring mistakes that SG students received made these students more likely to rate teacher advice highly.

Survey results indicated that the SG put more overall effort into proofreading than the CG, which is understandable given that CG students were not explicitly advised to check their work for mistakes. While most students in both groups did respond that they proofread silently at least once, students in the SG were more likely to indicate that they did this multiple times (Statement 4). In addition, the majority of SG students indicated that they proofread aloud, whereas just over half of the students in the CG acknowledged making this effort at all (Statement 6). Students in both groups were more likely to indicate that they successfully found and corrected errors by proofreading aloud than by proofreading silently (Statements 5, 7). Somewhat surprisingly, CG students who proofread aloud and those who proofread silently were slightly more likely to feel that they could find and correct errors than corresponding SG students were. One might have expected that the SG would have indicated greater success in this regard as students in this group had additional proofreading guidance. Perhaps the extra onus placed on SG students to find their mistakes made them more conscious of how many errors they were still unable to catch, despite whatever successes they did have.

Most students in both groups strongly believe that checking their English writing for mistakes is a useful way to improve their English. However, CG students were more likely to feel this way (Statement 2). This result may be related to the tenor of student response on the next survey item (Statement 3): while few students in either group indicated confidence in their ability to find their own mistakes without assistance, SG students were less likely to feel confident in this area than students in the CG. Because the SG generally proofread more than the CG, it is quite possible that some SG students felt greater frustration when the instructor spotted mistakes in their writing despite these students' additional efforts, and consequently lost confidence in their ability to find and correct their own mistakes.

Conclusion

Proofreading is an essential part of the writing process. It is especially important for L2 writers, many of whom understandably tend to commit more errors than native writers. While proofreading may seem a thankless task, if turned into an learning exercise it can actually become an effective tool for developing learner autonomy, writing ability, and overall language proficiency. Many students in the study described in this paper did not exhibit great confidence in their ability to find errors upon receiving specific proofreading guidance. However, this could have been due to excessive critical focus on the mistakes they did not catch, instead of a more positive focus on the errors which they had learned to overcome. This possibility may serve as a reminder to both the researcher and other interested readers that praising student successes is crucial in helping L2 learners gain confidence and mastery of a non-native language.

Because proofreading is so often overlooked as a useful tool for language learning, this area is ripe for further research. Future studies could expand upon this one in myriad ways. If the proofreading rules that were available to students were predefined and limited in scope, perhaps objective measurements of writer improvement would become a viable undertaking. A future study of students' subjective opinions regarding proofreading could additionally include the administration of the same survey at the start of the semester, in order to measure changes in student perception upon course completion. Lastly, a larger sample size combined with a qualitative analysis could provide much more data to explore as well as greater insight into student perceptions.

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Appendix A

Example Proofreading Checklist Sheet (Teacher Copy)

Proofreading Checklist

Always check your writing for these common mistakes (and any other mistakes) before class!
Read once silently, and then read again aloud (speaking to yourself.)

1. subject-verb disagreement (they ~~is~~ are, you ~~looks~~ look)
2. singular-plural error (many ~~animal~~ animals, one ~~months~~ month)
3. check for spelling mistakes!
4. verb tense errors (yesterday I ~~go~~ went, tomorrow he ~~played~~ plays will play)
5. forgetting articles (there is ~~man~~ a man, ~~dog~~ the dog is outside)
6. ~~..., and so on.~~ → such as...
7.
8.

Appendix B

Survey

1. **This semester, I met with Smith sensei for a writing lesson ___ times (今学期、スミス先□とのCW/SAWのセッションに___回出席しましたか。)**

3 or less (3回以下)

4 (4回)

5 (5回)

6 (6回)

2. **I think that checking my English writing for mistakes on my own is a useful way to improve my English (□分で書いたものを□直して間違いを□つけることは、英語を学習する上で有益だと思う。)**

Disagree (そう思わない)

Somewhat Disagree (あまりそう思わない)

Agree (そう思う)

Strongly Agree (強くそう思う)

3. **I feel confident in my ability to check my English writing for mistakes on my own (□分の英語の作□における間違いを□分で□つけることに□信がある。)**

Disagree (そう思わない)

Somewhat Disagree (あまりそう思わない)

Agree (そう思う)

Strongly Agree (強くそう思う)

4. **This semester, I silently read my essay to check for mistakes ___ time(s) on average before each lesson (今学期、CW/SAWの毎回のセッション前に、平均して___回くらい、□分で□分のエッセイを声を出さずに読んで間違いを□つけようとした)**

0 (0回)

1 (1回)

2 (2回)

3 or more (3回以上)

5. **I feel that I was able to find and correct mistakes in my essay when I read my essay silently before each lesson (CW/SAWのセッション前に、□分で□分のエッセイを声に出さずに読むことで、間違いを□つけられたと感じる。)**

Disagree (そう思わない)

Somewhat Disagree (あまりそう思わない)

Agree (そう思う)

Strongly Agree (強くそう思う)

6. **This semester, I read my essay aloud to check for mistakes ___ time(s) on average before each lesson (今学期、CW/SAWの毎回のセッション前に、平均して___回くらい、□分で□分のエッセイを声に出して読んで、間違いを□つけようとした。)**

0 (0 回)

1 (1 回)

2 (2 回)

3 or more (3 回以上)

7. **I feel that I was able to find and correct mistakes in my essay when I read my essay aloud before each lesson (CW/SAWの各セッション前に、□分で□分のエッセイを声に出して読むことで、間違いを□つけられたと感じる。)**

Disagree (そう思わない)

Somewhat Disagree (あまりそう思わない)

Agree (そう思う)

Strongly Agree (強くそう思う)

8. **How would you rate the advice your instructor gave you on your essay this semester? (今学期、スミス先□のエッセイについてのアドバイスについて、どう評価しますか。)**

Not useful (有益ではなかった)

A little useful (少し有益だった)

Useful (有益だった)

Very useful (とても有益だった)

What Makes Language Learners Succeed Online?

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What kind of effect can English Skype Lessons have on university students' English skills and motivation? This paper will report on a program that was implemented at a private university in eastern Japan, where, over two 15-week semesters, 98 university students were each given the opportunity to take 54, 25-minute English language lessons through Skype. The lessons were provided to develop learners' English skills so that they could confidently participate in study-abroad programs. The results of the program will be reported on, and advice on how to set up and administer this type of program will be provided.

大学生の学習スキルとモチベーションに SKYPE を利用した授業はどのような効果をもたらすだろう。本論では日本の私立大学で実施されたあるプログラムに関して報告するものである。そこでの授業は 15 週にわたるセメスター制を敷いており、98 人の学生が 25 分の SKYPE を通じた英語の授業を 54 回受講するものである。授業は学生が留学先のプログラムに自信を持って取り組むことができるように、英語のスキルを伸ばすことを目的として提供されるものである。このプログラムの結果を報告し、このようなプログラムをいかに確立し実施していくかについての考察を報告するものである。

Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do. (Pele)

Doubling the number of Japanese students studying abroad was a goal set in 2013 by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). (Tobitate! (Leap for Tomorrow) Study Abroad Initiative, n.d.). Data provided by MEXT indicates the number of Japanese students studying abroad had been steadily increasing until it peaked at 82,945 in 2014, but after 2014 the numbers have been decreasing. (New data suggests Japanese outbound market has been significantly undercounted, 2017). A White Paper published by Tokyo University suggests a number of reasons for this downward trend, namely financial constraints, necessity to extend the school enrollment period, lack of language skills and lack of program information (Tokyo Daigaku Kokusaika Hakusho , 2009). To help offset at least part of the financial concerns, in 2014 MEXT launched "Tobitate! (Leap for Tomorrow)," a program that provides 10,000 scholarships for university and high school students to study abroad. (McCrostie, 2017). However, in spite of this opportunity, many students seem to hesitate to apply, possibly because of the aforementioned issues. While educators cannot alleviate learners' concerns about finances or the necessity to extend their enrollment period, they can address the issue of "lack of language skills". Learners who lack confidence in their language skills or are unable to attain a high enough score on required tests like TOEFL or IELTS are likely to give up on their dream of studying abroad unless they are supported by their educational institutions.

In 2017, a private university in eastern Japan offered a supplementary online program to support learners who were interested in studying abroad but lacked sufficient language skills and confidence. The Ryukatsu Program gave learners the opportunity to take English lessons via Skype with instructors in the Philippines, funded entirely by the university, to develop learners' English skills so that they could confidently participate in study-abroad programs. The university chose to implement this program through Skype with instructors in the Philippines because the university had an existing program in one of its departments that successfully blended lessons through Skype with an academic English program. Having already established a relationship with the instructors in the Philippines through the blended academic English program, the coordinator of the Ryukatsu program was confident that the teachers in the Philippines would provide high quality lessons to achieve the goals of the program. This paper will report on how the program was conceptualized and set up, specifically focusing on measures that were taken to facilitate course participants' success and the results of the program. Participants' achievements upon completing the program suggest that language learners can successfully learn online if they are provided with adequate support from program coordinators and stimulating, engaging lessons from instructors.

Conceptualizing and Initiating the Program

When conceptualizing the Ryukatsu Program, one of the greatest concerns was ensuring that the course participants would complete the course. Studies suggest that, compared to face-to-face courses, distance programs' dropout rates are generally higher. (Carr, 2000). Some studies have shown that as many as 50 – 70% of online learners drop out of their courses or programs (Lehman and Conceicao, 2014). The literature suggests that there are several reasons why learners drop out of online courses. Lehman and Conceicao (2014) categorize the barriers to online learning by skill level, motivation, and support. Frankola's report (2001) seems to concur, suggesting that additional factors for learners dropping out include lack of time, technological issues, insufficient student support, under-qualified instructors and poor course design and content. Therefore, during the planning stages of the program, it was imperative to consider the reasons why learners might drop out, and devise a system to keep the attrition rate to a minimum.

Providing Support

When considering how to minimize attrition and ensure successful completion of the course, the main areas focused on were providing adequate support to participants, devising ways to ensure that their motivation was maintained, and offering sufficient technical support. Simpson (2004) contends that maintaining regular contact between the institution and learners is essential for learner retention in online programs. Simpson (2004) explains that contact can be either reactive (student-initiated contact) or proactive (instructor or administrator-initiated contact). The Ryukatsu Program was designed to provide support that was both proactive and reactive. In terms of proactive contact, once students were selected to participate in the course, lines of communication were established with participants through e-mail, LINE (a free messaging app) and the university's Learning Management System (LMS). Participants received regular messages of support through LINE from the course assistant (a recent graduate from the university), as well as messages from the course coordinator (a faculty member) through email and LMS. In terms of reactive contact, participants were able to contact the course coordinator and course assistant using the same methods, and all messages were responded to within 24 hours. Participants could also contact the organization that coordinated the Skype lessons for advice on technical difficulties. An intervention was made if participants' attendance rates began to drop. In this case, participants were contacted and were required to meet with the program coordinator to discuss their attendance issues and any other concerns that they had. It was hoped that providing both proactive and reactive support would not only minimize attrition but would also help participants maintain their motivation. In addition, gatherings were scheduled periodically throughout the semester to create a sense of community. Participants were invited to join the program coordinator for lunch twice during each semester, and a special face-to-face gathering that included some of the instructors visiting from the Philippines was held.

Maintaining Motivation

In order to maintain participants' motivation during the program, it was important to identify the kind of motivation that participants were entering the program with and what kind of motivation they would need to complete the program. Integrative motivation, as explained by Crookes and Schmidt (1991), is associated with being interested in the target language group, and having a desire to meet, interact and possibly become a member of that group. Participants were selected for the program in part based on their level of integrative motivation, which was measured by their desire to study abroad, so providing them with useful information about study abroad programs and stimulating them with lessons that would prepare them for studying abroad was how integrative motivation was maintained. In addition to integrative motivation, possible intrinsic and extrinsic motivation barriers were discussed when planning how to best support participants. A characteristic of an intrinsic motivation barrier that was of a particular concern was procrastination; as this program was a non-credit course, participants might not prioritize it over courses for credit, club activities or part-time jobs. In addition, extrinsic motivation barriers such as isolation and lack of interaction with peers might lead to attrition (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005, cited in Lehman & Conceicao, 2014). To prevent these types of barriers from forming, the program coordinator addressed them frankly in the initial screening interview and during the orientation to the program. Participants were told of the commitment that was necessary to complete the program and were asked to sign a learning contract, promising to fulfill the requirements of the program. This contract can be found in the appendix.

Pre-empting Technical Issues

The final area of concern was how to handle technical issues, which can lead to loss of motivation, focus and confidence, as well as create feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction. (Lehman & Conceicao, 2014, p.5). When candidates were interviewed for the program, the majority of them had never experienced online learning, so participants were assisted in creating Skype accounts and practiced making and receiving calls through Skype with the instructors in the Philippines during the orientation session prior to the start of the program. This not only ensured that they would be able to use the technology but gave them an opportunity to briefly "meet" the instructors online, which was a positive way to begin the program, and to establish some kind of face-to-face contact.

Therefore, before launching the program, the time spent conceptualizing and considering potential barriers to participants completing the program proved to be valuable in keeping attrition rates low.

Details of the Ryukatsu Program

During the 15-week semester, participants were required to take 54 25-minute lessons (a total of 22.5 hours) through Skype with instructors in the Philippines. Participants were advised to take a minimum of 4 lessons per week to ensure that they could complete the entire program. The lessons and all course materials were provided free of charge.

Participants were recruited through explanatory meetings. For the first cohort who participated during the spring semester, explanatory meetings were held and attended by 204 students, of which 108 students applied, and 42 were selected to participate. In the second cohort, 210 students attended the explanatory meetings, 110 students applied, and 56 were selected to participate. The selection process was primarily based on applicants' statements of purpose and most current TOEFL ITP scores. The entry score for the program was loosely set at 460 points because it was hoped that participants could raise their scores enough to be able to participate in study abroad programs that required a minimum of 480 points. Applicants who passed the initial screening were jointly interviewed by the program coordinator and the program assistant to reconfirm their goals and commitment to the program. All applicants were required to attend an orientation session to create Skype accounts, make appointments for their first lesson, and review the details of the learning contract. Participants could select their teacher, the day and time of the lesson through the online booking system. To maximize opportunities for participation, and to accommodate students' late-night schedules, lessons were available between 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

The initial lesson was an interview conducted through Skype with one of the instructors in the Philippines to evaluate the learner's communicative ability. The interview was not counted as part of the 54 lessons to be completed by the end of the course. Participants were placed into levels from 1-6 (1 being the lowest level, 6 being the highest) with each level being further divided into low, middle, and high. The lessons, developed by the instructors, were based on TED Talks and other video materials. Participants were required to preview the materials before the lessons and be prepared to discuss them. In addition, participants were asked to submit a weekly learning journal through the LMS, detailing what they had learned and their thoughts on the week's lessons.

Participants who were highly motivated and committed to completing the program were selected, and the program was designed to help them successfully complete the lessons and prepare them to study abroad.

Measuring Course Participants' Success

Participants who were able to achieve the criteria for success set by the program coordinator were considered to be successful. The criteria were as follows:

1. The participant completed most of the lessons.
2. The participant's motivation level was raised.
3. The participant felt that his/her communication skills had improved.
4. The participant became more interested in studying abroad.
5. The participant's TOEFL score improved.

In order to assess whether participants had met the criteria for success, attendance records were checked, feedback was collected from the instructors and online surveys were taken throughout the program.

Exit Survey Results

1. How many lessons did you complete? If you did not complete all of the lessons, please explain why.

Table 1: Lesson Completion Rates (N = 98)

Number of lessons completed	N	Percentage
50+	55	56%
40-49	10	10%
30-39	10	10%
20-29	5	5%
0-19	18	19%

As indicated by Table 1, 66 percent of participants completed 40 or more lessons, which was a positive result, considering that, as previously mentioned, studies have shown that 50-70 percent of online learners drop out of their courses. Based on comments given by the course participants who were not able to complete the program, it is clear that the reasons for not completing the lessons are mainly because of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational barriers.

<u>Written comments* from participants who did not complete all of the lessons</u>

I had too much homework for other classes, and couldn't find the time to take all of the lessons.

I didn't have enough time to finish all of the lessons because I was busy with other things.

I couldn't make a reservation for a lesson at a time that was convenient for me.

The Wi-Fi connection at home was poor, so it was difficult for me to take lessons.

I couldn't communicate well with the teacher, so I got scared and stopped taking the lessons.

*All comments translated from Japanese

2. How did the Ryukatsu Program lessons affect your motivation for learning English? Please comment specifically on how it affected your motivation.

Table 2: Effect on Participants' Motivation (N = 76)

Effect on motivation	N	Percentage
Greatly raised	21	28%
Somewhat raised	48	63%
Not sure	6	8%
Lowered	0	0%
Greatly lowered	1	1%

The data in Table 2 shows that participants' motivation was strongly affected by the program, with 91% stating that their motivation had been raised. Participants' comments indicate that as they developed confidence their integrative motivation increased.

<u>Written comments* from participants about how their motivation was affected:</u>

After taking the Skype lessons, I thought that I would like to be able to communicate more with people from English-speaking countries. Although I can't afford to study abroad right now, my desire to do so has greatly increased.

Because I had to speak in English with my teacher, my resistance to speak English has decreased and I am becoming able to speak with confidence.

As I became more confident, my motivation to study English increased.

As I gained confidence in speaking in English I have found more opportunities to speak. I had fun learning! I feel the necessity to improve my vocabulary, so now

I have begun studying vocabulary on my own.

Now I can try to think about problems of government, society, or community, which I usually did not think about in English. I could expand my vocabulary by taking Skype lessons.

*All comments translated from Japanese

3. Do you think your English communication skills have improved since starting the program?

As the data in Table 3 reveals, 75 percent of the participants thought that their English communication skills had improved, which was considered to be a sign of success.

Table 3: Improvement of Communication Skills (N = 76)

Communication Skills Improved	N	Percentage
Definitely	16	21%
I think so	41	54%
I'm not sure	16	21%
I don't think so	3	4%

Written comments* from participants about how their English communication skills improved:

After taking these lessons, I found it much easier to communicate in English when I studied abroad.

I have become able to respond more quickly and smoothly

I can express my opinions more easily now

At first, I couldn't speak to or understand what the teacher was saying, but by the last lesson I realized how much better I had become at speaking and listening

I think I improved, but there are still times when I can't say what I want to say.

*All comments translated from Japanese

4. How interested are you in studying abroad?

Table 4: Interest in Studying Abroad (N=76)

Interest in studying abroad	N	Percentage
Very interested	46	61%
Interested	23	30%
Not sure	7	9%
Not interested	0	0%

Responses to the survey indicated that the majority of participants were interested in studying abroad. They were interested in a variety of programs, which included short-term study abroad programs (one month or less) to The Philippines, Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom during summer and spring vacation, internship programs to Australia, Hong Kong and the United States, and one-semester programs to Croatia, Australia, Ireland and the United States.

5. Please give your comments on the Ryukatsu Program.

Written comments* on the Ryukatsu Program

Thank you for giving me chances to speak English!!

I am very satisfied that I can take these lessons and study English conversation at my own pace.

This has been a really great opportunity. I have made new friends – it's fantastic!

It was so much fun talking with the teachers from Cebu when they came to visit our university!

*All comments translated from Japanese

6. Based on the entry and exit scores of 69 participants, the average TOEFL score improvement was 23.4 points. There was no direct correlation between the number of lessons that participants took and TOEFL score improvement.

Based on survey results and the participants' comments, many of the participants were able to achieve success based on the criteria set by the program coordinator.

Advice for Success from an Administrative Viewpoint

After reflecting on the program, the following advice was offered by the program coordinator:

1. Select students to participate in the program who have "self-ish" traits, namely self-assurance, self-confidence, self-discipline, and self-reliance. (Curtis, 2013). Students

who exhibited “self-ish” traits in the initial interview and orientation sessions were the ones who were the most successful, whereas participants who lacked these traits had difficulty completing the program.

2. Establish a relationship with participants before the course begins, carefully monitor attendance, and make contact as soon as attendance levels begin to drop. Proactive and reactive contact with participants proved to be effective in keeping participation levels high. In addition, having an “open door” policy and encouraging participants to visit the program coordinator’s office whenever they had questions or concerns created a positive rapport between participants and the coordinator and helped maintain motivation.

3. Create a learning community. Participants who were proactive about joining the gatherings with the program coordinator and with the visiting instructors from the Philippines were more successful at completing the program than those who did not participate.

4. Make sure that participants can use the technology. Although having participants create their Skype accounts and reserve lessons during the orientation session avoided many technical issues, some participants continued to struggle with the technology. Student surveys indicated that technological issues had occasionally interfered with their lessons. Having a support system in place to deal with technological issues is imperative.

5. Work closely with the Skype instructors. Regular communication with the instructors is essential to ensure that the learning environment is conducive to success.

Advice for Success from an Instructor’s Viewpoint (Casimero, 2018)

1. Get to know your students’ personalities, especially when correcting their mistakes. Some students do not want to be corrected every time they make mistakes, and become self-conscious and withdrawn, while others want to be corrected right away

2. Have a syllabus to set the pace of the lessons so that all students are working with the same topic. If all of the teachers keep following the syllabus, participants can consult with each other on the content of the lesson and the homework, which helps to build the spirit of a learning community.

3. Conduct thorough English skills checks at the beginning, middle and at the end of the course. It is important to know the participants’ level so that the lesson content and level of difficulty is appropriate. If the lesson is too easy or too difficult it will affect the participants’ motivation.

4. Make sure that participants take lessons in a location with a stable network so that the lesson will flow smoothly. When the Internet connection is lost during the lesson it is frustrating and demotivating. Participants need to take into consideration the quality of the Wi-Fi at the location where they will take their lesson when they make a reservation, so that they can book a time when they will be in a location that they know has a strong Wi-Fi signal.

Conclusion

The Ryukatsu Program was implemented to support MEXT's initiative to increase the number of Japanese study-abroad students. It provided an opportunity for highly motivated learners to improve their English communication skills and to develop the confidence to apply for study abroad programs. As the program was being conceptualized and implemented, strategies to avoid common problems with online programs indicated by research such as high attrition, loss of motivation and technical issues were employed. As a result, course completion percentages were high, participants’ motivation levels were raised, they believed that their communication skills had improved, and their interest in studying abroad was raised. These results suggest that language learners can study online successfully if they are provided with a strong support system and engaging lessons. Educational institutions that implement this kind of program will be able to help the learners who are motivated to study abroad but need additional support to develop their confidence and communicative skills, which in turn will help MEXT achieve its goal of doubling the number of Japanese students studying abroad by 2020.

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Appendix

Ryukatsu[1] Program Contract*

I have read and understood the following rules, and agree to follow them as a participant in the program.

1. I promise that I will complete all 54 of the online English conversation lessons between the first and last day of the semester.

2. I promise that I will take between 2-4 online English conversation lessons per week.

3. I promise that I will take the TOEFL ITP test at my own expense after the end of the course and will submit the score to the program coordinator.

4. I promise that I will take other English courses and TOEFL preparation courses to prepare myself for studying abroad.

5. I promise that I will write my learning journal weekly and submit it to through the university's LMS.

Please note that if lessons are not canceled before the day of the lesson it will be counted as an unexcused absence. If there are more than 3 unexcused absences you may lose the right to continue taking lessons and will be required to meet with the program coordinator.

Date: ___________________

Name of Department: ____________

Name:_________________________ Student ID number: ________________

Signature of Program Coordinator: ___________________________

*This document has been translated from Japanese.

1. *Ryukatsu* is a word created by the program coordinator that combines the Chinese characters for study abroad and activity

Synform Pseudowords and Yes-No Vocabulary Tests

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In 1983, Anderson and Freebody introduced pseudowords to the yes-no test format to check for evidence of over-estimation of word knowledge by test-takers. Laufer (1988) introduced the concept of synforms, where readers confuse a word for a different word because their forms appear similar. Stubbe and Cochrane (2016) reported that "synform errors made up the largest category of errors" on an L2 to L1 translation test. In the present study, synform pseudowords were included in a yes-no test of 45 items: 30 real words; and 15 pseudowords (including 5 synform pseudowords). Results found that yes-no test scores were 11.5 percentage points higher than translation test scores, confirming the existence of overestimation on the yes-no test. The use of all 15 pseudowords, including the five synform pseudowords, in the application of the h-f scoring formula resulted in adjusted yes-no test scores to within 1.2% of translation test scores, a statistically insignificant difference. However, correlation analysis found mixed results when comparing correlations between the five synform pseudowords and yes-no test overestimation counts with the ten Meara pseudowords correlations with the same overestimation. It was concluded that future studies should use test items that include a larger proportion of words that are likely to suffer from synformic confusion.

先行研究において、疑似語の導入が学習者の語彙知識を図るために有効であることや、L2 から L1 への翻訳の際に起こる間違いにおいて、類似語に因る間違いは、最も大きな比重を占めることが示されてきた。本研究では、疑似語を 15 問含む（綴り字が似ている疑似語を 5 問含む）45 問から成る正誤選択問題と、英語から日本語への翻訳問題（L2 から L1）を日本人学習者に課し分析を行った。結果として、L2 から L1 への翻訳の試験よりも、正誤選択問題の方が正答率が 11.5%高かった。今後の研究においては、試験で問う語彙の選択において、綴り字が似ている問いの割合を増やして、結果の変化を観察していきたい。

During a previous study (Stubbe & Cochrane, 2016) a high number of synform errors were found on an English to Japanese (L2 to L1) translation test. According to Laufer (in Laufer, Meara, & Nation, 2005) synform errors "are word pairs or groups of words with similar (though not identical) sound, script, or morphology, which learners tend to confuse" (p. 4; see Laufer, 1988 for a detailed explanation of synforms). For instance, Stubbe and Cochrane (2016) reported that back translations of the Japanese equivalents of the word row, were raw, law and low by 25, 26 and 34 of the 204 test-takers, respectively, and suggested "that the l/r distinction remains a problem for these low-level students" (p.168).

Low-level students in Japan are not the only English learners to experience synform errors. Other researchers have also reported such errors in their vocabulary studies and classrooms. Gu, and Leung (2002) found that their Chinese participants, from both Hong Kong and Beijing, "confused the form of the target word with the form of another English word already in their working vocabulary" (p. 131). Nural (2014), studying intermediate-level Turkish learners of English, reported that synform errors appeared in a wide range of lesson activities including vocabulary revision; reading; listening comprehension; and, discussion. That study reported that most of the synform errors resulted from synforms with the same root, but different suffixes. Kocić (2008), investigating of the effects of synforms on advanced-level Serbian learners of English, similarly found that these learners have difficulty with suffix related synform errors.

Yes-no vocabulary test are recognized as an efficient method of enquiring about students' perceived vocabulary knowledge. According to John Read (2007, pp. 112 - 113). "Despite its simplicity, the Yes/No format has proved to be an informative and cost-effective means of assessing the state of learners' vocabulary knowledge, particularly for placement and diagnostic purposes." In these tests, participants are presented with a list of decontextualized words, usually as single items, and asked to signal whether or not they know a correct meaning for each item. Unfortunately, student perceptions are not always accurate. Although amounts vary, many students signal knowledge of words that they do not actually know a correct meaning of; labeled over-estimation. To attempt to measure this over-estimation, Anderson and Freebody (1987) introduced pseudowords (non-words) to the yes-no test format, on the assumption that if participants are signaling knowledge of items which have no meaning, then they are likewise apt to signal knowledge of real words for which they do not know a correct meaning. In the lingo of yes-no vocabulary testing, checking a real word is labeled a "hit"; not checking a real word is a "miss"; checking a pseudoword is called a "false alarm" and not checking a pseudoword is a "correct rejection" (Mochida & Harrington, 2006).

Two uses for the false alarm (FA) data have been developed. One usage is to delete all test forms with a FA rate exceeding 10% (Barrow, Nakanishi, & Ishino, 1999; Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe, 2011). The other is to adjust yes-no test results with a correction for guessing formula. This study will utilize the simplest adjustment formula, h-f. With this formula, the FA rate (the number of false alarms divided by the total number of pseudowords) is subtracted from the hit rate, which is the number of hits divided by the number of real words in the yes-no test. The resulting rate is the multiplied by the number pf real words (30).

As Stubbe and Cochrane (2016) demonstrated that low-level Japanese students confuse items for other words (synform errors) when completing vocabulary tests, and as pseudowords were introduced to the yes-no test format to adjust measurements of student vocabulary knowledge, this study aims to determine whether synform pseudowords (nonwords which resemble real words) can assist the adjustment of yes-no test scores to better reflect student actual vocabulary knowledge.

Methodology

Two vocabulary tests were created as pre-tests to determine the students' perceived and actual knowledge of words to be encountered during the semester. The first was a yes-no test; the other was an English to Japanese (L2 to L1) translation test of the same 30 items. The yes-no test contained 45 items: 30 real words, selected from the students' textbook; and 15 pseudowords, five of which were synform pseudowords. The synform pseudowords were created by substituting one or more consonants in a real word for its partner in katakana: l/r, b/v or syllabic final m/n, as follows: *clearly* became *crealy*; *detail* became *detair*; *value* became *balue*; *grab* became *grav*; and, *improve* became *inprove*. The other 10 pseudowords were randomly selected from Tests 101-106 of the EFL Vocabulary Tests (Meara, 2010): *balfour, ralling, degate, oxylate, glandle, dowrick, perryman, curify, noot,* and *lannery*. The 30 real words were selected from the students' textbook and included nine multi-word items, such as "get ready". The 45 items in the yes-no test were ordered randomly, as were the 30 items in the translation test. The yes-no test was taken at the beginning of a class in October 2017 (early in the autumn semester) and the translation test was taken towards the end of that same class, in order to maximize test-pairings. Participants (n = 205) were high beginner-level first year students enrolled in one of five mandatory English classes at a Japanese university.

Yes-no test forms were scored using an optical scanner, and translation test forms were marked manually - by one native Japanese university instructor of English. Prior to marking the translation test, 21 forms were randomly selected (10% of 205), copied and sent to a different Japanese teacher of English for marking. Co-rater reliability between the two raters was high at 92%. The translation tests were subsequently back-translated from the Japanese answers into English to check for synform errors.

Table 1: *Yes-no (YN) and Translation (Tr) Tests Descriptive Statistics*

Test	mean	SD	range	low-high	*r*
Tr	18.51 (61.7%)	3.53	20	10 - 30	1
YN Words	21.95 (73.2%)	3.37	21	7 - 28	0.54
YN FA	1.61 (10.7%)	1.54	6	0 - 6	0.09
h-f	18.73 (62.4%)	4.22	21	7 - 28	0.37

note: Tr denotes translation test; YN denotes yes-no test; *r* denotes correlation (Pearson Product Moment) with translation test results; n = 205; k = 30 words and 15 pseudowords

Results

Descriptive stats are presented in Table 1. The translation test mean of 18.51 of the 30 real words was 3.44 words lower than the yes-no test mean of 21.95, suggesting that some of the students had over-estimated their knowledge of the real words on the yes-no test. The false alarm rate of 11% was substantially higher than the 5% rate found in Mochida and Harrington (2006), and Stubbe (2012); both also studying Japanese learners. The correlation with translation test scores was only moderate for the yes-no test real words (.54) and negligible for the pseudowords (.09). Applying the h-f correction formula adjusts the yes-no test mean substantially closer to the translation test mean (18.73 and 18.51, respectively), but lowers the correlation (.37). A paired t-test found no statistically significant difference between the h-f and translation test results (t = .73, df = 204, p = .47). The effect size (Cohen, 1988) between the two results was also very small (d = .06). While yes-no scores were 11.5% higher than translation test scores (73.2% - 61.7%), the h-f adjusted scores were only 0.7% higher.

Table 2 breaks down the pseudoword results by origin, Meara's 10 pseudowords versus the 5 synform pseudowords. The FA rate of 4.4% for Meara's pseudowords was much more in line with previous studies (Mochida & Harrington, 2006; Stubbe, 2012). The FA rate for the synform pseudowords was more five times higher at 23%. Correlations with translation test scores were low at .04 and .09, respectively.

Table 2: *Meara's Versus Synform Pseudowords*

Pseudowords	mean	SD	*R*
YN FA 15	1.61 (10.7%)	1.54	.09
Meara's 10	0.44. (4.4%)	0.79	0.04
Synforms 5	1.17 (23.4%)	1.06	0.09

note: r denotes correlation (Pearson Product Moment) with translation test results; n = 205; Meara's = 10 pseudowords, synforms = 5 pseudowords

Table 3 reports the results of applying the h-f correction formula to Meara's 10 pseudowords and the five synform pseudowords separately. The h-f mean for Meara's pseudowords was 7% higher that the translation test mean, but the h-f mean for the synform pseudowords was 12% lower. Although the correlation with the translation test was moderate for Meara's h-f at .43, it was much lower for the synform h-f at .18.

Table 3: *Applying h-f to Meara's 10 Versus the 5 Synform Pseudowords*

Test	mean	SD	range	low-high	*r*
Tr	18.51 (61.7%)	3.53	20	10 - 30	1
h-f	18.73 (62.4%)	4.22	21	7 - 28	0.37
Meara's *h-f*	20.63 (68.8%)	4.02	21	7 - 28	0.43
Synform *h-f*	14.93 (49.8%)	6.67	28	0 - 28	0.18

note: *r* denotes correlation (Pearson Product Moment) with translation test results; n = 205; Meara's = 10 pseudowords, synforms = 5 pseudoword

Table 4: *Over-estimation and Pseudoword Means and Correlations*

Item	mean	SD	range	low-high	*r*
Over-estimation	4.99 (16.6%)	2.57	16	0 - 16	1
Meara's	0.44 (4.4%)	0.79	4	0 - 4	-0.002
Synform	1.17 (23.4%)	1.06	4	0 - 4	0.11
Meara's *h-f*	20.69 (69%)	3.95	21	7 - 28	0.22
Synform *h-f*	14.99 (50%)	6.78	28	0 - 28	0.03
h-f	18.79 (63%)	4.24	21	7 - 28	0.156

note: *r* denotes correlation on Over-estimation results; n = 205; Meara's = 10 pseudowords, synforms = 5

By comparing yes-no results with the translation test results on a student by student, item by item bases, the actual amount of over-estimation can be calculated (Table 4). The mean amount of over-estimation for the 205 participants on the 30 tested words was 4.99 (16.6%). Although the correlation between over-estimation and the synform pseudowords was weak at .11, it was considerably higher than for Meara's pseudowords at -.002. However, applying the pseudowords in the h-f correction formula resulted in the opposite: the correlation for Meara's h-f was stronger than for the Synform h-f (.22 and .03, respectively). As might be expected, the h-f (full 15 pseudowords) correction with over-estimation was between the two at .16.

An item analysis of the pseudowords revealed that the synforms crealy and inprove accounted for more than half of the total synform reports of 242 (Table 5). Whereas Meara's ten pseudowords had a mean of 9.9 FAs per pseudoword by the 205 test-takers, the five synform pseudowords had a mean of 48.4, almost five time more popular.

Discussion/Conclusion

The results presented above present conflicting data concerning the usefulness of synform pseudowords. On one hand, the *t*-test found no significant difference (*p* = .46) between the full 15 pseudoword *h-f* adjusted yes-no test results and participant demonstrable knowledge of the 30 tested real words, as measured by the L2 to L1

Table 5: *Item Analysis - Meara's & Synform Pseudowords (n = 205)*

Meara's	Total	Synform	Total
ralling	33	crealy	106
degate	18	inprove	68
dowrick	12	balue	31
noot	7	grav	21
oxylate	7	detair	16
glandle	6		
curify	4		
perryman	3		
lannery	2		
balfour	1		
Total	**99**		**242**
Mean	**9.9**		**48.4**

translation test. The combination of five synform pseudowords with ten Meara's pseudowords (a rate of two to one) appears to have created a useful scoring formula. The full *h-f* results had the closest mean to the translation test mean (63% and 62%, respectively) but a low correlation (.37). The correlation between the five synform pseudowords and the over-estimation results was significantly better than for the ten Meara's pseudowords (.11 versus -.002). However, when used in separate *h-f* scoring formulas, the opposite ranking occurred (r = .003 for Synform *h-f* and .22 for Meara's *h-f*). The difference between the translation test scores and the Synform *h-f* scores was greater than between the translation test and Meara's *h-f* results (12% lowers versus 7% higher, respectively) and the correlation was much lower (.18 versus .44).

One factor likely contributing to these less than impressive synform pseudoword results can be found in the tested items. Back translations of the responses on the translation test found that only one of the 30 tested real words suffered from what Laufer (1989) labeled "synformic confusion". The word "vase" was translated as "base" by 32 of the 205 test-takers (15.6%).

This has been an investigation into the usefulness of including synform pseudowords in the pseudoword item pool of a yes-no vocabulary test. The results reported above suggest that synform pseudowords may be useful when adjusting yes-no test scores to better reflect the actual word knowledge of the participants. Future research should utilize an item list which contains a higher proportion of words that are prone to synformic confusion ("law" versus "raw"; "vase" versus "base", for example).

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Action Research on the Effect of Focus-on-Form Instruction: developing Junior High School Students' Communicative Competences

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The action research was conducted in a private school from April 2014 to March 2015. Target students were junior high school (JHS) students who had been learning English in this school for 90 minutes every Tuesday night. Two students in particular, had come to dislike lessons due to complicated grammar explanations in their JHS classes, and were in need of treatment. On the other hand, the remaining three students enjoyed the lessons in their JHS. During this research, focus-on-form instructions (FFIs) were implemented and the students actively used target grammar form in communication. In addition, speaking and writing tests were given in order to evaluate their performance. As a result, all students gained confidence to use English in this school. Furthermore, their paper test scores (summative assessment) in JHS increased in March 2015. This research explains how FFIs can lead to positive results in improving students' communicative competences.

本研究では、小さい規模で個人経営の英語学校で１年間行われた実践報告を行う。研究対象は、中学校において英語の授業内容が分からず英語嫌いになった中学生 2 名と、英語が比較的得意な生徒たち 3 名が毎週火曜夜 90 分間、英語をコミュニカティブに使用できるかどうかに焦点をあて、１年間に渡りアクションリサーチを行ってきた。コミュニケーションに重点をおいた文法学習（フォーカスオンフォーム）による指導を行った結果、生徒たちは意味と文法の形を結び付け、その形を積極的に使用した。そして、話す・書く実践テストを繰り返し、生徒たちは話すことと書くことにおいて能力を伸ばしただけでなく、英語を使うことに対して自信が付き、中学校での英語テストスコアの向上にもつながった。この研究では、生徒たちがどのように英語の使用能力を伸ばしたかを論じる。

Though a great number of students have been learning English in Japan, the results obtained after spending much time on learning English do not reach their expectations. Lee and VanPatten (2003) argue that traditional instructions consisting of drills in which learners' output is manipulated and instructions are far from understanding actual meanings of forms is not an effective method for enhancing language acquisition (p. 137). In order to change this situation, *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) was introduced and brought favorable results in language learning classrooms.

Background

Savignon (1997) argues that communication is expressions, interpretations, and negotiations of meaning, and communicative competence is the capability to perceive context using integrated *communicative competence*（*CC*）. *CC* consists mainly of four components, which are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. To activate *CC*, all components require attention. Savignon (2002) also insists that each kind of competence is essential and interrelated, so each cannot be developed or measured in isolation, and one cannot develop them separately. Rather, when one kind of competence works with the other types of competence to interact with each other, only then *CC* can be intensified overall.

Considering English skills based on this theory, difficulties of improvement grammar competence are often discussed in Japanese language education. In general, teachers in English classes in JHS put emphasis on grammar teaching to help students with various methods, thus some instructions are not practical to improve students' grammar competence.

Grammar through Communication

Ellis (2006) states that "[a]lthough there is a clear conviction that a traditional approach to teaching grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practices is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the explicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication" (p. 102). Furthermore, Lee and VanPatten (2003) insist that "traditional grammar practice is largely mechanical with the focus exclusively on using grammatical features to produce some sort of utterance. A focus on messages and a focus on input are simply absent when it comes to grammar" (p. 123). For instance, traditional grammar teaching, such as mechanical drills, is not effective because students just copy sentences and cannot focus on the meaning of form. In short, it can be concluded that grammar drill lessons do not work well to learn a language. Rather, it would bring serious issues in second language acquisition. Taking into consideration the background of English education in JHS, some students who can access their lexicon quickly can acquire various grammar forms in traditional grammar teaching in their classrooms. However, most students fail to master these forms due to the mechanical drilled teaching and come to dislike the English lessons in JHS. To make the matter worse, these students are losing their motivation toward language learning, so the gap between other students who have strong motivation is becoming wider. From the current situations in English lessons, some practical approaches are indispensable to support the students who fail to understand grammar learning.

Focus on Forms versus Focus on Form

Long (1988, 1991) categorizes focus on form instructions into two different types (Ellis 2006). He argues that traditional grammar teaching is focus on forms where L2 learners focus on just forms and do grammar practice without understanding the meaning of forms, such as vocabulary, phrases, and sentences. On the other hand, *focus on form* is a different approach in grammar teaching where learners can focus on meanings before focusing on forms. Therefore, *focus on form* is a communicative and effective approach for L2 learners in order to allow them to notice meanings of forms in communication. It is based on a synthetic syllabus, so learners are required to treat a language primarily as an object to be studied and practiced step by step rather than to be used. On the contrary, focus-on-form apparently draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in classes whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication (Long, 1991 p.45-46).

Planned FFI & Incidental FFI

Furthermore, Ellis (2006) states that "*focus on form* entails a focus on meaning with attention to form arising out of the communicative activity" (p. 100). This focus activity is *planned* focus-on-form instruction (FFI) which provides input and output simultaneously while focusing on the meaning of target grammar. This means that L2 learners can notice grammatical structures naturally. In other words, this meaning-focused input allows students to notice the form-meaning relations. Then, they can establish their developing systems and intake the meanings of forms and output in this *planned FFI*. It requires a focused task, so it is an *intensive* activity. On the other hand, *Incidental FFI* attempts to form the not-predetermined context of communicative activities. It rather occurs in accordance with needs linguistics to accord with its activity (🡨this sentence doesn't make sense to me. I'm not sure what the message is..) (Ellis, 2006). *Incidental* FFI is an *extensive* activity and output-based instruction in essay writing that forms are not targeted in advance. This *FFI* implies integrated grammar teaching which consists of communicative

Table 1: *Types of Focus-on-form(s) Instruction*

Type of FFI	Primary Focus	Distribution
Focus-on-forms (Long 1998, 2000)	Form	Intensive
Planned FFI (Ellis 2006)	Meaning	Intensive
Incidental FFI (Ellis 2006)	Meaning	Extensive

tasks. In addition, Ellis (2006) maintains that "*incidental FFI* has special values because it affords an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems" (p. 102). There is another privilege of *incidental FFI* in grammar teaching when students make errors in classrooms, teachers can give corrective feedback. Therefore, students can learn grammar forms to apply in real-communication and through teachers' feedback, modify their forms if they choose inappropriate ones.

Previous Studies

Ellis et all (2001) studied how preemptive (incidental) FFI was accomplished in the meaning-focused lesson taught by ESL teachers in New Zealand. The meaning-focused instruction made students use English actively and led them to acquire the target grammar form. Needless to say, the acquisition of form is a very important stage for L2 learners when choosing a specific form for the topic of communication. As a result of these studies on incidental focus-on-form instruction, students-initiation took place more often than teachers-initiation. In fact, students-initiated focus on form involves actual gaps in the students' knowledge, so it is worth to gage their development of language acquisition in incidental instruction. To sum up this study, incidental FFI promotes uptake effectively for students in paying attention to form in an unplanned context. In addition, Sato et al (2012) explain that two projects by two different teachers in JHS were designed to implement planned FFI, and finally showed positive results in increasing students' motivation toward language learning. Moreover, one project which was designed to implement both planned and incidental FFI concluded positive results in JHS, too. The teacher in JHS used target grammar in the textbook explanation in Japanese and carried out planned FFI to encourage students to use the target grammar form in communication. Later, she gave incidental FFI after one or two units of textbook. Students in JHS changed their attitudes and participated in the classroom through writing essays in English. Furthermore, Shintani (2015) investigated whether focus-on-form instruction or focus-on form*s* are effective for young children to learn plural -*s* in schools in Japan. These young children who were divided in two groups (focus-on-form vs focus-on-form*s*) joined the study to examine the target features and ability (receptively and productively). For instance, focus-on-form students produced plural -s many times. On the other hand, focus-on-form*s* students produced plural -s, but it occurred in repetitions of teachers' utterances. In other words, focus-on-form instruction gave students incidental grammar acquisition better than their learning in focus-on-forms. This study explains that FFI created the need for learners to distinguish the target grammar forms and establish the form-meaning connection. As a result of the study by Shintani (2015), students mastered plural –s through incidental FFI and successfully produced pluralized nouns. Unfortunately, no students produced a plural noun in focus-on-forms instruction even though teachers revised their erroneous utterances.

Methods

Research Issues

Ellis (2006) explains that few studies have been conducted on the influence of FFI on language learning. Still, traditional grammar teaching is the most common method in language learning because a great number of language teachers misunderstand Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). They cannot change approach due to their believes (Sato & Kleinsasser 1999). For this reason, some of my students got bored because of traditional grammar teaching and failed to understand the grammar rules in their JHS. As a result, they came to dislike English lessons in their classes and their parents asked me to increase their motivation toward the language learning. To solve this issue, the action research was conducted to know how students change their emotion toward language learning, and how FFI, which is one aspect of CLT, can support them in this private school. In particular, there are existing studies (Sato, et al 2012) which illustrate how three teachers in JHS conducted longitudinal action research to explain what FFI procedure they tried in their classrooms, and how students increased their motivation. Therefore, action research with JHS students in this private school was launched in 2014.

Teaching Contexts and Research Questions

Action research (Apr. 2014 – Mar.2015) was conducted in a small private language school with students (S1, S2, S3) who liked English classes in JHS and students (S4, S5) who came to dislike the classes. Every Tuesday night, they took planned FFI for 60 minutes and did incidental FFI for 30 minutes. Week by week, they learned the target grammar form which was in their JHS English textbook through planned FFI. During the incidental FFI, they chose specific grammar form to state their opinions and to negotiate during conversation. In pairs, they did timed-conversation for one minute, two minutes and three minutes with different partners. At the beginning, students failed to continue conversation due to the lack of speaking experience. Therefore, conversation strategies were introduced to them as a treatment to avoid communication breakdown. For writing, they did step writing activities (flash-writing, peer-editing, teachers-feedback, self-editing) in order to use specific grammar form for essays. Periodically, speaking tests were implemented as summative assessment to assess their incidental grammar acquisition, fluency, conversation strategies usage, and speaking attitude in spoken context. Similarly, a writing test with the same topic as the speaking test was conducted to assess fluency and incidental grammar acquisition. Questionnaires as formative assessment were analyzed to discover changes in their views toward language learning. Three research questions: (1) How does FFI improve students' communicative competence? (2) How does performance tests (speaking and writing) influence students' motivation in private school? (3) How does FFI influence summative assessment in students' paper test scores in JHS? were explored using a mix method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data such as questionnaires, video-recording and self-evaluation sheets were collected, analyzed, and discussed at the monthly action research meetings of the NUFS graduate school program.

Three students(S1,2,3) completely understood English lessons in both their JHS and this private school, whereas two of them (S4, 5) held negative feeling toward English studies due to the peer pressure and complicated grammar explanation in JHS. Moreover, they had a hard time enjoying FFI in the private school at the beginning of this action research.

From April 2014, the students had been learning target grammar in planned FFI and spoke and wrote about their favorite topics step by step in incidental FFI. In May, the first speaking test was conducted. Unfortunately, most of them (except S1) failed to enjoy

Table 2:. *Students' comprehension in English lessons in private School and JHS (Pre-survey)*

Survey questions: Do you understand English lessons in private school and JHS? (As the supplement information, EIKEN <English proficiency tests in Japan> grades of participants are shown on the table.

○＝completely understand △＝almost understand ×＝hard to understand

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Private school	○	○	○	△	△
In JH	○	○	○	×	×
EIKEN	Pre 2	3	3	4	5

Source: Survey conducted in April 2014

Table 3: *Students' self-evaluations in May 2014*

What criteria are improved?	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
eye-contact	○	×	○	○	○
Volume (Voice)	○	○	○	×	×
speaking content	○	×	×	×	×
Fluency	○	○	×	×	×
Attitude	○	×	×	×	×

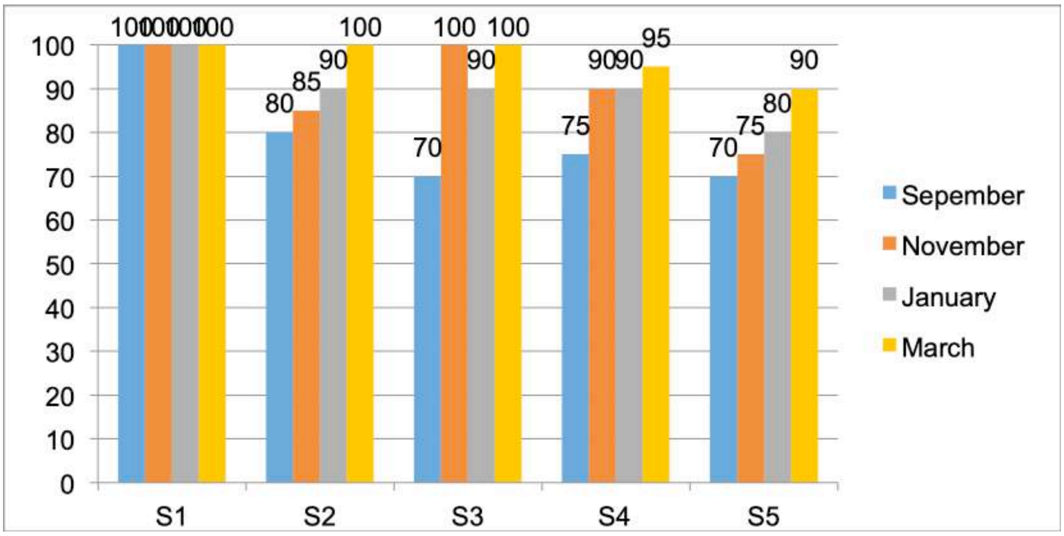
Source: Survey conducted after the performance test (1 min. conversation) in May 2014

the conversation due to a lack of communication strategies and experience speaking.

After the first speaking test, S2 noted on the comment sheet that "Speaking test was like torture! I want to practice drill-patterned grammar to prepare high school entrance exam". From the students' perspective of both planned and incidental FFI, launched communicative grammar teaching and tests were not welcomed at the first stage.

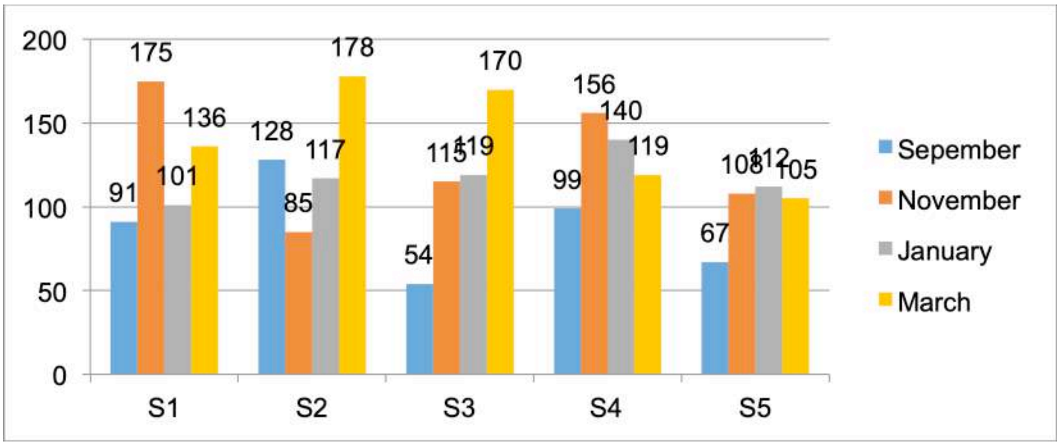
To release students' anxiety of speaking, conversation strategies were introduced. In each class, students learned these strategies to speak English fluently. Timed-conversation (1min. 2min. 3min.) was a routine activity, so they gradually gained confidence in speaking. From May to August, speaking tests were not

Table 4: *Speaking test results*



Source: performance tests (1min: My favorite in Sep./2 min. Happy story in Nov./3 min. New Year memory in Jan./ 4 min. My future in Mar.)

Table 5:. *Writing test results (written words on essay for 20 min.)*



Source: performance tests (Essay Topic: My favorite in Sep./Happy story in Nov/New Year memory in Jan./My future in Mar).

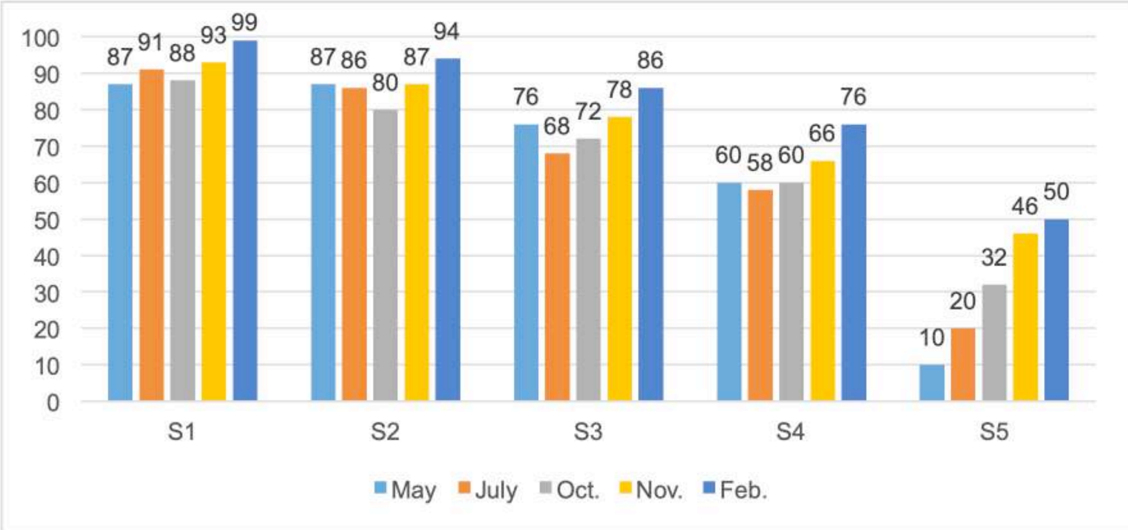
successful due to their attitudes in the private school. Moreover, most students did not show up on the speaking test day by giving excuses about being busy with club activities and other cram school tests. Therefore, during this period no performance tests were conducted, but various FFI were introduced to give students time to output English more. From September to March, students were active to engage in performance tests to show their communicative competence in speaking and writing.

All students gradually gained motivation and confidence in front of the video camera in speaking tests. Similarly to speaking tests, they had a good time writing essays in English to express their feelings and opinions. Because of test rubrics (Appendix 1 and 2), fluency was weighed higher than accuracy, so they talked more and wrote more in performance tests without feeling pressured. From students' comments on the evaluation sheet, it seems that all of them got satisfaction and confidence in speaking and writing.

Finally, all students improved paper test scores which were evaluated by their teachers in JHS.

Discussion

Table 6. *Number of paper test scores in JHS*



Source: Conducted paper tests in students' junior high schools in May, July, Oct., Nov. 2014 and Feb. 2015

Table 7: *Students' comments in March 2015*

Survey question: What do you think of FFI? It is helpful to write and speak?

	Comment
S1	Very useful. On both tests in JHS and private school, I used target grammar easily and actively.Speaking English is very fun, and I want to make people laugh in English in future.
S2	Once I notice the correlation of meaning and form, I can remember them. In paper tests in JHS, I was able to choose correct answer quickly. I was surprised.
S3	I can use many target forms in performance tests because it was not difficult. It was good to have performance tests many times, because I got rid of pressure in speaking little by little.
S4	As I don't understand some grammar rules in JHS, I came to understand them through FFI in private school. The topic on FFI was fun, so I never felt board.
S5	I disliked English before, but I like English study now because I can speak and write English. Especially, I made it to write more than 100 words in English. I am super happy.

All five students came to engage FFI actively and showed good performance in both speaking and writing tests. Especially, S5 who disliked going to JHS due to the peer-pressure in English lessons, changed his attitude and was happy to participate in both planned and incidental FFI(Appendix 3). Thanks to this change, the classroom atmosphere also improved. They become more excited to try various grammar form(s) that they have already learned through planned FFI and in JHS. In addition, they gained confidence through multiple-timed conversations. After the conversation, they were instructed to write English essay with the target grammar form(s). As a result, they discarded their anxiety for speaking and enjoyed writing to express their opinions and feelings. At last, their paper test scores of each term conducted by JHS dramatically improved.

Conclusion

This action research (AR) conducted with five junior high school (JHS) students to study the effect on both planned and incidental FFI in improvement of their communicative competences (CC) has been concluded. Research question (1) How does FFI improve students' CC? could be probed with these figures as test results show in the previous section. Despite the small number of participants, the data was collected and analyzed following a mixed-method approach, and through AR the sources to probe the improvement of their CC were discovered. Therefore, this study corroborates the findings of Sato et al. (2012), which stated that FFI was effective in JHS. Furthermore, this result of AR reflects the study of Ellis (2001) and Shintani (2015) which investigated that incidental FFI was helpful in incidental grammar acquisition

To answer the question (2) How does performance tests (speaking and writing) influence students' motivation in private school?, the perspective of students on Table 7. might be seen as supporting evidence since it shows that they gained motivation to speak and write English through performance tests and finally had an enjoyable time. Compared to the first stage of AR, their attitude was different, and they became active speakers by the final stage.

Yet, there is no clear evidence to answer the question (3) How does FFI influence summative assessment in students' paper test scores in JHS? Since these tests were made by teachers in JHS, it is hard to find correlations. Probably, the students' comments on Table 7. has some potential to state that they performed well on paper tests in JHS thanks to the quick access to the target grammar form by noticing meaning. In addition, they took planned FFI to learn the same target grammar form which is used in their JHS textbook. In short, they used the form for communication and mastered it due to multiple exposures they had to it. However, it is just a hypothesis and not a definite answer, so it could be grounds for further study to know the relevance between FFI efficacy and increased paper test scores in JHS

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Appendix 1: Speaking test rubric

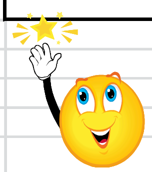
Speaking Test Rubric

Name (   )

1.Check List	How many times you used
Opener	
Rejoinder(Sounds nice,great.)	
Repeating	
Follow-up questions(When?)	
Filler(Let me see, Well,)	
Closer	

項目						
	6points	5points	4 points	3points	2point	1point
Conversation Strategies	6回以上 6種類以上全て使うことができた	5回以上 5種類以上	4回以上 4種類以上	3回以上 3種類以上	2回以上 2種類以上	1回 1種類
Content	3points 内容が豊かで、たいへん理解しやすい		2points 内容が適切でだいたい理解できる		1point 内容がわかりにくく理解しにくい	
Fluency	3points 2分間会話をスムーズにできた		2points 時々沈黙があるが会話をできた		1point 沈黙が続き会話ができなかった	
Attitude (Volume& Eye contact)	4points 十分な声の大きさでアイコンタクトをしながら話せる		3points ある程度声量、アイコンタクトに気をつけていた		1point 声が小さくアイコンタクトができていない	

Bonus point! 友達とお互い協力しあって会話を続けることができたら 4POINTS!!
Comments



Score /20points

Appendix 2: Writing test rubric

評価表

Categories 項目	Point 得点	Criteria 評価基準
Length & Style (作文の長さ＆ スタイル)	5	70文以上で，事実や感想が書かれている。段落形式で書かれている
	4	60～69文で，事実や感想が書かれている。もしくは70文以上で書かれているが，段落形式でない
	3	50～59文で，事実や感想が書かれている。もしくは60～69文で書かれているが，段落形式でない
	2	49文以下でしか，事実や感想が書かれていない。もしくは50～59文で書かれているが，段落形式でない
Neat &Tidy Handwriting	3	誰でも読める丁寧な英語が書かれているy
	2	読みにくい字が５か所以上ある
	1	読みにくい字が8か所以上ある
Grammar & Punctuation 文法&句読点及び大文字・小文字の区別	3	文法や記号，大文字・小文字の使い分けに，間違いが５つ以内。
	2	文法や記号，大文字・小文字の使い分けに，間違いが６－１０ある。
	1	文法や記号，大文字・小文字の使い分けに，間違いが１１以上ある。
Content 内容	3	冬休みの素晴らしいできごとについて，一貫性がありよく書けている。
	2	一貫性が欠ける部分がややあるが，まとまった文が書けている。
	1	ばらばらな文章のみ書かれている

BONUS POINTS!

オリジナルな点が多い場合　　３ポイント UP!

学習済の文法を工夫して使った場合　３ポイント UP!

TOTAL

/20points

Appendix 3: Incidental FFI

What a wonderful world！

How about you? After reading Yoko’s wonderful world story, talk about your wonderful story with partner.

Ex. A: What did you do during New Year’s holidays?

B: Let me see. I went to my grandparents’ house.

A: Sounds good. How much money gift did you get?

B: 30000yen. How about you?

A: Ehen. 50000yen. I will buy new ipod. How about you?

B; Hmmm. I haven’t decided yet.

Ask your partner!

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
What did you do?					
What did you see?					
What did you eat?					
Who did you see?					
How much ?					
What will you buy?					
Special thing					
Your question					

Developing Speaking Fluency through Tasks in Chat Rooms

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Completing tasks in an online platform through text-based communication is relevant to language learning today. The current study explores how simple interview tasks using chat rooms can affect fluency in speaking output in comparison with face-to-face tasks. The study was conducted with 138 university freshmen students in Japan. The study used two groups. Group One used text-only chats for interview tasks; Group Two completed interview tasks using face-to-face communication. Both groups repeated the tasks three times. The results of pre- and post-tests for speaking were compared. The results indicate that the chat room group gained higher scores in fluency and accuracy compared to the face-to-face group. The author discusses the potential of how certain tasks such as interviews conducted in a chat room environment affect fluency; the limitations of this study are also discussed.

言語活動の効果を最大限に引き出す手段としてコンピュータを利用したタスク活動がある。そして、この活動は空間を気にせずに行えることから学習機会を拡大することができる。本研究は、シンプルなインタビュータスクを文字のみのチャットルーム（チャット）と対面でのスピーキングの二つの方法で行い、スピーキングの流暢性がどのように変化するのかを調査・研究したものである。日本の大学一年生を対象に、一つのグループではインタビュータスクをすべてチャット内で行い、もう一つのグループでは対面で行った。両グループに対しては事前と事後にスピーキングテストを行い、その変化を分析した。結果、チャットを利用したグループは、流暢性と正確性共に対面グループよりも向上していることが分かった。本論文では、以上の外、チャット内で行うタスクの効果を議論するとともに、本研究の限界についても言及している。

As the usage of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has increased, researchers have explored effective ways to deliver optimal instruction for its use in language learning. Despite extensive research on task-based and face-to-face learning, the role of CMC in improving oral communication skills, especially for particular task types, has been little investigated. Although some argue that chat room communication is a form of written communication, others contend that the subtle turn-taking that takes place in chat rooms resembles face-to-face communication. By taking advantage of computer features and completing appropriate tasks online, this study has investigated how chat room activities can improve oral performance.

Literature Review

Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication and Second Language Acquisition

Previous studies have shown that the inherent features of chat rooms facilitate language learning (Blake, 2000; Payne & Whiney, 2002; Sotillo, 2000). As a form of synchronous communication, chat room conversations provide opportunities for instant, comprehensible interaction (Blake, 2000; Kitade, 2000), which has important consequences for second language learning and may trigger cognitive processes necessary for second language acquisition (SLA) (Long, 1981; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Interactions provide external feedback (e.g., clarification requests) and internal feedback (e.g., monitoring), which serve metalinguistic functions: helping language learners internalize linguistic forms, test hypotheses about language, and increase control over internalized forms. In other words, when learners and interlocutors negotiate to resolve impasses in communication, they signal and respond in ways that enhance their comprehension of input and assist their production of modified or pushed output, facilitating SLA. It, therefore, can be stated that SLA is promoted by opportunities for learners to solve communication problems through self-correction, corrective feedback, and negotiation of meaning.

The challenge to learning through interactions is that learners must notice the gap between the interlanguage and the target language. Text-messaging in a chat room allows learners to pay attention to language production, helping them notice their own and others' errors (Kitade, 2000; Lai & Zhao, 2006,Shintani; 2015). As learners can easily read and revise what they have produced in chat room interactions, mistakes are salient for self-correction and negotiation for meaning. In a study on corrective feedback, Shintani (2015) found that computer-mediated synchronous corrective feedback allows learners to notice the gap in a context similar to oral recasts. Oral recasts can provide immediate feedback but possibly not written feedback because it is often given when the material has been written. Synchronous corrective feedback, as in chat rooms, is "more likely to engage with the cognitive mechanisms responsible for acquisition" (Shintani, 2015, p. 4). Providing immediate appropriate feedback side by side in a written form may be more noticeable to the learners.

Another advantage of communicating through text-based chat rooms is that it encourages learners to take additional time to process and produce messages in ongoing interactions. Lai and Zhao (2006) claimed this might lower learners' cognitive load, so they can allocate their cognitive resources to reviewing and evaluating the linguistic forms in their output. Moreover, text-based communication supports students at different levels, including low-proficiency students who rely on their first language (L1) and shy students who lack fluency. Text-based chat rooms can help elementary-school learners stay focused on their second language (L2). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting where learners come from a homogenous environment and share the same L1, it may become difficult to continue exchanges in the L2. Chat rooms, though, allow learners to monitor their own output, so evidence of code switching is more noticeable, and learners can better reflect on what they produce (Beauvois, 1998).

Text-Based Interaction and Oral Proficiency Development

The earliest research on text-based interaction and oral development was Beauvois (1997) and Payne and Whitney (2002). Beauvois (1997) conducted an experiment using two pre- and post-tests in an oral format. The T-test result indicated that the group using text messaging outperformed counterparts in the posttest results. Payne and Whitney (2002) have investigated further into the mechanism of how online text messaging would develop oral proficiency among L2 learners. According to Payne and Whitney (2002), text messaging indirectly improves oral skills as the process of texting follows the same cognitive mechanism that underlies oral communication (Levelt, 1980).

Other research on online text-based interaction has yielded different results (Abrams, 2003; Kost,2004). Abrams (2003) found no significant difference for lexical richness, lexical density and syntactic complexity in groups using discussion rooms, chat rooms and face-to-face discussion. Kost (2004) using role-play for the tasks found no significant difference among groups engaged in chat sessions and face-to-face communication in terms of the development of oral and written proficiency.

In a meta-analysis of recent studies of the effect of CMC on oral proficiency, Lin (2014) found that language performance depends on several variables, including task type. Discussions with assigned topics and role-playing followed by discussion tasks have been reported to benefit oral development (Beauvois, 1997; Blake, 2009; Payne & Whitney, 2002). Other tasks, such as picture narrative tasks, have not outperformed control groups engaging in face-to-face speaking (Loewen & Erlam, 2006). Although comparing these results requires careful attention because not all the study designs are compatible, Lin (2014) identified task type as a methodological factor that affects oral proficiency in CMC.

Task Effect on Oral Fluency

Task effect on oral fluency has been widely been researched in face-to-face communication (Foster & Skehan,1996; Skehan,1998). Foster & Skehan (1996) reported that fluency develops when there is planning time in all three types of cognitive tasks (personal, narration, and decision-making). Also based on attention resource theory (Foster & Skehan, 1996) task characteristics may have a strong influence in directing the attention during planning towards accuracy and complexity. As the attention capacity is limited, this can result in trade-offs in performance in some areas at the expense of others (Skehan, 1998). According to Foster & Skehan (1996), when giving planning time to participants engaging in tasks with inherent structure such as personal or narrative tasks, their attention is directed towards achieving accuracy (Foster & Skehan, 1996) at the expense of complexity while improving their fluency.

In a recent study of attention resources and language processing using chat rooms, Adams and Nik Mohd Alwi (2014) claim that decreasing task complexity with prior knowledge appears to develop fluency. Adams and Nik Mohd Alwi (2014) state that fluency development is due to the nature of chat rooms, where the separation of the production and transmission of the message gives more opportunities to process and edit output. The text-based communication in chat room provides additional planning time compared to face-to-face interaction, which may develop oral fluency.

Present Study

Based on Foster & Skehan's attention resource theory (1996) and providing planning time through text-based communication in chat rooms, the present study hypothesizes that oral fluency development is greater through the use of text-based chat rooms. To compare the results with Foster & Skehan (1996), a personal task is used for the present study. Given Adams and Nik Mohd Alwi's (2014) findings on prior knowledge, the interview task was adopted to make use of the learners' past experiences. Tasks were repeated to ensure fluency (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2010).

Research Questions;

1. Does engaging in interview activities in a text-based chat room improve oral fluency?
2. Does engaging in interview activities in a text-based chat room affect accuracy and complexity in oral proficiency?

Method

Participants

This research involved 138 first-year students taking an English communication class that included this study as part of the class content. The participants were informed about the study purpose and content, and data were gathered with their consent. All the participants were nonnative English speakers whose L1 was Japanese. The male–to–female ratio was 1:3, and most were studying design or cultural policy. Their English proficiency levels were A1-B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) framework, with Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores of approximately 250–500.

Two classes were asked to participate in this study. Class One functioned as a control group and completed all the interview tasks using face-to-face communication. Class Two was the experimental group and completed the interview tasks using the text-based chat tool embedded in the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) classroom. To avoid the instruction effect, both classes were taught by same instructor.

Task

The task was conducted from October to November in 2017. Students were paired together and assigned to ask partners what they did during their summer vacations. The task was repeated three times with different partners each time. The learners were asked to summarize the interviews and report to the teacher at the end of the task. Before the interview task, both groups participated in a pretest, in which they recorded a one-minute speech on what they did over the summer using the recording software in the CALL lab. They gave another one-minute speech for a posttest after the three interview tasks.

Data Analysis

Pre- and posttest sound files were collected and transcribed for analysis. The transcribed pre- and posttests were divided into T-units, which are minimally terminable units (Hunt, 1965). The data were analyzed with Shapiro and Mann-Whitney U tests and independent T-tests using computer statistical analysis software R.

Fluency

Fluency of language was assessed based on the number of pauses, phonation time, and speech rate (syllables divided per total time). The silence threshold was set to -25(dB), and the minimum duration was set to 0.3(s) (De Jong & Bosker, 2013) in Praat phonological analysis software (Boersma & Weenink, 2018).

Accuracy

Accuracy of language production was evaluated by the percentage of error-free clauses per T-unit. Errors were defined at the sentence level rather than the discourse level. Different verb tenses in a single task, misused conjunctions, and “a/an” distinctions, therefore, were not counted as errors. Foster and Skehan (1996) used the same accuracy measures to analyze oral performance. A total of 25% of the data was compared with another rater for reliability. There was an 82.9 percent agreement. After discussing the disagreements, the first rater independently coded the rest of the data.

Complexity

Repeated words, self-repair words, fillers, and L2 use were eliminated before analysis. Syntactic complexity was measured utilizing the mean length of the T-units in the pruned speech. T-units 25% of the data was compared with another rater for reliability. There was a 91.0 percent agreement. After discussing the disagreements, the first rater independently coded the rest of the data.

Lexical variety

The Guiraud Index (GI) was used to analyze word types in all of the words produced in a single task. Although the GI is sensitive to text length, it has been used in research to show lexical richness (Vermeer, 2000).

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for accuracy, complexity, fluency, GI (lexical variation), and total number of words produced during the face-to-face and chat room interviews.

Fluency

In terms of fluency, the chat room group had a reduced number of pauses (t (30)=1.632, p=0.113) (Figure 1) and improved phonation (t (36)=2.441, p=0.020) (Figure 2) and speech rates (t (32)=1.276, p=0.211) (Figure 3).

Accuracy

The chat room group had higher accuracy in the posttest results (t (26.315)=2.167, p=0.039), while the face-to-face group saw no significant difference (t(30.944)=0.043, p=0.966).

Complexity

Both the face-to-face and chat room groups recorded slight increases in syntactic complexity and had similar effect sizes (face-to-face: t (31)=0.913, p=0.368; chat: t (26)=0.986, p=0.333).

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive Statistics for Using Interview Tasks

			Pre Test			Post Test		Pretest-Posttest comparison		
	Mode	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	p	d	
Accuracy	F2F	18	81.010	11.210	19	81.224	17.422	0.966	0.010	
	Chat	19	78.534	21.496	21	90.761	11.102	0.039	0.730	**
Complexity	F2F	18	7.000	1.239	19	7.492	1.901	0.368	0.310	*
	Chat	19	7.258	1.581	21	6.850	2.070	0.333	0.220	*
Fluency number of pauses	F2F	21	25.773	3.373	20	25.000	4.669	0.562	0.19	
	Chat	21	21.619	7.390	18	16.722	16.722	0.113	0.39	*
phonation time	F2F	22	34.438	6.307	20	34.708	8.718	0.912	0.040	
	Chat	21	38.837	11.954	18	48.510	12.060	0.020	0.810	***
speech rate	F2F	22	1.653	0.375	20	1.758	0.382	0.384	0.280	*
	Chat	21	1.649	0.467	18	1.878	0.603	0.211	0.430	*
Guiraud Index(GI)	F2F	20	4.291	0.522	19	4.694	0.474	0.019	0.810	***
	Chat	19	4.193	0.572	21	4.707	0.564	0.001	0.900	***
Total Number of Words	F2F	20	46.45	11.754	19	56.211	17.255	0.054	0.660	**
	Chat	19	40.737	10.681	21.000	55.000	13.363	0.001	1.170	***

*d>.20, **d>.50, ***d>.80

Lexical variety

The GI and total number of words increased significantly in the comparison of pretest and posttest results for both modes (GI: face-to-face: t (37)=2.459, p=0.019, chat t (37)=2.782, p=0.001; total number of words: face-to-face: t (32)=2.000, p=0.054 chat t (37)=3.65, p=0.001).

Discussion

To summarize the pre- and posttest results, the chat room group gained a certain amount of fluency, with improvement in syntactic complexity and accuracy. In contrast, the face-to-face group showed only slight improvement in oral performance on complexity and fluency. There was no difference in accuracy.

Research Question 1: *Does engaging in interview activities in a text-based chat room improve oral fluency?*

In this present study, engaging in the interview tasks in chat rooms had an improved effect on fluency compared to the face-to-face group, as shown by the results of a posttest for speaking. This result corroborates Adam and Nik Mohd Alwi's (2014) finding that engaging in tasks with prior knowledge develops fluency. Interview tasks are simple, structured tasks with which the participants are familiar within a variety of contexts. Drawing on knowledge of past experiences to complete tasks enables learners to improve fluency.

The results also indicated that lexical variety and total number of words both increased in face-to-face and chat group post-test results. This can be taken as an indicator of more meaningful output in both modes through task repetition. Repeating the task three times was sufficient to affect the results of the oral posttest. Looking carefully at the results, the chat room group had a larger effect size for the total number of words in comparisons between pretest and posttest results. These results may be because some participants found chat room conversations to be less intimidating than face-to-face communication. The opportunity to practice a task in a safe environment may have impacted the posttest results.

Research Question 2: *Does engaging in interview activities in a text-based chat room affect accuracy and complexity in oral proficiency?*

Engaging in interview tasks in chat rooms had a larger effect on accuracy and an equivalent effect on complexity as compared to face-to-face communication. This result supports the claim of attention resource

Figure 1: *Number of Pauses*

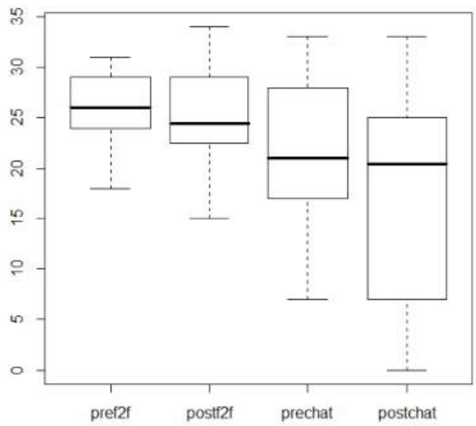


Figure 2: *Phonation Time*

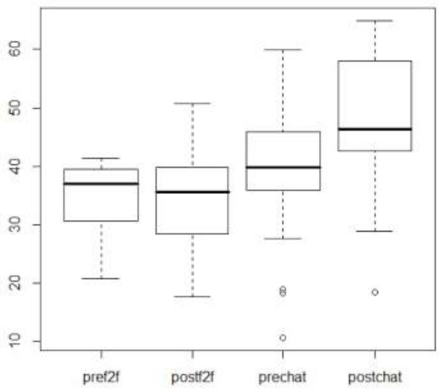
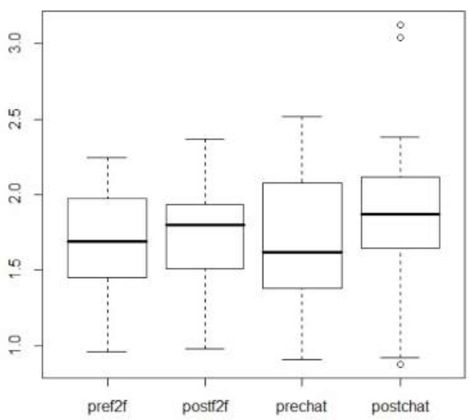


Figure 3: *Speech Rate*



theory (Foster and Skehan, 1996). In a structured task such as an interview task, providing more planning time will increase accuracy more than complexity (Foster and Skehan, 1996) as interview tasks may be completed without using complex language. Participants are aware of the task procedure and the task contains clear steps.

Another explanation for improvement in accuracy over complexity is that the participants' proficiency levels were not sufficient to easily produce complex sentences. The participants may have preferred accuracy at the expense of complexity. Previous studies have reported the greatest trade-off is between complexity and accuracy (Finardi, 2008).

In addition, as previous research has suggested, engaging in online text-based chat rooms may direct attention to linguistic aspects of communication due to the written format (Beauvois, 1998; Kitade, 2000; Lai & Zho, 2006; Shinatani, 2015). The written mode of exchange makes errors more obvious, possibly resulting in greater accuracy compared to face-to-face communication.

Limitation of the Current Study

The study limitations should be acknowledged because they have implications for future research. First, the study did not control for time on tasks. The face-to-face group spent much less time engaged in the tasks than the chat room group. The participants produced words much more slowly through text, allowing for more planning time for both parties in the conversation. To examine the effect of tasks in chat rooms, it is necessary to have a control group with a fixed time. Typing speed and text input speed also need to be considered because they affect the time for interactions.

Second, although the results showed that the chat room group improved its accuracy in the tasks, further investigation is needed to provide evidence on how attention shifts to linguistic forms. The chat log only shows the text after transmission, so additional indicators of attempts at language production, such as keystroke logs and stimulated recall, are needed to clarify whether the attention shift is due to planning the content or modifying linguistic aspects.

Conclusion

This study examined how interview tasks conducted in a chat room and in face-to-face communication affects oral speaking. The chat room group made greater gains in fluency and accuracy and had similar effects on complexity as the face-to-face group. The result suggests that taking part in interview tasks using text-based chat rooms may have the same effect as additional planning time in face-to-face activities.

Previous study (Loewen & Erlam,2006) has reported mixed results from using chat rooms to improve speaking. This study found that engaging in simple tasks in a chat room, such as interview tasks, improved speaking more than using face-to-face environments. For beginning learners, producing text in instant communication may bring their attention to linguistic aspects, allowing for more fluid output. Future studies are needed to support the claim that the presence of text in communication facilitates shifting attention to linguistic aspects.

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Smartphone Augmented Reality for EFL learners

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This study details the development and application of two Augmented Reality (AR) activities designed for use in listening and speaking university EFL classes. The authors demonstrate how the HP Reveal smartphone application can be used with a low degree of complexity to create AR content to encourage physical movement, collaboration, and contextual learning. Furthermore, is it shown how current AR technology is compatible with language learning, and displays a relative advantage over conventional materials. Analysis of participant survey data and discussion of the teacher and learner experience of the AR activities is contextualized with practical observations concerning the use of HP Reveal. Conclusions include suggestions for future educational AR research and materials development, and emphasize the importance of the demonstration of the benefits and uses of AR technology for both teachers and learners.

本研究は、大学の EFL リスニングおよびスピーキングクラスで使用するために計画された 2 つの拡張現実 (AR) 活動の開発と応用に関するものである。発表者は、動作、共同作業および環境にそくした学習を促す AR コンテンツを作成するために、スマートフォンのアプリである HP Reveal がどのように複雑さの程度が低い状態で使用されるかを説明する。さらに、現在の AR 技術が言語学習とどのように適合しているかを示し、従来の教材を超えた相対的な優位性を示す。参加者に対するアンケート調査および AR 活動についての教員と学習者の議論の分析について、HP Reveal の使用に関する実践的な観察とともに説明する。結論では、将来の教育的な AR 研究および教材開発への示唆を含み、教員と学習者両者のための AR 技術の利益と使用の証拠の重要性について強調する。

Augmented Reality (AR) is a relatively new technology brought to public consciousness by the Pokémon Go! game in 2016 (Godwin-Jones, 2016). The technology is now at a stage where researchers can develop and evaluate AR learning experiences (Santos et al, 2014), without the use of coding. However, the usefulness of AR in education remains unclear (Radu, 2014), and the potential of AR for language learning remains under-researched (Godwin-Jones, 2016). The following paper will detail the development and application of two AR activities designed to serve the teaching of listening and speaking skills to EFL learners. Specifically, the authors will discuss how the smartphone application HP Reveal can be used to experience camera tracking, marker-based AR, utilized to encourage physical movement and collaboration, and provide contextual learning in a meaningful, real world situation. The paper will conclude with discussion of the teacher and student experience of AR technology and suggest possibilities for future directions in AR material development.

The current study utilizes Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory (Rogers, 1983) to demonstrate that current AR technology embodies many of the characteristics of innovations that are adopted into widespread use. Rogers (1983) identifies five characteristics of innovations that determine eventual adoption; relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. The relative advantage of AR, the degree to which it supersedes conventional means of the representation of information, and its compatibility to language learning, the degree to which it is consistent with the values and needs of potential adopters, will be detailed below. The complexity, the degree to which it is difficult to use, and the trialability, the degree to which it may be experimented with, of AR technology will be illustrated in the Methods section, while the observability, the degree to which the results are visible to others, will be shown in the Results section.

The authors became interested in applying Augmented Reality (AR) technology to educational activities from using Quick Response (QR) codes. QR codes embody characteristics of mobile learning, by allowing meaningful information to be temporally and spatially independent (So, 2008). They allow the teacher to augment teaching materials by, for example, linking grammar explanations to online grammar quizzes. In this way, QR codes reduce the temporal and spatial distance between, and allow easy access to, different modes of informational content. The promise of AR technology for language learning lies in the ability to directly layer content upon existing content, that is, for the simultaneous alignment of multiple representations (Radu, 2014). For example, if you are practicing speaking in the language classroom AR technology allows for the audio of a conversation to be overlaid on to the transcript of the conversation, so that both modes may be accessed in the same space and at the same time. This is said to improve learning by reducing the cognitive load required to direct attention (Mayer & Moreno, 2003), and demonstrates the relative advantage of AR technology over conventional representations of information. Being able to so clearly direct attention to content is also said to improve performance and memory retention (Radu, 2014). Furthermore, activities that utilize AR technology in the augmentation of real-world environments encourage collaboration and increase motivation, while being compatible to theories of learning and second language acquisition that value contextual learning (Godwin-Jones, 2016).

There are, of course, issues that make AR technology inappropriate in some learning contexts, including, complexity, ineffective integration into learning goals, learner differences, and attention tunneling (Radu, 2014). The current research will show that the HP Reveal smartphone application can be used with a low degree of complexity to create AR content. It will also be demonstrated how AR content can facilitate learning goals, deliver multiple modes of presentation that may negate learner differences, and avoid attention tunneling through contextual learning. In short, the following study will demonstrate the compatibility of current mobile AR technology for teachers and learners in university EFL classes.

Methods

Materials design

Two activities were created using HP Reveal, a smartphone application (app) for iPhone and Android devices, that enables the user to create camera tracking, marker-based AR content (Hawkinson, 2014). It is marketed to businesses as a means of creating engaging consumer experiences, is free to use, and has a simple interface. The app allows the user to create AR content through the selection of 'triggers' and 'overlays'. Triggers must be unique, detailed, 2D images or surfaces. At the time of use, overlays were limited to video, image, or 3D animation files. The images and surfaces chosen by the authors to be triggers were photographed using the HP Reveal app camera. The overlays to be assigned to each trigger were videos recorded by the authors using a smartphone camera. The video overlays were then assigned to each trigger using the HP Reveal app interface, which is similar to one used when attaching a file to an email. Once saved to the app, triggers and the corresponding overlay content are viewable to the creator's in-app followers. A follower is then able to use the in-app camera to view a trigger. Once the camera detects a trigger, the video overlay is displayed on the trigger, so that it appears as if a 2D image or surface has become a video screen.

The first activity, a campus treasure hunt, was game-like and required teams of learners to collect a set of passwords contained in videos located around campus. The authors chose ten locations on campus and photographed a unique, 2D surface at each location to be used as a trigger, such as an information board or work of art. The authors then recorded ten videos explaining the position of these locations, to be used as overlay content. The language in the videos included prepositions of place that students had studied in their course textbooks. Each video also contained a password and directions to the next location. The last location had directions to the first location, making a loop. This design enabled contextual learning using familiar real-world places, and allowed for the integration of the activity into a review of prepositions of place. Liu & Tsai (2013) use GPS-enabled AR technology in a similar activity, while Richardson (2016) found the HP Reveal application to be a good means of creating a location-based, task-completion game.

The second activity, a conversation jigsaw, was classroom-based and required teams of learners to reconstruct a conversation from its separate parts. The authors wrote and video recorded a conversation about their winter holiday, to be used as overlay content. The conversation included culturally appropriate activities, images of which were selected to be used as triggers. The authors then split the video file at every change of speaker and assigned the separate parts of the conversation to the triggers. This design encouraged collaboration, provided scaffolding for speaking practice, had a natural focus on conversational turn-taking, and was integrated into a winter holiday-themed speaking class. Antonopoulos (2016) shows how HP Reveal can be used to create such an activity. This activity took advantage of one of the benefits of AR technology, that triggers can be portable. The images used as triggers were printed on pieces of paper and attached to the walls of the classroom, and then taken down and used in a different classroom with a different set of students.

Participants

Participants were 175 students (n=175) of compulsory English listening & speaking classes at a Japanese university, consisting of two distinct proficiency levels. Level one students (n=87) were false beginner/elementary, or the equivalent of CEFR A1. Level two students (n=88) were upper elementary/lower intermediate, or the equivalent of CEFR A2. Learners in both levels are categorized by the Council of Europe as being basic users who "can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance" (Council of Europe, 2001), a feature which influenced the decision to ground the activities in the contexts of the university campus, in the treasure hunt activity, and typical winter holiday activities in Japan, in the jigsaw activity.

Procedures

After the design and creation of materials the activities were administered in one-off classes at the end of the second semester. Both activities were preceded by a short instructional session during which all students downloaded the HP Reveal app onto their smartphones. During the treasure hunt activity, which was administered to a total of 66 participants, 29 from level one and 37 from level two, students were put into small groups, and each group was given directions to a different trigger in the loop. In this way, each group started from a different position, meaning that, because they were not all moving around the loop together, all groups were engaged with the task of collecting the passwords. Students accessed the triggers using the HP Reveal app, watched the video overlays, and wrote down the passwords contained within them, then followed the directions to the next trigger. Once groups had collected all the passwords they returned to the classroom.

During the jigsaw activity, which was administered to a total of 109 participants, 58 from level one and 51 from level two, the students worked in small groups to move around the classroom, watch each part of the conversation, and identify the correct sequence of the eight separate parts. They were then required to practice and perform their own conversation using the provided conversation as a model. Therefore, the AR content and the accompanying worksheet, which contained a further trigger to a video overlay of the complete conversation, acted as scaffolding for speaking production. At the end of each class all students were provided with a QR code link to an anonymous online survey, which they completed on their smartphones in class.

Survey design

The survey was created using Rogers' (1983) characteristics of innovations in order to gauge the readiness of learners to be adopters of AR technology. Survey items were written based on interpretations of Rogers' characteristics (Table 1). A further two items were added in order to measure student interest in AR technology. A 5-point Likert scale was used, where one indicated strong disagreement, and five indicated strong agreement.

Table 1: *The correlation of survey items to Rogers' (1983) characteristics of innovations*

Characteristic	*Interpretation*	*Survey item*
Relative advantage	Improves English	AR can improve my English level.
Compatibility	Helps Learn	Using AR is compatible with how I like to learn.
Complexity	Complicated	This AR activity is too complicated.
Trialability	Need AR	This activity could be done without AR.
Observability	Understand Goal	The goal of this activity was clear.
	Enjoy	I enjoyed using this AR activity.
	Want AR	I want to use more AR activities to learn English in class.

Results

The survey data was anonymized, and incomplete entries were discarded before analysis began. The small sample size (n=175) necessitates a cautious interpretation of data, and requires any results to be followed up with a more rigorous experimental design. Descriptive statistics showed a positive response to the activities. The Enjoyment, Helps Learn, and Improves English items all received mean scores of over 4 (Table 2), with the highest being Enjoyment (M=4.21). ANOVA analysis was used to investigate whether the student experience differed across activity type and proficiency level. The student experience showed no significant differences across activity type in Enjoyment, Helps learn, Improves English, or Understand Goal. However, there were significant differences, whereby Want AR was scored higher by the Treasure Hunt participants ($p<0.05$), and Complicated and Need AR were scored higher by the Jigsaw participants (both $p<0.05$). Considering the student experience by proficiency level, there were significant differences in all categories. Level two students rated the activities higher than level one students for Enjoyment ($p<0.05$), Helps learn ($p<0.05$), Improves English ($p<0.05$), Understand Goal ($p<0.05$), and Want AR ($p<0.05$). Whereas, Level one students rated the activities higher than level two students for Complicated ($p<0.01$), and Need AR ($p<0.05$).

Table 2: *Descriptive statistics*

	M	SD
Complicated	2.506	1.195
Enjoy	4.210	0.989
Helps Learn	4.006	1.039
Improves English	4.057	1.007
Need AR	3.063	1.256
Understand Goal	3.835	1.070
Want Again	3.892	1.093

Discussion

Student experience

The descriptive statistics show that students enjoyed the AR activities (M=4.21), and that the AR activities helped them learn (M=4.006) and improved their English (M=4.057). This suggests that students view AR technology as compatible to learning. In contrast, students were unsure of how complicated the AR technology was to use (M=2.506). It was observed by the authors that most problems in using the technology arose at the stage of enabling the AR technology. To reach the stage where they were ready to access the AR content required the students to complete the following four tasks; download the app, create an account in the app, which required the creation of a username and password, search for the teacher account in the app, follow the teacher account in the app. This is an area in which the complexity of the technology could be reduced by simplification of the set-up procedure.

The degree to which the activities required AR was rated relatively low (M=3.063). This could reflect a lack of understanding of the relative advantage of AR technology. However, this result could also be explained by an issue involving the previewing of triggers in the HP Reveal app. The authors noticed a student during the Jigsaw activity viewing overlays using triggers displayed on the smartphone of classmate sitting next to them, thereby negating the need to move around their environment to access the overlays. The ability to preview triggers thereby endangers one of the means by which location-based AR enables interaction with real world environments.

The strongest result of the ANOVA analysis concerned the difference in how complicated students found the activities. Students of lower proficiency found both activities more difficult than students of higher proficiency ($p<0.01$), and suggests that learners at the A1 level found using the AR technology and completing the linguistic task more cognitively demanding. Whether this difference is due to either or both of the cognitive demands of using the AR technology, or of completing the linguistic task is unclear. Future research may focus on varying the task difficulty to determine whether there is a proficiency level-related threshold whereby the use of AR technology in its current state becomes too demanding.

Teacher experience

The process of creating AR content in HP Reveal was quick and simple. The biggest issue concerned the requirement of unique surfaces for the creation of reliable triggers. This meant it took consideration and time to find suitable triggers for both activities. However, The HP Reveal app slightly negates this difficulty by displaying a bar below the camera screen that indicates the suitability of the image by moving from red to green as the uniqueness of the image increases. The testing of the AR content for the treasure hunt activity was time consuming as it necessarily involved walking the route and accessing the overlays using a specially created HP Reveal account. This process could be made more efficient by using two smartphone devices, one to assign overlays to triggers, and the other to test that the overlays are accessible.

Conclusions

This study has shown that AR technology, particularly in the form of the HP Reveal smartphone application, in Rogers' (1983) terms, is compatible with language learning, and can be used with a low degree of complexity in the development of language learning materials that take advantage of its relative advantage over conventional learning materials. It has also been demonstrated that learners have a generally positive experience of AR technology. Improvements to the measure of the learner experience could include the use of open response survey items to allow for a greater degree of qualitative analysis.

Future AR language learning materials development could include the development, and integration into language courses by means of the incorporation of student-generated content, of the Treasure Hunt activity, and the development of smartphone apps that allows for teachers and learners to create AR content in ways that avoid the complexities involved in current technology, as mentioned above. Nickerson et al (2014) show how adopter beliefs regarding the characteristics of an innovation are positively associated with adopter categories. Therefore, educational AR research should be concerned with demonstrating the benefits and uses of AR technology for language learning to both teachers and learners, as well as the development of the means of measuring the effect of AR technology on teachers, learners, and the learning process. The more teachers and learners adopt AR technology, the greater its potential to advance the effectiveness of language instruction and learning will be realized.

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Exploring the Roles that SIGs Play in Teacher Development: Three Interviews

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This is an account of a forum that was conceived of with the aim of bringing together different SIGs (Special Interest Groups) in order to cooperatively establish connections with one another and foster a clearer understanding and awareness of one another's interests through oral dialogue. In a departure from many other conference forums, this session saw officers of the *Teacher Development* (TD) SIG each conduct one-to-one semi-structured interviews with a representative from the *Teaching Younger Learners* (TYL), *Gender Awareness in Language Education* (GALE), and *Mixed, Augmented, and Virtual Reality* (MAVR) SIGs before an audience. Given the unfamiliar nature of the forum, the article opens with a description of the aims and format of the session. This will be followed by interviewer narratives of each of the three interactions. Finally, the article will conclude with a summary of the points that were co-constructively emergent through the interactive dialogues between SIGs.

この論文は、幾つかの異なる、分野別研究会がその理解、及び認知度を促進すること、そして意見交換や情報提供を通じて分野別研究会が連携することを目的とするために開かれたフォーラムの報告書である。通常の学会のフォーラムとは異なり、このセッションでは Teacher Development SIG (教員養成研究会）の役員が、Teaching Younger Learners SIG(低学年の学習者研究会), Gender Awareness in Language Education SIG (語学教育におけるジェンダー研究会), そして Mixed, Augmented and Virtual Reality SIG (MR, AR & VR の各研究会)の代表者たちと一対一の形式のあり程度決まった面談を観客の前で行った。 このようなフォーラムは前例があまりないため、この論文の冒頭ではセッションの形式、目的について述べる。 次にそれぞれの意見交換の詳細について述べたい。最後に分野別研究会の意見交換を通じて出てきた包括的な問題点や共通点について纏めをこの論文の結論としたい。

The JALT PanSIG conference is an annual event involving SIGs collaborating in order to conduct a conference showcasing work being carried out across various disciplines in the language teaching profession. SIGs are defined as "smaller groups within the overall organization or association that focus on specialized topics" (Davidson & Coombe, 2018, p. 137). In practical terms, SIGs function as semi-autonomous committees within JALT (Keith, 2010), facilitating different nodes of activity. Theoretically, SIGs could interchangeably be considered to be teacher support groups, teacher networks, learning communities (Barfield, 2014), and communities of practice (England, 2018). At the time of writing, JALT has 28 unique SIGs representing individual areas of inquiry into language education and related matters. In many senses, the conference is the culmination of a cooperative effort between SIGs, with the conference providing a space where each special interest can be represented alongside one another. Although there is clear cooperation between SIGs, it remains questionable as to whether members on behalf of SIGs collaborate with others on a level of professional and critical engagement. While some JALT members freely join multiple SIGs and combine numerous research interests, it seems worthwhile for SIGs to also physically engage with one another to share and develop an understanding of others' interest areas. With additions to the JALT family being continually made, this could be reflective of the expanding and fragmenting makeup of the wider applied linguistics field. Medgyes (2017) observes that "researchers are locked up in their own little cage with no periscope available to scan the whole landscape," whereby "experts in second language acquisition," for example, "seldom exchange views with lexicographers," and that typically, "academic discourse is conducted among a handful of fellow researchers working in the same specialist field" (p. 493). Given this trend, it seems important for practitioners working across different sub-disciplines to maintain an interface with one another, not just across the wider field, but also within local teaching associations (TA) such as JALT. This article is an account of a forum that was conceived of with the aim of bringing SIGs into closer and more meaningful contact with one another, in order to foster greater understandings of each other's work, and envisage future collaborative agendas within the JALT association together.

The Forum Aims

Although the PanSIG conference continues to provide a space for participants to present and attend practical and theoretically-focused sessions, and informally interact with other participants, it seems that further spaces and sessions could be created to allow SIGs to come together and learn from one another in a more dialogic mode of transmission. Unlike other forums, which traditionally see practitioners sharing completed or ongoing projects with others, this paper's forum foregrounded the exploration of new ideas and discoveries, co-created in the moment by SIG actors. The TD SIG used their allotted forum at the conference to create a chance for different SIGs to connect in dialogue with one another, with aims of:

1. Providing a space for meaningful and genuine interaction between SIGs;
2. Developing deeper understandings of each other's activities through dialogue;
3. Exploring teacher development stories across SIGs; and
4. Encouraging more formal exchanges across our field.

A tacit ethos of the TD SIG is to promote the growth of teachers as professionals. Through ongoing SIG activities, there is a belief that teacher development partly happens informally through conversation. The aims of this forum similarly reflect the beliefs of Zeldin (1998) who views conversations as a "a meeting of minds with different memories and habits," and that "when minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, and engage in new trains of thought." Therefore, "conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards" (p. 14).

The forum also allowed for the opportunity for meaningful exchanges about the JALT teaching association (TA) itself, and about SIGs' roles within it. This supports and corresponds with an emerging focus on TA-research that is characterized as "a collective attempt within a TA to carry out research based on members' expressed practical needs" (Smith & Kuchah, 2016, p. 213). Although the forum was chiefly devised of with the four aforementioned collegial aims in mind, in bringing SIG representatives together in this way, the forum organizers were hopeful that future ideas for professional initiatives would be established. Although ideas were informally expressed in the forum, a number of potential "research priority areas" that could instigate future TA projects (Kuchah & Smith, 2018) were sparked through collaborative dialogue.

The Forum Format

The forum's format follows a previous project titled *Global Educators, Local Connections* (Schaefer, Turner, & Lowe, 2018). In both sessions, three one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted before an audience. The interviews were considered to be semi-structured, owing the interviewer's flexibility (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007), and a mixture of prepared questions and follow up questions in response to interviewee utterances (Mann, 2016). The choice of interaction drew upon Edge's (2002) Cooperative Development principals: a non-judgmental form of professional interaction that allows for (self-) development. Before the forum, organizers prepared a series of questions themed around areas of focus including SIG specific and teacher development questions, designed to allow SIG representatives the space to illustrate their group's work. Following the interviews, a panel discussion supported by questions from audience members concluded the forum. The interviewees were further encouraged to reflect on each other's exchanges throughout the forum.

Preparation saw the organizers carefully consider which SIGs and representatives to invite, agreeing on the following invitees:

Kenn Gale - Coordinator of Teaching Younger Learners (TYL) SIG;

Gerry Yokota - Officer of Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE) SIG; and

Eric Hawkinson - Coordinator of Mixed, Augmented, and Virtual Reality (MAVR) SIG.

Through correspondence, certain selection criteria emerged. The organizers wanted to feature SIGs that had not recently collaborated with the TD SIG, SIGs that were of personal interest to the organizers, and above all, SIGs that were new to, or perceivably less familiar within the JALT association. Once the three chosen SIGs had been set, the organizers were keen to see what connections and themes would emerge, given the three decidedly different areas of interest.

Interview Narratives

Each of the following interview narratives are abridged, with the organizers using audio recordings to construct written summaries. Interviewees are referred to by forename throughout. Each summary is written from the perspective of the individual interviewer indicated in parentheses.

Interview 1: Kenn Gale (by Amanda J. Yoshida)

I asked Kenn to briefly describe the TYL SIG, with Kenn describing the high level of energy amongst members, with a major focus of the SIG being a platform for learning and sharing in an informal way. Concerned about how TYL members were coming to terms with MEXT's push for introducing English in the classroom earlier and earlier (International Education Division, n.d.), I asked how TYL would address this. Kenn said that as a SIG, TYL has not formed a committee to decide how to contribute to this cause; however, his school has a department that dispatches ALTs to work in 23 local public schools. Teaching methods and techniques differ greatly depending on the teacher, but Kenn explained the current popular methods of teaching young learners in Japan and how his members attempt to promote these methods within the public school's English educations at elementary level. For preschool and kindergarten, Kenn explained that they focus on child-centered approaches, which is apparent in the professional development sessions and invited speakers that TYL works with. The child-centered approach refers to hands-on, active, and inquiry-based styles of teaching. Kenn remarked that he often tells teachers to think of themselves as tour guides, whose job it is to guide the students to learn. However, when it comes to teaching, Kenn felt that while the Japanese teachers' skillsets are high, if not higher than his own teaching staff, he acknowledged that teaching a foreign language can be intimidating for elementary school teachers. He affirmed that ALTs need to give more support, and he hopes the JTEs and ALTs can collaborate in teaching foreign languages by sharing methods and techniques that work for various groups of learners. He acknowledges that ALTs and other teachers of younger learners are professionals at teaching English and working with children. Meanwhile, the Japanese elementary school teachers have a lot of other subjects and responsibilities, and they may value all the help they can get with teaching English.

Kenn followed by saying that the SIG is growing and benefits from having members that exude a great amount of energy and show a hunger for more. In response to demand, TYL has been sponsoring numerous chapter events around Japan in which they contribute by covering printing costs and sending representatives. Since Kenn's school has finances to hold monthly professional development sessions, he opens it up to SIG members so that they can be exposed to the various activities and speakers. In addition, JALT Junior is the SIG's main annual event. JALT Junior resembles a mini-conference within the JALT

International Conference and is unique in that the atmosphere is energetic and lively, complete with examples of teaching paraphernalia. Kenn invited anyone interested in teaching younger learners to visit the area at the next JALT conference.

In an attempt to connect the TYL SIG and TD SIG, I asked Kenn how he could see the two SIGs cooperating in the future. Kenn explained that teachers travel from all over to attend the monthly training sessions at his school, reflecting a demand for continuous teacher development. Kenn also suggested that the potential of co-sponsorship with chapters and other SIGs to bring the theme of teaching younger learners together with teacher development and other SIG themes, since every area of teaching requires development.

Finally, I asked Kenn to tell us what his future vision of the TYL SIG is. Kenn indicated that he hopes for a consistent platform, and to develop some regular annual events in which groups of local chapters and SIGs can co-sponsor events, ensuring a higher and more diverse attendance.

Interview 2: Gerry Yokota (by Michael Ellis)

I first asked Gerry to introduce GALE's goals and activities. Gerry stated that the SIG's aims are to research gender's implications on language education, improve pedagogical practices, develop language teaching materials, raise awareness of workplace and human rights issues related to gender, and increase networking opportunities among language professionals.

I encouraged Gerry to describe challenges in promoting gender awareness in Japan, a country which the World Economic Forum reports has dropped three places in the global gender equality rankings to 114 out of 144 (WEF, 2013). Gerry encouraged teachers in various contexts with various levels of autonomy to find good, gender literate textbooks when possible, but also to use weaker textbooks as opportunities to critically raise awareness of their problems. Gerry invited participants to use resources, especially newsletters and journals from groups such as GALE and International Gender and Language Association (IGALA). She recommended that teachers avoid simply presenting random articles and issues to students, but rather carefully scaffold the materials to support students' exploration. Gerry felt that if teachers do not guide carefully students' explorations of multiple perspectives, unexamined stereotypes may proliferate.

Moving the discussion to classroom applications of gender awareness raising, I asked Gerry to describe GALE's influence on her professional development. After recounting her experience at her first GALE conference, Gerry shared lessons from Keiko Ochiai, founder of the feminist bookstore *Crayon House* (See Masumizu, 2017). Ochiai is an advocate of equitable power sharing, making her realize that those in positions of power, such as full-time teachers at universities, must not shy away from using power, but rather use their fair share of such positions and platforms to help raise others. Gerry hoped this lesson provides a foundation for our practice as teachers.

Next, I mentioned how impressed I was that GALE's forum the previous day highlighted women of color's struggles in across the world, asking her about GALE's level of consciousness in promoting intersectionality. Gerry explained that while GALE as a group tries their hardest to be the best they can, they actively encourage advice about for how the SIG can do better. She continued by explaining that LGBTIA+ issues and issues related to ethnicity and other intersections are focuses of GALE. She mentioned an article in a GALE newsletter which offered suggestions for things to do on the first day of class to foster safe places for students, such as including LGBT and ally symbols in presentation slideshows. She referenced a plenary talk she gave at the JALT2014 conference in Tsukuba titled *Beyond the Binary*, and directed attendees to the GALE journal to read a related interview and many other articles which tackle intersectional issues (Yokota, 2015).

Within the discussion of intersectionality, I asked Gerry to comment on how GALE supports transgender people specifically, as it seems that one shortcoming of some otherwise progressively minded feminists is a failure to recognize transwomen as women or to understand non-binary gender identities. Gerry responded by referring to the spectrum of feminism and the wide variety of different feminisms. She recognized that there are those who question the concept of transgender due to the tendency of some to replicate oppressive gender roles in their relationships. Gerry emphasized that this is not the case for all transgender people, nor is this position held by all feminists, and that we must respect the wide spectrum of diversities and seek common ground. Gerry insisted that rather than avoiding such differences or pushing them under the rug, we must confront them head on.

To conclude, I thanked Gerry for bringing up the concept of a spectrum of feminisms, before asking the audience to never forget the relevance of non-binary gender identity to us as teachers, especially teachers of young people.

Interview 3: Eric Hawkinson (by Matthew W. Turner)

Eric first introduced the focus and scope of the fledgling MAVR SIG he coordinates, stressing that although there is a tendency to view the SIG as being technology-based and tools oriented, the members hope to explore what this technology represents moving forward, as well as studying the disruptiveness of this technology.

Referring to a quote attributed to Marshall McLuan, that "we shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us," Eric explained that the internet age has afforded new and unprecedented ways of interaction. Eric, therefore, feels the SIG should attempt to navigate the facets of these ongoing paradigm shifts.

Eric responded to perceptions that the MAVR SIG and the Computer-assisted Language Learning SIG (CALL) are similar. Differentiating the two, Eric reaffirmed that his SIG is not purely technology focused, but about its representations. Eric charted how the computer age became the mobile age, and that given how ubiquitous technology has become, it could be considered that a further paradigm shift is in motion. Following this, I asked the MAVR SIG's formation reflects the surrounding teaching community and wider society. Eric referred to Gerry's earlier interview, explaining that although JALT is centrally concerned with language teaching, the association's membership is interested in how communication and relationships in society may be evolving more broadly. Eric asked attendees to consider what being another gender could feel like, and how digital advances are letting us shape and create possible new personal identities, explaining how this technology has implications on wider humanity.

I encouraged some examples of the SIG's output, recounting the group's forum I attended. Eric explained how the forum presentations portrayed different realities, in that there were participants dealing with technical aspects by developing new applications and tools for the community, but also participants with projects concerned with connecting people via social causes. I paraphrased Eric's ideas by exploring how this technology appears not only supplementary, but transformative in nature, exposing students to multiple realities that can be virtually present in classrooms.

Regarding teacher development, I asked Eric how he encourages teachers to experiment with disruptive technology. Eric stated that novice educators have numerous inexpensive ways to sample such technology. Eric mentioned *Google Cardboard* as being an affordable and accessible way to try immersive 360 degrees videos with smartphones. Eric explained how our thought patterns, our sense of agency, and our emotional responses are changing through experiencing immersive videos. I asked Eric about teacher development possibilities through the use of related technology. Eric suggested this technology has the ability to give individuals feelings of proximity to others, allowing groups such as SIGs, who may geographically operate in different locations, to interact in more immersive ways.

Following on, I asked if there could be dangers that the so-called 'wow factor' of using new technology might become a distraction. I wondered how educators could judge the relationship between technology and pedagogically robust principles. Eric stressed that some of the most important work his SIG should do is maintain skepticism, especially with regard to the commercial narrow-sightedness of technological tools. Eric mentioned the problematic privacy and data-gathering aspects of digital platforms, and the physical dangers that augmented games bring. With these issues set to be further exacerbated, Eric wishes the MAVR SIG remain conscious to these developments.

Finally, Eric stated that the SIG should provide a safe, inclusive, flexible, and altogether disruptive environment, where boundaries are pushed and new understandings are gained. Along with emerging technologies, Eric hopes for the SIG not to be too rigid in focus, but instead loosely guided by the aforementioned values and beliefs.

The Panel Discussion

This section summarizes the open discussion session that followed the individual interview exchanges. Invitees were asked to join together, with the forum organizers encouraging the interviewees to engage with one another. Audience members were also encouraged to add to the discussion. The invitees drew parallels between their personal and SIG interests and developed understandings with each other. The following four sections are arranged by the themes explored.

Young Learners, Technology, and Privacy

The panel agreed that technology is pivotal in early language education. However, the panelists raised privacy issues related to technology's presence. Eric claimed that while higher education has the flexibility the comes with working with young adults, elementary, junior, and senior high schools however are governed by laws aimed at protecting young children from being represented on social media for example. Eric felt disruptive technology uses could invade privacy in potentially deep ways, whether the teacher is aware or not. Eric asked Kenn to comment on any pushback issues from working with technology in public schools. Kenn explored his experiences with using social media such for marketing purposes with kindergartens and preschools. He mentioned that as little as five percent of parents have resisted their children's involvement. Kenn reflected on the challenges for teachers who must remain diligent and conscious to these issues, by paying attention to online output.

Technology, Gender, and Identity

Gerry wanted to find out what MAVR SIG's position was with regard to Japan's world position on gender equality within the larger educational context. Gerry highlighted the term disrupt, a recurrent theme during Eric's interview. Eric explored how immersive technology like VR and AR has been described as an empathy machine, with movie directors attempting to use technology to put people in others' shoes, creating a sense of agency. Immersive feelings, therefore, can offer new perspectives and insight into different lives such as another genders. With regard to education, Eric mentioned how young people use such technology to experiment with new identities and forms in online games. Gerry expressed her wish that Eric's SIG promote the term empathy machines more, feeling that people sense this technology may be having a negative effect on empathy, such as cyberbullying cases. Gerry encouraged opportunities for showing how this technology could promote empathy.

Gender, Intersectionality, and Young Learners

The discussion developed to questioning gender and intersectionality issues with young learners. An attendee explained that any inclusion should be at an age-appropriate level, given that very young learners won't be able to process some details. Another attendee remarked on themselves as being an educator dealing with intersectionality related issues, and that giving young children the opportunity to be taught by similar teachers may provide early exposure. Gerry raised the potential for teachers' own implicit biases and the possibility of unconsciously indoctrinating young learners with personal prejudices. However, she also pointed to studies indicating that young adults are interested in learning about LGBTIA+ issues despite teachers perhaps thinking otherwise. Gerry concluded that teachers should be making informed and firmly grounded decisions about what is appropriate to introduce to young learners. Eric suggested that technology has afforded more familiarity and reduced the controversy with young people, given the way information is communicated. Kenn additionally warned that because young learners have no preconceptions, presenting such issues should be done so carefully.

JALT and Teachers of Young Learners

An audience member asked the panel about how SIGs could help teachers of young learners and/or those working in the *eikaiwa* industry to understand that JALT is inclusive of their interests. Kenn said he joined his SIG to provide an example for teachers he works with, in hoping to maintain professional engagement. Although Kenn said he was successful in bringing fellow teachers to a JALT event, useful sessions for the group were lacking. In response, Kenn cited JALT Junior as an event for teachers of young learners to experience demonstrations of high applicability to their classrooms. An audience member contributed by suggesting a sense of difficulty in attracting Japanese teachers of English to JALT, expressing a wish that SIGs could collectively think about ways to attract them. Some ideas followed, ranging from promoting the affordability of local chapter and SIG membership, making efforts to have more sessions in Japanese, increasing awareness, forming partnerships with local boards of education, and the possibility of using emerging technology to provide online content and virtual opportunities for participating in JALT events.

Evaluation of Forum

This paper documented an experimental forum that brought different SIGs together to share in a cooperative and collaborative form of dialogue. The forum was largely successful in its aims of developing mutual understanding about each other's SIG's interests, finding commonality between each group's activities, and collaboratively uncovering potential projects together within the JALT association through actual conversation. The organizers of the forum encourage similar dialogic sessions be created at future events, and hope this paper illustrates the value of SIGs participating in dialogue with each other.

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Teacher Efficiacy and Effective Language Teaching in the 21st Century

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This study aims to identify teacher efficacy in teaching English and its correlation to their teaching performance. Teacher efficacy describes teachers' confidence and belief that they can carry out effective learning process to help their students improve their language and communication skills necessary for 21st century. In this study, 30 pre-service teachers in western, central, and eastern areas of Indonesia were given evaluation checklist to self-assess their efficacy level and the results of their assessments would be compared with the evaluation scores given by their observers. The results of statistical analysis infer that teacher efficacy affected their performance in conducting language teaching and learning process.

本研究は、21 世紀の英語教育において極めて重要な言語運用能力の向上について、教員の自己肯定感の高さと指導効率の相関性を明らかにすることを目的としている。本研究では、インドネシア西部・中部・東部各地域の 30 名の教育実習生を対象に自己評価アンケートを実施し、指導教員の評価と比較した。調査の結果、自身の指導能力に対する教員の自己肯定感は、指導の成功に影響を与えるということが明らかになった。したがって、教員養成プログラムは、教育実習生の自信を高める機会を提供する必要がある。

With all forms of development in education in the 21st century, effective English teachers should build stronger foundation for teaching, see possible opportunities, and anticipate challenges. In Indonesia, the qualifications of English teachers are described in the National Qualifications Framework and this becomes the guideline to design curriculum for teacher training program. Effective and qualified English teachers should have mature attitudes as professional teachers, knowledge on language, pedagogical principle, and educational psychology, as well as teaching, communication, and professional skills which are continuously developed in the training program and throughout their career. In addition to having attitudes, knowledge, and skills, there is one key element that also contributes to shape teaching performance called teacher efficacy. Efficacy refers to belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action which influences how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act (Bandura, 1995, pp. 2-3). Teacher efficacy can be described as teacher's confidence to make to make improvement on students' learning which affects behaviors and attitudes toward teaching (Dembo & Gibson, 1985).

Teacher efficacy is important to identify because it also contributes significantly to teaching. How efficacy affects teaching performance in linked to teachers' effort and behavior towards teaching and learning process. Efficacious teachers spend their time to plan the teaching and learning process, put their current knowledge into practice, apply teaching principles that work best in the classroom, analyze their own teaching practice, identify problem that appear, and find out the ways to solve the problem. A study by Ware and Kitsantas shows that teachers who have high teaching efficacy level contribute greater effort to their jobs and take more personal responsibilities for their success and failure (2007). Another study by Coladarci also suggests that highly efficacious teachers have enthusiasm and full commitment to teaching (1992). Those explain that efficacious teachers are highly committed and dedicated to teaching, continuous self-development, and lifelong learning. They are willing to reflect on their own practice, try out new practice, as well as adapt to changes and development in education. Referring to the importance of efficacy in teaching, this paper aims to identify teacher candidates' efficacy level and investigate the correlation between teacher efficacy and teaching performance.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy refers to teachers' belief that they have the ability and skills to bring about students' learning (Dembo & Gibson, 1985) and make a difference to the education of the students they serve (Schleicher, 2011). Teacher efficacy can also be described as teachers' confidence and beliefs on their capability to organize and execute courses of action to successfully accomplish a teaching task, overcome problems in learning, develop strategies to organize courses, and overcome students' obstacles in learning as well as their judgement of whether their current abilities and strategies are adequate for the teaching task (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Another definition of teacher efficacy is the degree to which teachers feel that their own efforts determine the success of their students (Slavin, 2006, p. 7). As a conclusion, teacher efficacy is the picture of teachers' beliefs, values, and ideas about their knowledge and skills to carry out effective teaching and help their students succeed.

The results of several previous studies describe some characteristics of efficacious teachers. Teachers with high efficacy level have clear expectations on learning (Ashton, 1983), feel well-prepared, maintain good classroom management, and influence students' achievement and motivation (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), adapt teaching to individual differences (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992), maintain students' academic working habits (Fuchs, Fuchs & Phillips, 1994), and employ constructivist approach in their teaching (Temiz & Topcu, 2013). Efficacious teachers know what the students need to learn and achieve at the end of the lesson as the learning outcomes. To achieve the outcomes, they always spend some time to plan and prepare the lesson. During the lesson, they always maintain the classroom environment conducive to learning, engage students in the learning activities, and motivate the students to learn. Teacher efficacy is also marked by teachers' belief that they can help all students learn and achieve the learning outcomes. Being aware about students' differences in terms of language competence, learning styles, learning pace, and interest, they give their students some space for personalized learning. They will allocate time for group work to allow discussion and knowledge sharing among their students before asking the students to work independently. Another result shows that teachers who have high efficacy try various learning materials and approaches, find better ways of teaching, and implement progressive and innovative methods (Allinder, 1994). Conducting classroom action research or experimental research, employing new teaching methodology, using educational technology in the classroom, and updating knowledge from various workshops or seminars are essential for teachers to conduct successful teaching. As it determines teachers' efforts and behaviors toward teaching, teacher efficacy is important to research and develop. These constructs above were used to design the self-assessment questionnaire.

Methodology

To self-assess their efficacy level, teacher candidates were asked to fill out a questionnaire designed as self-evaluation checklist to score their performance on the scale of one to four. Self-assessment questionnaire should gather information about personal capabilities, such as skills, knowledge, strategies, and personality traits as well as their teaching tasks (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). The questionnaire consisted of 30 closed-ended questions for self-assessment and 5 open-ended questions that gathered information about what had been learned in the teacher preparation program, how the teacher candidates learned and practiced, what they thought about effective teaching, what worked well in the classroom, and what aspects still needed to be improved. The questionnaire was distributed to some schools in western, central, and eastern parts of Indonesia via email.

A teaching evaluation rubric was also sent together with the questionnaire to be filled out by the teacher candidate's supervisor. The evaluation rubric was to give information about the teaching performance of each candidate. Responses from fifteen teacher candidates in western, ten teacher candidates from central, and five teachers from eastern parts of Indonesia were returned. These teachers were doing their pre-service teaching program at schools in the academic year 2017-2018.

Table 1. *Criteria of answer (Sudijono, 2009, p. 175)*

Criteria of Answer	Score
Very positive	3.4 – 4.0
Positive	2.8 – 3.3
Fair	2.5 – 2.7
Negative	2.2 – 2.4
Very negative	1.4 – 2.1

This research adopted criteria of answer above to assess teachers' responses on their competence. Besides self-evaluation, teacher candidates also received feedback and performance evaluation scores from their supervisors at school. After obtaining both scores, the correlation between teacher efficacy and their teaching performance was analyzed using Chi square analysis. The data would explain how efficacy shaped teaching performance.

Teacher Candidates' Views and Beliefs on Effective Teaching

When asked to write about their beliefs and views on effective teaching in 21st century, teacher candidates mentioned several points or principles they learned from the courses and their experience. In general, those teachers mentioned quality of instruction, learning media, affective factors, and research-based practice as characteristics of effective teaching in 21st century.

First, in terms of instruction, the teachers mentioned that effective teaching is well-planned, well-organized, collaborative, clear, communicative, and student-centered. These teacher candidates believed that clear lesson-planning determined not only the quality of learning materials and activities but also the flow and success of teaching and learning process. To structure and organize the lesson, the effective teachers would use scaffolding technique. Scaffolded and assisted learning involves the steps of introducing a concept, making it explicit and experimenting with it for the students' lives by using various meaningful and purposeful activities, so at the end of the process the students will have the control over their language (Johnson, 2009, p. 70). Various collaborative activities like group discussions, pair works, or group projects in scaffolded learning would help the students internalize and experiment with the concept to acquire the knowledge and skills. Based on their opinions, collaborative learning they had in the classroom provided more opportunities for learning support, sharing of knowledge, and active learning, so the students would be ready to work independently after collaborating with their peers or groups. Well-organized learning that the teacher candidates mentioned was also linked to ability to manage classroom, students' behaviors, and learning. These findings were similar to the results of previous study by Faez and Valeo that effective teaching is characterized by skill development, good classroom management, effective materials, and good planning (2012). The teachers also mentioned that effective teaching should be clear in terms of explanation and instruction. In terms of learning material, rather than being dominated with explicit teaching of grammar, they emphasized communicative experiences for the students, such as discussing an issue, analyzing messages from a spoken or written text, and presenting ideas. As what Nunan says, instead of merely knowing the grammatical rules, students should be able to use the rules effectively and appropriately when communicating (2001, p. 12). The teacher candidates also agreed that effective teaching should be student-centered. Based on Johnson, effective teaching integrates student-centered approach, involve contributions and discoveries by learners as well as assistance of a teacher so they can accomplish goals or solve problems on their own and maintain interaction between teacher and students (2009, p. 63). Therefore, active participation from each student was highly promoted in the class.

Second, effective teaching can be achieved by integrating educational technology and various media in the classrooms. Teachers should be able to improve their instruction by using technology-mediated activities. Therefore, the teacher candidates also agreed that teachers should learn to manage online classroom portal and use online learning activities like online reading, listening, writing, game, and quiz that can be accessed on the internet or designed using applications. Not only technology, they also used various learning media such as pictures and realia to support teaching. Third, related to affective factors, learning can be considered effective if it is enjoyable and motivating. All teachers wanted to make the students feel motivated and enjoy the learning process so they could achieve the learning outcomes. Fourth, the teacher candidates mentioned that effective teaching is research-based. They always tried to reflect on their experiences, identified the effects of their actions, choices of activities, media, and materials, as well as tried out new ideas to solve learning problems or improve the quality of their instruction. Good teachers always learn from teaching experience and improve practice (Goodwyn & Branson, 2005, p. 143; Slavin, 2006, p. 7). Research done in the classroom functions to establish, test, and verifies theories of teaching and learning as well as make sense of practices (Kiely & Askham, 2012).

Teacher Candidates' Efficacy Level

Based on the self-evaluation results presented in Appendix 1 and open-ended questions, it can be inferred that in general, teacher candidates gave positive evaluation on their performance. During the training program, the teachers took several courses on teaching principles, such as learning program design, language learning assessment, second language acquisition, educational technology, and educational psychology, so they felt confident and ready to teach their students in the apprenticeship program they were taking. The preparation program provided them with teaching practices and meaningful reflections that could develop their potentials as teacher candidates and build their efficacy as described below.

a. Apply theories and principles of effective teaching

The teacher candidates believed that they mastered the subjects or materials so they were able to explain the materials to the students in the teaching practice. Not only the subjects, they also mastered the teaching skills and applied the educational theories or principles when preparing a lesson, designing learning materials and media, conducting a lesson, observing students' learning, assessing language performance, and solving problems. Feeling successful in applying the theories they had learned, the teacher candidates became more efficacious. Previous study by Haverback and Parault also shows that teachers who can successfully relate theories and teaching practices increase their efficacy level (2008).

b. Plan lesson

Teachers found the importance of planning for effective teaching. Most teachers planned and prepared the lesson before the teaching practice. The lesson planning that they prepared clearly stated the expected learning outcomes, the series of tasks to achieve the learning outcomes and time spent on each task, the learning materials, and media for effective teaching. From course on learning program design the teachers also learned to design teaching syllabus for a set of learning program. Having skills on lesson planning and curriculum design, the teachers always felt well-prepared when teaching their students.

c. Develop learning materials, media, and assessment

Teachers integrated various resources in their teaching practice. Besides adapting or adopting materials from textbooks and other sources, teachers also used their own learning materials. The self-evaluation score shows that almost all teachers believed that they could develop learning materials and media. Before teaching the students, they prepared learning materials and media that would be used for activities in the classroom. The teachers were also able to develop evaluation instruments to assess students' learning achievement.

d. Conduct effective teaching

The teachers believed that they were able to explain the materials clearly, give clear instructions and questions to the students, and communicate with their students so the students know what to learn and how to learn the concepts effectively. Communication skills in the target language were highly prioritized. These teachers always maintained communication and interaction with and among their students by questioning students, providing feedback, and responding to students' questions. The tasks given, such as text analysis, discussion, and group project also required critical thinking and problem solving skills. In the teaching practice, the classroom situation was conducive for learning and the teacher started and finished the class on time based on the lesson plan.

Based on their views on effective teaching, the teacher candidates felt successful in conducting the forms of scaffolded, collaborative, and self-regulated learning. They always encouraged their students to be active and responsible for their learning by giving series of tasks that require students' engagement like discussion, presentation, simulation or roleplay, project based learning, group work, and individual work. This was also to facilitate students in mixed-abilities class to support and learn from each other. After working in groups or pairs, the students would work independently to compose written or oral texts using the concepts. While teaching, these teacher candidates tried to find out the most effective ways to teach the materials, spent their time understanding their students and their problems in learning, monitored their progress, and gave constructive feedback.

e. Motivate students

Students' learning motivation was considered important for learning because it affected students' behavior and effort toward learning. These teacher candidates applied various teaching activities and gave ice breaking sessions in the classroom, such as listening to recorded talks or conversations, watching videos, analyzing pictures, miming actions, singing songs, and playing games to stimulate students' motivation and interest for learning. Their enthusiasm in teaching the students also raised students' energy to learn as well. Frequently, the teachers used educational technology for online games, quizzes, or tests. Course on educational technology also introduced the students to some applications or online classroom portals such as Kahoot, Hot Potatoes, Edmodo, and Moodle.

f. Conduct research

Based on the self-assessment results, teaching preparation program prepared the candidates to be reflective practitioners who would always reflect from their teaching experience. Before teaching practice, these teacher candidates also observed in-service teachers' classes and wrote regular reflection about their learning to identify successful model of effective teaching, develop teaching principles, and improve teaching practice.

Teachers' actions and efforts demonstrated their capability to create and facilitate effective teaching. The findings were similar to Gurney's research that foundation of effective teaching includes teacher knowledge, enthusiasm, responsibility, self-regulated learning, effective feedback, and effective interaction (2007). When those requirements were met by the teacher candidates, their efficacy level would increase. The results above explain that teacher efficacy was affected by their understanding about teaching principles and experience in carrying out effective teaching. Teachers' successful experiences as educators and students, personality traits, abilities to meet teaching task requirements, and knowledge on educational principles impact teachers' beliefs on their capabilities and practices (Richards & Lockhart, 2007, pp. 29-32; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998).

Although most teacher candidates believed on their capabilities to become effective teachers, some teacher candidates were not really confident and ready to teach. They were unable to manage the classroom, discipline their students, prepare lesson, conduct effective lesson and variate learning activities which resulted in low efficacy and motivation to teach. In the evaluation, several teachers mentioned that they did not use educational technology because they did the pre-service teaching at schools which had limited access to

Table 2: *Correlation analysis result between teacher efficacy and teaching performance*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,873[a]	1	,005		
Continuity Correction[b]	5,136	1	,023		
Likelihood Ratio	6,873	1	,009		
Fisher's Exact Test				,016	,016
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,610	1	,006		
N of Valid Cases	30				

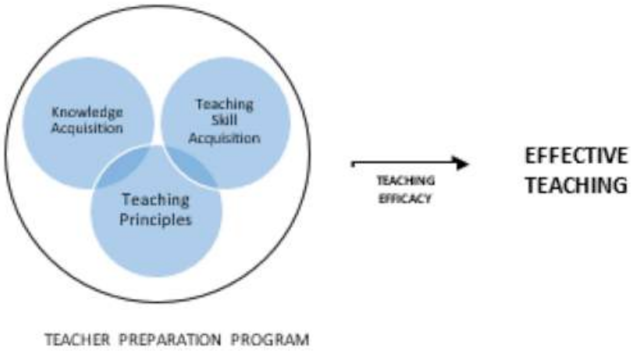

Figure 1: *Teacher efficacy and effective language teaching*

internet and did not provide LCD projector or computers for learning.

Teacher Candidates' Efficacy Level and Its Relation to Teaching Performance

Based on the evaluation scores given by the supervisors presented in Appendix 2, most of the teachers were considered qualified and able to carry out effective teaching. Feedbacks after teaching simulation and teaching reports show positive results that almost all teacher candidates could present materials clearly, plan lesson, structure and manage lesson, conduct successful mastery learning, maintain positive interaction with their students, and help students achieve the expected learning outcomes. Teachers' successful experiences in the classroom shaped their confidence, enthusiasm, and commitment toward teaching.

Understanding the teaching principles and reflecting from their successful experiences and feedbacks from supervisors, these teachers established their own model of effective teaching and teaching principles. After they had been established, they were used as habit and improved throughout teaching career. The coefficient score below 0.05 confirms that there was correlation between teacher efficacy and teaching performance. It describes that teacher candidates who made positive beliefs about their language competence, knowledge of teaching principles, and teaching skills performed effective and successful teaching. This finding also explains why efficacious teacher candidates were able to control and manage teaching and learning activities. Teachers were more confident to make use of their teaching model and principle that made them successful to conduct effective teaching and help their students achieve the learning goals. Thus, the practice would be repeated. Similar to previous research result, if teachers believe that they could control their actions, they could influence students' learning and once efficacy developed, it would last (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000).

Based on the correlation result between teacher efficacy and teaching performance, teachers who had high efficacy level performed successful and effective teaching. The findings also explain that teacher preparation program in the university contributed to shape teacher efficacy. How reflective practice in teacher preparation program shaped teacher efficacy and influenced teaching can be summarized in the figure above. Various activities like discussion, observation, and teaching practice as well as constructive feedbacks in the teacher preparation program developed teachers' knowledge on language, teaching principles, and teaching skills. Based on Zimmerman, teachers who receive feedbacks on their performance may be helped to analyze their strengths and skills in teaching and evaluate things need to be improved (in Bandura, 1995, p. 208). Teachers who successfully applied their knowledge and conducted effective teaching felt more confident, well-prepared, enthusiastic, and committed to teaching and self-development. Thus, they would consistently practice the teaching model and apply the same principle that made them successful in conducting effective teaching and helping their students. This explains that once the beliefs and confidence in teaching were formed, the effects in teaching practice would last throughout their career as professional teacher candidates. Previous studies also found that effective teaching practice assisted teachers to better manage challenges, formed teaching habit, as well as enhanced self-efficacy and commitment to professional development (Farrel, 2012; Wyatt, 2011). As teacher efficacy brings significant impact on teaching performance and has lasting effect on teaching career, teacher candidates should be assisted to find their potentials and develop effective teaching model.

Conclusion

Teacher efficacy is the picture of teachers' beliefs, values, and ideas about their knowledge and skills to carry out effective teaching. Teachers' positive beliefs on their competence and capability made them feel more confident and motivated to give their efforts in teaching and helping their students. The result of this study confirms that teacher efficacy influenced and predicted teaching performance. Therefore, teacher training program needs to provide opportunity to increase efficacy level through meaningful and reflective practices.

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Appendix 1

Teaching Evaluation Rubric

Self-Evaluation Result of Efficacy Level

No	Evaluation	Score
1	I reflect from experience as a teacher	3,3
2	I can develop my skills as a teacher, problem solver, critical thinker, and decision maker	3,4
3	I have clear goals and objectives in every meeting	3,3
4	I feel motivated and enthusiastic to teach	3,5
5	I have knowledge about educational principles	3,3
6	I can make syllabus for a learning program	3,2
7	I can develop a lesson plan using the principles of learning program design	3,1
8	I can develop good learning materials and media	3
9	I can use various learning strategies that can be applied in the classroom	3,2
10	I know how to approach and communicate with my students	3,3
11	I can manage the students and learning using the theories of educational psychology	2,9
12	I apply effective classroom management	2,9
13	I can develop assessment instruments and assess my students' learning achievement	2,9
14	I use learner-centered approach	2,8
15	I can give clear instructions and questions	3,2
16	I feel confident to teach	3,2
17	I believe that I am a good learning facilitator	3
18	I feel well-prepared to teach the students	3,1
19	I use information technology or educational technology in the learning process	3,4
20	I can create organized, stress-free, and enjoyable learning situation	3
21	I always plan and prepare the lesson well before teaching	3,2
22	I use various games when teaching	2,9
23	I use various learning media when teaching	3,2
24	I variate the learning activities to teach the students in mixed-abilities class	3,2
25	I involve all students in the learning activities	3,1
26	I apply cooperative learning through group work or pair work	3,2
27	I encourage the students to use their problem-solving skills in the learning activities	3,2
28	My explanation is clear and easy to understand	2,9
29	I use learning activities that require students' critical thinking	2,8
30	I always motivate the students to learn	3,3

Appendix 2

Evaluation Scores from Supervisors

Student	Aspects								Total Score
	Material Mastery	Material Delivery	Instructions & Questions	Classroom Managem	Activity	Language	Voice Production	Lesson Plan	
1	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	84
2	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	97
3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	88
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	100
5	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	4	72
6	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	88
7	4	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	84
8	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	88
9	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	97
10	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	81
11	4	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	84
12	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	4	72
13	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	84
14	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	84
15	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	94
16	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	100
17	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	94
18	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	94
19	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	91
20	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	88
21	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	81
22	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	88
23	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	94
24	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	94
25	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	91
26	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	91
27	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	88
28	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	88
29	3	4	3	2	3	2	4	4	78
30	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	91

Appendix 3

Teaching Evaluation Rubric

Category	1	2	3	4
Material and content mastery	The teacher does not seem to understand the material and content very well.	The teacher shows good understanding of parts of the material and content.	The teacher shows good understanding of the material and content.	The teacher shows full understanding of the material and content.
Material delivery	Teacher explanations are ineffective, unclear, and inaccurate, and incoherent.	Teacher explanations are accurate and clear enough, but the teacher needs to fully clarify the information.	The teacher explains the material very well. Only several parts of the explanations are not clear.	Teacher explanations are very clear, accurate, coherent, and precise.
Instruction and questions	All questions and instructions are difficult to understand.	Questions and instructions are provided but confusing and limited.	Questions and instructions are clear and easy to understand. But the teacher needs to explain twice.	All of the questions are clear and concise. Teacher gives all instructions clearly and they are easy to follow.
Classroom management	The session lasts before 10 minutes or for more than 18 mins. The teacher does not give attention to the students.	The session lasts for more than 17 minutes. The teacher gives attention to some students.	The session is finished before or after 15 minutes, but no more than 2 mins. The teacher gives attention to almost all students.	The session is conducted effectively within the time allocation. The teacher gives attention to all students.
Activity	The activities do not address the targeted skills. No variety of activity is evident. It is mostly explanation.	Skills are practiced but not really reinforced. The teacher needs to vary the activity to make the lesson engaging and motivating.	Most of the targeted skills are practiced through the activities. The activities are engaging. At least two types of activities are evident.	All targeted skills are practiced through the activities. The activities are various and engaging. At least three types of activities are evident.
Language	More than 5 grammatical errors are found.	3-5 grammatical errors are evident.	Grammatical errors are found but no more than 3.	No grammatical errors are found.
Voice production	Teacher often mumbles and mispronounces more than three words.	Teacher speaks clearly most of the time and mispronounces three words.	Teacher speaks clearly all the time and mispronounces one or two words.	Teacher speaks clearly all the time and mispronounces no words.
Lesson plan	The activities are not relevant to the learning objectives or targeted skills. The lesson is entirely teacher-directed.	The activities do not clearly address the objectives or targeted skills. Some activities are not relevant and leading to confusion. Teacher almost dominates the lesson.	The teacher is well-prepared. The activities are connected to the learning objectives and targeted skills. The lesson goes well and is quite organized.	The teacher prepares the lesson very well. The learning objectives and targeted skills are reinforced strongly during the lesson. The lesson is very organized and well-timed.

Flipping a Global Topics Classroom

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This paper introduces a classroom activity that the researcher implemented in a second-year integrated skills class, focused on global topics, at a private university in Tokyo. Her research interests had been drawn to 21st Century Skills (Tilling & Fadel, 2009) and she felt her students did not have many opportunities to implement the 4 Cs, communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking when using English. This paper will introduce how she flipped the classroom in detail and share student reflections from the course. Finally, this paper will elicit the limitations and possible ways to continue similar project-based work in the future.

本稿では、研究者が東京の私立大学で、グローバルトピックスを中心とした、2 年次英語スキルズのクラスで実施した教室活動を紹介する。彼女は 21 世紀の技能（Tilling & Fadel, 2009)に引き寄せられ、生徒が英語を使うときに 4Cs（コミュニケーション・コラボレーション・創造性・批判的思考）を経験する機会があまりないと感じた。それが本研究の始まりになった。本稿では、この反転授業活動を詳細に紹介し、そして、本授業に関する学生の意見を共有する。また、これから本研究をベースにし、どのようにして作業を続けられるか、限界と可能な方法を導き出すことに説明する。

During the 2016 academic year, I selected a textbook and taught a second-year global topics course that integrated the four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The textbook content was recent and relevant, but my Japanese university students failed to thrive for various reasons including their belief that the topics were not relevant to them and the textbook was not at a level appropriate for their English ability. The students seemed demotivated to participate in the class and the course continued to be lackluster despite trying various ways to improve it. In the end, I decided to not use the textbook in the fall semester and began designing materials to use for the remainder of the course. This experience spurred me to not use a textbook for the 2017 academic year while instilling a desire in me to design a course that my students would find engaging, relevant, and meaningful. Additionally, I hoped the course would entice my students to become motivated, autonomous learners of English while gaining 21st century skills; all qualities that would be useful whether their future selves used English in the workplace, on study abroad, or never again.

Connecting with 21st Century Skills

Trilling and Fadel (2009) state that innovation and technology are now common place in the world today. They explain that to thrive in the 21st century students need to have knowledge of digital literacy, learning and innovation skills, and career and life skills. Learners also need to foster “values and behaviors such as curiosity, caring, confidence, and courage” (Trilling & Fadel, 2009 p. xxxii). Without these skills it will be very difficult for students to integrate into the 21st century workforce and Japanese EFL students are no different. They too, must be able to utilize these skills in the future. Critics of 21st century skills argue that there is no need to learn those skills and that it is just a ‘fad’ (Sawchuk, 2009; Mathews, 2009), however in current EFL research there is a call for a balanced and cautious approach (Griffin, 2018). While an additional cognitive demand on the learner cannot be denied, integrating these skills into the classroom moves the focus away from just *learning* English and places it on *using* English which will benefit Japanese EFL students in the future even if their majors, or future occupations do not require English. For these reasons, as I designed the year-long course, I tried to implement these skills and values into the lessons and projects, in the spring semester.

The Decision to Flip My Classroom

The decision to shift the responsibility of the individual topics each lesson on the students as well as relinquishing a large portion of the control of the classroom to my students during the fall term was a frightening proposition initially. “Would they prepare appropriately each week?” and “Would they participate in English?” were just a few of the questions I pondered. However, the more I researched about flipped learning, and flipping the classroom, the more I realized that elements from it would be very useful in the design of the course. Bergmann & Sams (2012, 2014) gave examples and techniques from successful flipped classrooms in a variety of settings, including foreign language classrooms. Those examples provided me with a more concrete focus of what I hoped to achieve in my class.

From my observation, classroom practice in Japan often is based on the idea that a student’s job is to enter the classroom, listen to the instructor, take copious notes, memorize the information, practice translating various sentences in preparation for a final exam or a university entrance exam. Moreover, it can be said that many Japanese students are familiar with a traditional teacher-centered, lecture-based, passive education style during secondary and tertiary education which is in direct opposition to the structure of a flipped classroom environment. However, it must be noted that the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has made efforts regarding English education policy to promote more active learning in the classroom (MEXT, 2003). With this educational background, getting students to accept that the majority of the content would be learned outside of the classroom, as homework, was a foreseeable hurdle when implementing flipped learning in the course.

A search of relevant literature found that the majority of flipped learning research was based on STEM related courses (Biemiller, 2012; Berrett, 2012; Steen-Utheim & Foldnes, 2017). However, as for flipped learning and EFL, research has been conducted, mostly on specific EFL skills; EFL writing (Leis, 2015; Leis, Tohei, & Cook, 2015; Leis & Brown, 2018; Mehring, 2015a, 2015b); and speaking (Leis, 2016). There is limited research on integrated skills and content based EFL courses (Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2017; Kang, 2015; Sung, 2015). With the extremely limited research regarding EFL and integrated skills and EFL and content-based learning, I set out to integrate flipped learning into my class.

Course Design and Implementation

While the spring semester focused on cultivating 21st century skills, helping students build confidence in using English, and becoming acclimated to having more autonomy in the classroom, the fall semester found the students being the main facilitators of knowledge being shared and exchanged in the classroom. My role was mainly to act as a coordinator or overseer to make sure students moved between activities on schedule, and in a timely manner. Occasionally, I would have to intervene in group discussion to help with conflict resolution, or aid in clarification or interpretation of students’ opinions, however generally, the students took control of each activity. Overall, the majority of my time was spent, listening to group discussions, joining in when appropriate, and assessing participation and effort.

The 15-week course was designed with the first two weeks of class being introduction and preparation classes. Weeks three through 15 were divided into three rounds labeled A, B, and C. Each round was four weeks long. Each round the students were divided into four groups and each group chose a topic for their presentation and discussion. Each week was a new group, a new topic, and a new presentation and discussion. At the end of each round, the members were shuffled, and the process was repeated.

Each group was required to choose a topic for their group presentation (Appendix A). Some presentation topics students chose include: Dating customs, marriage traditions, transportation, Christmas, and World Heritage sites. After the weekly topic was chosen, each group member had to choose a country to represent (Appendix A). Below is one example:

Topic: LGBT Rights

Country 1: America

Country 2: Afghanistan

Country 3: Thailand

Country 4: Uganda

Country 5: Australia

Country 6: The Netherlands

This style of presentation allowed the students to cooperate in choosing the topic, subtopics, introduction, and conclusion while allowing them the freedom to work on their section of the presentation independently. From my experience, many students often complain about the difficulties of group work and presentation work outside of class, however through using a class Google Sites page designed by me, google slides, and students individual LINE accounts, the students claimed that the pressure of working as a group, was greatly reduced.

Presentation days in weeks three through 15 were conducted with the same process each week. This allowed the students to become comfortable and confident with the flow of the class. The process was divided into three categories: before class, in class, and after class. Figure 1 summarizes each step of the process.

Before Class

Before each class there was one task that the presentation group needed to complete. They were required to find background information. All classmates were then required to use the assigned background information to prepare for the class topic that week.

Background Information

Each group was required to find, and submit to me, one or two authentic English resources. These could be newspaper or magazine articles, videos, or TED Talks that connected with their presentation topic. Occasionally, students would send extremely short materials and would have to try again to find more suitable materials. The process could be as easy or as difficult as the presenting group chose to make it. Once approval was granted, the link(s) were posted on the classroom Google Site and students could access the materials, from school, home, or anywhere with an internet connection.

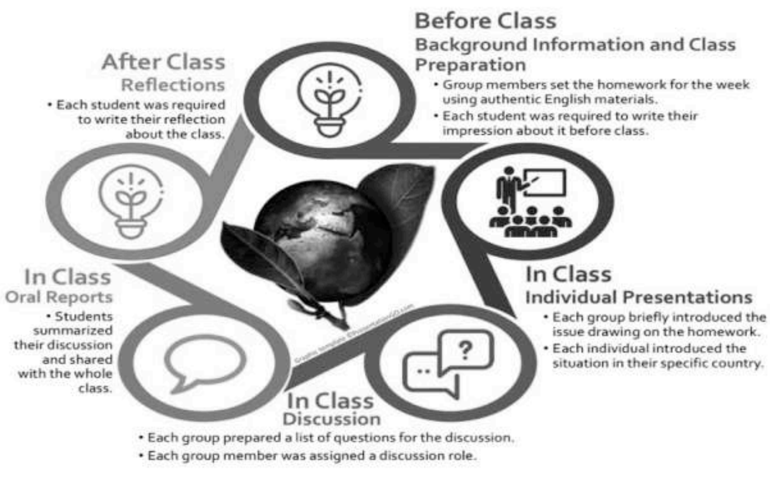
Class preparation

For class preparation, all students were required to access the background information and prepare a written impression about the article sharing their ideas and opinions about the topic. This served two purposes. The first showed me that they had done the homework and prepared for class. The second, and more important purpose, was to create an opportunity for them, to think critically about the topic and their opinions, in English, before they entered the classroom.

In Class

Each 90-minute class was divided into three main sections: group presentations, group discussion, and

Figure 1: *Process Graph of Global Topics course flow*



Graphic template design ©PresentationGO.com oral reports. The first few minutes at the beginning and end of class were used for administrative purposes, however the bulk of the class time was given to the students to use English.

Presentations

During presentations there were two groups of students. The presentation group comprised of six students, and the remaining students who participated as audience members. Each group presentation took about 25 minutes. During the presentation, the presenters would briefly introduce the topic of the week drawing on the homework that they had assigned. Next, each group presenter would individually introduce the situation in their chosen country. Finally, the audience members could participate in a question and answer session with the presenters. During that time, the presenters would try to answer any questions that were asked. During the presentations, the audience members were encouraged to take notes, however it was not a graded requirement.

Discussion

The next 30 minutes of class time was devoted to small-group discussions. Each presenter was assigned as the discussion leader of a small group and used the class discussion questions they prepared in advance to aid the discussions. Generally, each discussion group had four members. Each group member was also assigned with a specific role for that week. The roles were: discussion leader, notetaker, speaker, and timekeeper (Appendix B). The discussion leader moderated the discussion. The notetaker generally took notes on paper, but a few chose to use their tablets or smartphones. The time keeper periodically shared the time remaining with the group members and gave warnings when the discussion time was coming to an end. The speaker summarized the group discussion at the end of the oral report round. In this way, each student had a role to complete for the discussion to run smoothly.

Oral Reports

The final 20 to 25 minutes of class were devoted to oral reports. Each group was given about 10 minutes to work with the speaker to prepare a brief summary of their discussion. This required the participation of all group members for the speaker to do a thorough job. Next, the speaker would share their group's summary with the whole class. Quite often students were surprised to learn that each group had very different discussions and outcomes despite the original discussion questions being the same.

After Class

After each class the students were required to write a reflection about the experience. They had the freedom to reflect on anything, as long as it connected to the class or the topic. Some of the reflections focused on who made good presentations or were strong group leaders while others shared their personal opinions or analyzed what went well or poorly during the group discussion. Still others would be more critical of themselves and focus on how or why their opinions had changed or developed during the class.

This process was repeated each week. In the beginning the students would often complain about how difficult it was, but by the second round the majority of students had acclimated to the process and found the repetitive style and requirements to be less and less daunting.

Student and Teacher Voices

As this was my first time to try running a class in this style, I unfortunately didn't have the foresight to administer a class survey before or after the course, however the students graciously granted me permission to use their reflections as my main source of qualitative data. Focusing on the second semester data alone, I was provided with 165 pages of impressions and reflections. Three main themes could be taken from the students' reflections: motivation, autonomy, and English skills.

Motivation

Reflections regarding motivation were peppered throughout the student reflections. Here are some of the students' direct quotes taken from the weekly impressions and reflections. "I was motivated and inspired by your Global Topics class so much." "All the people I met in this lesson are motivated to speak English," (Student reflections, 2017) and,

> In spring before entering this class, my English skill was clearly lower than [when] I was studying English to enter college. However, I did not study English because I didn't get motivated… I like the

> lesson[s] gradually. I thought that such a lesson will make my life of the next grade (Student reflections, 2017).

These quotes all directly mention a personal sense of motivation or a sense of feeling motivated by the activities or people in the class. As this was one of my main goals in designing the course, it can be said that the results can confirm a positive outcome among students.

Autonomy

Reflections that showed instances of learner autonomy were sprinkled throughout the student reflections. Some of the students' direct quotes taken from the weekly impressions and reflections and shared here. "I speak positively from myself in this class." "I felt I had to free myself from a sense of inferiority as early as I could. This is what I decided to study hard for." "I gradually became conscious of being able to remember the content to be released by myself firmly and making slides that everyone can see easily," (Student reflections, 2017).

> I learned many things…I am apt to neglect to add more details. One of the reasons why…is that I made much of forming the rim of the presentation, so I couldn't take time to deepen the content of what I introduced. However, at the same time, I realized [how] to make a presentation. I don't feel so nervous while speaking in front of people, because I concentrate on making the rim, so I realized it's not so difficult to speak (Student reflections, 2017).

> I was able to obtain information on countries outside [Japan] by presentations [of] other groups, and when I examined [about them] by myself, I was able to know a lot of things. Some countries I've heard of, some countries I do not know about that country at all (Student reflections, 2017).

> There are countries that I'd like to visit in a number of…regions. In addition, there was also knowing Japanese culture …by examining the culture of other countries. I was surprised to realize that there are many things I do not even know about the culture of the country where I was born and raised (Student reflections, 2017).

These quotes all express a sense of participating or growing due to a sense of self. It is shown through actions which include 'speaking positively,' becoming 'conscious' of one's actions, and understanding why one does certain actions. As this was one of my main goals in creating the course, it can be said that the student results can uphold a positive outcome among students.

English Skills

Reflections regarding the improvement and growth of English skills were most prevalent throughout the student reflections. The students wrote about the following in their reflections and impressions. "Through this lesson I was able to feel the joy and importance of doing things in English." "I thought my English skill became surely good. Not only knowledge, but also my mindset to speaking seemed to be improved." "It was difficult writing before impression[s] and after reflection[s] each more than 100 words. However, I became able to write them easily little by little, so I felt that my ability of English continued to develop through this class" (Student reflections, 2017).

> It was difficult to talk about the topics of the world in English. Discussion is difficult even in Japanese... I was made aware of my absence of vocabulary…I thought that I first had to know the word rather than grammar to speak from myself. However, as I repeated the classes, I thought that it was not necessary to use only difficult words. Of course, it is important to know many words, but you can also speak with simple word[s]. The most important thing is to talk a lot (Student reflections, 2017).

> At first, I was little confident to speak English, but now, I changed my mindset and…I became to express what I want to say in English. I am feeling this is one of the valuable facts in my life, so if I bump into some difficulties in my life, I want to confront them taking advantage of this experience (Student reflections, 2017).

> I thought that we should have speaking and listening skills because we will have opportunities that we work with foreigners and talk with them or we go to abroad to work in the future. Thus, I wanted to improve my speaking and listening skills more while I took this class (Student reflections, 2017).

> I think we could develop so many skills. For instance, reading, listening, and speaking…we got homework of reading article[s] or watching TED every week. At the first time the homework was hard because of the topic…However through doing the homework I feel that my listening skill and reading skill is developed (Student reflections, 2017).

These quotes all express a sense of improvement in their English skills. The main skills students consciously wrote about were mainly speaking and listening skills. Reading skills were mentioned far less often, while writing skills were seldom mentioned. I found that intriguing as the students wrote so much over the term. As a major goal of the course was to integrate the four skills, it can be said that more focus to make reading and writing skills explicit was needed however the majority of students completed the course feeling a sense of satisfaction or growth relating to their English ability.

Conclusion

This practice-oriented paper introduced the teaching methodology and implementation of a flipped-learning project in a second-year tertiary global topics course. The activities in the spring semester were designed to teach the students various 21st century skills and improve their confidence in using English with their peers, while also fostering autonomy. The fall semester students then were given more autonomy as they worked in groups to complete their homework assignments, presentations, group discussions, and reflections in a flipped classroom. Student reflections on the classroom format and the fall semester were very positive overall and numerous students reported feeling a sense of growth throughout the semester in their reflections.

However, it must be noted that this is a paper based on one teacher's classroom and more research is needed before definitive outcomes can be confirmed. Finally, as I work to improve this model, I will hold this student's quote close to heart, "I want to do my best making use of this irreplaceable experience," (Student reflections, 2017). I hope that through flipping content-based integrated skills EFL classes, more students will become motivated and autonomous learners.

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Appendix A
Presentation Topics and Countries by Round

Table A1
List of Student Topics and Country: Round A

Student Name	Group	Topic	Country
Student 1	1	Fashion	Saudi Arabia
Student 2	1		France
Student 3	1		Italy
Student 4	1		Peru
Student 5	1		Russia
Student 6	1		South Korea
Student 7	2	Average Life Span	America
Student 8	2		Brazil
Student 9	2		India
Student 10	2		Switzerland
Student 10	2		Nigeria
Student 12	2		Sierra Leone
Student 13	3	Same-Sex Marriage	Australia
Student 14	3		Netherlands
Student 15	3		America
Student 16	3		Afghanistan
Student 17	3		Thailand
Student 18	3		Uganda
Student 19	4	Dating Customs	Russia
Student 20	4		America
Student 21	4		Italy
Student 22	4		Cambodia
Student 23	4		Egypt
Student 24	4		South Korea

Table A2
List of Student Topics and Country: Round B

Student Name	Group	Topic	Country
Student 1	1	Sports	Germany
Student 2	1		Spanish
Student 3	1		America
Student 4	1		China
Student 5	1		Russia
Student 6	1		Jamaica
Student 7	2	Weddings	China
Student 8	2		N/A
Student 9	2		Russia
Student 10	2		India
Student 10	2		Sweden
Student 12	2		Egypt
Student 13	3	Food Culture	America
Student 14	3		Italy
Student 15	3		Federated States of Micronesia
Student 16	3		Germany
Student 17	3		India
Student 18	3		Spain
Student 19	4	World Heritage Sites	Austria
Student 20	4		Canada
Student 21	4		China
Student 22	4		Ecuador
Student 23	4		Czech Republic
Student 24	4		Italy

Table A3
List of Student Topics and Country: Round C

Student Name	Group	Topic	Country
Student 1	1	Festivals	Taiwan
Student 2	1		Spain
Student 3	1		N/A
Student 4	1		Italy
Student 5	1		Germany
Student 6	1		England
Student 7	2	Transportation	USA (Alaska)
Student 8	2		China
Student 9	2		Thailand
Student 10	2		United Kingdom
Student 10	2		India
Student 12	2		Maldives
Student 13	3	Christmas Traditions	Australia
Student 14	3		England
Student 15	3		Finland
Student 16	3		Germany
Student 17	3		Russia
Student 18	3		USA
Student 19	4	New Year Customs	India
Student 20	4		New Zealand
Student 21	4		Spain
Student 22	4		Madagascar
Student 23	4		Chile
Student 24	4		Taiwan

Appendix B
Discussion Group Members and Their Roles: Round A

Below is the table the students made to divide into discussion groups for Round A. A similar process was repeated for rounds B and C. All students experienced being the discussion leader, timekeeper, speaker, and notetaker three times each during the semester.

Table B1

Discussion Group Members and Their Roles: Round A

	Groups	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
1	Student 1	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker
1	Student 7	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker
1	Student 13	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper
1	Student 19	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader
2	Student 2	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker
2	Student 8	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker
2	Student 14	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper
2	Student 20	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader
3	Student 3	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker
3	Student 9	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker
3	Student 15	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper
3	Student 21	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader
4	Student 4	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker
4	Student 10	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker
4	Student 16	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper
4	Student 22	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader
5	Student 5	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker
5	Student 11	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker
5	Student 17	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper
5	Student 23	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader
6	Student 6	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker
6	Student 12	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper	Notetaker
6	Student 18	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader	Timekeeper
6	Student 24	Timekeeper	Notetaker	Speaker	Leader

Using TV Commercials to Promote Critical Thinking and Cultural Understanding

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Television can be viewed a mindless form of entertainment, or a powerful tool for education and change. Using television commercials in classrooms can provide a much-needed break from textbook-based instruction and bland handouts, connecting students to a familiar media format while activating prior knowledge. Incorporating commercials that some have deemed controversial can be a powerful tool, engaging learners and encouraging them to consider other cultural viewpoints and global social issues. University students in three English classes (n=74) in a Japanese university were shown television commercials and completed connected exercises. Students then completed a survey measuring levels of self-reflection and growth as a Global Critical Thinker (GCT). Since controversial commercials were used, levels of discomfort were also measured. Results show a majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that the television commercials, activities, and discussions assisted them in self-reflection and becoming a better GCT.

テレビは、単なる娯楽としてではなく、教育や考え方の気づきのために必要な強力なツールとして見解できる。 授業でテレビコマーシャルを使用することは、教科書や配布物だけに基づいただけの指導からの「休憩」を提供し、すでにある知識を活かしながら、身近なメディアフォーマットで学生の意欲を高めることができる。 話題や論議を醸しだしているコマーシャルを組み込むことで、学生の興味を引き、文化的な視点や世界的な社会問題を考慮する強力なツールになる。3 つの英語クラス（n = 74）において、日本の大学生にテレビコマーシャルを視聴させ、それぞれのコマーシャルに繋がる活動を行なった。その後、グローバルクリティカルシンカー（GCT）としての自己反映と成長のレベルを測定する調査をした。物議を醸し出すようなコマーシャルでもあったため、不快感のレベルも測定された。結果として、大多数の学生が、テレビコマーシャル、活動、およびディスカッションは、自己反映に役立ち、より良い GCT になることに同意、または強く同意することを示した。

Education has undergone multiple transformations, from teacher-centered to student-centered classrooms, from textbook-focused to multimedia inclusive. Using videos within lessons was a breakthrough in education. Unfortunately, after years of overuse, the video-focused lesson has become as interesting as the VCR itself, and with the invention of the computer and then the smartphone, students now have quick and easy access to a range of videos and other media online, making educational videos challenging to use.

A common problem expressed among educators is that the modern student has become unfazed by interesting, yet predictable videos of wildlife, pollution, and space travel. YouTube has now become a common tool for teachers in need to liven up a classroom, supplementing lesson after lesson with quick, often amusing videos that catch students' attention.

Incorporating videos is not a new trend in education, but as stated above, with the advancement of technology, students are able to receive new information at a rapid pace, which makes showing videos in classroom lessons a daunting task. In other words, incorporating videos are becoming more of a challenge than ever before, with some teachers opting not to show video in their class at all. Add to this the continued use of predictable education DVDs that book publishers are including in every new textbook, and the field of education has put itself in in a difficult situation, with nowhere to go but back to the basics—textbook exercises, pop quizzes, and cloze handouts. In short, educators are struggling with making content meaningful and engaging to students who are more interested in Instagram updates than traditional medicines from a small desert village in Tunisia.

Globalization is affecting every country, and even the most closed off, either by choice (Japan) or by force (North Korea), are having to deal with the eventuality of a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual society. So, a relevant question now for educators is: How effective are videos for teaching cultural awareness and understanding, and promoting critical thinking?

There are more layers to this question, of course. There are probably very few educators who do not believe videos have the potential to enhance daily lessons, making them valuable teaching resources. Neuman, Wong, Flynn and Kaefer (2018) showed that using videos during classroom lessons was an effective tool particularly for vocabulary building. Even students are happy that teachers are mixing things up in the classroom, as one student in an English class was quoted as saying, "I like the way you use videos with us -- you get us moving, talking, writing and speaking. The problem is you make us think too much" (quoted in Ferlazzo, 2012). Educators will agree that students need critical thinking skills, so "The teacher made us think too much" is a complaint most would love to see on course evaluations.

Another point that needs to be considered is the use of television commercials compared to clips found on textbook DVDs. In her paper promoting using television commercials in language classrooms, Oliveira (n.d.) writes, "Authors such as Medina (2002) and Weyers (1999) claim that the cognitive support provided by video may help second language learners acquire grammar and vocabulary, improve spelling and develop the linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening" (p. 1). Brief video clips, such as television commercials, offer students opportunities to hear authentic language spoken in natural settings while being presented with relevant issues in society, with the goal of achieving high levels of critical thinking.

Critical thinking has been a key phrase in education for years, producing a variety of definitions. Lai (2011) provides one clear definition of *critical thinking*: "Critical thinking includes the component skills of analyzing arguments, making inferences using inductive or deductive reasoning, judging or evaluating, and making decisions or solving problems" (p. 2). With globalization entering education jargon, "Global Critical Thinking" (GCT) is a more of an appropriate phrase for today's classroom goals. GCT combines both critical thinking skills and cultural understanding (in other words, one's own culture, as well as other cultures around the world). Researchers admit, "Very little is known about video's role in knowledge development and helping critical thinking, and this is identified as a major gap in the research that requires more investigation" (Carmichael, Reid, & Karpicke, 2018).

So how can GCT be achieved by incorporating videos into lessons? One way to accomplish GCT is to broaden students' perspectives and understanding of the world around them. This thought causes a lot of educators to hesitate for fear of disrupting the peaceful flow of their classrooms and replacing it with a tense atmosphere and awkward silences due to the controversial nature of some of the topics brought up in videos. With the new wave of politics, technology, and global issues permeating the news and infiltrating our lives, it is becoming more acceptable to discuss controversial issues in classrooms and faculty lounges, even in countries that have a reputation of conducting relationships on mostly superficial levels.

My research question is: How effective are videos for teaching cultural awareness and understanding, and promoting critical thinking?

Methods

Participants

All participants are university students attending a well-known private university in Saitama, Japan. During the

Spring semester of the 2018 academic year, three English language speaking (communication) classes with a total of seventy-four (n=74) university students were recruited for this study. Twenty-two (22) students were female and fifty-two (52) students were male. The mean age was 18.43. All students were majoring in Economics, Business Management or Law, and the English language level for all classes was "Intermediate" (i.e., all students fell in the range of TOEIC 400-500). Each class met once a week for 15 weeks, with each period lasting one hour and 30 minutes.

Procedure

Three classes were chosen to show the television commercials followed by one main activity (both the videos and activities are explained in detail in the Appendix B below). The class number (e.g., "Class 5" took place during week 5 of the academic semester), chosen videos, and activity are shown in Table 1.

On each of the chosen days, the students would engage in a warm-up exercise meant to activate prior knowledge on the chosen theme and video. After the warm-up activity, the students would view the television commercial twice. Finally, the students would engage in various activates based on the day's theme, using the television commercial as the main focus of discussion. At the end of the lesson, students took a 4-statement survey using a standard Likert scale format that inquired about their perceived levels of self-reflection, as well as cultural viewpoints and global social issues they took into consideration (see Appendix A for complete survey).

Students were also asked to document at any point in the lesson when they felt uncomfortable (divided into three sections—Beginning, Middle, and End of the lesson), with the material being presented, with the discussion topic or with the assigned activity, and measure their levels of discomfort during the lesson on a scale of one to ten.

Results

The collected survey results for all three classes (*n*=74) are shown in Table 2.

After finishing the three lessons throughout the semester, and compiling the survey data, the following results surfaced. For Statement #1, about 72% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the television commercials, activities, and discussions assisted them in self-reflection. For Statement #2, about 76% of the participants also agreed or strongly agreed that the television commercials, activities, and discussions helped them to think about new cultural perspectives. For Statement #3, 82% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the television commercials, activities, and discussions offered opportunities to openly discuss global issues. And finally, for Statement #4, 74% of participants felt they became better Global Critical Thinkers (GCT) after the three lessons.

Table 1.

Class Information

This Table includes the class number, the video chosen for that particular class, the theme used for that lesson, the activity the students completed, and the number of students who participated.

Class #	Chosen Video	Theme	Activity (see Appendix B for procedure)	Number of students present
5	Folgers Coffee	Gender	Role Play	74
9	Chinese Detergent	Racism	Evaluate, Analyze, Describe (E.A.D.)	74
14	Kool-Aid	Stereotypes	Presentations	74

Table 2.

Survey Results

The results below reflect student responses to the four statements found in the Student Survey (Appendix A).

Statement #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	*n*
1	5	8	8	37	16	74
2	2	6	13	29	24	74
3	0	4	9	26	35	74
4	1	11	7	47	8	74

Students were also asked to make a note if at any point in the lesson they felt uncomfortable with the material or activity being presented. The points were divided into three sections—Beginning (0-30 minutes), Middle (31-60 minutes), and End (61-90 minutes) of the lesson, with the material being presented, with the discussion topic or with the assigned activity, and measure their levels of discomfort during the lesson on a scale of one to ten ("1" being the lowest level of discomfort, and "10" being the highest level). The results are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Discussion

A quick analysis of the survey results reveals about 75% of the students felt that the lessons offered opportunities to self-reflect and discuss pertinent issues in today's global society, thus increasing their feeling of being globally-minded thinkers, or Global Critical Thinkers (GCT). With the Japanese government urging more university students to study abroad in order to meet its promise of doubling the number of students by the year 2020, university teachers are incorporating more activities that promote a more global perspective while challenging Japanese norms (Lee, 2018). Including television commercials is just one way in which this can be accomplished.

The most pressing issue in this study was whether students would feel uncomfortable talking about complex and sensitive issues found in the television commercials, such as racism and sexism. However, according to the results, only about 34% of students felt uncomfortable with the first lesson, and the number decreased with each subsequent lesson (22% for lesson two, and 18% for lesson three). The high number of

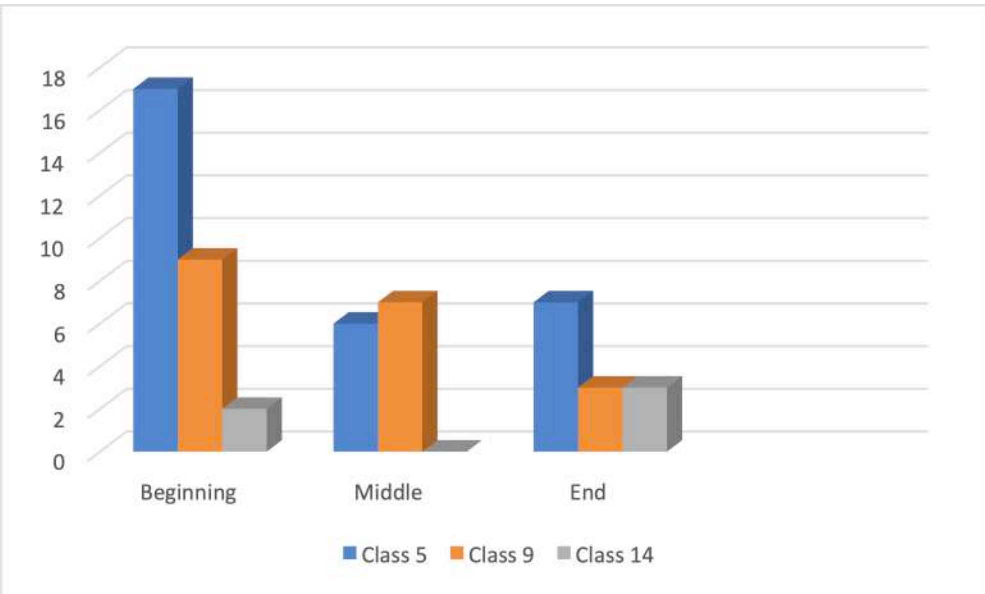
Table 3.

Number and Levels of Students Who Felt Discomfort During Lessons
Table 3 shows the number of students who experienced some discomfort during the beginning, middle, and/or end of each lesson.

Class #	Beginning	Middle	End	Total
5	17 (mean=4.88; SD=1.93)	6 (mean=5; SD=1.09)	2 (mean=4; SD=1.41)	25
9	9 (mean=4.44; SD=1.74)	7 (mean=3.85; SD=1.46)	0	16
14	7 (mean=3.4; SD=1.14)	3 (mean=3.66; SD=1.15)	3 (mean=4.66; SD=1.53)	13

Table 4.

Number of Students Who Felt Discomfort During Lessons
Table 4 is a visual representation of the number of students who experienced some discomfort during the beginning, middle, and end of each lesson.



students who felt uncomfortable with the first part of lesson one could be attributed to the nervousness that naturally accompanies taking on any new task, particularly in a foreign language.

Moving out of one's comfort zone is never a comfortable experience, but being put into situations where one must face discomforting circumstances, whether it be a volunteering, giving a presentation or discussing sensitive topics in an open forum, can build leadership qualities by defying the "grooves of routine" (Worline, Wrzesniewski, and Rafaeli, 2002) and increase personal and professional success rates (Caprino, 2014). Therefore, it is critical that students begin to encounter more challenging situations to better prepare them for life—and what better place to begin this journey than in a safe, controlled classroom environment supervised by a caring, culturally-sensitive educator. If students feel comfortable discussing difficult global issues in their classes, then perhaps they will feel more confident about studying abroad and not focus on the "hassles" (Hassett, 2018).

There are some limitations to this study that should be discussed. First, the study took place over one academic semester, so it is unclear whether the benefits of presenting challenging material to students will have a long-term impact on their general critical thinking skills, as well as the Global Critical Thinking (GCT) skills. Second, all of the students were Japanese nationals, so this study needs to be applied to a mixed ethnic group of university students in order to test the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the videos chosen for this study were specifically chosen with the participants' general personalities in mind, so care must be taken when choosing television commercials (or any multimedia) to show and sensitive topics to discuss before presenting them to the class. As Martinelli (2018) confirms, "The most important factor in knowing when and how much to push is thinking about your [students'] personality," considering their strengths, weaknesses and interpersonal conflicts, and, if possible, having them be part of the development of the lesson. This last comment is more of a warning than a limitation, but still needs to be carefully considered.

Conclusion

As technology becomes more commonplace, children are spending more time in front of computer, tablet, and smartphone screens—for children under eight years of age, that could be 48 minutes per day, in addition to at least two hours of television viewing (Barshay, 2017). If eight-year-old children are spending almost an hour a day on cellphones or tablets, imagine how much time the average high school of university student spends in front of the "black mirror."

Rather than view this as a detriment to education, educators should embrace technology by carefully choosing which multimedia to bring into his or her classroom, and how to present that material to students in ways that will deepen their understanding of themselves, broaden their cultural perspectives, and strengthen their Global Critical Thinking (GCT) skills. This has been a major issue in higher education, with many teachers relying on textbook DVDs and online websites to satisfy the technological craving of students, and while there is an appropriate time for textbook DVD videos, other media, such as television commercials, could provide more opportunities to grow critical thinking skills and global minds. In the end, hopefully the research and application illustrated in this paper will provide educators with ideas to use in their lessons, or at the very least inspire them to consider other ways to challenge students to think more critically about the world around them and the issues that permeate national borders.

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Appendix A

Student Survey

Please respond to the following statements about the lessons with television commercials.

1) The television commercials, activities, and discussions helped me think about myself in new ways (self-reflect).

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

2) The television commercials, activities, and discussions gave me the opportunity to consider new perspectives from other cultures (cultural viewpoints).

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

3) The television commercials, activities, and discussions gave me a chance to think about and discuss problems around the world (global issues).

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

4) After the three lessons, I feel I've become a better Global Critical Thinker (GCT).

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Appendix B

Videos and Activities

Activity	Method	Materials	Video
Role Play	After viewing the video, students will be placed into groups of two or three, and develop one of the following tasks: 1) Recreate one of the coffee ads to reflect a more "modern" family. 2) Reenact one of the commercials, switching the genders. 3) Act out one of the commercials as it is presented, and afterwards discuss how you felt during the performance.	-Folgers commercial (accessed from YouTube using a computer and projector or TV). (Note: This activity can be applied to any chosen video and theme. Choose a selection of videos and theme that best suits your class!) -paper -writing instruments	Folgers Coffee (Folgers Coffee Sexist 60s Ads, 2011)
Evaluate, Analyze, Describe (E.A.D.) (Velasco, 2015)	Participants are shown the commercial twice. Have the students just watch the first viewing. For the second viewing, have them write information for the three categories. Students are asked to first evaluate how they feel about what is happening; next, analyze the situation—i.e., why it is happening; and finally, describe the situation in the video in the simplest terms. Afterwards, students can either share their findings to the class, followed by a group discussion, or the students can write a brief journal/reflection paper on what they wrote for the three categories.	-Kool-Aid commercial (accessed from YouTube using a computer and projector or TV). (Note: This activity can be applied to any chosen video and theme. However, the subject of the video is chosen based on the possibility of multiple meanings/conclusions that could be drawn from what is occurring. For example, students can view the video from various cultural, ethnic or racial perspectives. -paper -writing instruments	Kool-Aid (Kool-Aid Kids in Japan 1960 commercial, 2013)
Individual or Group Presentations	After viewing the video, students will be placed into groups of three or four, and prepare a 5-minute presentation on the commercial, issues reflected in the commercial (Was the commercial racist, or simply cultural differences/ misunderstandings?), and what they learned from the experience.	-Large sheets of paper -thick markers (black and a variety of other colors -Optional: Old magazines or newspapers students can use for photographs, images, graphs, etc.	Chinese Detergent (Racist Chinese Laundry Detergent Ad Qiaobi (俏比) ad, 2016)

Realisations through Conversation Analysis (CA): Increasing awareness of interactional dynamics in the discussion classroom

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This paper is about how Conversation Analysis (CA) helped us attain a deeper understanding of interactional dynamics in the classroom. We video recorded discussions of English language majors and initially used CA to investigate student use of taught discourse strategies (TDS) when turn taking. However, this investigation brought us an increasing awareness of two interactional phenomena we had not consciously considered: *gesturing* and *intersubjectivity*. Our focus therefore is on excerpts of classroom talk that highlight their importance. We believe that a recognition of the communicative potential of bodily gestures and an awareness of how intersubjective forces define the trajectory of a discussion may lead to a revision of grading criteria. The context specificity of our excerpts and their non-lexical focus may be of interest to ELT teachers: greater awareness of embodied communication and of the psychological dynamics within groups will increase the mindfulness of teachers to contextual contingencies that affect classroom performance. The experience of 'doing' CA has reminded us of the need to grade holistically, to pay more attention to the formation of groups, and to recognise a need to analyse patterns and sequences of both verbal and non-verbal communication in discussion groups.

この論文は、会話分析（CA）が教室での社会関係のダイナミクスについて、いかに私達の理解を深める助けになったかについて書かれています。私達は英語専攻の生徒達のディスカッションを録音し、CA を使用して、話者交替の際に生徒達が指導された会話戦略（TDS）をどのように使用しているか調査しました。 しかしながら、この調査は私達が認識していなかった 2 つの相互作用現象、「ジェスチャー」および「主観性」について意識を高めました。この論文は、その重要性を浮き彫りにした教室での会話の抜粋を含みます。 私達は、（ジェスチャーによるコミュニケーション能力や主観的な力がいかに議論の軌跡を定義するか意識することについての）認識が、成績評価の修正につながる可能性があると考えています。 私たちの抜粋の文脈の特異性とそれらの非語彙的な焦点は ELT 教師の興味を引くかもしれません。少なくとも、身体的コミュニケーションとグループ内の心理的ダイナミクスに対する意識が高まれば、教室のパフォーマンスに影響を与える文脈上の偶発事象に対して教師は順応しやすくなるでしょう。CA の「実施」の経験により、総合的に評価を付ける必要があること、グループの形成にもっと注意を払うこと、ならびに英語のディスカッショングループで相互作用のパターンと順序を示す必要性を私たちは再認識しました。

1 CA

Conversation Analysis (CA) is an approach to the study of interactional talk that is organised around *action* and *sequence*. Its methods allow us to "investigate the communicative and cultural constraints that shape language as they intersect with the cognitive" (Clift, 2016:1). Although it evolved through a focus on casual conversation, CA is now used to investigate task or institution-centred interactions, and thus has relevance to language teachers. Our classrooms are venues for public displays of interaction where socially shared cognition and learning are on display. The practice of detailed transcriptions of audio or video recordings used in CA help us observe what happens between minds in order to discover more about what is inside them (Clift, 2016: 1).

Since Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's (1974) ground-breaking paper, CA studies have focused on two areas: turn-taking dynamics, and the characteristics of speech and delivery. Both have obvious uses for teachers who seek clearer understandings of classroom performance. Yet perhaps surprisingly, CA was initially disregarded by some SLA (second language acquisition) researchers who saw SLA as a predominantly cognitive process that takes place in the mind. However, after Firth and Wagner (1997) called for SLA to re-direct its cognitive focus towards discourse and communication there has been a wider acceptance that language acquisition is a social process whereby learners acquire a language in interaction with speakers of the language. There has also been a refining of classroom aims from communicative competence to interactional competence (see Young, R, 2011). SLA has evolved from a cognitive focus to a sociocognitive one (Larsen-Freeman, 2018: 67), and CA is now mainstream enough for *Discourse Studies* to publish criticisms of a key figure in CA research (John Heritage) for allegedly being too cognitivist and not fundamental enough in his practice of CA (e.g. see Lynch and Macbeth, 2016; Raymond, 2018).

CA informed studies now often focus on interaction that highlights learner competencies over learner deficiencies (e.g. Mori and Hasegawa, 2009; Burch, 2014). Phenomena once perceived as indicative of deficient competencies (e.g. restarts, self-repair, and word searches) have become perceived as skills that are used when dealing with contingencies in interaction. We noted how Burch (2014) described how a learner of a second language worked toward interactional goals and deployed interactional competence through a microanalytical focus on participant action and multimodal communication strategies. His paper made us interested in using CA to investigate our student's production of *discourse strategies.*

2 OUR PROBLEM

We teach discussion skills to third-year English Language majors at a Japanese university. The course materials and textbook (Lo Dico et al, 2016), designed to promote discussion skills in English, focuses on six academic themes and nine TDS (shown in figure one). We knew students were using the TDS but we realised that other non-lexical factors had a strong influence on turn-taking and we wanted to know more. Some of our students acted in similar ways to Young's (2015; 2018) whose first-year Japanese students stayed oriented to Japanese styles of floor management (discussed below), and we also realised that pragmatic issues were involved (e.g. see Williamson, 2019). Believing that these pragmatic issues would be partly-detectable through bodily movement, in Spring 2018 we sought and obtained permission to record eight discussions. We

Figure 1: *TDS*

TDS (Taught Discussion strategies)
Leading a discussion
Giving an opinion
Agreeing
Disagreeing
Interrupting
Checking your own comprehension
Checking others' comprehension
Rephrasing
Reporting information

transcribed and analysed them to increase our understanding of turn-taking dynamics.

3 TURN-TAKING

It is axiomatic that a turn is taken by one speaker. An individual turn contains the main content of an utterance and is built from turn-construction units (TCUs). The end of a TCU is a point where a turn may end and a new speaker may begin, at a place termed a transition-relevant place (TRP). Turns are allocated in two ways: a current speaker (CS) can select a next speaker (NS), or a NS can select his or herself (see figure two). These rules were outlined in Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). Turn-taking itself has a context-free organization but participants call upon “the thick particular of content and context” within each interactional moment (Lerner, 2003: 196).

3.1 TURN-TAKING AND JAPANESE STUDENTS

We learn how to turn-take with fluency by noting how turns are completed. To do this we often have to focus on syntax because the syntactic ordering of an utterance can ‘project’ the forthcoming TRP. Linguistically speaking, there are definite difficulties in turn-taking for Japanese students. Firstly, in English, question words tend to appear at the beginning of an utterances and create strong projections of a TRP; in Japanese, the flexible word order in a clause, and postpositional sentence structures prevent such a strong projection (see Fox et al., 1996; Hayashi, 2003; Tanaka, 1999). Secondly, interactional units that determine the end of a turn (in all languages) can be syntactic, intonational, or pragmatic (Ford and Thompson, 1996). Thirdly, as Williamson (2019) notes, there are issues related to pragmatics, notably in relation to hierarchy and politeness, that affects who will be expected to take a turn. If there is an effect of mother tongue turn-taking on foreign language learners, we may expect the effect to be strongest on lower-level students; it is therefore understandable that first-year university students remain oriented to a Japanese style of floor management even after explicit instruction and awareness raising on turn-taking (see Young, 2018: 12).

Young reported that his students did not produce simultaneous or overlapping speech and that they displayed pauses between turns. An avoidance of overlapping talk is common to all languages but overlapping is far more common in English than Japanese (Stivers et al, 2009). The displaying of pauses is less common. Hauser (2009: 220) showed and reported on studies where low-level Japanese students made turn transitions with “precision-timing”. Yet there are definite pragmatic-related difficulties concerning inter-group relationships and face-sensitivity issues regarding content of talk that slows the process of turn-taking (Williamson, 2019). In addition, foreign language students may be silent or use lengthy pauses for a multitude of other reasons. It is not necessarily down to an unwillingness to speak (Bernales, 2016: 10; Hauser, 2018). Situational antecedents influence communication in the classroom (Zhang et al, 2018); teacher expectation and classroom organisation do too.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION

The premise of the course textbook was that teaching TDS would lead to an improvement in student fluency. It led to our exploratory research question: (Other than TDS) What influences turn-taking?

5 METHOD

We recorded eight classroom discussions of English Liberal Arts students who were taking a once-weekly course called Speaking for Academic Purposes. Students were preparing for the end-of-semester test the following week and had been informed that they would discuss topics from themes studied in the previous month. They had been told to review vocabulary, readings, and TDS’s from the course text. They could not prepare a script and were not informed of the exact topic before class. After viewing the discussions, we transcribed the talks and discussed areas of interest. It was clear that TDS were used, but we noticed other phenomena which impacted turns. They are discussed below in Gestures and Intersubjectivity. (Longer transcriptions for the four excerpts are found in the appendix where bodily gestures are put in parentheses.)

6 GESTURES

Recent years have seen an increase of CA studies that investigate how “visual orientation, gesture, and other kinds of bodily comportment” inform the production of a turn-at-talk (Heath and Luff, 2013: 283). In class time, we can’t pay too much attention to such actions but after viewing the discussions we were struck by how our students used gaze and gesture to great effect. Two examples will follow.

Excerpt 1 (a)

1. A. Let’s begin. Eehh,
2. (A looks at B and quickly at C. All smile and look at handout.)
3. A. Lesbeginwith (.) what does job satis+facation (0.2) mean (1)
4. = (All look at their paper; A raises head on ‘mean’)
5. = (A looks quickly at B)
6. A. What do you think (B)?
7. (A puts head down after question; looks directly at B) (1.5)

Excerpt 1 (b)

8. B. I think (.) eeeehhh (0.5) {sniff} (.) ehh.(1)=
10. = goodt (1)
13 good place (.) soooo (.) <goodplace> (.) and
14 ah (.) I think (0.2s)
17 B. ihmp (.) ah! (.)
18 C =tsh(h) hhhh.(h)
19 A = tsyaheeheejee
20 B = the besst pointo (0.5)=
21 = <workplace>. (0.5)
22 Sooo I thinkuh (.)
27 it (.) uh itis good (0.5)
28 = (moves hands in circular motion)
29 = (moves hands away again)
29 for meee touu (6)
30 = (separates both hands again)
31 = (extends right hand away from left hand eight times;
32 = (then moves left hand in rolling motion in direction of C)
33 not far
34 (B nods three times quickly for agreement while looking at *A, who nods)*
35 (A nods several times to receive her answer)
36 Do you know what I mean?

In excerpt one (a), all participants are female. Student B uses gesture to maintain the floor and, ultimately, to recall a word. All were in the lowest level class and requested to use notes for assistance. ‘A’ opens the excerpt by gazing and then requesting B to answer her question about the meaning of job satisfaction (line 1 to 7).

It takes a long time (lines 8 to 36) for B to supply her answer (that a good workplace should not be not far). She has trouble completing her sentence and turn, but her continual use of (often rhythmical) gestures while speaking ensured that other participants did not challenge her. Unusually, there is a six second gap between ‘for me to’ in line 29 and the completion of her utterance ‘not far’ in line 33. During this time, she makes use of hand and arm gestures to prime this communication. A and C smile and maintain eye contact while awaiting her to complete her turn. It appears in line 33 to which B self-selects and adds the TDS, “Do you know what I mean?” The three members worked together to ensure B completed her turn. After completion, she receipted a confirmatory nod from A that her question was answered. B had used gestures to keep the floor, recall a word, and complete a turn. As teachers, what can we learn from this? One thing is that we could encourage lower-level students to use body language to assist recall. It would, however, be preferable for us to teach or remind students of suitable phrases (e.g. Let me think or What do I mean?).

In excerpt two, all four participants are male. A and B have just returned from a six-month study in the US; C is a high-level student who has only studied in Japan; D is similar to B in excerpt one in having difficulty in completing sentences. Excerpt 2a shows that B and D answered A's question; excerpt 2b shows an example of interruption without a TDS.

'A' opens the talk in and asks what factors students consider when choosing a part-time job. Although B and D answer, C plays no part in 2a (although he communicates through gestures - see appendix). Later in 2b, we see C interrupted when attempting an answer. This disrupts turn-taking norms. C begins his turn at line 91 in excerpt 2b. He starts to speak but is interrupted by 'A' in line 93 (and uses a TDS – 'as for me' – after using a hand gesture in line 94). A interrupts and prevents C from taking his turn. Prior to the interruption, A gazes at all participants. This affirmative move, we surmise, is probably due to his experience using English in the US, and a desire to speed-up discussion in the group.

Excerpt one and two show how gesture plays important roles for both low- and high-level students. In addition, excerpt one showed how participants help each other to reach intersubjective understanding (and complete a turn).

7 INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Intersubjectivity is a systematic consequence of turn-taking that obliges its participants to display their (shared) understanding of other turns' talk (Sacks, Schegeloff, and Jefferson, 1978). It synthesises a number of different components, each of which may be present to a greater or lesser extent during a single interaction (Stevanovic and Koski, 2018:40). As Harding and McNamara (2017) note, to have communicative competence today is to be able to interact with people at different proficiency levels. We see one student show such interactional competence in excerpt 3. It is the same student C who was interrupted in excerpt 2b. In this excerpt he talks with two female co-participants. He chooses to assist rather than to interrupt.

Student A begins by asking B and C about the causes of population aging. 'A' smiles at B, who gestures but chooses not to say anything. C sits back and allows A to continue but focuses on the talk. B responds by using a TDS ('I agree') in line 15, but in the next line C recasts A's response (in line 16) to her own question. 'A' acknowledges but does not uptake this cast in line 17 (possibly as it is not part of an adjacency pair to her question). By doing this he does not unduly impose

Excerpt 3

1 A Let's begin (laugh)
5 = uh what is population aging (.) and oh
6 = what oh (.) are its causes (smile)
7 (T is moving papers; C points to B; B looks at A)
8 (B smiles and laughs; no verbal response)
9 (A points to self and B nods)
10. In my opinion uh (DOWN)
11 (A moves hair back at 'uh')
12 = population aging iz increasing
13 (A pushes hand down on 'increasing')
14 = elderly people
15 B I agree (looks at A)
16 C = the number of elderly people
17 A Mmmm yes. (2)

Excerpt 4a

6 T **Do you think Japan needs babies?**
12 **Why?** (1)
13 C **To (.) develop (.) our country.**
15 T **I think your country is already developed**.

Excerpt 4b

19 C = **But** (moves body back and looks at T)
20 A = **uh**
21 C = **its not enough** (.)
22 A =**younger people pay** (0.5) **nenkin**
23 (A moves hands around and looks at C)
24 C **uh nandake** (.)
25 (C hunches his body and puts hand to head)
26 C = **income ta**=
27 A= **uh**
28 CW= (whisper) **pension**
29 A = **money ah for** (looks at camera woman)
30 A **eh?**
31 CW =(whisper) **'pension'**
32 A **mention mention**
33 =T **hehehehehe**
33 = CW (whisper) **pension pension** (in tune with 'A')
34 T **Thank you camerawoman**!
35 A **aha ha ha(.) pension**! (said with hand gesture)

himself on other speakers, but this deference was unrecognised before we reviewed the recordings. However, now we read it as behaviour of a student aware of the group's intersubjective needs. It could be inferred that C is hiding behind the perceived norms of TRPs to display cynicism towards the situation, but we note that when A and B speak he offers smiles and encouragement. When viewing the whole discussion, and seeing C's performance in other discussions, it appears that his behaviour reflects procedural display. Procedural display occurs when people work together to interact and follow procedures to accomplish a cultural event (Bloome, Puro, and Theodorou, 1989: 272). C realises that A and B need to use floor time for their own and the watching teacher's benefit. He holds back for the benefit of all.

Excerpt 4c

37 T So if there are fewer babies and fewer children
38 T **it means you pay a /higher/ (.)rate of tax**
<u>for</u> /older/ peoples pensions.yeah slh h.
(all nod; T moves back)
39 T **I see** (0.5) **I see I see I see** (1)…(looks at all, fixes on C) (0.5)
40 C **how about um <u>Fin</u>land (.) system** (looks at all; hands open)
41 C **they**
42 T = (quiet) **good**
43 C **they have a really good system to childcare**.
44 C **the /price cost/ of school is not is free you know** (looks at A and B)
45 C **so (.) but this is difficult to (.) do in Japan**
46 C **I think our taxes or something** (inaudible)
47 C (0.5) **this is my (.) idea**

Student C is also involved in excerpt 4. The four other participants are the (T)eacher, students A, B, C, and CW (a student camerawoman). There are two matters of interest: firstly, it shows how teacher interruption breaks standard floor management for good ends, and secondly, it shows a participant (CW) to speak 'out of turn' (Bolden, 2018) when recasting A's utterance. As Young noted (2015), interruption does not often occur in some Japanese English language discussions, but here we see it from a teacher and a student. It leads to a TRP where 'C' offers a highly relevant and unexpected topic into the talk.

In excerpt 4a, the teacher asks why Japan might need more babies. C answers that they are needed to 'develop' the country. T replies that Japan is already developed to which C retorts that the present development is not enough. 'A' comes in at a TRP and uses the Japanese word for pensions, something which C tries to recast and translate. However, the CW then interrupts with a correctly-translated (and whispered) recast ("pension"), which she repeats on lines 28, 31 and 33. 'A' humorously mishears her recast and says 'mention' twice. As a student, CW demonstrates attentive recipiency but in attempting a recast she speaks 'out of turn' (Bolden, 2018: 142) in her role as a camerawoman.

In lines 37 to 39 of excerpt 3c the teacher provides a summary. C takes the floor at a TRP that opened up after T repeatedly using the phrase 'I see' to create room for another to enter the talk. C self-selected and showed ability to repair and redirect the discussion. He also added something unexpected: the talk had covered talk of taxes and pensions as covered in class, but, coincidentally or not, C then referred to something new: the Finnish social security system. Possibly he would not have offered this without the breaking-up of floor management norms. He may have considered intersubjective needs and played it safe.

8 CONCLUSION

We initially considered 'C' to be disinterested in group participation but the process of doing CA gave us a very different perspective. In conclusion, firstly, we realise that we might not have been paying enough attention to non-lexical interactional dynamics. This may be because we were focusing on TDS and expected turn-taking patterns. Secondly, we know that some students may use gesture to aide word retrieval. Thirdly, we saw how a student used gesture to interrupt another's turn (prior to using a TDS). Fourthly, we infer that many students who appear reticent and unwilling to speak might be constrained by intersubjective considerations that could be understood upon video analysis. Fifthly, we contend that there may be occasions when teachers should interrupt during student discussions – a) as an exemplar, and b) to see who will initiate repair and take the floor. Although we were aware of these points, the process of doing CA has deepened our understanding of interactional phenomena and has made us reconsider how we group students. We hope other teachers will find these realisations helpful in developing their own knowledge and understanding of classroom discussions.

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Appendix

Yellow-shaded text denote questions

Green-shaded text denote answers

Excerpt 1

1. A. **Let's begin**. Eehh,
2 (A looks at B opposite her and quickly at C. All smile and look at handout.)
3. A. **Lesbeginwith** (.) what does job satis+facation (0.2) mean (UP) (1)4. = (All look at their paper.) = (raises head on 'mean')
4. = (All look at their paper.) = (raises head on 'mean')
5. A. = (A looks quickly at B)
6. A. **What do you think** (B)? (A puts head down after question)
7. =(A looks directly at B) (1.5)
8. B. **I think** (.) **eeeehhh** (0.5) {sniff} (.) **ehh**.(1)=
9. (puts hand on nose; looks up in direction of C)
10. = **goodt** (1)
11 (raises left hand to head; pushes hair back)
12 (A and C look at her; A moves back in chair)
13 **good place** (.) **sooo** (DOWN) (.) <**goodplace**> (.) **and**
14 **ah** UP .)(**I think** (0.2s)
15 =(places right hand in left and pounds palm)
16 = (C and A smile at her)
17 B. **ihmp** (.) **ah!** (.)
18 C =**tsh(h) hhhh.(h)**
19 A = **tsyaheeheejee**
20 B = **the besst pointo** (0.5)=
21 = <**workplace**>. (0.5)
22 **Sooo I thinkuh** (.)
23 = B places right hand in left palm three times
24 B moves both hands away from each other
26 A is looking at her; C at her paper
27 **it** (.) **uh itis good** (0.5)
28 = (moves hands in circular motion)
29 = (moves hands away again)
29 **for meee touu** (6)
30 = (separates both hands again)

31 = (extends right hand away from left hand eight times;
32 = (then moves left hand in rolling motion in direction of C)
33 **not far**
34 (B nods three times quickly for agreement while looking at *A, who nods)*
35 (A nods several times to receive her answer)
34 **Do you know what I mean?**
35 *(looks with a fixed smile at A and then to C)*
36 A **Yesss** (nods and moves back;B looks at C; C moves forward)
37 **What do you think** C? *((gesture; gaze))*

Excerpt 2

1 A. **Okay so let's begin with the ah discussion.**
2 (A gestures with both hands pushing done
3 (…. then pulls at his cardigan with both hands twice rhythmically while talking)
4 (B looks at d who has a pained expression; C nods)
5 (C touches nose at ‘begin’; A pulls at nose when saying ‘discussion’
6 **= first we'll do tha works and priorities.**
7 (A touches table and then puts hands under table after ‘works’
8 (B looks at camera in corner of eye)
9 **an ah first question is uh**
10 (All look at A; A smiles while asking question)
11 **what factors do uh university students ah uhconsiduh**
12 (A moves shoulder on ‘factors’)
13 (C nods on ‘students’)
14 **=when they choosing (DOWN) (.) apart time job?**
15 (A nods after ‘apart time job, so does D in alignment)
16 (A puts head down and then leans chair back away from the table)
17 (C looks at A and points to self) and ove statement)
18 **What do you think D?**
19 (A points in a throwing gesture to D when asking and then covers face)
20 (A points to nose and then pushes hand over lips … then smiles)
21 (B looks at C and D looks ahead before looking outside group)
22 D. **So I think so** (down)
23 (D looks up and then down)
24 **about uh**
25 (C joins hands together on ‘about’ then moves both outwards)
26 **wage is high or not.**
27 (C does same as in 25 on ‘wage’; A nods to him)
28 **=also**
29 (C looks up and moves head in circular motion; blinks three times
30 **=erm**
31 **=working contents**
32 (C does same gesture as in 25 and 27 on ‘contents’; looks upwards)
33 **= what he is**
34 (C does same gesture at ‘what’)
35 **he or not**
36 **= he or she**
37 (C points to self with both hands)
38 **wants to**
39 **= work**. (END OF UNIT)
40 (.) Looks to A and makes disjointed gesture with arms
41 **Wants to work** (.)
42 = (A looks upward)
43 **things**.
44 **and uh**
45 (C looks up, blinks, and points to self) (2)
46 **we** (.)
47 (C points to self and then shakes head)
48 **= they**
49 (C puts hands together; puts eyes skyward)
50 **= commit**
51 (C looks at A who has a fixed gaze)
52 **= they can commit** (.) **or not**
53 (C has hands clasped)
54 **to near** (.) **by**
55 **nearby** (2.5)
56 (nods head to A who is fixed in his gaze; nods some more)
57 (A nods head twice and then turns to B () TRP
58 B **so**
59 (releases hands at ‘So’; continues to look directly at C)
60 **ayou you mean**
61 **you need you see the**
62 (B pushes hand toward C at ‘see’)
63 **= when you choose the job** (DOWN)
64 **parrrt time job you see the wage**
65 **ah just wageor**

66 **or (.) you can learn**
67 (B looks upward; A looks away from group)
68 **learn language skills for eh**
69 **= for example I'm working in the McDonald's**
70 (B points to self at ‘I'm’)
71 **= and I can learn the** (.) **uh**

72 **leadership**
73 (B has hands together bur releases at 'leadership'; projects body forward)
74 (C pushes head forward to listen more clearly)
75 **uh an how to teach**
76 (B pushes left hand towards C at 'teach')
77 **and to uh I call the we call the**
78 (B makes gestures with right hand)
79 **Japanese say kouhai**
80 (B makes same gesture at 'kouhai')
81 **= and we weteach**
82 = **and** (.) **I can learn the** (.) **teaching skill**
83 = **and I can learn the** (.) **uh society skills**

84 = **so I mean uh ah you you saw** (.)
85 = **I know the wage**
86 **= and I see**
87 (D mutters to self at 'see()
88 **= I need the how to (learning) skill**
89 **Learning skill is uh an important to choose (.) in uh part-time job**
90 (A nods at 'to choose' and moves back;
(B looks around;
(C looks at D)
91. D **Exactly=**
92 (D opens mouth, but)
93. A = **uh,**
94 (A looks at all and raises hand vertically to D)
95 **as for me ah**
96 **= university students** (DOWN(
97 **= will consider about the**
98 = **what time** (.) **what time the part time job maybe starts**
99 = **and what time tha what time the part-time job will be ends**

Excerpt 3

1 A **Let's begin** (laugh)
2 (All smile to each other)
3 (A looks at B; C on other side is distant but smiling)
4 = **with fir topic** (.) **topic** (.) **population aging**
5 **= uh what is population aging** (.) **and oh**
6 **= what oh** (.) **are its causes**
7 (T is moving papers; C points to B; B looks at A)
8 (B smiles and laughs; no verbal response)
9 (A points to self and B nods)
10. **In my opinion uh** (DOWN)
11 (A moves hair back at 'uh')
12 **= population aging iz increasing**
13 (A pushes hand down on 'increasing(
14 **= elderly people**
15 B **I agree** (looks at A)
16 C **= the number of elderly people**
17 A **Mmmm yes**. (2)
18 B **I agree** (quiet)
19 A = **and it causes** (.) **it causes by** (.) **uh** (2)
20 = **people getto** (2)
21 (B puts head down then up)
22 (C mutters something inaudible then adds:
23 C **marriage late**
24 (A looks at C when he utters 'marriage'
25 A **= get marriage late**
26 (B nods in tune with 'marriage' and 'late')
27 B **= whoaoh I see**
28 C **= I see I see**
29 B **= I see I see**
30 A **How about you**?
31 (A gestures in a circular motion to B; C looks away momentarily)
32 B **I think** (looks down)
33 **= eh its cost is**
34 (C smiles and looks at her)
35 **= to deku decline** (.) **in [birthday rate]**
36 (B looks at C then A then to C)
37 **How about you?** (gestures to C)
38 C **uuuh as for me**
39 = **there is**
40 (Hand gesture on each word: 'so many attractive things')
41 **so many attractive things**
42 **around us**
43 **like uh game or sports …**

Excerpt 4

A teacher, student A, B and C.
The teacher has summarised student opinion on population decline

1 T **But maybe Japan need babies**
2 C = **Yesss**
3 A = = (nods head)
4 T **Or does Japan needs babies**?>
5 (T gestures to all with hand)
6 T **Do you think Japan needs babies?**
7 (A and C look at each other; B smiles)
8 = A **Yess**
9 = C **Yess** [together] (nods)
10 T **Do you think so?**
11 (T looks at all; A looks at C)
12 Why? (1)
13 C **To** (.) **develop** (.) **our country**
14 (C looks at T and holds hands together)
15 T (moves back before speaking)
16 **I think your country is already developed**
17 (C smiles then A does too on 'developed')
18 **and beautiful an' everything**
19 C = **But** (moves body back and looks at T)

20 A = **uh**
21 C = **its not enough** (.)
22 A =**younger people pay** (0.5) **nenkin**
23 (A moves hands around and looks at C)
24 C **uh nandake** (.)
25 (C hunches his body and puts hand to head)
26 C = **income ta=**
27 A= **uh**
28 CW= (whisper) **pension**
29 A = **money ah for** (looks at camera woman)
30 A **eh?**
31 CW =(whisper) **'pension'**
32 A **mention mention**
33 =T **hehehehehe**
33 = CW (whisper) **pension pension** (in tune with 'A')
34 T **thank you camerawoman!**
35 A **aha ha ha**(.) **pension!** (said with hand gesture)
36 T **pension yes yes** (.) **/yes/** (slow down) (.)
37 T **So if there are fewer babies and fewer children**
38 T **it means you pay a /higher/** (.)**rate of tax for /older/ peoples pensions.yeah slh h**.
(all nod; T moves back)
39 T **I see** (0.5) **I see I see I see** (1)…(looks at all, fixes on C) (0.5)
40 C **how about um Finland (.) system** (looks at all; hands open)
41 C **they**
42 T = (quiet) **good**
43 C **they have a really good system to childcare**
44 C **the /price cost/ of school is not is free you know** (looks at A and B)
45 C **so (.) but this is difficult to (.) do in Japan**
46 C **I think our taxes or something** (inaudible)
47 C (0.5) **this is my** (.) **idea**

JALT Special Interest Groups & the PanSIG Conference

Extensive Reading SIG (ER)
The ER SIG exists to help promote extensive reading (ER) in Japan. Through our website, our newsletter, the ERJ Journal, and presentations throughout Japan we aim to help teachers set up and make the most of their ER programmes.

Framework and Language Portfolio SIG (FLP)
FLP SIG wants to discuss the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and European Language Portfolio (ELP), and other similar frameworks and their relevance for Japan. There is an emphasis on developing materials to support educators who would like to use these pedagogic tools. This is currently practically pursued in a Kaken Project. Also, the bilingual Language Portfolio aimed at Japanese universities is available on the SIG moodle.

Gender Awareness in Language Education SIG (GALE)
The purpose of the GALE SIG is to research gender and its implications for language learning, teaching, and training. We welcome submissions for our newsletter (spring, summer, and fall issues) on topics, both theoretical and practical, related to the SIG's aims. Book reviews, lesson plans, think pieces, poetry -- basically anything related to gender and language teaching is welcomed.

Global Issues in Language Education SIG (GILE)
GILE aims to promote global awareness, international understanding, and action to solve world problems through content-based language teaching, drawing from fields such as global education, peace education, environmental education, and human rights education. GILE SIG produces a quarterly newsletter, organizes presentations for local, national, and international conferences, and maintains contacts with groups ranging from Amnesty International to Educators for Social Responsibility to UNESCO.

Japanese as a Second Language SIG (JSL)
日本語教育研究部会(JSL SIG)の役割は、第二言語としての日本語指導、日本語学習、 日本語 教育研究の向上を目指し、指導、学習、研究のための資料や情報を与えることで す。日本語の指 導者、学習者、研究者の皆様加入大歓迎です。発表の援助をし、ニュー スレターと論文集を発行 するので論文・記事の寄稿を歓迎します。 The mission of the JSL SIG is to serve as a resource for promoting JSL teaching, learning and research. We welcome JSL teachers, learners, and researchers to join and take an active role in our SIG. We sponsor presentations, and publish a newsletter and a journal.

Learner Development SIG (LD)
The LD SIG is a lively energetic group sharing an interest in ways to promote learner (and teacher!) development and autonomy. LD SIG は、多様な教育現場(大学以外)でご活躍の皆さんの参加を歓迎しています。 小 学校、中学校、高校、通信教育、大学院、語学学校での指導や、英語以外の言語を教え ている教師の皆様、 どうぞご参加ください。

The 2017 PanSIG Journal
Lifelong Language Learning SIG (LLL) We offer a bright future to our aging society. The energy of older learners who wish to lead active lives is flowing all over Japan. LLL is willing to help these older learners enrich their lives through language learning. LLL also provides resources and information for teachers who teach English to older learners by holding events and publishing online newsletters.

Literature in Language Teaching SIG (LiLT)
LiLT started up to encourage and promote the use of literature in the language classroom. Literature provides real content to engage and to motivate our EFL students.

Materials Writers SIG (MW)
The MW SIG was established to help members turn fresh teaching ideas into useful classroom materials. We try to be a mutual assistance network, offering information regarding copyright law, sharing practical advice on publishing practices, including self-publication, and suggesting ways to create better language learning materials for general consumption or for individual classroom use.

Mind, Brain, and Education SIG
The Mind, Brain, and Education SIG is a forum for language educators and researchers to share insights in neuroscience. We hope to be a driving force in bringing relevant new discoveries in psychology, cognitive neuroscience and neurolinguistics into language teaching in Japan.

Other Language Educators SIG (OLE)
The OLE SIG was founded in 1996 in order to serve the special needs of learners and teachers of a wide variety of languages (German, French, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Russian etc.). OLE can also be considered part of peace education as languages are also thought to be instrumental in developing cultural empathy, opening up our minds to other concepts and ideas, and enabling us to reflect on our own.

Pragmatics SIG (PRAG)
The Pragmatics SIG welcomes members who are interested in both research and practical teaching issues related to “how people do things with words.” The group’s newsletter, Pragmatic Matters, is published electronically three times a year. Our Pragmatics Resources series offers practical and theoretical articles on language in use. If you do anything with language, you are using pragmatics.

School Owners SIG (SO)
Language School owners have always played a significant role in JALT both at national & local levels. The SIG functions as a private online forum where owners can share ideas, experiences & solutions to the academic and commercial challenges they face which cannot be addressed through other SIGs such as: recruitment & training; taxes, accounting, banking and bookkeeping; marketing & advertising; and partnerships & trade between owners.

Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG (SD&D)
The mission of the SD&D SIG is to provide a forum for teachers and academics to discuss, research, and implement oral interpretation, speech, debate, and drama in language education. The main activities are creation of newsletters, two journals, and sponsoring a Speech, Drama, and Debate conference. Future activities may be sponsoring and supporting local and regional speech, drama, and debate contests or festivals.

Study Abroad SIG (SA)
The JALT Study Abroad SIG was established in 2008 to promote research on overseas study and facilitate networking among those interesting in learning more about study abroad.

Task-Based Learning SIG (TBL)
The TBL SIG is aimed at teachers who currently use, or are interested in using, task-based approaches in the classroom. TBL SIG focuses in particular on issues related to Task-based Language teaching and learning in the Asian EFL context, where TBLT has yet to enter the mainstream of language pedagogy. We hope that the SIG will serve as a useful forum for the exchange of practical teaching ideas, theoretical discussion, and academic studies of TBLT issues.

Teacher Development SIG (TD)
The TD SIG is a network for those who want to help themselves and others become better teachers. Our activities include retreats, mini-conferences, social and networking events, and forums & presentations. TD’s comprehensive newsletter, Explorations in Teacher Education, welcomes stimulating articles!

Teachers Helping Teachers SIG (THT)
THT is a grassroots organization founded by members of the Himeji Chapter of JALT in 2004, out of the efforts of the late Bill Balsamo, longtime president of the Himeji chapter. THT is dedicated to the aid and assistance of fellow educators and students in and around Asia. We fulfill this mission by providing teacher- training workshops in Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, and Vietnam that exhibit practical, student and teacher-friendly approaches to language education that are informed by current research in the field.

Teaching Younger Learners SIG (TYL)
The TYL SIG is for teachers of children of all ages. We publish a bilingual newsletter four times a year with columns by many of the leading teachers in the field. We are always looking for new ideas and new people to keep the SIG dynamic. With our bilingual newsletter, The School House, we particularly want to appeal to Japanese teachers and teachers who team teach.

Testing and Evaluation SIG (TEVAL)
TEVAL SIG aims to provide avenues for research, information, and discussion related to foreign language testing and evaluation both from within JALT membership and with other professional organizations which have common interests and goals. Current and back issues of Shiken, the TEVAL SIG publication, are available on the TEVAL website.

Vocabulary SIG (VOCAB)
The VOCAB SIG aims to provide a forum for focused research and discussion in specific regard to vocabulary acquisition. We aim to offer both teachers and researchers a place to connect regarding how learners improve vocabulary knowledge, how to test their knowledge, and how these theoretical aspects will connect to classroom practice. The VOCAB SIG aims to be a driving force for both current and future research in the field of how vocabulary can be taught, learned, and tested in an increasingly global context.

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