PanSIG
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2023

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).

Edited by
PanSIG Journal 2023 Editorial Team

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

The 22nd Annual PanSIG conference convened from May 12 to 14, 2023, at the scenic Kyoto Sangyo University. Embracing the theme "Looking Forward," we sought not only to reflect on our recent transformative experiences in education but to anticipate and shape future paradigms. This year, amidst the serene beauty of Kyoto, over 250 face-to-face and pre-recorded presentations ignited discussions that bridged past insights and future innovations.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Nicholas J. Wilson, our Conference Chair, and Amanda Gillis-Furutaka, our Site Chair, whose leadership was instrumental in orchestrating this successful event. Their dedication, along with the tireless efforts of our organizing team, brought to life a conference enriched with diverse learning opportunities and community engagement.

The 2023 PanSIG Journal proudly encapsulates this spirit of innovation and forward-thinking. With rigorous peer review and a renewed editorial approach led by a freshly assembled team, including Assistant Editors Ezra Vasquez, Duncan Iske, Annie Minami, and Shanique Hutchinson, we've curated a collection that reflects the breadth of topics discussed at the conference. Special thanks are due to Allyson MacKenzie, our new Senior Editor, whose expertise was vital during critical phases of the publication process.

This year was particularly challenging and rewarding for me, stepping into the role of Editor-in-Chief amid the journal's editorial team transition. The learning curve was steep, and the experience invaluable. Observing the evolution of submissions through the review process was profoundly educational, underscoring the journal as a growth platform for both novice and seasoned authors.

Our contributors and reviewers deserve immense recognition for their adaptability and commitment to excellence. Watching authors refine their submissions in response to insightful reviews has been truly inspiring. I am especially grateful for the support from Patrick Conaway, whose guidance has been so important for navigating the complexities of editorial responsibilities.

As we look to the future, I am excited about the potential to further enrich our journal and conference offerings. The 2024 PanSIG at Fukui University of Technology promises to continue this trajectory, exploring fundamental educational strategies and nurturing the academic community. I am confident that under the guidance of incoming Conference Chair Parvathy Ramachandran and Site Chair Bradford Lee, the PanSIG community will reach new heights.

In closing, I hope that the articles within this journal inspire you as much as they have inspired us. May they provoke thought, incite dialogue, and encourage you to contribute to our ever-evolving field.

Warm regards,

<div align="center">

Miguel Campos
Editor-in-Chief, PanSIG Journal 2023
May 15, 2023

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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 James Dunn

PanSIG Journal 2023

PDF Version

Conference info

PanSIG 2023 was held May 12-14 face to face with hybrid presnations at Kyoto Sangyo University. Thank you to everyone who helped make this conference a success!

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Embodied Learning: A GEM Approach to Couple the Body with Language

Brian J. Birdsell

Hirosaki University

Embodied cognition argues that the body plays a crucial role in cognitive processes including perception, problem-solving, and language. As a result, research in the learning sciences has recently begun to explore the implications of embodied cognition in learning, resulting in an emerging field called embodied learning. In this paper, I first review the theory of embodied cognition and how it differs from traditional views, focusing on both hybrid and strong views of embodiment. Next, I consider how this theoretical framework can strengthen arguments for using embodied learning in the language classroom through a GEM approach. This approach outlines how gesture, enactment, and mental simulation can facilitate vocabulary learning. Practical examples of how this can be done within the natural constraints of a classroom environment are also included.

身体化された認知は、知覚、問題解決、言語などの認知プロセスにおいて、身体が不可欠な役割を果たすと主張する。そのため、近年、教育研究においても、身体化された認知が学習にどのような意味を持つのかが模索され、「身体化学習」という新たな分野が生まれつつある。本論文では、まず、具現化認知の理論を概観し、それが従来の見解とどのように異なるのか、ハイブリッドな具現化観と強い具現化観の両方に焦点を当てながら検討する。次に、この理論的枠組みが、言語教室で身体化学習を使用するための議論をどのように強化することができるかを検討する。GEM アプローチと呼ばれるモデルを開発し、ジェスチャー、エンクトメント、メンタルシミュレーションがどのように語彙学習を促進するかを概説している。さらに、教室という自然の制約の中で、どのようにこれを行うことができるかの実践例も紹介する
。

This paper explores the concept of embodied cognition and its potential implications for language learning, specifically in the context of vocabulary acquisition. Theories of embodied cognition argue that cognition is dependent on the physical body for meaning and this coupling is non-trivial (Wilson, 2002). In essence, semantic knowledge is "structured by our constant encounter and interaction with the world via our bodies and brains" (Gallese & Lakoff, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, learning new vocabulary can be improved through incorporating multimodal materials and physical movement during the learning event. This paper is organized as follows. Section 1 presents the findings from the cognitive sciences over the past 20 years, which suggests semantic knowledge is grounded in the sensorimotor and emotional systems of the body, rather than abstract symbols. This provides the theoretical background for Section 2, which outlines a GEM approach. The GEM approach demonstrates practical ways to focus on embodied learning in the classroom to enhance learning outcomes.

Semantic Knowledge

Consider the following sentence: *The girl with a yellow jersey kicked the soccer ball*. This sentence is composed of a person, objects, and an action verb. Over the last several decades, neuroscientists and linguists have tried to pinpoint where in the brain is what we know of the world. This *what* is our semantic memory or our knowledge about people, objects, actions, relations, self, and culture acquired through experience (Binder et al., 2009). This memory helps us to recognize objects, perform actions, think creatively, and communicate through language. It consists of concepts that we have learned over our lifespans – some are viewed as being more concrete (e.g., tree, violin, orange, jump, and skip) while others are more abstract (e.g., freedom, democracy, and infinity). The semantic content of these abstract concepts is more variable and dependent on context (Borghi et al., 2017).

An early view of semantic knowledge

The classical or traditional view of semantic knowledge argues that our concepts are "amodal" (Pylyshyn, 1984). This means that our understanding of words and concepts is independent of sensory and motor experiences. For example, our conceptual understanding of *garlic* is first learned through the sensorimotor system, but then is transformed into an abstract symbolic code. In other words, when we first learn the word garlic, our experience of interacting with this bulb whether smelling it, seeing it, cooking or eating it, or peeling the cloves activates the sensorimotor

system, but then goes through a process called transduction where this semantic content is stored in a separate, amodal system (consisting of abstract symbolic codes) that is divorced from the sensorimotor systems. Thus, the original modality-specific sensorimotor information is lost (see Barsalou, 2008a for a visual representation). Proponents of this view do not deny the possibility that when one reads the word *garlic*, the sensorimotor systems are activated, yet they will argue that this is simply epiphenomenal (or secondary) and not causal for comprehension (Machery, 2007).

According to this view, semantic knowledge is not directly tied to any specific sensory or motor experience, but instead resides in a dedicated language module within the brain. This module stores abstract representations that can be accessed and manipulated independently of our sensory and motor modalities. If this is the case, then teaching language can be done in a de-contextualized and disembodied way with the teacher (or perhaps a textbook) transmitting knowledge to a passive recipient, or the student. This would include rote memorization, drills, and test-focused learning. In this teaching approach, students sit and remain sedentary throughout the learning session because the bodies of both the teachers and students are seen as irrelevant to the teaching-learning event (Macrine & Fugate, 2022, p. 14).

Embodied theories of semantic knowledge

Embodied theories of semantic knowledge contend that our understanding of language and concepts is grounded in sensory and motor experiences, and that our mental representations of concepts are shaped by these experiences (Barsalou, 2008b; Shapiro, 2019). This means that the same neural systems that are involved in perception, action, and emotion are also involved in language comprehension and production. Therefore, researchers within an embodied framework argue that semantic knowledge is distributed across brain regions and not stored in a separate amodal system (Hoenig et al., 2008). Thus, language is shaped by our bodily experiences interacting with the world around us. Over the last couple decades, both behavioral and brain imaging studies have provided compelling evidence to support this embodied view of language comprehension.

Evidence from neuroimaging studies

It is first important to note that the body is topographically mapped onto the primary motor and somatosensory cortices. In other words, specific structures within the motor cortex correspond to certain parts of the body (e.g., leg, arm, lips, etc.). Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), studies have shown that reading a word such as "kick" activates the corresponding motor area of the brain for that effector (e.g., leg) and this has been done with arm related words like "pick" and mouth related words like "lick" (see Hauk et al., 2004; Pulvermüller, 2001 for more details). These are examples of processing motor-related concepts, or otherwise action verbs, but other studies have similarly found corresponding activation in modality-specific brain region for reading gustatory (e.g., ham) (Barros-Loscertales at al., 2012) and olfactory (e.g., lavender) related words (Gonzalez et al., 2006).

If we return to this sentence, *The girl with a yellow jersey kicked a soccer ball*. To comprehend this sentence means activating the motor (specifically the effector for this action, as in, the leg), vision, and object/person recognition. These are all integrated through running a mental simulation of this event. There is considerable agreement in the field that this is the case for highly concrete language where the body and sensory systems are closely coupled to the action or object. However, one of the more debated topics now in the field is not whether language is embodied, but rather to what degree it is embodied – fully embodied, including abstract language or partially embodied or what is commonly referred to as a hybrid model.

A hybrid view of semantic knowledge

A hybrid view suggests that there is interaction between modality specific areas (sensory and motor regions of the brain) with multimodal and amodal conceptual hubs that provide conceptual binding and integration (Patterson, Nestor, & Rogers, 2007). Therefore, concepts are formed through the hub-and-spoke representational system with the hub localized to the anterior temporal lobe (ATL) and the spokes in modality-specific cortices that are distributed across the cortex. The ATL is active in semantic processing across virtually all types of concepts.

A strong view of embodied cognition

A strong embodied view proposes that abstract language is also grounded by way of metaphor and thus also relies on the sensorimotor systems for meaning comprehension (Gallese & Lakoff, 2005). For example, both the literal sentence, "Grasp an object", and corresponding metaphorical sentence, "Grasp an idea", have been shown to activate motor areas of the brain for that effector, as in, the hand (Boulenger, Shtyrov, & Pulvermüller, 2012). This has also been shown with gustatory related metaphors, as in, "She received a sweet compliment" compared to "She received a nice compliment" (Citron & Goldberg, 2014) and the former activated brain regions for taste.

There are countless examples of how abstract concepts are grounded by way of metaphor. Take for example the abstract concept of *time*. This concept is mapped onto physical space; "I'm looking forward to seeing you" or "Let's put the past behind us". This allows one to

understand and reason about this abstract concept in a more concrete and embodied way. People also gesture in a congruent way when talking about time – forward movements when talking about the future, and backward movements when talking about the past. Other examples include *justice* and physical balance; *affection* and physical warmth; *creativity* and breaking of walls or thinking outside the box; or the abstract concept of *negative past experiences* and physical weight (e.g., emotional baggage). All in all, there is a considerable amount of research that has provided evidence for a strong view of embodiment (see Landau, 2016 for more details). However, its major drawback is that not all abstract language is metaphorical.

Nonetheless, a growing body of research suggests language processing is at least partially embodied. Therefore, educators should consider teaching approaches that incorporate movement and sensory experiences. Recent studies have also explored embodied representation of semantic knowledge in second language acquisition and have found that reactivating experiential traces is not limited to one's first language (see Buccino et al., 2017). The following section explores the application of embodied learning in language education.

A GEM Approach for Increasing the Coupling of the Body and Language

Language teaching is primarily based on the combination of oral or written language with pictorial, auditory, or audiovisual materials. Few methods have acknowledged the importance of active bodily experience for language learning (except for a couple methods like drama-based teaching and Total Physical Response). Embodied theories of cognition provide empirical evidence for such methods. In this GEM approach, I focus on research that shows how Gesture, Enactment, and Mental Simulation (GEM) can have an enhancing effect on language learning, particularly for vocabulary.

Embodied theories of cognition highlight the relevance of movement and experiential interactions with our environment during learning. This may seem intuitive for teachers to comprehend, but difficult to conceptualize what this means from a practical perspective. Therefore, this GEM approach helps visualize how embodied theories of cognition could be integrated into the language classroom.

GEM practical activity 1: Gesture

Gestures-speech integration is the cognitive process that binds audio and visual information into a single communication exchange (Green et al., 2009). It is a natural part of language, but is an often overlooked and underutilized communication strategy in the classroom. This is likely due to constraints of the classroom such

as sitting and using the hands for other functions (e.g., holding a pen, paper, book, writing, etc.). Gestures can reveal knowledge that the speaker wants to say, but simply cannot produce the language to communicate this intention effectively. A large body of research has been accumulating over the last 30 years showing the beneficial effects of gesture on vocabulary retention. For example, Mayer and colleagues (2015) show that learning foreign vocabulary through gestures facilitates long-term memory retention (2 and 6 months later). Using neuroimaging, they also show that gesture-enriched learning has an enhancing effect due to its recruitment of visual and motor cortical areas of the brain. Thus, learning through gesture builds deeper semantic coding. In addition, Kelly and colleagues (2009) had participants learn Japanese verbs that were learned audio-visually and by additionally performing a congruent or an incongruent iconic gesture. Results suggest that better memorization was achieved with words trained with congruent gestures, non-matching gestures did not enhance memory.

Below are some practical applications for integrating gestures into the classroom:

(1) Use matching gestures (gestures previously used by a student) for teaching opportunities that highlight a linguistic point (Majlesi, 2014).

(2) Have students stand when doing conversation/group activities. This provides them more space to use their hands.

(3) Use videos where people are gesturing. Watch the video without sound and then discuss what they are likely saying to each other based on gestures. Then listen to the video and finally perform a skit based on the content of the video focusing on gesture-speech integration.

(4) Introduce gesture as a content topic in the classroom by showing different types of gestures based on McNeill's classification (1992). Show how we use our hands to point out things in our immediate environment (deictic gestures), how we use our hands to physically represent something that is semantically related to the co-occurring speech (e.g., opening folded hands when talking about reading a book) (iconic gestures), and how we use gestures to refer to abstract concepts like time (e.g., motion forward to talk about the future) (metaphorical gestures). A good video on YouTube to introduce this topic to students is Tom Scott's "Why do we move our hands when we talk".

GEM practical activity 2: Enactment

Similar to gesture, but more purposeful and dramatic is to enact the meaning of words. This so-called "enactment effect" (Engelkamp & Jahn, 2003) proposes that actions can facilitate the learning and recall of

verbal information, by engaging the same neural systems that are involved in perception and action. Words that have been enacted activate the motor areas of the brain and thus are more deeply encoded and facilitate memory retrieval by reactivating these experiential traces in the motor cortex (Senkfor et al., 2002). In one recent study (Birdsell, 2021), students enacted the meaning of a set of phrasal verbs (see Figure 1). Students who viewed these enactments performed better on a posttest than those who saw the phrasal verbs with an L1 translation.

Figure 1

A student research assistant enacting the meaning of a phrasal verb (Birdsell, 2021)

Enactment can take many forms. Recently, creativity research has begun to examine the benefits of movement for improving creativity. Creativity is important for both linguistic competency and for developing higher order thinking skills in the target language. One study (Leung et al., 2012) showed that enacting metaphors for creativity (e.g., physically standing outside a box, compared to sitting inside it) improved scores on various assessments to measure creative potential. This has also been shown with simple fluid movements of the hands in the air (Slepian & Ambady, 2012). Recently, in a virtual reality (VR) study (Wang et al., 2018), participants who virtually enacted "breaking walls" as they walked down a corridor (compared to a "no-break" condition) scored higher on divergent thinking tasks for originality and fluency. Doing such activities with students in the classroom can highlight a range of metaphorical expressions in English from *thinking outside the box* to *having a breakthrough*. Such studies confirm that the body has a modulating effect on creative cognition, suggesting that creativity is not only in the head, but in the interaction between the brain, body, and environment. In short, physically enacting the meaning of words from phrasal verbs to metaphorical expressions can strengthen the semantic representation of these words for foreign language learners.

GEM practical activity 3: Mental Simulation

The final part of this GEM approach is to provide students opportunities to run a mental simulation of an event. A mental simulation of an event reactivates experiential traces from an earlier experience (Zwaan & Pecher, 2012). In a writing activity, students are provided the following writing prompt for a homework assignment (this is part of a semester long creative/free writing project in a required English Communication course for 1st year students).

> *It is autumn and the weather is lovely. Go for a walk and find some place in Hirosaki (park, cafe, shopping mall, mountain, train station, temple, shrine, etc.) that you don't frequently visit. Bring some paper. Write down a description of this setting. Provide lots of details. Use all your senses to describe this place: smell, taste, sight, sounds, and texture. If you run out of things to describe, observe the people. Imagine who they are and where they are going.*

In class, students read their writings to other students in their groups. The other students are to mentally simulate these experiences. Below is a condensed (non-edited) student excerpt from the above writing prompt.

> *I came to Hirosaki Central Citizen's Square for the first time. Recently, we had a lot of rain. But the weather is fine today. The sun is bright. Sometimes it's blowing. I feel slightly cold when it's blowing. It smells like autumn and a little bit of winter.*
>
> *At first, I sat down on a wooden bench that has a square shape. It was warm because of the sunlight. The surface of the bench feels rough. There are some fallen leaves around the bench.*
>
> *This park is surrounded by roads. There is a public restroom in front of me. And there is a bank across the road. Next to the bank, there is a gas station. I can see Hirosaki Park on the right-hand side. Some of the cherry trees in Hirosaki Park have started turning red.*
>
> *I hear the telephone ringing from the gas station. It rings 8 or 9 times. A woman wearing an apron enters the public restroom. It seems that she is going to clean there. Some people are walking or riding a bicycle. And Traffic is busy here. I can hear birdsongs. I think sparrows are singing. But the noise of traffic is louder than the songs. Sunshine is warm. I forgot to put on sunscreen.*

Since most classrooms naturally constrict movement, this is one practical activity that can be easily done in a traditional classroom environment. It can also be enhanced by incorporating gestures and enactment while the student reads the assignment to their group members.

Conclusion

Accumulating evidence from cognitive neuroscience suggests that language is embodied and the body plays a crucial role in facilitating language acquisition and production. Therefore, foreign language educators should consider integrating movement into the classroom. One possible way to do this is to use the GEM approach, as outlined in the previous section. The aim is to expand movement beyond the TPR approach, which primarily focuses on action commands for lower-level students, to language teaching in general and for all levels of students. In summary, the bodies of both teachers and students are in fact an integral point of the teaching-learning event.

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Looking Forward with Vocabulary Notebooks

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Learners need to be specifically taught how to use a vocabulary notebook (Folse, 2017). Notebooks are only one vocabulary learning strategy (VLS), but Folse argues that no one VLS will equip learners for the huge task of acquiring L2 vocabulary. Therefore, teachers must show their learners a range of vocabulary learning tools, enabling them to choose the most appropriate ones for them. Drawing on research into effective vocabulary learning and about what it means to know a word, this paper will present methods that under-graduate university educators can use with A2 learners and above. First it will look at how to structure a notebook, then it will present two activities to further develop students' knowledge and awareness of words. The activities discussed will not only help students increase their lexical resource but also enable them to become better at guiding their own vocabulary learning, equipping them with the ultimate VLS.

学習者は単語帳の使い方を具体的に教わる必要がある（Folse, 2017）。ノートブックは語彙学習ストラテジー（VLS）のひとつに過ぎないが、L2 語彙習得という膨大なタスクに対応できる VLS はひとつもないと Folse は主張する。したがって、教師は学習者にさまざまな語彙学習ツールを示し、学習者が自分に最も適したものを選択できるようにしなければならない。本稿では、効果的な語彙学習と、単語を知ることの意味に関する研究をもとに、大学学部以下の教育者が A2 以上の学習者に使える方法を紹介する。まず、ノートをどのように構成するかを検討し、次に生徒の単語に対する知識と認識をさらに深めるための 2 つのアクティビティを紹介する。これらのアクティビティは、生徒の語彙リソースを増やすだけでなく、生徒自身が語彙学習を指導できるようになり、究極の VLS を身につけることを可能にする。

The ability to learn vocabulary is the single most important factor in successful language acquisition. (McCarten, 2007). It follows therefore that the most important task for teachers is to increase learners' lexical repertoire. Teachers' manuals often suggest that learners keep vocabulary notebooks such as the Oxford series Q Skills for Success (Sherman, 2019). Despite this, suggestions for what makes an effective notebook are often lacking. Furthermore, students are not necessarily familiar with the format of a vocabulary notebook. For some students, the term represents a published book of word lists that are used to memorize words. For clarity, the term vocabulary notebook used in this paper refers to a small to medium-sized blank notebook, which is used to record new vocabulary by hand. Given the definition of a vocabulary notebook is seemingly rarely made explicit, the purpose of this paper is to present effective methods of using one to help learners become more independent at learning vocabulary. As Dronjic (2019) says, if learners rely solely on a textbook and receive no specific guidance about how to learn vocabulary from the teacher, they will not succeed.

Context

The author works as an instructor in a university language department teaching both compulsory and elective courses at A2 CEFR level. The methods suggested in this paper have been used with compulsory courses. The principles that underpin compulsory courses are based on Nation's four strand approach consisting of meaning-focused input, language-focused instruction, meaning-focused output, and fluency development (Nation, 2011), which should each form 25% of classroom time. The courses also have a very strong focus on vocabulary learning. Motivation towards learning vocabulary is generally high among students as there is a clear link with the classroom activities and the course goals. It should also be noted that the courses use core textbooks, *Q Skills for Success Listening and Speaking* and *INSIDE Listening and Speaking*. Both textbooks draw on corpus lexis. Therefore, these supplementary vocabulary learning techniques complement the textbooks and course aims well.

Importance of Learning Vocabulary

"Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (Lewis, 1993, p.34). It is widely accepted that a lexical approach to learning a language, whereby students are taught to look for common combinations of words or chunks of vocabulary, is essential in helping them to acquire fluent productive skills. Vocabulary is not only important for productive skills. According to Dronjic (2019), it is also the best indicator of comprehension. The wider a student's vocabulary, the more they can comprehend.

Time dedicated to learning vocabulary is also essential because there are multiple layers to learning a word successfully (Zimmerman, 2009). For example, learners need to know not only about possible collocates, but also its grammatical structures, register, frequency, part of speech, pronunciation, relevant cognates, or false friends. It is not possible to fully grasp the meaning in one sitting. This means that learners need multiple occasions to encounter words in order to acquire this word knowledge. How can educators help their learners increase these opportunities?

Schmitt (2008) suggests that to learn vocabulary, learners need to engage with words, which could include an increase in exposure, attention to an item, intention to learn a word and manipulation of a word and its properties. All of these can be categorized as what Nation (2017) calls deliberate learning, which falls under the language-focused strand of a course. Vocabulary notebooks represent one method or instruction for this strand.

Benefits of Using a Vocabulary Notebook

The first benefit of using a notebook is related to the ability to retrieve hand-written information. A 2021 study by the University of Tokyo and NTT Data Institute of Management Consulting published in Frontiers in Behavioral neuroscience, revealed that the act of physically writing with a pen or pencil onto paper improves information retrieval ability, compared to when students write using electronic devices. (Umejima et al., 2021). The study showed that Japanese university students using the former method showed more activity in the language zones of the brain, and also in the hippocampus, an area closely related to memory. Consequently, it could be suggested that if vocabulary is learned by using a pen or pencil and paper, students are better able to retrieve a word later, making this method more effective, that using electronic recording methods. Another study investigating students' opinions towards notetaking whilst listening suggested that students who use a pen and paper method, as opposed to electronically, preferred doing so because it helped their "concentration, comprehension and organizational skills" (Siegel, 2023, p. 8). Therefore, the argument for using the pen or pencil method to write down new words could have two potential benefits. First, vocabulary can be retrieved more easily, and second, some learners prefer to use the pen and paper method.

Secondly, the notebook activities proposed in this paper help promote learner autonomy. Students themselves decide which words to add, and as such they are in control of their learning. In addition, students are free to choose which activities they feel best suit their learning style. As a result, their notebook becomes an autonomous learning tool, which can transcend the classroom. For Nation (2011), teachers should actually be doing less teaching, with more onus on the students working hard. However, crucial to this are the students being motivated enough to take responsibility for their own learning. But how can teachers motivate students to take responsibility?

Allowing time to work with words that have a low learning burden could help foster motivation. The term *learning burden* refers to the degree of effort necessary to fully learn a word. The difficulty of learning increases with factors such as irregular spelling, pronunciation, or grammatical irregularities (Nation & Webb, 2017). Dronjic (2019) also suggests that words with only one meaning, such as "bungalow", are easier to learn than words that have multiple meanings, such as "present". Therefore, working with low burden words, or even words that students already know to some extent, might help motivation. As Meurers et al. (2019) discuss, working memory is crucial for L2 acquisition. However, working memory may become overloaded if students are exposed to words with multiple meanings or irregular spellings, they may feel demotivated. Conversely, when learners work with words that are considered more straightforward, they can free up space in their working memory.

Analysis of the Activities

An important stage in each activity requires learners to assess themselves as to how well they think they know a word. This type of self-assessment activity is an effective method by which learners can come to understand their knowledge of vocabulary. Figure 1 illustrates self-assessment task used in the core textbook 'Oxford INSIDE Listening and Speaking Intro'.

Figure 1

INSIDE Listening and Speaking self-assessment (Blackwell, 2015, p. 5).

Zimmerman (2009) proposes this type of reflection activity is a way for students to assess their word knowledge. When students engage in metacognitive activity such as a ranking task illustrated above, they first become more aware of their word knowledge, and second, they identify a gap in their knowledge, which guides them to the next step in learning. They are completely engaged in deciding, for themselves, to what extent they should focus their attention on a specific lexical item. This stage illustrates Nation's idea of deliberate learning very effectively. In turn, it helps students feel a sense of progress as they become more confident using each word, and it also demonstrates how word knowledge is built up over time (Zimmerman, 2009).

Another similarity between the activities described below is that learners use word lists. Folse (2014) suggests that presenting semantically unrelated words together, rather than related words, leads to more effective learning, than presenting semantically related words together. The author used two types of word list, first the lists presented in each core textbook and second the Oxford 3000, the latter of which has been developed by language experts and teachers combining the most important and useful vocabulary for learners. In addition, since both course textbooks present lexis from the Oxford 3000 list, this was an obvious choice. Word lists help teachers guide their learners to the most useful language for their particular goals and can perhaps avoid students feeling daunted.

Finally, all the activities incorporate attention to collocation, which would also fall into Nation's deliberate learning category (2017), and is a crucial stage in vocabulary learning. Collocation represents another layer of word meaning (Zimmerman, 2009). It can be illustrated by showing common collocates of the delexicalised verbs "make" and "do". However, other verbs are not delexicalised and do not have clear collocates. According to Sketch Engine (n.d.), an online corpus, "pain" most frequently collocates with the noun "relieve". Should learners also learn it often occurs with "throbbing"?

It appears that dealing with collocation is not straightforward. A simpler way to introduce frequency of collocations is the website Just the Word, which indicates frequency as a number. In the case of the word "pain", "feel" is by far the most common verb collocation (Just the Word, n.d.). Depending on the level of their class, teachers can decide to what extent they explain the relationship between collocation and corpus linguistics. For A2 learners, it is not necessary to give a lengthy explanation of each collocation. Teachers should focus on two or three common collocates to illustrate the idea of frequency. Nevertheless, using concordances is essential when teaching collocation (Dronjic, 2019), and online concordance tools are useful

for independent study. Moreover, by using concordances, learners observe real examples, rather than random examples of collocation.

Layout of the Notebook

This section looks at three ways to use vocabulary notebooks. First, it will show how to layout a notebook for new words. Then, it will present two activities that can be used for further engagement and manipulation of lexical items. For each activity, the author suggests aims, possible stages for the procedure, a rationale for each task and also possible problems and solutions.

Folse (2014) presents a very simple method for how to lay out each new entry in the notebook. As can be seen in Figure 2, each entry has four elements: target word, translation, synonym or short definition and an example collocation.

Figure 2

Example of student vocabulary notebook (Folse, 2014, p. 104).

Limitations

Perhaps the most obvious missing piece of information is the part of speech. Zimmerman (2009) suggests that students can be encouraged to record vocabulary in such a way that incorporates part of speech. This is evident in the second entry in Figure 2. The indefinite article "a" appears with the noun "valley" reinforcing the part of speech for the target word. However, it is not present for "come up with", which could be changed to "to come up with". Similarly, when entering an adjective, "to be" can be added before the adjective. Students should also be reminded that the part of speech is always presented on the word list.

Another possible limitation is there is not sufficient space to write long sentences for each entry. However, Folse (2014) claims writing full sentences is time consuming, which leads to a loss in interest. Furthermore, writing whole sentences could be categorized as meaning-focused output, as opposed to language-focused meaning which is what the goal of a notebook is. Moreover, the greater the learning challenge, the more unattainable the goal becomes (Hattie, 2023). For this reason, it is not necessary for

learners to write complete sentences, which could result in the task becoming too demanding and thus de-motivating.

Benefits

A major benefit to this layout is that it facilitates various ways for the students to retrieve the item, encouraging repeated meetings of the same word. An important condition for vocabulary learning is repetition, or how many times a learner comes across a word (Nation, 2017). There are varying opinions about the exact number of times a learner needs to meet a word to learn it; however, Nation (2014) suggests that twelve repetitions would be adequate. Folse (2014) suggests that students use the list they create to practice retrieval of the items by using a small piece of card with a cut out as illustrated by Figure 3 below. Students use the card with a cut-out by moving it down the page to reveal each item one by one. The card can then be turned over and used in the reverse way to retrieve the other column.

Figure 3

Notebook entry with cut-out card adapted from Vocabulary Myths (Folse, 2014, p.106).
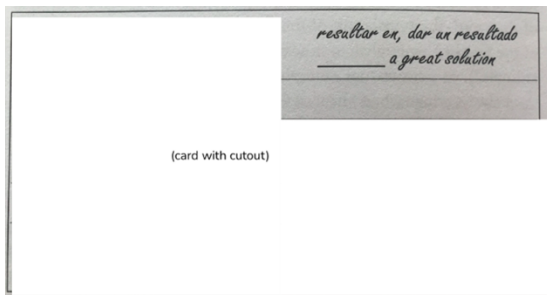
Another major benefit of this layout is that it is orderly, which is crucial for increasing appeal and likelihood that students will want to use it. Secondly, a blank line between each entry leaves space to add more information later (Folse, 2014). For these reasons, the layout plays an important role in learner engagement.

Using a Notebook for New Words

The first way students can use the notebook is by entering words from the word list. However, they might not know which words to add. One way to help them is to have them consider how well they think they know the word. If students tick either the first or second column in self-assessment table in Figure 1, then the word should be entered. Another way to guide them would be to suggest adding low burden, such as words that have regular spelling patterns or words that are easy to pronounce.

Helping Students Engage more with Lexis

This section introduces two further notebook activities designed to help learners explore vocabulary on a deeper level. In the first activity, learners investigate collocations, while in the second, they experiment with categorizing random words. The former activity is more challenging than the second, however the contrast between the two helps illustrate that there are varying stages to learning vocabulary. Teachers may decide to introduce the activities in a different order.

Activity One: Using Mind Maps for Words You Want to Know More About

The aim of this activity is to encourage learners to research words that they have already encountered, might be able to use to some degree, but which they would like to be able to use better. This activity demonstrates how words tend to occur together.

Procedure

The teacher models the activity by telling students a word that they themselves are interested in. An example word might be "education". The teacher displays the Oxford 3000-word list on the large screen if available. Next, the teacher then indicates where example collocations appear as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Oxford Learner's Dictionary collocations with "education" (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.).

Next, the teacher then demonstrates how to make a mind-map using the collocations with the target word as shown in Figure 5. In the final step, individual students research their own words. Students can either choose from the word lists presented in their textbook or can use the Oxford 3000-word list.

Figure 5

Mind-map of collocations with "education"
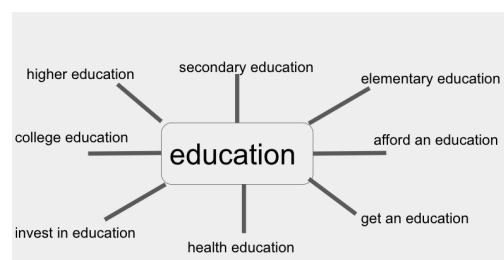
Rationale

The rationale behind this activity relates to the idea that students need time not only for repetition, but also time to think deeply about words, promoting good quality processing (Nation, 2017). Here, they are focusing on explicit words which are relevant and interesting to them, and processing them in a new way as well as discovering collocations. Zimmerman (2009) suggests that the use of mind-maps in this way teaches learners about connections between words and how words are related, thus increasing their word knowledge incrementally.

Potential problems and solutions

Firstly, students might not know which collocations to choose, and some examples might even be too difficult. To avoid students feeling discouraged, they should be advised to work with   simple collocations first such as cognates, which have a lower learning burden. Secondly, the concept of collocation might be difficult to grasp initially. This can be illustrated by using a cognate word. For Japanese learners this could be the word for coffee, コーヒー, which often collocates with "drink", "make" or "shop".

Activity Two: Using Mind Maps for Known Words

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to work with words with which they already feel confident, whilst deciding how best to categorize them. This activity demonstrates there are multiple connections between words.

Procedure

The activity can be demonstrated as a whole-class task. The teacher should choose approximately 15 words that they know the students have learnt. Next, the teacher displays these words for all students to see. Students are then instructed to categorize the words depending on their own criteria. It is useful for the teacher to give an example or two at this stage, however they should not go into too much detail as to do so might hinder students' creativity. In the final stage students share their ideas in small groups. Students often find it interesting to see how others have approached the activity, noticing differences and similarities between ideas.

Rationale

The rationale behind this activity relates to the idea that in a vocabulary course, students should be exposed to content they already know. Nation suggests that 98% of meaning-focused input should be already comprehensible, it would follow therefore that learners need to engage with words that they already know quite well (2011). Even though words in this activity might have a low learning burden, deep mental processing is still necessary when assessing the suitability of each word. This is important because when students think carefully and more profoundly, it is more probable that learning will happen (Nation, 2017).

Potential problems and solutions

The first problem might be that students find it difficult to explain in L2 the reasons for their choices. The teacher can consider allowing them to explain their choices in L1 if more appropriate. Another problem might be that students do not fully understand that the words can be grouped in multiple different ways. It is necessary to make this clear so that students can use their full creativity.

Limitations

A downside to the discussed activities is that there is no immediate opportunity for productive tasks to recycle the vocabulary. There is a chance that learners could feel dissatisfied if they do not have the immediate chance to use the target words learnt. However, it is necessary to remember how these activities fit into the wider course design. Consequently, it would be beneficial to communicate to students how deliberate language-focused learning complements their learning. The teacher can communicate this to students by explaining the importance of dedicating time to analyzing vocabulary, in addition to other language skills. They should also be reminded that the notebook activities will contribute to them becoming independent vocabulary learners.

Secondly, since the notebooks are individual tasks, another negative point might be that students do not have the chance to share their learning with other classmates. Therefore, it could also be beneficial to incorporate peer discussion in L1, whereby learners use their notebooks as a springboard for discussion about their learning process. One way to do this is to have students share interesting words or collocations they have learnt or discuss which activity they find most useful for them personally. A metacognitive task like the one described in this approach, allows students to monitor their learning helping them to achieve their goals (Anderson, 2002).

Assessing Student Progress

Schmitt (2008) suggests that students are more likely to learn a word if they know they will be assessed. In practice, it would be impossible to create a valid summative test to measure students' individual acquisition, because each learner chooses different words. Therefore, the author feels it would be more advantageous to incorporate notebooks into formative assessment. Firstly, this can be done by collecting the notebooks in the middle and at the end of the course. This would enable the teacher to give an overall

impression grade and constructive feedback. Zimmerman (2009) suggests that students need to be encouraged to ask themselves questions about words. Teacher feedback, therefore, could entail posing questions to students such as "Is this noun singular or plural?", "Have you come across any words with the same root?, or "Does this word have a positive or negative connotation?". It is not necessary to comment on every word. With some carefully poised questions by the teacher, students might start asking themselves similar questions. This type of feedback helps students to feel a sense of progress, notice the incremental nature of learning vocabulary, and appreciate the different layers of meaning words can have.

It is worth noting that, when checking student work, teachers should check if students are engaging with not only new words, but also words with which they are already familiar. If students are only using their notebooks to enter new words, their motivation might decrease as the learning burden will always be high. Moreover, if they do not engage with familiar words, their word knowledge does not increase. Therefore, teachers should be alert to whether students are engaging with a wide range of vocabulary, not only unknown words, but also familiar words.

Finally, it is essential that students reflect on their own progress. They can do this by using the self-assessment table illustrated in Figure 1 at the end of the course to consider to what extent their learning has progressed. If students do not have the chance to reconsider their word knowledge periodically, the learning cycle is left incomplete.

Conclusion

Lexical items presented in textbooks are pre-determined whereas the activities and approaches discussed in this paper are designed to be student-led. Teachers can choose to supplement their syllabus by incorporating freer, independent tasks such as these. They are designed to allow students to guide their own vocabulary learning, but also to increase time spent engaging with lexis in multiple ways. The author hopes that these types of activities will help students to become better equipped vocabulary learner.

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Back to the Future for Task-based Learning with Jane and Dave Willis's Collins COBUILD English Course

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In 2022, Jane Willis, Robert Maran, and myself started the free site *Taskbasedlearningforall.com.* It contains the downloadable digitalized version of the original three-level *Collins COBUILD English Course* (CCEC) that was written by Jane and Dave Willis and published between 1988-1990. The CCEC introduced two important innovations to ELT coursebooks: a task-based learning methodology (TBL), and a lexical syllabus. The Willis's TBL methodology is widely practiced in educational settings around the world (Willis & Willis, 2007). While TBL has become mainstream, few of its current practitioners have seen the CCEC. In the first part of this paper, I will introduce the six key features of the CECC centered around the two innovations. In the second part of the paper, I will use a recent lesson I taught from the course to show how the CCEC can be utilized. This paper will be of interest to teachers interested in TBL and the work of Jane and Dave Willis.

2022 年、2 人の同僚と私が無料サイト Taskbasedlearningforall.com を立ち上げた。 ジェーン・ウィリスとデイブ・ウィリス（以下、ウィリス夫妻）によって書かれ 1988 年から 1990 年にかけて出版された 3 レベルの Collins COBUILD English Course (CCEC)がありますが、このサイトにはそのダウンロード可能なデジタル版が含まれています。 CCEC には、タスク・ベースド・ラーニング（TBL）とレキシカルシラバスという 2 つの重要な革新を ELT コースブックに導入しました。 ウィリス夫妻の TBL 手法は、世界中の教育現場で広く実践されています。TBL が主流となっている一方で、現在 TBL を実践している人の中で CCEC を見たことがある人はほとんどいません。 本論文の第 1 部では、2 つのイノベーションを中心に CECC の 6 つの主要な特徴を紹介しています。 第 2 部では、CCEC とその特徴がどのように機能するのかを、私が最近教えた授業を用いて紹介しています。この論文は、TBL とウィリス夫妻の研究に関心のある教師にとって興味深いものとなるでしょう。

In 1983, Jane and Dave Willis were commissioned by the publisher Collins to write the CCEC. The course was part of the COBUILD (Collins-Birmingham University International Language Database) language research project. This eventual 20 million-word digital corpus of contemporary English text provided the language for the CCEC and other Collins COBUILD products which are still sold to this day. The COBUILD project was overseen by John Sinclair, an important pioneer in corpus linguistics. In addition to Sinclair being the editor-in-chief for the CCEC, two other very well-known linguists Michael Halliday and Ronald Carter advised on the CCEC. With Jane Willis having won numerous awards over her career including being honored with the IATBLT Distinguished Practitioner Award in 2022, it is difficult to think of an ELT coursebook series that was developed with this many influential professionals involved. The CCEC is probably the only coursebook series that has had books written about its key ideas and development. D. Willis's classic *The Lexical Syllabus* (1990) is a detailed account of the rationale and development of the CCEC. His later book *Rules,*

Patterns, and Words (2003) is an expansion of the original ideas first realized in the CCEC. J. Willis's also classic *A Framework for Task-Based Learning* (1996) is an in-depth guide to the TBL methodology that was used in the CCEC.

The Willis TBL Methodology

The Willis six-component TBL framework, comprising pre-task, task cycle (task, plan, report), and language focus (analysis, practice), emerged from their extensive language teaching experience and Prabhu's Communicational Teaching Project (Bangalore Project 1979-1982). The Willis TBL methodology for the CCEC realized six learning and teaching features:

1. Aim to support general language development rather than to teach discrete language items.

2. Recognize learners are engaged in building a meaning system.

3. Opportunities for learners to improvise with the language they already have.

4. Incentives for learners to refine their language to meet different communicative demands.

5. Procedures which encourage learners to think carefully about how language is structured and how it is used.

6. Exposure to spoken and written texts to provide opportunities for learners to explore language for themselves (D. Willis, 2003, p. 215).

With the first feature, the Willises rejected the structural syllabuses that were popular at the time. These syllabuses presented grammar as a list of discrete items to be accumulated one at a time. The Willises thought that this reductionist approach to language syllabus design denies the learner's built-in syllabus, and, moreover, diminishes the complexity and extensiveness of the language being learned regarding such features as orientation, class, and pattern. The Willises and others (e.g., Wilkins, 1975) wrote about these discrete itemized syllabuses as having 'low surrender value.' This term refers to an investment that takes a long time to extract value from and will offer very little return if abandoned early. This contrasts with a course having a 'high surrender value,' where there is potentially a quicker return on the learning investment.

The next three features of their TBL methodology (two, three, and four) are arguably no longer absent in most language education settings. These three related features acknowledge that languages are ultimately learned for communicative purposes and therefore learning a language is about building a 'system for meaning.' From a teaching perspective, the third feature involves creating opportunities in the classroom with tasks for students to engage in meaningful goal-oriented use of the language as part of their system building. The fourth feature is also about meaningful language use and relates to the planning and report stages in the Willis task cycle. The final two features (five and six) of the Willis TBL methodology recognize that language learning needs to include conscious attention to language that is both teacher-directed and self-directed. At the time of the writing of the CCEC, many coursebooks followed a PPP (Present, Practice, Produce) method which purposely discouraged student analysis of the target language in favor of activities based on simple habit formation (Prabhu, 2019). Since the Willises first developed their framework, subsequent decades of SLA research (Ellis, 2018) have convincingly demonstrated that TBL can be an effective methodology for facilitating second language acquisition. The enduring influence of the Willis TBL framework is evident in a more recent collection of classroom-based TBL studies (Samuda et al., 2018), where seven out of the 10 studies reference the framework.

The Willis Pedagogical Corpus and Lexical Syllabus

The Willises aimed to maximize students' exposure to rich input and, furthermore, foster student exploration of the target language by designing the CCEC language syllabus as a *pedagogical corpus*. This unique idea envisioned a mini corpus of the larger 20 million-word COBUILD corpus with the former being comprised of carefully selected authentic written and spoken texts (e.g., native speaker task recordings). Students are expected to initially process these texts for meaning related to the main task, and then later analyze the same texts as part of their post-task study. This student post-task exploration is as D. Willis (2003, p.163) notes the same as corpus linguists analyzing a corpus of language to better understand how the target language works. D. Willis (2010, p.11) believes that the pedagogical corpus is a more suitable tool for looking at aspects of grammar like orientation (e.g., determiners) that are too subtle for teacher explanation, and for pattern grammar (e.g., preposition + verb patterns) that is impossible for the teacher to give complete coverage to.

Central to the development of the pedagogical corpus was ensuring that it was not just a random collection of texts, but instead level-appropriate with texts carefully selected to ensure relevance and accuracy of coverage of the English language. Their answer to realizing this brings us to the second major innovation of the course - a lexical syllabus. Sinclair's COBUILD project demonstrated that the 700 most frequent words in English account for around 70% of all English text (Willis, 1990). The top 1,500 words contribute to 76%, and the top 2,500 words cover 80% of the language. As D. Willis (1990) explains, "the commonest and most important, most basic meanings in English are those meanings expressed by the most frequent words in English" (p.47). The CCEC project team decided that word frequency would determine the content and level of the course. The level one course was comprised of a corpus that contextualizes the 700 most frequent words together with their common patterns and uses. The level two course recycles those 700 words and adds the next 800 frequent words in English. Finally, the level three course incorporates the previous 1500 words and introduces an additional 1000 words, resulting in a total vocabulary of 2500 words, along with their most frequently used phrases, across all three courses. Below is the six-part process of how they developed the CCEC lexical syllabus around a pedagogical corpus which includes supporting tasks with analysis and practice activities.

1. List the lexical items you believe learners at a given level should become familiar with (frequency lists corpus-informed).

2. Identify a set of topics likely to be of value and interest to your target learner. Design a

pedagogic corpus by assembling a set of tasks and associated spoken and written texts which cover these topics.

3. Order your texts and tasks according to difficulty. There is no objective way of doing this (teacher mediation).

4. Analyze your texts for coverage of lexical items identified in part 1. The frequent words of the language not covered in the text should be covered in supplementary exercises.

5. Identify elements of the grammar (structure, orientation, and pattern) illustrated in the texts you have assembled and decide on ordering. This ordering doesn't imply control and simplification.

6. Design a set of language-focused activities which will focus on the targets in context. Items which are treated for recognition are recycled later as part of system building (D. Willis 2003, p. 223).

The Commercial Success of the CCEC

Although CCEC never attained the commercial success of other popular courses at the time it did manage to sell well internationally and was acknowledged for being influential (Lewis, 1993). O'Dell (1997) suggests the CCEC's weaker commercial appeal stemmed from putting one theory (lexical approach) too rigidly into practice rather than creating a course that was more eclectic. By this, she is referring to the popular language coursebooks of the time that typically combined a discrete itemized syllabus with communicative activities. Her criticism highlights the misconception that the Willises replaced grammar for lexis. The Willis's lexical syllabus naturally subsumed a grammatical syllabus. For instance, the passive form in the course is treated as just one of the patterns of the verb *be*. Anyone who has thoroughly examined the CCEC would wonder why some teachers thought there was no visible grammar syllabus. Each unit lists the grammar relevant to the tasks and at the back of the student book there is *Grammar Book* which lists all the grammar for the course and where it can be found and for what use.

The Willis's analysis of their lexical syllabus, prior to the CCEC's release, showed that it offered the same, if not richer, grammar coverage as other traditional grammar syllabuses. The grammar omissions in CCEC were intentional, as certain elements, such as reported speech, were regarded as artificial categories or infrequent. Jane Willis (personal communication) thought that the most substantial issue with the course not achieving greater commercial success was its sales presentation. The Willises felt, as the grammar issue demonstrates, that the CCEC was not explained as well as it should have been considering the innovations

involved. This problem was compounded by the fact that they were not introducing one innovation but two (a lexical syllabus and TBL), and even three if you include the pedagogical corpus. It should also be remembered that it was not until 15 years after the CCEC was published that the first-ever international task-based conference was held. By the time TBL became mainstream the course was already out of print. Even if it had been marketed better the innovations were perhaps too novel for most teachers at the time.

The CCEC in Practice

In this second part of the paper, I will demonstrate, using a recent lesson, how the lexical syllabus, TBL, and pedagogical corpus can be employed to help teachers and students realize the six learning and teaching features discussed earlier. The students in my lesson are Japanese university students at the CEFR A1-A2 level taking a general communicative English course as part of their graduation requirement. The start of each unit in the CCEC lists all the tasks for the unit and their communicative aims/goals including corresponding analytical and practice activities. The lexical, grammar, and discourse objectives are also listed. The task in Figure 1 is from the level one coursebook and belongs to Unit 6, titled 'Just Over Eight Million.' This unit focuses on tasks that involve using numbers such as talking about dates and times.

Figure 1

Task: ways of saying numbers (from Willis & Willis, 1988)

This task's communicative aim/goal (Figure 2) is for students to focus on different ways of saying numbers based on their context of use. The teacher's manual lists the high frequency lexis for this task including words and phrases (grammar) for 'understanding only.'

Figure 2

Teacher manual information for task (from Willis & Willis, 1988)

78 Ways of saying numbers

Aim: To focus on different ways of saying numbers. (For more examples of the use of **way** see SB94a.)

Lexis: American, bus, date, double, hundred, month, nought, nothing, think, thought, thousand, time, year, zero (and other numbers)
Understanding only: **depending, whether, to/past** (in times), **could be, would be, You'd say . . ., each**

This 'understanding only' category is to help teachers identify which words and phrases students will be exposed to for the first time in the CCEC, and possibly for the first time in their language learning. While it is unlikely that students will use this language during the task, by the end of the lesson, they are expected to recognize the use of, for example, *could* and *would* for expressing possibility. This recognition is for many students the first step in the eventual acquisition of these words and their accompanying phrases. The CCEC course then offers students repeated exposure and opportunities to employ these words and phrases. For example, with the word *could* the *Grammar Book* section in CCEC level one lists the sentences in the course that use *could,* what purpose they are used for (suggestion, possibility, ability, offer/request, permission), and where each sentence can be found. In total, *could* in its most common uses appears sixteen times in the level one course thus ensuring repeated exposure.

Part B is the task for the lesson. Students in pairs discuss the different ways of saying these numbers and when/where you would find them said in that way. The explanation text in part B provides the students with incidental exposure to the language that they might find useful for achieving the communicative outcome of the task. Below is an excerpt from a pair of my students.

The following excerpt is typical of all the student recordings from this task in that much of the student focus was on just trying to say the numbers correctly. For example, at the start of this excerpt, the pair decides if it is 'zero' or the letter 'o' for the phone number. We also see S1 trying to correctly say 1989. None of the pairs I recorded (eight) used speculative language in English during the tasks outside of reading the task instructions as S2 did two times in this excerpt. However, as this excerpt shows the students in all the recordings did speculate on the numbers in their own language. In other recordings, かもしれない (could possibly) is frequently used by students.

Extract 1

Spoken excerpt from pair work

S1: What is . . . telephone is . . .

S2: たぶん(perhaps)(then reads) what about nineteen eighty-nine for example? Could it be a telephone number . . .

S1: だから(therefore) nineteen eighty-nine is date and year だよね.

S2: Telephone number telephone number is . . . zero two zero two one.

S1/S2: (said together) three three seven zero.

S2: O . . . zero なんとういの？

S1: Zero じゃない？

S1/S2: (said together) Zero four five two.

S2: And car number.

S1: What is this number?

S2: Car is 22756 でしょ？

S1: Date date's is ten point two.

S2: Twelve.

S1: Twelve. One one nine and . . . one one 九十 (nine ten).

S2: it's one nine eight nine じゃない

S1: one nine

S2: (reads) How would you say it if it was a date?

The next step of the task cycle is 'tell the class.' This is the report stage of the task cycle, and its purpose is to push students to carefully refine their task language by making it more presentable, and thus closer to more ideal speech. In other words, although none of the students used speculative language during the task in the target language the report section will require them to incorporate it into their final reports. The teacher's manual (Figure 3) part 3 provides a possible report template for teachers and students who may need some support in the planning stage.

Figure 3

Task planning and report information for teacher (from Willis & Willis, 1988)

Planning and report SB78b

3 Students plan what they are going to tell the class. You may need to help with the wording, e.g. 'We looked at number _____', 'You could say _____ if it's a _____'

4 Ask students to report to the class. Write their ideas on one side of the board so you can write Bridget and David's ideas next to them for comparison when you get to section 78c.

*Probably the most varied number is **0**. It can be said: **nought, nothing, zero, O** (phone number), **nil** (in some sports,), **love** (tennis). Point out the formation of ordinal numbers in dates, e.g. 'the fourteenth of March'. Note that the American way of writing the date in figures begins with the month, e.g. 10.12 in English means 10th December. In American it would be 12th October.*

As the report guidance demonstrates, the CCEC teacher's manuals provide extensive support for teachers on all aspects of teaching the course. In part 4 of Figure 3 advice is even offered on how to organize the report stage to prepare for the upcoming listening in part C. There is also information reminding teachers that the number zero of all the basic numbers has the most varied ways of saying it, which as we saw in the excerpt was something my students encountered during the task.

After the report stage of the TBL sequence students move on to language focus (analysis and practice). This stage starts with a listening activity that is meant to provide students with more language exposure. In part C they listen to two English native speakers (Bridget and Dave) do the same task. All the task recordings are unscripted and therefore give students exposure to authentic language. This means, as demonstrated in Figure 4, part A, that there are numerous false starts, hesitations, and various discourse makers (yeah, okay, so right, oh).

Figure 4

Post task language analysis and practice (from Willis & Willis, 1988)

This naturally messy discourse occurs because it is negotiated interactively. It contrasts sharply with scripted dialogues in coursebooks that incorrectly present discourse as built up one piece at a time through clear concise turn-taking of the participants. In the teacher's manual we are even warned that Bridget

and Dave *do not do this task very well*, and that student pairs may even do the task more successfully! While some teachers may wonder if authentic texts in CCEC are too challenging for students, the Willises (1990) in their piloting of these recordings found that the natural redundancy of words and phrases in negotiated tasks along with many discourse markers made the recordings very accessible to students. My own experiences with these spontaneous recordings confirm their findings.

For the language analysis part of the post-task work in part A, students engage in a consciousness-raising activity. They review the excerpt and attempt to answer the three accompanying questions. The goal of these questions is for the students to recognize that *could* and *would/'d* are used to express possibility. While an excerpt is provided, typically in most of the tasks throughout the three levels the students are required to explore the complete transcript. For part C, students are given more practice in saying numbers, accompanied by further practice with Wordpower (Figure 5), which is included in each unit of the first two courses. This practice activity introduces expressions of approximation with numbers.

Figure 5

Wordpower practice (from Willis & Willis, 1988)

This last activity in Figure 5 is one demonstrable reason why the CCEC can offer 'high surrender value' in that it gives quick return on time invested in the course. Typically, when we use numbers in everyday life, it is very common to use words of approximation

with them (e.g., 300 and something). Puzzlingly, I have never seen a four-skills coursebook at the A1 to B1 levels that introduces these types of expressions, despite their prevalence. A similar point can be made for the early introduction of the highly frequent *could* and *would* for expressing possibility. If one reviews popular coursebook series at the same language levels, they will find that the use of 'could' and 'would' for expressing possibility is either not covered at all or is introduced only after hundreds of hours of study with the courses. With the CCEC's use of only authentic texts and activities that push students to analyze and explore language, it is fair to say that students can potentially achieve a richer learning experience with the same amount of time invested. This is an important consideration in EFL settings where classroom time is very limited.

Conclusion

Jane and Dave Willis have been central figures in the development of TBL in the classroom. To fully appreciate their ideas, it is important to have some familiarity with the CCEC since it is the most comprehensive realization of their work. The free site *Taskbasedlearninforall.com* now makes the course accessible to everyone. It took us over five years to collect all the material. Large multi-level courses can be very expensive and this free access to the CCEC can offer institutions and teachers working with limited financial resources a chance to use high-quality language learning material. Over the course of my teaching career, I have worked as an adult coursebook advisor for all the major publishers. Comparing the CCEC to current courses, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that, despite being 30 years old, the CCEC remains innovative and, for TBL (Task-Based Learning), still very relevant. Only a very small number of the tasks might be outdated for some teachers (e.g., how to use a payphone). The high-frequency word list from the COBUILD Corpus remains consistent with those from other more recent corpora (e.g., BNC). Bygate (2020) writing on the future 'survivability' of TBL believes, that it needs to more effectively demonstrate how it can facilitate students' access to the breadth and depth of coverage of the target language. In addition, he feels that TBL needs to better demonstrate how it can incorporate a full range of learning processes (analytical learning, chunk learning, category induction, inferencing, memorization, rehearsing, and so forth) that are crucial for language learning. Bygate, too, uses the term 'high surrender value' and feels TBL has yet to show this. These two contemporary concerns with TBL that Bygate identifies are ones that I believe the Willises carefully considered over 30 years ago when they wrote CCEC. This is why the title of this paper employs the phrase 'back to the future' for TBL. To date, CCEC is the most comprehensive attempt to construct a TBL course, and it serves as a good starting point for ideas on how TBL can progress as a global project.

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Using Drawing Prompts to Promote Topic Development in Discussion Tasks

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A lack of engagement with partner's ideas and disjointed monologic interaction patterns can be a hallmark of peer-to-peer conversation tasks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Japan. In response to this, the author trialed an instructional method informed by research on interactional competence. Thematic drawing prompts, accompanied by a topic development method worksheet, were used as springboards for extended student discussions. Teacher reflections and observations made during a summative speaking assessment give insight into the efficacy of the method. Whilst a need for more focused student questionnaires and conversational analysis of student performances was found, observations obtained from this initial trial are promising. This initial trial suggests that drawing prompts can provide a useful forum for the modeling, practice, feedback, and ultimate production of context responsive topic development techniques.

日本の EFL の授業では、相手の考えを掘り下げることが欠如していたり、生徒同士が一方的に話すモノローグ的な会話が特徴的である。そこで筆者は、相互作用能力の研究分野に基づいた指導法を試行した。この指導法では、テーマ別に描かれたプロンプトとトピック展開法を説明するワークシートと組み合わせて、生徒の会話のための出発点として使用した。教師の振り返りや実施した会話の総括的な評価の観察から、この方法の有効性が評価された。生徒に対して、この方法により特化したアンケートの実施や生徒のパフォーマンスの会話分析が必要であることが明らかになったが、この最初の試行から得られた観察結果は有望であり、プロンプトの使用により、トピック広げる手法を生徒に紹介し、練習、フィードバック、そして応答させる機会を提供できることを示唆している。

Encouraging free-flowing reciprocal conversation and topic development in peer-to-peer conversation tasks in Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes can be challenging for both teachers and students. For teachers, it can be disheartening to see students showing a tendency to exchange longer monologic turns as described by Hauser (2009), and missing the quick topically-interconnected back and forth and expansion of ideas that characterizes a natural flow of conversation. For the students, it can be difficult to navigate these expectations considering that the majority of their English learning experience has been within a junior high school and high school system that is arguably still struggling to overcome a grammar/vocabulary-heavy backwash effect from university entrance exams (Otaka, 2011) and a reliance on the grammar translation method (Koby, 2015). The persistence of these issues can create a scenario in which students may not have had sufficient exposure to, and opportunities to practice the skills required to navigate and co-create an unfolding conversation.

This paper details a teaching intervention implemented in response to a number of issues related to topic expansion and engagement with partners observed during peer-to-peer conversation tests in a first year English Communication class at a Japanese university, consisting of 38 students. Prior to the change in teaching approach (which occurred in week eight of a 15-week semester), the course had followed a structure in which, after the completion of certain content topics (Different cultures, education, etc.), students were randomly paired for a five to six minute assessed conversation, based on a list of 10-12 questions. The questions were generally similar in nature to discussion questions which had come up in class. Students did not have to address all questions and were encouraged to be flexible to what their partners were saying and extend the conversation. This style of test, henceforth referred to as a *question list* style assessment, was used for two midterm conversation tests in weeks four and seven. However, after identifying a variety of issues in student conversations, particularly ones in relation to topic development, the teaching and assessment style was changed to one in which students completed thematic

drawing/storytelling prompts which served as the catalyst for extended conversations. This drawing prompt style activity, along with an accompanying topic expansion technique worksheet, was used each week from weeks eight to 14, and formed the basis of the third and final speaking test in week 15.

The following discussion will seek to evaluate the trialed approach based on the extent to which it provided a classroom forum for the teaching and learning of topic development techniques, and whether or not there was any discernible improvement towards more natural peer-to-peer conversations.

Issues Observed in Initial Student Performances

The following issues were found to be prevalent in multiple pairs across the two initially administered question list style conversation tests.

Unnatural Interaction Patterns

Conversation structures tended to gravitate towards a repetitive pattern: Question > Answer > How about you? > Answer > Next question. In essence, this flow that students fell into set up a turn-taking dynamic where students engaged in long, uninterrupted turns and often failed to acknowledge and integrate content from their partner's just prior turn. Such issues are reminiscent of descriptions of student discussions made by Hauser (2009) who noted that students can tend to produce semi-monologues without sufficient meaningful topic engagement with their partner. In a number of cases, the monologic nature of student contributions led to them covering multiple self-extension points in one turn and giving multiple details in a kind of soliloquy, without proper points of poise for interjection or comprehension checks. Then, upon the realization that they had been speaking for too long, or that they had ran out of things to say, the student would abruptly throw the conversation back to their partner with a rushed "How about you?" prompt. In the most egregious cases, this would place their partner in a situation where they had to think back through a span of multiple content points from their partner's just-prior turn to isolate exactly which point "How about you?", actually referred to. Such occurrences indicated that as a pair, the speakers had fallen out of sync with one another and were not truly engaging in a collaborative and co-constructed conversation.

Formulaic Expressions and Minimal Topic Expansion

Another issue was that acknowledgement of partner's contributions often took the form of generic and formulaic minimal expansions such as "Okay, Okay", "Nice, Nice" and "I see". Whilst these acknowledgement tokens may fit as an appropriate response to a partner's

turn, they did not offer any context renewing springboard from which to project the conversation further (Sandlund & Greer, 2020; Schegloff, 2007). Even responses which hinted at engagement with the ideas of their partner such as "I think so too", "That's good" or "really?", came across as formulaic when not delivered with convincing intonation or facial expression, and not followed through with some type of extension comment to move things forward. This created an atmosphere in which students were seemingly disinterested and waiting for their turn to speak rather than engaging with their partner's ideas.

An Overreliance on WH Questions

When students did engage in expansion of a partner-initiated topic, an overreliance on WH questions was prominent. WH questions can be considered a meaningful topic expansion move in response to a speaker's prior turn. However, in the conversations observed during the initial speaking tests, this technique was overused as a crutch. This created an interview style dynamic in which students were prompted to go into minute details of the *When/ What/ Who/ Why/ How?* of a particular avenue of conversation without any reciprocal topic work by their partner (e.g., speaking of their own experiences, adding to or countering opinions). This often led to conversational dead ends, as seen in the following excerpt:

A: I do not like carrots.
B: Why?
A: I don't like crunchy textures.
B: Why don't you like crunchy textures?

This example clearly illustrates the extent to which student B was over-relying on WH questions. Answering such questions, even in a first language, can be challenging to articulate meaningfully. This left the partner with no choice but to simply restate that they just don't like crunchy textures. This brought the conversation to halt before the pair moved onto a different, unrelated question. Instances similar to this were common across multiple pairs. When topic expansion moves relied too heavily on long strings of WH questions, topics were generally closed with long awkward silences, and this ultimately affected the perceived mood, pacing, and energy of the exchange. This also often led to abrupt "*Next question"* style topic shifts which negatively impacted the cohesive flow of the conversation.

Drawing on Previous Research

Interactional Competence and Patterns of Interaction

The issues highlighted above can be attributed to weaknesses within the interactional competence of the students. Interactional competence (henceforth IC) refers to the extent to which a speaker is able to navigate and co-create meaning and structural flow with

their partner in a spoken interaction (Galaczi & Taylor, 2018; Burch and Kley, 2020; Lam, 2018). An easily digestible and concise depiction of how this takes place in practical terms is offered by Galaczi and Taylor (2018) who, after amalgamating a number of key elements from previous research on IC put forward a construct of Interactional Competence as a tree, with the main branches representing the following key elements of spoken interaction Galaczi and Taylor (2018, p.8):

- Topic management: initiating, extending, Shifting, Closing

- Turn management: starting, maintaining, ending, latching

- Interactive listening: backchannelling, comprehension checks, continuers

- Breakdown Repair: joint utterance creation, recasts

- Non-verbal behavior: eye contact, facial expressions, laughter and posture.

The extent to which speakers are able to implement these elements ultimately affects the eventual overall shape or pattern of interaction and whether it feels natural or not. Galaczi (2008) has highlighted three main patterns of interaction, namely *cooperative, parallel and asymmetrical*. The patterns are categorized by different levels at which speakers engage in the conversation. First, speakers show effective engagement in both self and other-initiated topic expansion, a concept referred to as mutuality. Second, they balance the amount of speaking and topic initiation moves between them, ensuring equality. Lastly, a healthy back and forth is achieved through backchannelling, support moves, and interruptions. This keeps the conversation moving smoothly without anyone being too passive or dominant, equalizing conversational dominance. Ideally, when these balances align, healthy a cooperative pattern of interaction emerges.

Intersubjectivity

Another key aspect of IC is the notion of intersubjectivity. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in Galaczi and Taylor's (2018) construct and Galaczi's (2008) patterns of interaction, it is implied and serves an important function. As discussed by Burch and Kley (2020), intersubjectivity refers to the ways in which speakers show one another that they understand, as well as how they have understood or align with their partner's content. The processes by which these elements are made publicly visible are important. This is done by engaging in turns that are contextually contingent on their partner's just-prior turn (Lam, 2018) and can take the shape of paraphrasing, signposting connections, integrating partners' ideas into their own contributions,

showing epistemic or affective stances, or extending (Burch & Kley, 2020).

In a sense, when someone comes across as being present or engaged in a conversation, and engaging in natural topic development, it is usually as a result of the speaker smoothly exhibiting a number of behaviors related to Galaczi and Taylor's (2018) construct of Interactional Competence and intersubjectivity to work towards a collaborative pattern of interaction.

Whilst there are of course other factors at play in IC, it was these specific aspects that the teacher used to identify what was missing in initial student conversations. It was determined that students were either lacking, or not utilizing the necessary skillset to engage in the topic expansion branch of Galaczi and Taylor's (2018) construct of Interactional Competence. This was exacerbated by an overreliance on WH questions which tended to mire conversations in details rather than facilitate a natural flow and shift of dialogue. The characteristics that were perceived as being *unnatural* interaction patterns, specifically stiff and repetitive turn taking patterns, seemingly waiting for one's turn to speak, and generally only expanding their own self-initiated topics could be characterized as *parallel* interaction patterns (Galaczi, 2008). In addition, a lack of intersubjectivity via non-use of segues, and using formulaic responses which failed to indicate one's stance or interest, further contributed to a feeling of disjointedness in the observed conversations. In response to this, the teacher decided to trial a different teaching and assessment approach intended to guide students towards more natural exchanges and topic development.

Method

Participants

The participants were a class of 38 students first-year students in a compulsory Communication English class in the spring semester at a Japanese university. Students were non-English majors, predominantly coming from Agriculture and various Engineering courses. The class was the "advanced" class, as decided by incoming scores, and is generally described by the university as being representative of around the B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Procedure

In response to the prevalence of the problems observed in the two initial question list assessment style, the decision was made to trial a different style of activity and assessment. The teaching intervention in question was a combination of two main components: the use of drawing prompts completed by the students as entry points for conversations, and the instruction of topic

development methods via a worksheet resource made to accompany the prompts.

Drawing Prompts

The drawing prompts created for use in this class were inspired by the book "99 Stories I could tell: a doodlebook to help you create" by Nathan Pyle (2018). The book is comprised of a large selection of semi-complete drawing prompts in which readers draw in extra details and add writing to create an image which acts as the springboard for story telling across a diverse array of themes. Applying this core concept from the book, a selection of original drawing prompts (See Appendix A for examples) were created and became a recurring touchstone resource throughout the duration of course. While these particular examples are original, Pyle's (2018) book is filled with creative story prompts that can be adapted for classroom use and is highly recommended for those interested in this idea.

Topic Expansion Method Worksheet

Due to the aforementioned issues of parallel interaction, and an over-reliance on WH questions, a topic expansion worksheet was created as a means to help students broaden the repertoire of skills with which to expand and shift topics (See Appendix B). These methods are based on how the teacher had observed students with high IC attributes navigating topic expansion in the past. The premise is based on the ability to capitalize on keywords from partners' just-prior turns and outlines the thinking processes behind some potential topic expansion and shift moves and some simple expressions.

Specifically, in addition to WH questions, the worksheet encourages students to think about three methods that they can use to give open up avenues of topic extension. Examples and potential language patterns to use can be found in the worksheet (See Appendix B) but as a brief overview, the three potential topic expansion methods were,

1. Categorization: Can a key word from a partner's utterance be categorized under a broader theme that can be used to segue or extend the conversation?

2. Association: Does a keyword from a partner's utterance evoke any other themes or related topics that the conversation could be steered towards?

3. Personal Connection/Observations/ Facts: Are there any particular anecdotes on the topic or things a person has heard, read or noticed that might help bring depth to or expand the topic?

The overall keyword capitalization method, and example language suggestions were intended to encourage intersubjectivity via the signposting of connections, segues and keywords in order to make the contingency of students' topic moves visible to both their partners and the assessor (Lam, 2018; Burch & Kley, 2020). In addition, the "association", and "personal connection/observations / facts" aspects were intended to encourage students to take on ownership of both self and other-initiated topics in order to promote deeper mutuality and a more collaborative interaction pattern (Galaczi, 2008).

Introduction and use of resources

The drawing prompts and topic expansion worksheet were introduced in week eight of the 15-week semester following two question list style assessments held in weeks four and seven in which issues were highlighted and given as feedback to the students. From week eight onwards, a new drawing prompt was introduced and used in class each week. The prompts were used both as simple one-off warmup activities, as well being integrated as advance organizers and summary activities for broader topics covered in class before culminating in a final conversation test using a selection of prompts in week 15.

Each time the drawing prompts were used, students were given about 10 minutes to complete their drawing and think through their content before being paired with random partners and encouraged to converse about what they and their partner had written and expand the conversation using methods from the worksheet when applicable. These practice runs were done in pairs and would span about 10 minutes, with students rotating to speak with multiple partners if time allowed.

Whilst the drawing prompts were different each time, the repetition of the task type provided multiple opportunities for student speaking practice. To help acquaint students with the topic expansion methods, either the teacher or a volunteer student would show their own model drawing to the class. Then, through group work and whole class discussion, students used the topic development methods to extend out the initial topic in different ways. Part of this centered on demonstrating how speakers can use the method to drop and pick up on keywords to help shape and respond to the flow of a conversation.

This consistent repetition of the task style was used by the teacher to observe students' interactions and capitalize on key feedback points to model techniques and language.

Finally, in the final week of the semester (week 15), the students completed a final paired speaking assessment in which they could choose one option from a selection of different drawing prompts. Some of the drawing prompts had been done in class and some were new. Partners were selected at random, with no promise that

a participant's partner will have chosen the same prompt. The conversations went for 10 minutes and students were instructed that there was no need for a 50/50 split and that the main goal was to be responsive to the partner and the topic at hand and "go with the flow". It should be noted that the rubric for the assignment (See Appendix C) did not make any stipulations about "completion of story" and instead rewarded the extent to which students could give enough exposition to their ideas on either self or other-initiated topics whilst still being reflexive to their partner's input.

Observations and Discussion

Initial observations indicate that the drawing prompt/topic development method worked well on a number of levels. Firstly, in terms of teacher planning, the underpinning ideas within the extended research available on IC helped the teacher to articulate the more ephemeral notions of what is "natural", and how abstract terms such as "presence" or "engagement" manifest in student interactions. This was beneficial in ascertaining what was lacking in student interactions, what goals lay ahead, and ultimately informing potential teaching approaches to raise student awareness and increase their repertoire of skills.

From a classroom teaching perspective, the drawing prompt and topic expansion format provided some dynamics to class time, creating opportunities for individual and pair/small group work as well as class-wide discussions. These moments also facilitated a "Show, don't tell" dynamic, offering multiple points for modeling and the co-construction of understanding and skill development at multiple levels.

In terms of the efficacy of the method to facilitate more natural peer-to-peer interaction patterns, the prompts provided a novel forum for students to navigate all "branches" of Galaczi and Taylor's (2018) construct of interactional competence. Students engaged in lively conversations, which showed diversity and spontaneity in the absence of a laid-out track of prescribed questions. Especially in regards to topic development, student performances on the final speaking test showed promising results on the "Topic Development" and the "Content and Flexibility" aspects of the rubric used for student evaluation. However, it should be noted that the rubric remains a work in progress and thus there may be some potential oversights across marking criteria. Despite this caveat, the teacher's observational notes on student performances also indicate a promising shift in student performance. Comments such as "Topics abandoned too quickly", "Failed to capitalize on interesting points from partner", "Overuse of WH questions", "Monologic spiels of memorized content in inappropriate places", and "Abrupt 'How about you?' exchanges" which had previously been commonplace, noticeably decreased. Students were observed using

different combinations of the WH questions, categorization, association and personal connection techniques from the worksheet. This contributed towards more responsive and nuanced style of topic development and connection with each other's ideas. Their increased engagement with other-initiated ideas also indicates a move from Galaczi's (2008) parallel pattern of interaction, towards higher mutuality and a more collaborative model. Alongside this, explicitly stating connections and building on each other's ideas helped give a more in sync or contingent *(Lam, 2018)* feel to student utterances and increased perceived intersubjectivity between speakers.

Finally, post-semester student questionnaires also suggested positive student experiences in terms of the amount of speaking opportunities in class, speaking confidence levels, and general enjoyment.

Limitations

Despite these initial promising results, there are some caveats. Firstly, as this was a teaching intervention done in active response in order to remedy issues in student performances during the semester, there are some limitations in the type of data obtained and the claims can be made. Whilst the initial trialing of the drawing prompt and topic development method shows promise, some consideration must be made as to how the research process and results could be made more empirically sound in the future.

For example, in terms of the aforementioned positive questionnaire results, these questionnaires unfortunately dealt with the course as a whole and, as such, there is conflation with other activities and teaching approaches used throughout the semester. With this in mind, future exploration of this research will likely benefit from a more focused questionnaire to ascertain how students perceived the method in terms of enjoyability and classroom atmosphere, provision of speaking opportunities, access to and understandability of concepts, level of difficulty and relevance to student goals. In addition, a more compartmentalized analysis of each step of the teaching method using Laurillard's (2013) conversational framework, which focuses on providing different types of communication, modelling, practice, and production across different learning activities, could be also useful when implementing and evaluating the classroom teaching aspect of the approach.

It would also be a valuable step to bookend the intervention with more robust pre and post-implementation conversational analysis. In particular, a comparative analysis which isolates the type of topic extension moves, and the frequency at which they occur, could provide a more effective scope through which to quantify any improvement in interactional patterns and topic development.

Conclusion

Whilst there are limitations to the implications that can be drawn from this initial trial, potential for the future is promising. Initial observations made by the teacher suggest that the drawing prompts and topic expansion worksheet can be an enjoyable, and potentially beneficial way to model, reinforce, and assess aspects the topic expansion aspect of IC. It is hoped that a second trial of the teaching method within a more robust research framework will help to further evaluate and improve the method.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Drawing Prompt Examples
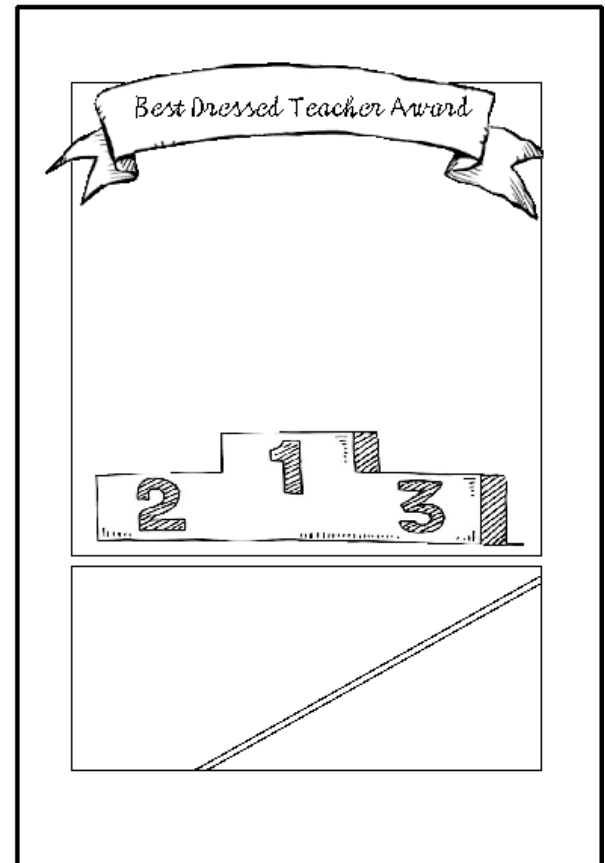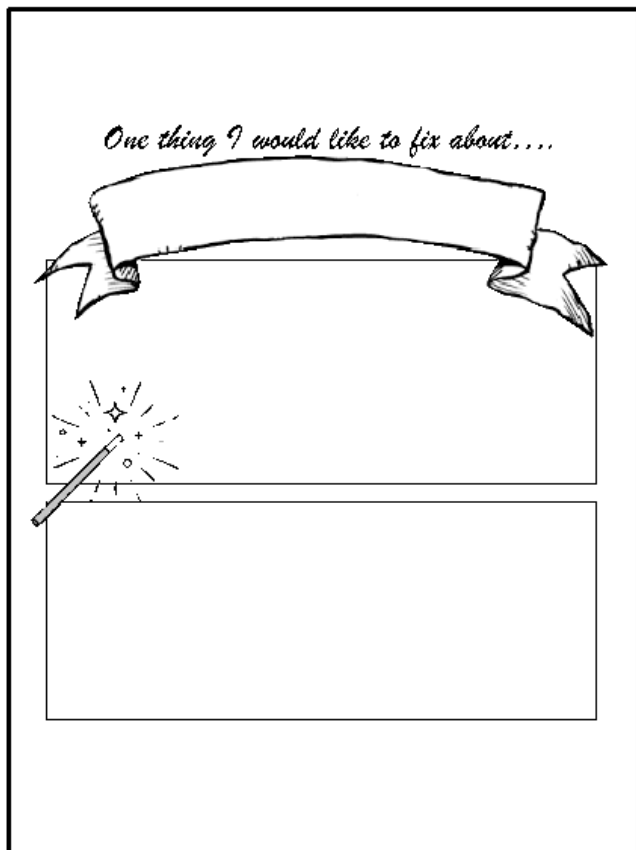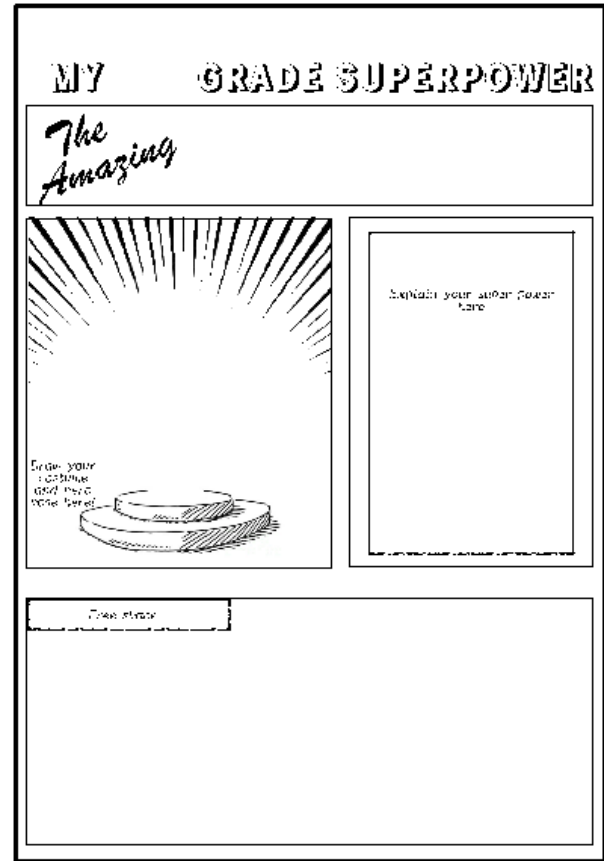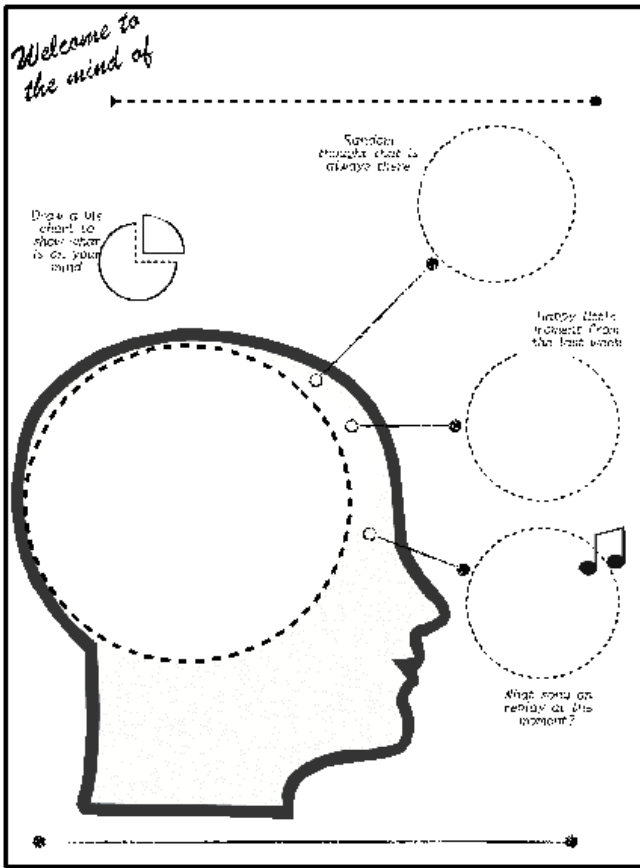
Appendix B: Topic Expansion Method Worksheet

Remember to acknowledge what your partner has said -
Surprise Expressions / Facial Expressions / Paraphrasing / Micro comments / まとめ type comments

	"Wh" Questions	Categorization	Association	Personal Connections / observations / facts
Thought process	What more details can I ask for? Detail questions	What are we really talking about?	What does this make me think of?	Do I have any stories or facts about this topic?
Language Suggestions	What? Why? Who? When? Where? How?	Let's talk about ____ in general. How about ____ in general?	When I think of ____ I think of _____. Whenever I hear the word ____ I can't help but think of _____	That reminds me of when (経験) I have always thought that (忘察) I have kind of noticed that (観察) Did you know that…(トリビア)
Example I used to like LEGO but now I don't really like LEGO. Keyword = LEGO	Why don't you like lego anymore? When did you stop using lego? What things did you make? *Note: Are you actually interested? Yes? : Great. Ask away! No? : Try to use some of the other strategies.*	**Lego** > Lego is a **TOY** **Let's talk about TOYS in general…** · What **toys** did you love playing with? · Do you still have any **toys** that you kept from childhood? **Lego** > Lego is a type of **PLAY**. **How about PLAY in general?** · Did you like to **play** inside or outside? · What kind of games did you **play** as a kid? **NOTE:** Intangible things are ok too	**Lego** > **Denmark** When I think of lego I think of **Denmark**. I have always wanted to **go** to Denmark. Note: **Denmark** or **travel** can serve as our new from topic theme from now.	**That reminds me of when** I play with my <u>son</u>. He loves making things. We bought him Lego for **Christmas**. Or I have kind of noticed that Japanese kids don't really play with lego as much as **Australian** kids. **Did you know that** on average there are 80 LEGO bricks for every person on earth. **Note:** we can use these statements to drop in **keywords** as **breadcrumbs** for our partner to follow…
My partner's answer…				

Appendix C: Rubric used for Assessment of Student Performance

SPEAKING	5 - 6	3 - 4	0 - 2
Balance between speakers and Cooperation	Student shows a natural balance (doesn't talk too much or too little) and is cooperative: - Invites other student opinions - Avoids long silences by offering help or modeling an answer - Avoids dominant interruptions - Shows a variety of turn taking tactics (not just how about you)	Student shows a natural balance (doesn't talk too much or too little) but sometimes noticeably misses some of the following cooperative behaviors: - Inviting other student opinions - Avoiding long silences by offering help or modeling an answer - Avoiding dominant interruptions - Student may rely too heavily on "How about you?"	The student is either too passive or far too dominant. Student often fails to show cooperative behaviors. The other student must put in a lot of work to keep the conversation going. Student shows very variation in turn taking style - often sticking to Question, Answer, How about you? Pattern.
Topic Development	Student uses a variety of - WH questions - Categorization - Association - Personal Connection / trivia To expand both their own AND their partners topics in a natural / smooth and engaging way.	Student uses some development techniques shows some of the following problems - over reliance on WH questions - Cuts topic short in an unnatural way - Lack of "other development" - Some standout missed opportunities to develop topic	Student uses some development techniques but commonly shows some of the following problems - over reliance on WH questions - Cuts topic short in an unnatural way - Lack of "other development" - Some standout missed opportunities to develop topic - Relies on partner to develop topics

Energy and Presence	Student consistently shows their partner they are engaged and interested through consistent • Backchanneling - Including comments • Gestures / expressions / eye contact • Intonation and surprise expressions	Student generally shows interest and engagement but is sometimes inconsistent or misses the mark with: • Backchanneling -Including comments • Gestures / expressions / eye contact • Intonation and surprise expressions	Student does not seem interested or engaged and this shows through a lack of • Backchanneling - Including comments • Gestures / expressions / eye contact • Intonation and surprise expressions • Student generally does not show enough enthusiasm
Content and flexibility	Content is well chosen and conveys information smoothly but also change gears/pivot with partners input. Student makes an active effort to include interesting content through opinions / feelings / reasons / stories etc. Often shows that they have listened to and thought about what their partner has said in their contributions.	Content is not quite as smooth as it could be or student does not always show the ability to change gears and or pivot with partners input. Student generally an active effort to include interesting content through opinions / feelings / reasons / etc. but falls short on some occasions. Contributions sometimes seem overly pre-rehearsed and/or said without real connections to what their partner has said.	Student has either not prepared well enough to smoothly tell content or is overly rehearsed and cannot be flexible with partners input. Student does not make enough effort to include interesting content through opinions / feelings / reasons / etc. Contributions often seem pre-rehearsed and/or said without connections to what their partner has said.
Can you be understood?	The student's speaking can be understood enough to have a conversation without trouble or a lot of patience. Ideas are not too simple	The student's speaking has some mistakes can be understood enough to have a conversation without too much trouble. Ideas not TOO simple	The listener has to spend a lot of effort thinking about what the student is trying to say. Ideas too simple. Partner or teacher has to spend a lot of effort trying to understand the student

Using Positive Psychology Interventions to Support EFL Students

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Positive psychology, which focuses on well-being and aims to promote flourishing (Seligman, 2011), has its relevance in language learning. Promoting a positive learning environment and highlighting positive experiences can impact students' perspectives and beliefs with regards to learning (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2022; Seligman, 2019). Integrating positive psychology interventions into the language classroom can foster a learning environment (Hegelsen, 2016). Such interventions can heighten students' awareness of their strengths and positive aspects of their learning experience (Gregersen, 2019). This in turn, can boost their motivation and resilience, aiding them in maintaining their learning journey (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). In this practice-oriented paper, we will share five examples of positive psychology interventions that we applied with our students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes and during one-to-one advising sessions.

日本の EFL の授業では、相手の考えを掘り下げることが欠如していたり、生徒同士が一方的に話すモノローグ的な会話が特徴的である。そこで筆者は、相互作用能力の研究分野に基づいた指導法を試行した。この指導法では、テーマ別に描かれたプロンプトとトピック展開法を説明するワークシートと組み合わせて、生徒の会話のための出発点として使用した。教師の振り返りや実施した会話の総括的な評価の観察から、この方法の有効性が評価された。生徒に対して、この方法により特化したアンケートの実施や生徒のパフォーマンスの会話分析が必要であることが明らかになったが、この最初の試行から得られた観察結果は有望であり、プロンプトの使用により、トピック広げる手法を生徒に紹介し、練習、フィードバック、そして応答させる機会を提供できることを示唆している。

In this practice-oriented paper, we will discuss the relevance and the benefits of positive psychology in language learning. We will introduce positive psychology interventions that we have learned from literature but also from resources about advising and reflection activities. In our functions as learning advisors and lecturers, we have applied those interventions with our EFL undergraduate students, both in classes and during one-to-one advising sessions at a university in Japan. Though we did not conduct research, we noticed from our observations that the interventions enable students to notice their strengths and achievements, which result in higher motivation and self-confidence. Our aim for this paper is to share these positive psychology interventions so that other language teachers can also cultivate positivity in their classes.

What is Positive Psychology?

While psychology tends to focus on treatments dealing with pathological effects, positive psychology concentrates on recognizing and building upon the positive qualities of life (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000). That does not mean that positive psychology coerces people to completely ignore all negative aspects of life such as the difficulties and stresses as well as the array of emotions in life (e.g., in language learning). Rather, it attempts to build the "understanding that along with neurosis, psychosis, and a host of other ills, life also has an abundance of positives" (Gregersen, 2019, p. 96). Defined as "the scientific study of what goes right in life" (Fresacher 2016, p. 344), positive psychology aims to promote well-being and to help people flourish by increasing five factors, known under the acronym PERMA (Seligman, 2011):

- Positive emotion, including pleasure, comfort, ecstasy, happiness, and life satisfaction,

- Engagement, defined as something that a person can get totally absorbed in,

- Relationships, referring to a sense of belonging and of connection to people,

- Meaning, "belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than self" (p. 17),

- Accomplishment or a sense of fulfillment.

According to Seligman, these five factors, not only happiness, which is part of positive emotion, are necessary for a person to feel a sense of well-being.

Relevance of Positive Psychology in Language Learning

Language learning is a long-term process involving positive and negative emotions (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2022; Oxford, 2016). It can be enjoyable and exciting for some people, but it can be stressful, demotivating and cause anxiety for others; it requires patience, perseverance, action and courage (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Williams et al., 2021). Additionally, learners' emotions and thoughts can fluctuate (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014) depending on many factors such as test scores, classroom interactions, and performances. Emotions influence learners' motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). For instance, a highly motivated learner can lose their motivation due to not performing as well as they hoped (e.g., a low TOEIC score). On the other hand, a learner who is not usually willing to participate in class discussions may find motivation to speak after receiving positive feedback and encouragement from a teacher and their peers (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Positive emotions can help learners keep and increase existing motivation, making positive emotions an "additional fuel" enabling motivation to be long-term (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 85). Therefore, promoting a positive learning environment and highlighting positive experiences can impact learners' motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021), their performance (Oxford, 2016) as well as their perspectives and beliefs with regards to learning (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2022; Seligman, 2019). That is why positive psychology has its place in education and should be fostered and practiced in the classroom.

Further, positive psychology is beneficial not only for students but also for teachers. Who would not wish to have students who have positive emotions, are engaged in class activities, have good relationships with one another, find what they learn meaningful, and are aware of their achievements? As Helgesen (2016) says "happy, engaged students learn more" (p. 321), is that not what all teachers want? Talbot (2022) summarizes the importance of well-being for both students and teachers well in this statement:

> A positive sense of well-being is a necessary condition for both language learners and language teachers; it forms the foundation for successful teaching and successful learning and should be a central concern of educational stakeholders seeking to support learners and teachers' development (p. 200).

However, teachers themselves might not be willing to do extra class tasks designed to purposefully promote well-being, not necessarily because they do not believe in the benefits of such tasks, but they feel they already have enough responsibility. Furthermore, they may feel they do not have sufficient time even to finish the required activities in their syllabi. Helgesen (2016) suggests, "we should think of positive psychology tasks as more of an opportunity than a responsibility" (p. 305). Those can be opportunities to foster well-being and also to practice different language skills as well as reflective skills. Considering the advantages of having happy and engaging learners, it is worth integrating those tasks into the classroom.

Examples of Positive Psychology Interventions

In this section, we give five examples of positive psychology interventions that we have learned and adapted from the literature related to positive psychology, advising, and reflection activities. The interventions are *three good things, confidence-building diary, savoring, action logs,* and *medal*.

Three Good Things

The first positive psychology intervention we suggest is called *three good things* (Helgesen, 2016) or *what-went-well exercise* (Seligman, 2011). This writing task enables students to recall good events that happened during the day and the reasons why they occurred. Such regular practice gets students in the habit of noticing positive aspects in their lives and can even reduce depression (Seligman, 2011). We suggest providing students with linguistic support to help students express their emotions and expand their vocabulary repertoire at the same time. A list of adjectives denoting positive emotion such as *happy*, *excited*, *wonderful*, *motivated*, *cheerful*, *comfortable* can be helpful. Also, we recommend linguistic scaffolding like in Figure 1. This writing task can also be done at the end of each week or at the beginning of class. Assigning this as a routine task at the beginning of class and then having students share one of their positive things as a warm-up activity is ideal. If that is not possible, however, we think implementing this

activity in more distant intervals, such as after completing a unit or assessments, may still be beneficial.

Figure 1

Linguistic Scaffolds adapted from Bennett and Yarwood (2021)

I feel	happy excited fulfilled motivated	because…
I was able to…	and I realized… so now I will…	

Confidence-building Diary

The second intervention is confidence-building diary from Kato and Mynard (2016). While three good things can be about anything positive in life, confidence-building diary helps students focus on small daily achievements that are specifically related to their language learning (see Figure 2). Confidence-building diary enables students to consciously think about small improvements that they might not easily notice. These can be tasks they were able to complete, help they could provide to someone by using the target language, or even just the fact of being able to remember a useful word at an opportune time. Confidence-building diary, thus, allows students to notice and appreciate small achievements and to realize that what they do is meaningful. We suggest that students write in their diary every day, and then have an opportunity to share their "biggest achievements" with their peers once a week, time permitting. Sharing will help them reflect on their achievements once again, interact with their peers on positive things, learn from their peers, and discover their peers' achievements. That is one way for them to "celebrate" those achievements.

Figure 2

Confidence-building Diary adapted from Kato and Mynard (2016)

Confidence-building diary

Tell yourself everyday about something **GOOD** and **POSITIVE** you have done in your English study. This will increase your confidence and motivate you to continue through even the most difficult times.

In this diary, write something good and positive about your English study. Think about how that makes you feel about your English ability:

Day 1	Activity: *"I went to the Academic Support Area and enjoyed talking with a teacher. I was able to use the new words I learned in our conversation!"* Feelings: *"I felt happy as I could realize my progress."*

Savoring

Savoring is a technique "to deliberately and mindfully derive pleasure and fulfilment from a positive experience, either in the present or by allowing our minds to 'time travel'" (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020, p. 44). Such a technique allows positive emotion to increase in intensity and to last longer (Seligman, 2011). One way to better understand the concept of savoring is to consider the opposite strategy which is coping. As Gregersen et al. (2014) explain:

> A more familiar process comparable in some ways to savouring is coping—that is, where an unpleasant event engenders undesirable emotions that individuals deal with by attempting to change the event itself, its consequences, or themselves in order to decrease the negative impact as quickly as possible. (p. 333)

In other words, as opposed to coping with undesirable experiences, savoring is a practice of focusing on desirable outcomes and achievements. Gregersen et al. (2014) continue,

> Coping strategies in language learning, such as dealing with error correction or seeking extra help from the teacher, are often taught explicitly in the classroom. Compared to coping, however, savoring strategies such as anticipating positive events in the future, relishing them in the moment and reminiscing about those in the past seem to be taught less frequently. (p. 334)

In a language learning context, savoring can be done right after assessments, projects, presentations, or other difficult activities. The following questions can be used to relish positive events in the moment (or right after something important has happened):

- What did you do well in your presentation? How are you feeling?

- What did you like most in your project?

- How are you feeling now that the project is finished?

To help students reminisce past positive experiences or to give them a boost, we suggest questions like the following:

- What are you most proud of this semester?

- What is something you couldn't do at the beginning of the semester, but you can do now?

Some students could find it difficult to focus only on positive points, for example, after doing a presentation

or a project. If that is the case, they can be given the opportunity to also share the negative points, but to help them develop more positivity, we would recommend giving them instructions like the following:

- Think of one thing that needs to be improved and three things that went well in your presentation.

To help students anticipate positive events in the future, questions related to the achievement of their goals (which should have been addressed in class earlier) can be used:

- What is your goal? How will you feel when your goal is achieved?

- Imagine that you get the scores you need for TOEFL. How would you feel? Who are you going to share the news with?

Action Logs

The fourth intervention we would like to introduce is a form of "action logging" (see Murphey, 1993; Miyake-Warkentin, et al., 2020; Caballero & Bennet [sic], 2023). Action logs are "documents that students use to record activities of a class and their evaluations, which are later reviewed by a teacher in order to adjust the activities to meet students' needs" (Caballero & Bennet [sic], 2023). In brief, the action log allows students to be aware of their mood at the beginning (pre-class) and at the end of a class (post-class), set a goal for the class and subsequently their level of goal achievement, and finally provide feedback to their teacher. Useful language and language frames are provided for students as to lessen the strain of coming up with their own language to express their emotions (see Bennett & Yarwood, 2021). As seen in Figure 3, both *Good* and *Not Good* adjectives are provided on the right side of the action log. As mentioned above, positive psychological approaches are not about ignoring or avoiding negative emotions as Gregersen, et al. (2014) state,

> If positive emotion is like the wind in a ship's sails, negative emotion is like the rudder keeping a ship on course. It is not the presence of positive emotion but the ratio of positive to negative emotion that is especially important for wellbeing. (p. 329)

In the pre-class section of the action log, students are asked to share their current feelings and set a goal for the class. After answering these questions, students are encouraged to ask their peers how they feel and what they hope to achieve in the class. The purpose for this pre-class activity is to facilitate relatedness (see Ryan & Deci, 2017) between students and provide them with the opportunity to set a goal that is self-endorsed and which may become a positive learning experience. Both

the post- and pre-sections can take place in the first and last three to five minutes of a class resulting between a cumulative 6 to 10 minutes of class time.

In the post-class section, students are asked to what level they were able to achieve the goal set in the pre-class section by completing the sentence "I was … to achieve my goal today" (see Figure 3) by choosing one of four options:

- completely not able

- somewhat able

- able

- more than able

They are also asked to once again share how they are feeling. Although the feedback section is not directly designed as a positive psychological activity, it can provide opportunities for the teacher to implement positive interventions in future classes. For example, the teacher could receive feedback that students are feeling discouraged or feeling a high sense of achievement and then can respond accordingly. Finally, the action log can be adapted to facilitate the above-mentioned interventions (e.g., three good things, and savoring*)* as well as other reflection activities.

Figure 3

An Example of an Action Log

Medals

Medals, an activity suggested by Helgesen (2016), can be used after a pair or group work, for example, a collaborative project or a collaborative presentation. For

this activity, which is similar to what Dörnyei (2001) suggested, teachers need to provide each student with a few small pieces of paper with pictures of medals on them or star-shaped pieces of paper. They can also give students plain pieces of paper and ask them to decorate and to cut those according to their liking. Then, each student is asked to write a quality of each of their partners, which they noticed during the project, on their piece of paper. That piece of paper is the medal. We would recommend encouraging students to state the reason for the quality they are stating. For example, they can write "You are a good organizer. Thanks to you, we were able to finish the project before the deadline", "You are an enjoyable person to work with because you are a good listener". Medals enables students to recognize the advantages of peer collaboration and their peers' qualities, which can enhance positive relationships in class. It also allows students to have their qualities recognized and highlighted by their peers, which is an achievement in itself.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have established the critical role of positive psychology in enhancing language learning experiences. By integrating targeted interventions, EFL classrooms can become environments that foster greater student engagement and well-being. The interventions showcased in this paper may enhance the potential for learners' positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning-making, and achievement, which are the "five well-being pillars" (Butler & Kern, 2016, p. 2). We implore, or at least hope, that EFL teachers will consider the benefits of the interventions discussed and make an effort to implement them in their classrooms.

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Effect of Self-Efficacy and Proficiency on Speaking Test Scores

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This paper investigates the relationship between 1st-year university students' self-efficacy, English proficiency, and speaking test performance. English skills are essential for participation in global education and employment opportunities; however, the proficiency level among Japanese students has not yet reached the targets set by the Japanese government. While existing research points to self-efficacy as a predictor of academic performance, a more detailed study is needed comparing it with students' performance at the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages levels. In this survey study, a teacher research stance was adopted, and data were triangulated from self-efficacy questionnaires, English proficiency assessments, and speaking test scores from 116 1st year university students. The results indicate that although these measurements are correlated, students have lower self-efficacy scores than expected, suggesting the need for interventions.

本研究では、大学１年生の自己効力感、英語力、およびスピーキングテストの成績との関係を調査しました。英語スキルは、国際的な教育や就業の機会への参加に不可欠ですが、日本の学生の英語力はまだ政府の目標に達していません。自己効力感が学業成績の予測要因であることは研究によって示唆されていますが、学生の自己効力感と欧州言語共通参照枠のレベルでの成績に関するさらなる研究が必要です。この調査研究では、教師の研究スタンスを採用し、自己効力感のアンケート、英語力評価、スピーキングテストのスコアからデータを三重に収集しました。その結果、これらの測定値は相関していますが、学生は期待されるよりも低い自己効力感のスコアを示し、学生の自己効力感を向上させるための介入が必要であることが示されました。

Due to English's status as a lingua franca for global communication, students' English proficiency level can determine access to global educational and employment opportunities (Baker, 2016; Breaden, 2014; OECD, 2022). However, the English proficiency of Japanese university students is low compared to other Asian countries (English First, 2022) which places them at a disadvantage. Accordingly, over the years the Japanese government has implemented various projects such as Tobitate and Global 30 to increase student interest and ability in English. Further, The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) have set the goal for at least 50% of high school students to achieve Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) A2 by graduation, which is determined by gaining the Step Eiken grade pre-2 (MEXT, 2022). Prominent research has pointed to how affective factors such as self-efficacy (hereafter SE) impact student academic achievement prompting change in proficiency levels (Bandura, 1982; Mills, 2014). Since SE is influenced by behavioral, environmental, and personal determinants, measures to elevate SE can stimulate higher achievement levels. Consequently, the purpose of this research was to explore how students' SE levels related to English proficiency levels and achievement on an English speaking test.

Self-Efficacy Theoretical Framework

Self-efficacy is a core component of Bandura's social cognitive theory which relates to people's capability to control their actions through the interplay of behavioral, environmental, and personal determinants (Bandura, 1994); within that framework, SE refers to the confidence a person feels in their ability to perform a specific task. Self-efficacy is determined by four factors: (a) mastery experiences, which constitute the past experiences with a task, (b) social modelling, which are opportunities to watch similar others such as classmates complete the task successfully, (c) social persuasion, which is the verbal support that significant others such as friends and teachers give the student about the task, and (d) physiological states, which are the students' interpretations of their emotions related to the tasks. Bandura advises measuring SE with Likert scales in which participants are asked to indicate how confident they feel to successfully complete a specific future task by choosing a point on a 11-point Likert scale (Bandura, 2006).

Self-efficacy developed as a treatment for people with snake phobias in which participants who underwent interventions, such as observing others holding snakes and looking at photos of snakes, achieved an increase in SE and achievement. Subsequently, SE advanced to encompass how people determine their ability to control wider life events, especially how students with high SE are likely to attempt difficult tasks and exert higher cognitive effort than those with low SE (Bandura, 1994). It is important to understand that SE is different to other similar sounding concepts such as self-worth or self-esteem. The latter are general personality traits which relate to how people perceive themselves in broad terms; SE is highly domain specific, for example, people can have high SE in some areas such as math and low in others such as music (Zimmerman, 1995). SE is also predictive of future actions rather than an assessment of past ones (Bandura, 2012).

Self-efficacy in EFL

Research suggests that SE equips students with diverse, beneficial learning outcomes in foreign language learning such as the formation of long-term learning goals (Bai & Wang, 2020; Kormos et al., 2011) and the adoption of advantageous learning strategies (Gahungu, 2009; Mills et al., 2007; Wang & Bai, 2017). Additionally, SE is useful for teachers because it can be developed by implementing activities that foster the formation of the four sources of SE. Accordingly, there has recently been more interest in the role SE plays in foreign language learning (Graham, 2022; Kobayashi, 2018).

In the Japanese context, research has also shown the positive effects of SE on language learning achievement. In Leemings' study (2017) increases in speaking SE and ability over the course of a year were attributed to students' familiarity with the course and influence of classmates. Similarly, SE has been shown to be predictive of success in English immersion programs (Thompson et al., 2019). It is also likely that SE works in combination with other affective forces to yield gains in performance. For example, in a study of vocabulary acquisition, SE was predictive of development through effort regulation mechanisms (Onoda, 2014).

Teacher Research

This research was conducted within the framework of teacher research. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle, teacher research is a form of practitioner research which positions the teacher as "knower and agent in classrooms and in larger wider educational contexts" (2009, p. 7). Hence, teachers are not just consumers of research conducted by others outside of their context, but creators of research grounded within their local practice which can impact on wider teaching contexts through dissemination to national and international research communities (Borg, 2010). Although teacher-research has an inherent element of subjective bias, it is not seen as a fault of the stance if ethical considerations, right to withdraw, and privacy are fully addressed. Indeed, the teachers' closeness to the research participants is regarded as a benefit because the teacher's in-depth knowledge of students and context allows them to anticipate potential issues with implementing the research (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 150). Finally, since the teacher is researching their own context, the research results contribute to ongoing development of teaching practice and student learning goals. They should also have direct benefits to the research participants (Leuverink & Aarts, 2019). In this way, the intrusive nature of third-party researchers is ameliorated.

Research Aim

The body of research points to SE having a positive influence on academic achievement. Further research into students' SE levels at the different CEFR levels would facilitate assessment of student confidence to reach MEXT's target A2 level and identify if confidence at different CEFR levels correlates to achievement. The research aim was to administer a SE questionnaire to 1st -year university students to examine the relationship between their English proficiency scores, English speaking test scores, and SE to speak English as a foreign language (hereafter SE to speak English). The research questions were:

RQ1: How confident do students feel to complete speaking tasks at the A2 level?

RQ2: Which items on the SE scale do students feel most and least confident to complete?

RQ3: How do students' speaking SE level and TOEIC scores correlate with English speaking test results?

RQ4: What implications for practice can be gleaned from the results of RQ1-3?

Methods

The study used a survey design employing three different research instruments to achieve triangulation of data. The participants were 116 students (female=51, male=65) in their 1st year at a small, Japanese university managed by the local city council. The students were from the economics and the art department and all enrolled in the General English course. Their English proficiency level was CEFR A2.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed by explaining the purpose of the study to all students and clarifying that students would not be identifiable after anonymization. Additionally, students were told that

non-participation would in no way influence their grades and that there would be no follow-up contact in relation to their responses. Informed consent was collected from all participants. Students wishing to participate were asked to fill in their student number on the self-efficacy questionnaire so that data from the three measures could be matched. After matching was completed, student numbers were replaced with random numbers to anonymize the data. Once this step was completed, it was no longer possible to identify which number belonged to which student. Furthermore, to reduce the participation burden on students, the data collection instruments were administered as part of the course development and results were used to transform teaching practice in alignment with teacher research conventions.

Instruments

The data collection instruments were the students' TOEIC bridge test scores which were administered in April 2022. This test was administered to students for assignment to different proficiency level English classes. The students' SE to speak English levels were collected with a SE scale which was based on CEFR descriptors for levels A1 to C1 and phrased as can-do sentences (see Appendix A). The highest level, C2, was not included because it denotes a fluent, native-speaker level and most students would respond with low scores. Additionally, inclusion of such high-performance items might cause students to form negative appraisals of ability or unattainable learning goals. The scale used an 11-point Likert scale as recommended by Bandura, with 0 denoting *not confident at all*, and 10 *definitively confident*. The 11-point scale was chosen over a 5-point one because, as respondents tend to avoid the extreme points, in practice, only three choices remain, and variance becomes limited. Thus, an 11-point scale is a more sensitive measure and yields better variance (Bandura, 2006). All items were translated into Japanese and checked by two native speakers. The internal consistency of the scale was excellent with Cronbach alpha score of o.964. and all corrected inter-item correlations were over 0.50.

The final data collection instrument was the results of a 1:30-2:00 minute speaking test. Students delivered a speech about a time when someone was kind to them. This was selected with reference to the CEFR descriptor for addressing an audience at the A2 level "Can give a short, rehearsed presentation on a topic pertinent to their everyday life, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. Can cope with a limited number of straightforward follow-up questions" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 66) The speech was graded out of thirty points using a rubric which evaluated the following three areas, each marked out of ten: (a) content, which encompassed vocabulary, grammar, and language choice; (b) structure, which

included use of discourse markers, logical progression, and engaging style; and (c) delivery, which included use of gestures, eye contact, and body language.

After collection, the data was checked for missing and erroneous entries and then inputted into SPSS 28. The means and standard deviations in descriptive statistics were examined for outliers, and none were deemed to be unusual.

Results

The data was collected in 2022. The TOEIC bridge scores were collected in April at the beginning of the academic year, and the self-efficacy questionnaire and speaking test were collected in July during the second semester.

First, means and standard deviations of the self-efficacy scale were examined to understand students' self efficacy level for each of the 5 CEFR levels in the study (see Appendix B). Table 1 shows that A1 has the highest SE level (*M*=5.75) and C1 has the lowest level (*M*=1.47). However, it is apparent that the only level which most students expressed confidence at is A1.

Table 1

Mean SE Scores for Different CEFR Levels

CEFR Level	Min	Max	M	St. D
A1 items	1.00	10.00	5.75	2.16
A2 items	1.25	10.00	4.83	1.80
B1 items	0.00	7.75	3.32	1.75
B2 items	0.00	7.50	3.24	1.89
C1 items	0.00	8.75	1.47	1.67

Additionally, a histogram for average A2 was created to understand the distribution in-depth. The results resemble a normal curve with a peak at 3.5 mark which is also the mode for the data set (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Distribution of Average A2 SE Scores
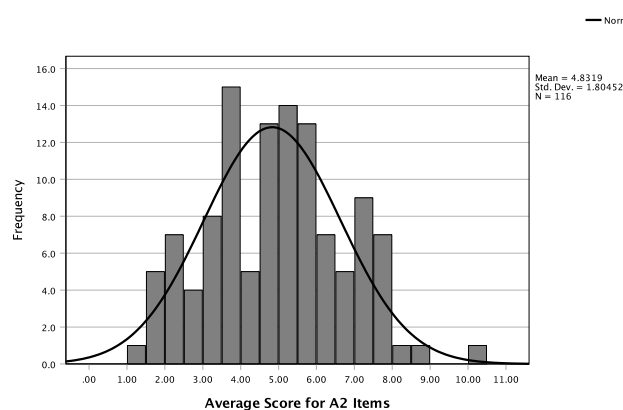
After describing the context of the course, what was conducted before, during, and after the spring semester of academic school year 2020 by the team of teachers teaching in this program will be explored.

Next, the means and standard deviations of individual items were examined to understand which items students felt most and least confident to perform (Appendix B). The item that students felt most confidence for was item 1, "I can ask and answer questions about name and age" (A1), and least confidence was item 20, "I can describe complex issues with their causes and offer an appropriate conclusion" (C1). In total, students indicated confidence to perform 6 items and lack of confidence for 14 items.

Finally, correlation analysis using Pearson's coefficient was conducted to examine the relationship between measures (Table 2). TOEIC Bridge scores and SE had large positive correlation (.508); speaking test and SE, and speaking test and TOEIC bridge scores had medium positive correlations (.457 and .401 respectively). According to Cohen's (1988) conventions correlations below.3 are small, between .3 and .5 are medium and over .5 are large.

Table 2

Correlations between Speaking Test, TOEIC Bridge, and Self-Efficacy

Variable	1.	2.	3.
1. Speaking Test	-		
2. TOEIC Bridge	.457**	-	
3. Self-Efficacy	.401**	.508**	-

**p<.001

Discussion

In this section, the results will be discussed in relation to the four research questions and will conclude with implications for practice and suggestions for future research.

Confidence to Perform A2 Speaking Tasks

Students did not indicate that they felt confident to perform speaking tasks at the A2 level. This was not unexpected considering that the percentage of high school graduates reaching A2 level or Eiken pre-2 whilst at high school still stands at 48.7% at A2 or higher level (Ministry of Education, 2022). Just under half of high school graduates attaining A2 level is strikingly similar to the average SE at A2 level self-efficacy scale of just under half 4.83. However, the majority of students attained A2 level scores on the TOEIC Bridge test and also the majority of students passed the A2 level speaking assignment. The result suggests that many

students' SE is unreasonably low and does not reflect what they can actually achieve. Although, some students did express confidence to achieve A2 tasks, it is surprising that other students did not feel confident to complete A2 tasks such as to give a short self-introduction or to talk briefly talk about their family.

Confidence to Perform Speaking Tasks at Different Levels

Examination of the means for the SE items indicate that the item that students felt most confident about was asking and answering questions about name and age (*M*=6.38). However, this figure is only just over the midpoint of 5 and shows slight confidence. This is similar to the results for the other A1 items. Although means were over the midpoint of 5, there were several students who indicated that they were not confident to perform quite basic speaking tasks. This finding mirrors that of Ahn et al., (2016) who found that students' from East Asian cultures often understate their ability. It is likely that, although students' low of SE to perform basic tasks does not necessarily reflect their actual ability, it does negatively impact on what they could achieve.

Not surprisingly, the item students felt least confident about was item 20 (C1). Indeed, all the C1 items scored very low, and the distribution curve of the averages showed a negative skew with most answers clustering to the left. Closer examination of the inter-item correlations shows that all C1 items have low correlations to the other items in the scale. This is probably due the difference in what is being asked, the A and B level items address the ability to converse, describe, and give justification for opinions; at the C1 level students also need to have knowledge of complex issues and then discuss them in depth. In other words, the items are measuring not only English-speaking knowledge but also knowledge of topical issues.

Correlation of English Proficiency and Self-Efficacy on Speaking Performance

The research showed that both students' self-efficacy to speak English and their English-speaking proficiency were correlated to speaking test scores. English proficiency had a strong positive correlation and self-efficacy had a medium correlation. It is essential to point out that although this indicates that students who have high SE also score high on the speaking test it does not reveal causation. However, considering that the self-efficacy scale was administered prior to the speaking test, it is likely that both students' English proficiency and the self-efficacy level is influencing the speaking test score. This finding aligns well with existing research that points to the synergic relationship between SE and proficiency (Leeming, 2017, Thompson et al., 2019; Todaka, 2017).

Implications for Practice

Both English proficiency and SE appear to influence speaking test scores of students. Considering the synergic relationship between SE, proficiency and performance, intervention of one of the items should also raise scores of other items. Therefore, it was decided at the research site to deliver more positive sources of self-efficacy experiences to students. Students' mastery experiences will be increased by using role plays and scaffolded speaking activities to expand occurrences of successful communication. The possibility of social modelling will be increased by using Japanese speakers of English in listening activities. Opportunities for using social persuasion will be enhanced by creating a vocabulary list of useful support phrases that students and teachers will be encouraged to use in class. Finally, positive physical and emotional responses to speaking English will be enriched by implementation of the previous three points along with improving the classroom environment and establishment of achievable learning goals.

Limitations and Future Research

It is important to note that this a small-scale study and, as such, the results are difficult to generalize to other contexts. There is also the possibility of bias stemming from the teacher-student relationship. Although, every effort was made to reduce the power imbalance of a teacher researching their own students, it must be acknowledged that this may have influenced how students responded. However, it is hoped that the results can be strengthened by other teacher-researchers conducting replication studies in other contexts. Other suggestions for further studies are to remove the C1 items from the scale due to the negative skew. Also, since the SE scale in this study used items from the CEFR descriptors, future work could be done to expand them with items from the CEFR J, which is specially adapted to the Japanese context. Finally, a larger study using regression analysis should be conducted to understand the contributing effects of English proficiency, SE and other factors such as goals and foreign language learning anxiety on speaking test performance.

Conclusion

This study suggests that Japanese university students do not feel confident to perform speaking tasks at MEXT's target level for high school students (CEFR A2). It also highlights that since low SE correlates to performance indicators, integrated interventions might be required to enhance both confidence and ability.

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Appendices

Appendix A: English Speaking Confidence Survey

学籍番号: _____

英語を話す自信アンケート

当てはまる答にチェック✓をつけてください。

1. **何年生ですか？**

   1年生 ☐　　2年生 ☐　　3年生 ☐　　4年生 ☐．

2. **年齢:** _____ 歳

3. **性別:** 男性 ☐　女性 ☐．

4. **国籍:** 日本 ☐　他 ☐　（国籍を書いてください）_____

5. **あなたは海外に住んだことがありますか？**

   はい ☐　　いいえ ☐．

   → 『はい』と答えた方に聞きます。

   a. どこの国ですか？ _____

   b. 何ヵ月住みましたか？

   1ヶ月以下 ☐　1ヵ月－6ヶ月 ☐　6ヶ月以上 ☐．

6. **学校の授業意外で英会話を勉強したことはありますか？**

   はい ☐（年数を書いてください）_____, いいえ ☐．

7. **あなたの両親のどちらかが母国語として英語を話しますか？**

   はい ☐　　いいえ ☐．

8. **最新の TOEIC スコアーは何点ですか？**

Directions: 以下のスケールを使って質問に答えてください。あなたの英語を話す自信についてあてはる番号 0 から 100 まで〇をつけてください。

0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10

まったく自信がない　　　　　有る程度自信がある　　　とても自信がある

1	住んでいる場所、名前、年齢などの基本的な情報について英語で聞いたり答えたりすることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
2	相手がゆっくり話すなら、自分の趣味などについての質問に英語で答えることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
3	簡単な英語で自分の住んでいる場所を説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
4	簡単な英語で友人について説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
5	相手がほとんどの質問をすれば、趣味や関心事について英語で短い会話をすることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
6	レストランで料理の注文を英語ですることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
7	いくつかの簡単な英語のフレーズを使って自己紹介ができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
8	いくつかの簡単な英語のフレーズを使って、自分の家族について話すことができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
9	海外旅行する際に、英語で道を尋ねることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
10	日本で外国人観光客に英語で道案内をすることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
11	自分の夢やその理由を英語で説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
12	おとぎ話のような短い物語を英語で説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
13	趣味や興味のあることについて、英語で率先して会話することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
14	好きな曲や映画など、好きなものの理由を英語で説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
15	趣味について英語で詳しく説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
16	ソーシャルメディアの活用など、様々な問題について英語でメリットとデメリットを説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
17	時事問題やニュースのトピックについて、自発的かつ流暢に英語で話すことができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
18	英語で自分の意見を明確に表現し、他の人の意見と関連付けることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
19	気候変動のような複雑な問題を英語で詳細に説明することができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
20	複雑な問題やその要因について説明し、適切な結論を英語で述べることができる。	0　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10

アンケートのご回答ありがとうございます！

Appendix B: Analysis of Variables

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D
1. I can ask and answer questions about name and age	1	10	6.38	2.46
2. I can answer questions about hobbies if asked slowly	1	10	5.83	2.29
3. I can explain where I live in simple English	0	10	5.51	2.46
4. I can describe my friends in simple English	0	10	5.28	2.26
5. I can have a short conversation about hobbies and interests if other takes lead	0	10	4.97	2.08
6. I can order a meal in a restaurant in English	0	10	3.81	1.97
7. I can introduce myself using several simple phrases	1	10	5.53	2.02
8. I can talk about my family using several simple phrases	1	10	5.02	2.11
9. I can ask directions in English when travelling abroad	0	10	3.79	2.09
10. I can give directions in English to a tourist in Japan	0	10	3.18	2.02
11. I can describe my future plans with reasons	0	10	3.66	2.27
12. I can narrate a short story such as a fairy tale in English	0	10	2.63	1.85
13. I can talk spontaneously about my hobbies and interets in English	0	8	3.24	1.98
14. I can describe my favorite movies and songs giving reasons	0	10	4.06	2.32
15. I can talk about my interests in detail	0	10	3.60	2.27
16. I can talk about complex subjects such as social media with their advanatages and disadvantages	0	7	2.04	1.82
17. I can talk fluently and spontaneously about current affairs	0	7	1.56	1.74
18. I can say my opinion clearly and relate it to others' opinions	0	8	1.89	2.03
19. I can explain complex issues such as climate change in English	0	10	1.28	1.76
20. I can describe complex issues with their causes and offer an appropriate conclusion	0	10	1.14	1.68

Note. Variables are written as English translation of scale items.

Reflective Practice: How Learner Reflections Facilitate Teacher Development

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Reflective practice can enhance the decision-making process essential to the professional development of teachers. Decisions made by teachers are directly related to the outcome of their courses since there are a variety of factors such as teaching methods, materials, and student engagement that must be managed. Though there are many ways teaching skills can be evaluated, these methods tend to center on course outcomes. Incorporating student reflections on the experience of learning can inform teachers about the ongoing progress of the course and level of student satisfaction The focus of reflective practice is the process of making meaning which can counteract teacher burnout. Learner reflections also create a space for communication between instructor and learner which is essential for intercultural communication. The development of awareness through reflective practice sheds light on how teachers adjust to new policies, practices, and decision-making processes.

日本語概要リフレクティブ・プラクティスは、教師の専門的な能力開発に不可欠な意思決定プロセスを強化することができる。教授法、教材、生徒の取り組み方など、管理しなければならない様々な要素があるため、教師の意思決定はコースの成果に直結する。教育スキルを評価する方法は数多くありますが、これらの方法はコースの成果を中心に行われる傾向があります。学習経験に関する学生の振り返りを取り入れることで、教師はコースの進行状況や学生の満足度について知ることができる。学習者のリフレクションはまた、異文化コミュニケーションに不可欠な、講師と学習者のコミュニケーションの場を作り出す。リフレクティブ・プラクティスを通して気づきを深めることは、教師がどのように新しい方針、実践、意思決定プロセスに適応していくかに光を当てることになる。

Reflection is the active pursuit of making meaning from experiences. Reflective practice operationalizes this process and since difficult experiences highlight what we have previously taken for granted when things go smoothly, they are the starting point of an inquiry. Incorporating reflection papers that elicit the perspective of the students can give instructors insight into their classroom activities which in turn can uncover hidden assumptions and improve communication with students. Learner reflections can give ongoing feedback to the instructor and provide information about how the course is meeting their needs, which is especially important in a classroom where cultural differences may impede communication.

Foreign language instructors who have a different cultural background from their students may face challenges interpreting of their students' behaviors. The intercultural classroom is already a complicated environment, but the abrupt changes, such as the shift to online classes, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic led to an enormous increase in mental and physical fatigue as instructors were on call around the clock to support their students as they navigated this new type of learning environment. It may be counter-intuitive to add more work while being overburdened, but adding learner reflections to the syllabus engages the teacher in the process of making meaning, an important part of professional development and job satisfaction. In sum, reflective practice has the potential to improve teaching practice, and can also counteract teacher burnout.

Reflective Practice as Professional Development

When addressing the conflict between technical rationality and competence earned from experience, Donald Schön, in his call for a new epistemology of practice (1983), developed the notion of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. His view of professional knowledge argues for the examination of experiences to properly assimilate technical knowledge to shorten the gap between theory and practice (Schön,1987).

Reflection-in-action is the ability to instantly make informed decisions in the moment. This implies taking a moment to respond rather than acting rashly. It is a skill that can be cultivated with reflective practice. Reflection-on-action is reflecting after the event. This is

where the development of awareness takes place which in turn, improves reflection-in-action. The process of reflecting after the episode during reflection-on-action influences how teachers and other professionals develop their own theory of practice. As a scholar of John Dewey, Schön was also critical of the divide between research-based theory with the messy day-to-day of practice with problems that do not have a tidy solution (Schön, 1983).

Reflective Practice as a Method of Inquiry

Practitioner Research is a "systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, p. 2.) The purpose of teacher research differs significantly from typical academic research *about* teaching. Since teacher-led research is an inquiry that aims to gain insight into individual practices or classrooms, the results are highly contextual and not generalizable. Teachers begin their inquiries as they integrate theory into practice, when they feel dissatisfaction, or when they are curious about a problem. Reflective practice as a method of first-person inquiry is subjective therefore the results are individualized (Rodgers, 2001; Torbert, 2006), but these studies add the teachers' voices to the body of academic research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

John Dewey's Theory of Inquiry

There are a variety of reflective inquiry models available to the teacher-researcher, but the underlying concepts follow John Dewey's theory of inquiry which begins with an experience—one that makes you feel uneasy or in doubt. He explains this discomfort as "genuine ignorance," (1910, p. 177) where feelings of humility, curiosity, and open-mindedness are likely to co-occur.

At the core of a reflective inquiry is the concept of reflection. Rodgers (2002) organizes Dewey's concept into four criteria. First, reflection is a meaning-making process. In other words, each process is unique, and the outcome is personalized for the individual making the inquiry. Second, it is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with roots in scientific inquiry. Although the purpose is different from the natural sciences, the inquiry is systematic and purposeful. Third, the reflection must happen in a community. To prevent rumination and getting lost in one's own perspective, the teacher-researcher can engage with an outside research community or with the learners. Finally, reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others. Rather than using the inquiry to justify teaching practices and decisions, the inquiry should open them up for examination. So, although the results of a reflective inquiry will likely lead to improved teaching practices, the aim is not to generalize a solution or to replicate it, but to go through the process of discovery for greater understanding of the current situation (Rodgers, 2002).

Reflective Practice Framework and the Reflective Cycle

Terry Borton (1970) developed an uncomplicated reflective practice model (Figure 1) that provides structure for a reflective inquiry that also allows the teacher-researcher the freedom to explore. It begins with "sensing." Like Dewey, the starting point for this model is a sense of discomfort. The teacher then gathers descriptive data from the classroom and the learners such as observations, written reflections, and interviews. "Transforming" indicates the meaning-making process as the teacher reflects on and contemplates "so what does this mean" while considering various interpretations of data. At the end of the process, in the "Now What" phase of the inquiry a new, clearer understanding of the situation and awareness of attitudes and actions informs future action.

Figure 1

Basic Model of Reflective Cycle (Borton, 1970)
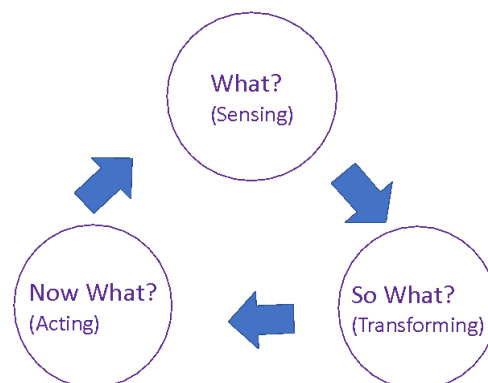
Decision-Making Processes in Foreign Language Teaching

Foreign Language Teaching

Although foreign language teaching, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL), has developed from an Applied Linguistics tradition (Freeman 1989; White, 1988), depending only on this research will result in incomplete information and difficulties will likely arise when it comes time to teach the course. People are unpredictable and learning is not so easily categorized. Everyone—teachers and students, comes into the classroom with their own histories, expectations, and reasons for being there. Schön's criticism of the gap between theory and practice (1983) is applicable for foreign language instructors who rely too heavily on theory. Applied linguistics may provide robust information about the different traditions and methods of foreign language learning, but another approach is

needed to deal with the complex and messy environment of the classroom.

Teaching as a Decision-Making Process

Donald Freeman (1989) warns about the problem of focusing too much on knowledge about language rather than the teaching of the language. He advocates finding a balance between the two disciplines of applied linguistics and education by examining how people learn to teach and has developed a model based on four components: knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness, that represents teaching as a decision-making process. Freeman describes knowledge as information about the subject, students, and the teaching context. Skills are comprised of teaching methods, classroom management and so forth. Attitude is what teachers think of themselves, the learners and teaching. Attitude, or teacher beliefs, are often hidden and stem from personal experience, unlike knowledge which is learned. Freeman (1989) defines awareness as "the capacity to recognize and monitor the attention one is giving or has given to something. (p. 33)" The difference between reacting and responding in a situation is awareness.

If instructors view teaching language as a decision-making process, then they can start to become aware of the complexity of the classroom and how their decisions affect the many layers of the teaching and learning experience. Reflective practice provides a structure to guide the teacher-researcher with their inquiry.

An Example of Reflective Practice in the Online Teaching Context

Decisions with Course Modification

When class content had to be quickly modified to fit the online format at the start of the pandemic, instructors had to navigate unfamiliar territory that may not have accommodated their current teaching practices. For lecture-based courses where students gather to listen to information, the traditional academic model can be easily transferred directly online, but for skills-based courses it was more complicated.

Engaging learners to practice English can be trying at the best of times, but when these courses went online and instructors were faced with a screen full of black boxes and silence, it became clear that simply transferring content from face-to-face classes to an online format was not appropriate. In addition, with this new format, instructors had to re-evaluate how to manage in-class practices and assignments. Finally, there was the new technology to quickly learn and then teach the students so they could attend the online lessons and successfully submit their assignments.

Deciding to Use Blended Learning

My English communication courses for first-year university students at a national university in Japan needed revamping to adjust to the online context. Blended learning which uses a backward design, experiential learning, and a project-based instructional framework (International Association of Blended Learning, 2020) matched my view of teaching and learning and incorporated elements I was already using, so I felt more comfortable about shifting my face-to-face classes online.

With blended learning, classes are a combination of face-to-face, online, and asynchronous so continuing with blended learning was a future possibility.

I also created peer groups so students could consult with each other to clarify their understanding of the classes and so they wouldn't feel so alone.

Since I teach English communication courses, I look for ways for learners to exchange information. This often means assigning individual and group presentations, so my basic syllabus remained the same, but the method of submission changed drastically. I chose to use Flip (formerly Flipgrid) an application for making videos to share. Students post their video presentation in this application and their classmates ask questions in video format in the comments section. The original poster can then respond by video. I found this method to be more interactive than live presentations where students tended to be silent during question-and-answer sessions.

Learner Reflections as Part of the Syllabus

I typically incorporate two kinds of reflection papers in the syllabus: post-class reflections, and a final reflection report. These assignments are evaluated based on the details of the descriptions.

Post-class reflection questions focus on the lesson just taught so the comments can help the instructor understand how the class aims are being interpreted by the students. Sample questions include: 1) What went well today, 2) What did not go well today, 3) What helped you learn today, 4) What did not help you learn today, 5) Questions/Comments/Frustrations. To avoid overwhelming the students I usually choose two direct questions and one free comment-type question.

The final reflection report asks the students to think about their growth throughout the semester. I often begin with my own reflection of the course before asking the students to tell me about their experiences. For this course, I asked: 1) What did you learn about yourself, 2) What did you learn about English communication, and 3) How will you use online communication skills in the future. I wondered how students were feeling about

making the short-form videos, and how they were coping with being separated from their classmates. I was also curious to see if the students would connect their language learning with future online activity in addition to their overall growth.

What: The Sense of Unease

Kyodo News (2021) reported that 45% of Japanese university students were not feeling fulfilled during the pandemic. Students felt unmotivated, stressed, overwhelmed with the large number of assignments, and could not see how their classmates were progressing with their studies.

In the second year of the pandemic (2021) restrictions eased, but many students were still taking classes from home. I made minor adjustments to the course based on the learner reflections from the previous year.

I still felt uncomfortable with staring into a screen full of black boxes, especially since, as a reflective practitioner, I relied heavily on observation. So, this was my sense of unease. I could see their final products, but I couldn't really tell how they were experiencing my teaching.

So What: The Learner Reflections

The following reflections were taken from one of the freshman courses I was teaching that incorporated learner reflections into the syllabus, but I have seen similar comments in all my courses. In the second week of the semester, I asked the students what went well during the lesson. This student shows a high level of anxiety with being taught in English.

> This class speak all English. So I am very, very anxious. I don't feel going well…I don't understand today's lesson. (M.I.)

This comment reminds me that I should keep my teacher talk to a minimum and to slow down especially when the class is online. Moreover, I start to question the purpose of teaching these courses in English. I'm not convinced that having an all-English class with me once a week for 15 weeks benefits the students. I wonder if it causes more anxiety and confusion than improvement with English skills.

This student blamed themselves for not speaking out.

> Today, I cannot talk to myself. It did not work. Because I did not have the courage. I think that I am shy. So, I do not want to make the same mistake. (M.M.)

As a new university student, they must navigate different learning styles, a new environment, create new friend groups, and so forth. It is no wonder that they are feeling hesitant to speak up in a language they don't yet

feel comfortable with. Experiencing this alone likely contributes to the unease.

Anxiety about the course being taught in English was a comment I saw often so when it came time for the students to write their final reflection report, I asked them to write the main points in English and allowed them to write detailed examples in Japanese.

M.I., who expressed high anxiety at the start of the course, described their understanding of the

difference between learning about English and communicating in English when they write:

> After posting videos on the Flip grid and watching the videos and comments of my classmates, I found the videos of those who spoke with bright expressions and gestures, and those who were conscious of their intonation and accent, even if they were not very good and fluent to be very interesting and easy to understand. I realized that it is not important to say difficult things, but to communicate in a way that is easy for others to understand. [translated from Japanese]

One of my beliefs about language learning is to differentiate between knowledge-based and skills-based teaching. I designed this course to focus on communication skills, so this comment showed that my intentions were clearly conveyed. M.I. also explained how the short-form video assignments contributed to the creation of friendship circles which reduced their overall anxiety about the university life experience:

> I have learned about the importance of face-to-face communication. Ex) Without the coronavirus, it would have been possible to have face-to-face classes, but this was no longer possible and online classes began. The breakout rooms and flip grids were a great way for me to communicate face to face with friends and new people I met. This allowed me to expand my circle of friends, and even when classes were face-to-face for the first time in a while, I was not isolated and felt less anxious. [translated from Japanese]

This comment about peer groups and having space during the online courses to consult with each other in Zoom breakout rooms highlights their loneliness and disappointment by having classes online. They were able to exchange new information about themselves in English with the short-form videos and make friends by communicating through the videos. I saw students introducing themselves when we did have face-to-face classes which indicated the assignments were reaching their objectives—communicating in English.

M.M. stopped blaming themselves for not speaking English and realized that they were able to improve their skills with practice when they write:

> I learned the reason that my English skills is not high. This is there is no opportunities what I speak in English. I improved at this class. Because, I was able to talk with my friend in English on online and, take communication very well. I practiced speaking in English at flip grid. For example, I watched classmate's videos. And I did questions or comments. When I was first time, I couldn't speak in English well, see the camera lens and make a good expression. Over and over, I became able to do these. I learn that I had little experience speaking english.

Now What: Teacher Reflections and Making Meaning

I was still unsure about teaching language skills online and there were many aspects of the medium that I was not comfortable with. For example, there were times when I entered breakout rooms to find the students had their cameras off and mics muted, but after reading their reflection papers I could understand how to incorporate the use of breakout rooms more effectively and stop assuming the worst.

After reading the learner reflections about their experiences using short-form videos, I don't plan to return to live presentations with in-person classes. Although video presentations are more time-consuming to implement, they encourage out-of-class practice and are easier to evaluate.

The process of making meaning from the learners' descriptions about their experiences gave me insight into how my teaching affected the students. Seeing the implementation of the course through the learners' perspective showed me that they were engaging with the syllabus the way I intended and that gave me satisfaction that my efforts were worth the investment.

When M.M. describes their experience using English "over and over" and realizing it is the usage of language that improves their skills, I can see how they are learning about themselves in addition to meeting the objectives of the course.

Discussion & Implications

Teacher burnout stems not only from overwork, but from a malaise stemming from job dissatisfaction. Difficulty communicating with reticent students can exacerbate the situation. Engaging in reflective practice by attempting to view the classrooom experience from the learners' perspective combined with academic literature can afford the teacher-researcher a richer, more nuanced interpretation of their experiences.

Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout has been described as a combination of mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion and stress, which leads to negativity toward work (Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2019; Watts & Robertson, 2011). In other words, overwork makes you hate your job, but it is not that simple. There is another dimension to teacher burnout that may be overlooked: meaningfulness. According to van Manen (1990), "Teacher burn-out is not necessarily a symptom of excessive output of effort, of being overworked. It may be the condition that ensues when as teachers we no longer know why we are doing what we are doing" (p.123). In addition, Lackritz (2004) notes that when students demonstrate satisfaction with their learning, teachers feel a higher sense of achievement. Clearly, how teachers make meaning from their experience is directly related to their students.

Although there were many times when I questioned the added workload of reviewing reflection papers, I realized that these learner reflections were the reason I was able to continue and even enjoy teaching in the online context. The comments from the students in their final reports describing how they were able to learn new things about their classmates from their short video assignments were encouraging to me. It showed me that students were indeed communicating in English and students who described their difficulties with the course gave me insight into how I could make improvements.

Intercultural Communication

We all have conscious and unconscious biases towards different cultures which was likely highlighted with the new online context which exacerbated an already complicated interpersonal dynamic. For example, instructors who come from a western culture may already be confused about the silence they experience in the classroom and make assumptions about the meaning of this silence such as categorizing Japanese students as being shy or not willing to use English. However, this narrow perspective does not leave room for potential and individualized explanations that may or may not be cultural. Written reflections create a space for communication with the instructor which is especially important in a classroom where cultural differences may impede communication. Fantini (2009) describes intercultural communication as "…complex abilities that are required to perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p.458). As facilitators in the classroom, teachers should take the responsibility for communication difficulties. Byram's model for

intercultural communicative competence for learners of foreign languages like English is also applicable to instructors, especially "readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" and "general knowledge of processes of societal and individual interaction" (Byram, 2021, pp. 62-63). Like teaching, intercultural competence requires awareness about attitude which is described by Freeman (1989) as the interplay of external behavior and internal feelings. Learner reflections can bridge this gap described by Freeman.

Conclusion

Practitioner research that focuses on the development of awareness through reflective practice sheds light on how teachers adjust to new policies, practices, and their decision-making processes. Learner reflections are an essential part of the inquiry as teacher practices are reflected in the experiences of the students. Re-framing research and professional development to embark from a subjective and generative perspective humanizes the experience of teachers and their students while adding critical information to existing theory- based literature. Cochran-Smith & Little (1990) are critical of research on teaching because teachers are cast as objects of researchers' investigations (p. 3). Academic literature on teaching still lacks the voices of teachers so I would like to add information about my classroom life and my perspective on teaching in the context of English in Japan as a non-Japanese instructor with the hope that others can learn from my experiences.

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Effects of an Intro Level Disability Studies CLIL Course on Student Perceptions of Disability

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Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses have become increasingly popular and research seems to support their use for language acquisition, though less information is available about the effectiveness of learning the content of a CLIL course, particularly in a university setting. In addition, planning and implementing a brand new CLIL course can be a daunting task and often leaves the teacher wondering how they will know if the students have learned the intended content. With this in mind, before and after surveys were conducted for a disability studies course which aimed to track student growth over the semester, particularly to see if the students understood key concepts, such as the medical and social models of disability, and if they changed their thinking about disabilities over the course. This paper discusses some background, results, and analysis of the study which will be used to improve the course in the future.

日本語概要 近年、内容言語統合型学習（CLIL）は益々注目を集めるようになり、言語習得におけるその有効性は研究によって支持されてきているようである。一方で、特に大学レベルでの CLIL の内容の学習効果については、あまり情報が見られない。また、全く新しい CLIL のコースを計画し、実施することは教師にとって大変な作業であり、学生が意図した内容を学んだかどうかをどのように知ることができるのか、教師はしばしば悩むことになる。こうしたことを念頭に置き、学期中の学生の成長を追跡し、特に学生が障害の医学的モデルや社会的モデルといった重要な概念を理解したかどうか、またコースを通して障害についての考え方が変わったかどうかを確認することを目的として、障害学コース受講前と受講後に調査を実施した。本稿では、この調査の背景、結果、分析について述べ、今後のコース改善に役立てる。

Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) is a private foreign language university in Chiba, Japan. At KUIS lecturers are encouraged to propose semester-long Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses on any topic, which students take as electives. In order to improve a course called Disability Studies: Rights and Current Issues for the next academic year, students were surveyed both at the beginning and end of the course with two goals in mind: assessing my effectiveness as an educator, and tracking any changes to student perceptions of disabilities over the course of the semester.

The topic of disability studies was chosen for a number of reasons. The primary reason is because of my experience and research into disability related issues. CLIL courses are a combination of content and language, so having a high level of knowledge about the content area in order to teach a semester-long course can be beneficial. In addition, there has been an increasing focus on global issues in recent decades, partially due to the SDGs, which KUIS incorporates into various areas of the university. Furthermore, since 2006 Japan has been pushing more for integration of disabled students into mainstream schooling, and the number of disabled students in schools has been increasing (Isogai, 2017; Mithout, 2016). This means that more students are able to join mainstream education, and students already in mainstream education encounter students with disabilities at a higher rate than before. Course content is divided into three units: defining disability, history of disability rights movements, and current issues in the disabled community. Some key concepts include understanding different models of disability (such as the medical and social models), learning how rights were won over time, and being able to apply that knowledge to imagine a more inclusive environment. The course culminates in a project that aims to improve some aspect of the campus for people with disabilities.

Four research questions guided this study:

Q1: Did I cover all of the material in the survey during our semester-long course?

Q2: Did students retain the information I intended for them to retain until the end of the semester?

Q3: Did students seem to understand the material I covered in the way I intended them to understand it?

Q4: Did the class as a whole demonstrate a shift in perceptions of disabilities? In what ways?

Context and Theory

CLIL

CLIL began in the 1990s as an educational approach that teaches content through an additional language that students are studying. At any particular time either content or language may be the larger focus, but the overall goal is to teach both (Coyle, 2006; Coyle et al., 2010; Ball et al., 2015). This balance can be challenging, but the potential benefits may be worth the effort.

There is significant research demonstrating the effectiveness of CLIL in language acquisition. For example, Pérez-Cañado and Lancaster (2017) demonstrate that CLIL education is more effective in acquisition of oral comprehension and production skills when compared with non-CLIL styles of teaching, with the exception of pronunciation. While their study is about primary education and took place over several years, some studies have focused on higher education. Through the use of pre and post test scores, Sato and Hemmi (2022) found that English production skills of students in CLIL courses improved over a one semester CLIL course. A study by Ito (2019) about teaching basketball to junior high school students in Japan demonstrated how just one CLIL lesson can help disinterested English learners maintain interest.

However, when it comes to studies focusing on how well content is learned in a CLIL course, there is less research. One study by Hughes and Madrid (2019) compared primary and secondary bilingual CLIL courses in Spain, basically concluding there are no detrimental effects to content learning and possibly even positive effects. While CLIL students' test scores were slightly lower in primary school, these differences were insufficient to cause problems and were made up for by the time students reached secondary school. While this is not a resounding endorsement, given that linguistic skills also increase in a CLIL setting, this is still a point in favor of CLIL, at least in primary school settings. While many studies have investigated the efficacy of L2 acquisition in CLIL courses, fewer studies have investigated the efficacy of CLIL on content learning. Thus, more research into this specific area needs to be done, particularly in university level settings.

Transformative Education

Transformative learning is when something shifts in a learner, causing a shift in worldview or some kind of transformation in a learner's life (Mezirow, 2000; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). In the case of social issues, students would reconsider what they think they have always known about an issue and learn to understand it more deeply. In this disability studies CLIL course, the goal is for students to think more deeply about the topic as the semester progresses, and hope that the curriculum moves them towards transforming how they think about the topic.

Keeping this in mind, I designed a disability studies CLIL course with the intent to assess content goal achievement. To measure any shifts in student thinking, surveys were administered before and after the course. These surveys were not expected to capture the full depth of student transformation but were implemented to offer indications of whether the course content goals were being met.

Disability Studies and Perceptions of Disabilities

The number of publications on the topic of disability is far too immense to detail in this paper. Having a basic understanding of the history of disability law and social attitudes towards disabilities in Japan are important when teaching a course about disabilities in the country. English language information about disabilities in Japan in general is somewhat accessible and plentiful (Cabinet Office, n.d.; Heyer, 2015; Mithout, 2016; Stevens, 2013). Narrowing down the literature to English language studies about university student perceptions of disability in Japan also produces some resources, though the sample sizes are sometimes small, or the studies quite old (Iwakuma et al., 2021; Mino et al., 2000; Brown et al., 2023). Iwakuma et al. (2021) conducted a thorough study with a small sample size that aims to ascertain changes in student perceptions of disabilities before and after a semester-long course, much like in this paper. Using pre and post tests, they found significant changes in students' perceptions of disability. This understanding of topic areas shaped the development of the CLIL course and influenced the selection of content for the before/after survey.

Methods

In an attempt to answer the research questions, the same 38 question survey was given on the first day of class and on the second to last day of class. This survey was nearly the same as the survey used by Brown et al. (2023). Some minor adjustments were made to tailor it to one specific class instead of all university students, and to fix some translation errors. The bilingual survey consists of open ended questions (8), multiple answer

checkbox questions (3), Likert scale questions (21), and non-Likert multiple choice questions (6). While the majority of questions were required, some were not because they were either too sensitive to require an answer or dependent upon a certain answer in a previous question. Even when there were multiple choice or checkbox answer questions, respondents were generally given the option of choosing "other" and writing in an answer. The goal of the Likert scale questions was to force a decision on the part of the respondents. However, at the end of all Likert scale questions there was an opportunity for respondents to add comments about any of them, should they feel it necessary. Respondents were informed they had the option to answer in either English or Japanese and a professional translator was employed for the process. The full survey is available from the author upon request.

While completion of the survey was a required part of the course, respondents were given the choice of whether their answers could be used for research. On the first day of class, 24 usable responses were received, and 22 usable responses were received for the after survey. Respondents were all junior or senior undergraduate English majors with varying English proficiency. In an attempt to maintain confidentiality, specific respondents were not tracked, which presented some difficulties. This approach, while protecting anonymity, also posed challenges in determining which respondents preferred their answers to be excluded from each survey. Therefore, it is possible a participant in the before survey did not give consent, while in the after survey the same participant did give consent. In addition, one student dropped the class and there is no way of knowing if that student gave consent in the before survey or not, and of course that participant did not take the after survey. In light of these limitations, only general class trends that have clear differences can be tracked and there was no attempt to claim statistical significance.

Finally, there was no control group, so this study should be read bearing this in mind. It cannot claim an overall effectiveness or ineffectiveness of CLIL in content learning.

Results

Research question two asks if students retained the information I intended for them to retain until the end of the semester. There is evidence that some information was retained while other information was not. On the survey, question three asks respondents "Were there any terms in question 2 that you were unfamiliar with?" and students check applicable boxes. All are terms that could be considered a disability depending on a person's social context and definition of disability. In the first survey, there were several unfamiliar terms. The terms "cerebral palsy" and "experiencing a traumatic

event" were both not understood by 7 respondents. As seen in Table 1, in the after survey this number changed to one and two respondents respectively. The results of this particular question demonstrated that the respondents remembered some important terminology from the course.

Table 1

Unfamiliar terms

	Before	After
Wheelchair user	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Anxiety	0 (0%)	1 (4.5%)
Depression	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Dyslexia	1 (4.2%)	0 (0%)
Blindness	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Deafness	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
ADHD	2 (8.3%)	1 (4.5%)
Hearing loss	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	6 (25%)	2 (9.1%)
Brain injury	6 (25%)	1 (4.5%)
Down syndrome	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cerebral palsy	7 (29.2%)	1 (4.5%)
Experiencing a traumatic event	7 (29.2%)	2 (9.1%)
Rheumatoid arthritis	11 (45.8%)	7 (31.8%)
Diabetes	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Obesity	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Speech disorders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
None of the above	8 (33.3%)	9 (40.9%)

However, another question points to where respondents did not learn the intended content. Question 10 is a Likert scale statement that says "I am familiar with some accommodations disabled people might receive in various situations." In the before survey, 18 students either mostly agreed or strongly agreed, and the after survey was 19. While there were very slight changes in responses in the before and after survey, they could be attributed to the different number

of respondents. There was no clear understanding of what accommodations are before the course or after the course.

Research question three asks if students seemed to understand the material I covered in the way I intended them to understand it. As with research question two, results were mixed. One of the main points I intended for students to take away from this class is understanding various models of disability. We talked a lot about how to define a disability and how definitions of disability can change in a different context. Respondents were asked what percent of people in Japan they think have a disability. In the before survey, answers ranged from 0.5% to 90%. In the after survey, answers ranged from 3% to 80%.

Another key point for consideration is if students were able to recognize more disabilities after the course, particularly invisible, also called hidden, disabilities. Question 2 of the survey asks "Which of the following do you think is a disability?" and respondents were able to select multiple checkboxes from a list. This is related to the above key concept of understanding the definition of disability. What are often known as invisible disabilities were recognized as disabilities more often by the end of the semester. For example, "experiencing a traumatic event" was thought to be a possible disability by only 13 people before, and 21 after. Even with the changes in sample size this is a clear change. Rheumatoid arthritis changed from 11 before to 17 after, and anxiety rose from 6 before to 12 after. In Table 2, please note that alcoholism, drug dependence and adjustment disorder were write-in answers which no one wrote in for the after survey.

Table 2

Recognizing possible disabilities

	Before	After
Wheelchair user	20 (83.3%)	21 (95.5%)
Anxiety	6 (25%)	12 (54.5%)
Depression	13 (54.2%)	21 (95.5%)
Dyslexia	23 (95.8%)	22 (100%)
Blindness	24 (100%)	22 (100%)
Deafness	24 (100%)	22 (100%)
ADHD	21 (87.5%)	22 (100%)
Hearing loss	22 (91.7%)	22 (100%)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	24 (100%)	22 (100%)

	Before	After
Brain injury	17 (70.8%)	20 (90.9%)
Down syndrome	21 (87.5%)	21 (95.5%)
Cerebral palsy	15 (62.5%)	20 (90.9%)
Experiencing a traumatic event	13 (54.2%)	21 (95.5%)
Rheumatoid arthritis	11 (45.8%)	17 (77.3%)
Diabetes	8 (33.3%)	15 (68.2%)
Obesity	1 (4.2%)	13 (59.1%)
Speech disorders	24 (100%)	21 (95.5%)
Alcoholism, drug dependence	1 (4.2%)	-
Adjustment disorder	1 (4.2%)	-
None of the above	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Research question four asks if the class demonstrated a shift in perceptions of disabilities and in what ways. Once again, due to not being able to compare individual results, it was unclear whether there were big changes in perceptions of disabilities based on the Likert scale questions. However, there are a couple of notable points. Question 12 was a Likert scale question that said, "disabled people should be granted accommodations in school." Table 3 demonstrates that opinions definitely shifted for this question. More respondents strongly agreed with this statement, and nobody mostly or strongly disagreed by the end of the course.

Table 3

School accommodations

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree
Before	8 (33.3%)	13 (54.2%)	2 (8.3%)	1 (4.2%)
After	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)		

A similar Likert question asked students to choose how much they agree with the statement "disabled people should be granted accommodations in the workplace." Table 4 indicates another shift in opinion. Again, there is a shift toward stronger support for workplace accommodations.

Table 4

Workplace accommodations

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree
Before	8 (33.3%)	15 (62.5%)	1 (4.2%)	
After	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)		

Some interesting results came from open-ended questions where respondents were asked to elaborate or give more general comments. Question 37 was an open-ended question that asked "how do you think your exposure to information about disabled people affects your perceptions of disabilities?" One respondent wrote "Actually before taking the class, I thought people with disability cannot do anything by themselves. However, Through the listening to guest speakers and lectures, I realized the recognize was not correct." In answer to the same question, another respondent wrote:

> I believe that people who are prejudiced and discriminatory about disabilities are ignorant about them. I believe that by being informed, we can accept it. I myself must have been discriminatory without knowing it, so I would like to gain knowledge so that I can dispel these (ideas/stereotypes) and become an understanding person.

Although not all intended teaching points were covered, and students may not have grasped every nuanced concept expected, evidence of learner transformation was present.

Discussion

These results can be interpreted and understood in a number of different ways which I've categorized as course improvement and limitations.

Course improvement

When asking students if they were familiar with accommodations that could be made for people with disabilities, there was no big change in the before and after survey. This can be interpreted as a shortcoming in the way I taught about accommodations. While the topic came up organically in small group discussions and when talking with guest speakers, how accommodations could be used in school, work, and daily life were not taught as the main part of any lesson. One example of when the topic came up was during a Q&A session with a guest speaker. Students asked the speaker what they need to be successful at work. Another guest speaker, unprompted, described how the clothes they wear accommodate disabled bodies. The responses demonstrate a need for more concrete and explicit instruction on this topic.

Another demonstration of a place for course improvement can be seen in respondent understanding of what a disability is. While the minimum number students selected when asked "What percentage of Japanese people do you think are disabled?" increased from 0.5% to 3%, the fact that the maximum number was still extremely high (from 90% to 80%) demonstrates continued misunderstanding of what a disability is. I wonder if this is a case of students overcorrecting. Sometimes, a person thinks very few people have disabilities, but learns otherwise. Instead of fully understanding the societal barriers a disabled person faces, a person may overcorrect and think that every person wearing glasses has a disability. There could be many reasons for these answers, so all I can do is be more careful about how I teach this point next time, as it is a key concept.

While respondent answers for what percentage of people in Japan they think are disabled demonstrates a need to more carefully teach this key concept, it does seem that students were able to recognize hidden disabilities more easily in the after survey. Recognition of experiencing a traumatic event and rheumatoid arthritis as disabilities by more respondents shows some understanding of what a disability is, or at least understanding of vocabulary. Being able to identify invisible disabilities is a key concept to the course and demonstrates a more holistic understanding of what a disability is.

Planning and teaching CLIL courses pose many challenges, and teaching a serious, often depressing topic can wear on any instructor. However, the effort and insecurity I experienced seemed worth the struggle after reading respondent comments and seeing genuine transformative thinking. While every single respondent may not have undergone some sort of transformation, these comments indicate that perceptions changed a lot for some, and there were some class wide changes. Improvements to the course are needed, but students were able to learn and grow.

Limitations

While this research is personally very helpful and interesting, there exist several limitations, particularly when attempting to draw any widely applicable conclusions.

Survey design

Although the survey was professionally translated, in the process of transposing it from one document to another I added the wrong translation to question 22, so that question was removed from the study. In addition, some questions were unclear and didn't produce the desired results. For example, question 37 asked "If you have/have had a relationship with disabled people or a

disabled person: How do you think your relationship with disabled people affects your perceptions of disabilities?" Based on the progression of questions before it, in English it can be assumed to mean any type of relationship. However, the translator's use of 恋愛関係 (renaikankei) implies a romantic relationship, thus respondents answered in an unintended manner.

Finally, survey question three would be better phrased as "Which of the following do you think could be considered a disability?" instead of "Which of the following do you think is a disability?" This phrasing would fit better with the social model of disability by recognizing what might be a disability for one person might not be a disability for another person in a different context.

Sample population

This is a small sample size from only one course at one university in Japan, and there was no way to add a control group. Conclusions cannot be extended to the population of Japan as a whole, other countries or cultures, or even other nearby universities. As an example, our university is a place that attracts students who are interested in other cultures, and thus may already have a tendency towards wanting to understand human diversity. Other universities with different specializations will attract different types of students with different interests.

Context

In addition to the context mentioned, I would like to reiterate that our university asks us to teach our CLIL topic for an entire semester. Recognizing the varying constraints on instructional time, readers should note that implementing CLIL does not necessarily require extensive commitment and can be effectively integrated on a more modest scale as well. Even one good lesson about an important topic can be meaningful to students. I recommend reading Ito (2019), mentioned at the beginning of the paper, if you are interested in seeing an example of CLIL being taught in one lesson.

Recommendations and future research

There are several ways to improve this project and many possibilities for future research. After reviewing the results, it was clear that some questions on the survey were unnecessary as there was not time to cover them in class. Therefore, a shorter survey could be used and would be more time efficient. In addition, tracking individual respondents would enable seeing more specifically how a respondent changed and what they retained from the course. Certain questions can paint a limited picture of an individual's learning and attitudes, so another option for future studies would include interviews or in-depth written reflections at the

beginning and at the end of the course. Another way to study content retention in a CLIL course could be to use an exam, project, or other type of content evaluation.

While it would be ideal to track respondents to see if they retained the knowledge and if any attitudinal changes remained or progressed in the same direction, logistically that would be difficult. The course is offered to junior and senior students, so they soon leave the university setting, making them much more difficult to contact. However, if this barrier could be overcome, it would be valuable information to learn.

Conclusion

This small study is intended to add to the existing work on the topic. While it cannot be used to draw larger conclusions, it can add to the English language literature about content retention in CLIL courses. Respondents were able to learn and retain both linguistic and content related information studied in this course and results indicate some learner transformation. These results illustrated areas of improvement for the course, such as a need for more explicit instruction explaining accommodations. It is also hoped that this study gives some inspiration to those who are considering tackling complex topics, those who wish their students to experience some transformation, or those who wish to research this topic themselves.

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Locating Practice: A Duoethnography on Language Teacher Identities

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Teaching language is an inherently political act; systemic hierarchies shape the roles of and interactions between practitioners and learners. Teachers who reflect on their own experiences and identities as language learners and users can develop the awareness needed to effectively disrupt such hierarchies. Such reflection ideally includes recognition of how intersectional social locations inform their access to English as embodied cultural capital. This article offers insights into the formative language learning experiences of two practitioners from Sri Lanka and Canada developed from a duoethnographic study. The aim is to explore how these experiences connect to their current language instruction practices. Four semi-structured dialogues uncovered understandings related to bilingualism, ethnicity, and language policy that challenge misconceptions related to each country's inner and outer circle status.

言語を教えることは、本質的に政治的な行為である。体系的なヒエラルキーが、教育者と学習者の役割や相互作用を形作っている。言語学習者や言語使用者である自分自身の経験やアイデンティティを振り返る教師は、そのようなヒエラルキーを効果的に崩壊させるために必要な意識を育むことができる。このような振り返りには、交差する社会的位置が、英語という「具現化された文化資本」へのアクセスにどのような影響を与えるかを認識することが理想的である。本稿は、スリランカとカナダ出身の２人の実践者の形成的言語学習経験に関するデュオエスノグラフィック研究から得られた洞察を提供する。その目的は、これらの経験が現在の言語指導の実践にどのように結びついているかを探ることである。４回の半構造化対話により、バイリンガリズム、エスニシティ、言語政策に関連する理解が明らかになり、内輪と外輪の地位に関連する誤解が覆された。

The sustained expansion of World Englishes continues to increase the diversity of the field of English language teaching (Sadeghpour & D'Angelo, 2022). Kachru's three concentric circles of English provides a hierarchical, state-based understanding of this propagation as informed by speech communities, patterns of spread, and distinct language practices (Kachru, 1986). Mediated by sociopolitical dynamics, inner circle countries such as Canada and the UK are regarded as the bastions of the English language, utilizing it as a vernacular, whereas in outer circle countries like Sri Lanka and Nigeria, colonization served as the vehicle for the entrenchment of English. In the latter, its influence endures either formally as an official language or informally as an important lingua franca among intra-national elites (Mufwene, 2010). In expanding circle countries such as Japan, English is perceived as a foreign language or foreign lingua franca primarily employed for communication with non-nationals (Mufwene, 2010). While it is now common to assert that English language teaching is not the domain of the inner circle, native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006) endures. These shifts come with a parallel increase in research on language teacher identity and self-efficacy (Kaez & Faras, 2021). Considering our diversity along with the dynamic nature of power, our relationships to the cultural capital of English are in constant flux. As such, identity has an inherent impact on practice, making it a critical area of study in need of greater attention. Student and teacher positionality being relational and dependent on the broader context (Kayi-Aydar, 2019), reflecting on teacher identity must be an integral part of pre-service education and professional development (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Lawrence & Nagashima, 2020). Reflective practice is one way of giving overt attention to identity construction, growing from the notion that identity is "a discursive and performative phenomenon" (Aktekin & Celebi, 2020, p.

113). As a tool in practice-based learning settings, reflective practice emphasizes wisdom gathered through experience rather than formal learning (Mathew et al., 2017, p. 126). Despite this, it is not necessarily embedded in pre-service programs.

This research juxtaposes the experiences of two English language instructors and researchers to understand how our formative experiences as language learners shape our sociolinguistic identities and current practice. We have engaged in dialogue delving into the commonalities and divergences between our formative contexts, current practices, and the ways in which the former informs the latter. Our interest in examining early sociolinguistic and language learning experiences through duoethnography was initially informed by the overlaps between our two settings: Sri Lanka and Canada. Both countries are officially bilingual, with educational practices that reflect the highly contested landscape of language policies heavy with the weight of colonial history. We grew up as speakers and learners of multiple languages and have spent our adult lives as practitioners in these countries as well as in Japan.

Sri Lanka is a small island state with a centrally administered education system, so we take the whole country into consideration. For Canada, the provincially mandated nature of the curriculum makes geographic specificity important. While the two contexts might seem difficult to set side by side, comparing them highlights the dynamic nature of linguistic identity and implications for practitioner reflexivity. One is an outer circle country, the other an inner circle one, and we now collaborate in an expanding circle context.

Researcher Positionality
Lasni

A multicultural and multi-ethnic country in South Asia, Sri Lanka is a conflict-ridden society. Colonized by the Portuguese, Dutch, and finally the British, its 26-year civil war ended in 2009. Sinhalese people comprise approximately 74.9% of the total population, while 11.2% are Sri Lankan Tamils, 4.1% Indian Tamils, and 9.3% Sri Lankan Moors (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012). Its two official languages are Sinhalese and Tamil; Sinhala is the language of the Sinhalese people, while Tamil is spoken by Tamils and most Moors/Muslims. Though the status of English is not recognized on paper, it functions as a de facto official language in commerce and higher education.

I am Sinhala by birth, with Sinhalese as my mother tongue. Throughout my studies, Sinhala was the medium of instruction, English was mandatory, and Tamil was an elective. Living in the ethnically and linguistically diverse central region, I was exposed to various ethnic and social groups. Attending three different schools, I experienced how language can be instrumentalized according to urban/rural, class, religious, and ethnic disparities. I shifted to English medium higher education after my Advanced-Level exams and subsequently became a teacher of English. I have taught English for 8 years while pursuing graduate studies, currently working on a PhD.

Yaya

The state of Canada rests uneasily in the north of Turtle Island, an indigenous name for North America. Canada's official languages are English and French, with the Inuit languages of Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut also considered official in the northern territory of Nunavut. The province of Québec is French dominant, New Brunswick is extremely English-French bilingual, and the remaining provinces and territories are English dominant . The state has historically taken a race-based, essentialist stance to language (Leeman, 2019), stipulating that "mother tongue is one's native language, the language of his race", rather than the language one "speaks most fluently, or uses chiefly in conversation" (Canadian Census Office, 1901, p. 17).

I was born and raised in Tkaronto (colonially Toronto, Canada), the capital of Ontario, on ceded and unceded lands traditionally stewarded by the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat peoples. More than half of Tkaronto's population was born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2023). My parents came from Hong Kong as international students in the 1960s, and my first language was Mandarin, followed by Cantonese. From K-12, I attended programs in public schools: French Immersion, bilingual, and one French medium program administered by one of Ontario's 12 French-language school boards. My English is now dominant, and while my French reading skills are at a secondary school level, my verbal skills are now elementary. As a practitioner, I have spent 12 years in arts-based and social justice education in Canada and Hong Kong, and 10 years teaching English language and literature in secondary and university settings in Japan and Thailand.

Key Concepts

Our dialogic reflection is rooted in two concepts: the Freirean notion of praxis and Bordieu's cultural capital. Praxis argues for an equitable regard for practice and theory. The articulation of an intertwined, dynamic process through which theory grows from practice and vice versa reflects a radical commitment to social transformation (Freire, 1970). Engaging in "education as the practice of freedom" (hooks , 1991, p. 54) means in part the critical interrogation of our own lenses as informed by our particular social locations, which are shaped by systems of power and privilege. All practice is informed by theoretical constructs that can be made visible through critical reflexivity. The underpinnings of

much practice are shaped by the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1960): the unwritten rules, values, beliefs, and expectations shaped by sociopolitical dynamics that uphold the status quo. Delving into teacher identities is a key way to unpack this implicitly hegemonic curriculum.

Related to this concept is cultural capital (Bordieu & Passeron, 1977). It is regarded in three states: the embodied state (the behaviors that represent ruling class ideals of sophistication), the institutionalized state (which reifies those ideals through academic qualifications and job titles), and the objectified state, (possessions and property that hold symbolic power). As a manifestation of embodied cultural capital, or lack thereof, language is animated by underlying systems of power. The degree to which a language can be leveraged on the linguistic market as a tradable commodity is informed by the extent it is validated by the state, for example through official language status (Bordieu, 1991).

Methodology

Duoethnography is an emerging form of study in which two or more researchers come together to interrogate the cultural contexts of autobiographical experiences to dialogically critique issues related to personal and professional life (Sawyer & Norris, 2012). Rooted in autoethnography, which is informed by feminist theories that challenge the notion of academic objectivity, it enables researchers to gain insight into the questions at hand through the exploration of lived experience. The researchers involved are the site of the inquiry, not the subjects of it (Breault, 2016). Given the nature of our positionalities from inner and outer circle contexts, the duoethnographic approach serves to highlight the complexities of the differing levels of cultural capital each researcher holds in the linguistic market.

With this evolving qualitative method, we first discussed our experiences and contexts in an open-ended way. Next, four in-depth dialogues totalling eight hours were recorded following an interview guide prepared in the first session. Discussions were transcribed and themes were identified collaboratively. We then selected two excerpts addressing key themes in a dialogue format to capture the polyvocal nature of the process. Narrative can play a powerful role in distilling insights. Informed by narrative inquiry's understanding of how the granular illustrates the whole and the need for a fine balance between the two (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), excerpts were refined to enhance accessibility and clarity. The research questions emerging from the initial dialogue are:

1. What were our experiences of conflicts between dominant and family language practices?

2. How was bilingualism conceptualized and represented to us as language learners, growing up?

3. How do our formative language learning experiences (as shaped by marginalization and lingualism) influence our practices as language teachers?

Below, we share the two excerpts to highlight two key moments as connected to the questions above. Each excerpt is followed by an in-depth discussion from the standpoint of one of the authors.

Dialogue A: Conflicts between Dominant and Family Language Practices

YY When did you switch from a Sinhala medium school to a bilingual, English dominant school?

LB That was when I went from more semi-urban school to urban school so it is more like from less competitive school to more competitive school I would say

YY So when did the "break" between your school language and your home language happen– between which grades?

LB There were two transitions. First, I went from a semi-urban school in which Sinhala was the medium of instruction to an urban school in which English was widely used, in Grade 8. The break, or rupture, was cultural as well. In the semi-urban school, my classmates and I listened to Sinhala music, were interested in Sri Lankan pop culture and so on. But as I went through secondary school, especially when I scored well enough to enter an elite high school in the same neighborhood, most of the students were into US and UK pop culture, so it was a huge transition not only in terms of language but in terms of culture. Although the medium of instruction was still Sinhala, all of the announcements and extracurricular activities, all of the life outside of formal lessons was informed by English and oriented to the West.

YY That must have been jarring.

LB Yes, and the class dynamics were really in-your-face. Almost all the students who got into Student Council (prefect board) had a powerful parent, a doctor, an engineer or such.

YY Hearing about your experience, I feel envious of the amount of education you received in your mother tongue. For me, that break between home and school cultures was automatic, from when I entered school. My home languages were Mandarin and Cantonese, and school languages were English and French. They were culturally different worlds, and I inhabited them in completely different ways. To oversimplify a bit, I was assertive

at home, but at school I struggled a lot with expressing myself, because of how racism, sexism, and homophobia affected my self-esteem. I hid my Mandarin and Cantonese selves in public, so they languished. They were markers of difference that I knew to hide to fit in. The way I spoke had to be "perfect" – as "Anglo Canadian"– sounding as possible.

LB It's essential to think about how our students might be experiencing this kind of fragmentation when they enter the classroom. The classroom is a microcosm of society, so a certain degree of racism and lingualism is inevitable, but how can we help students understand and question those dynamics, or at least cast some doubt at these norms and assumptions.

Discussion of Dialogue A (Lasni)

The identity politics related to language in our contexts seem complex and divergent. I consider my transition from a Sinhala-speaking home environment to an English dominant elite school relatively smooth, as I attended another urban school in between, which prepared me for the culture shock. My willingness to deal with the English dominant linguistic landscape of the new school paved the way for me to benefit from the increased access to embodied cultural capital (Bordieu, 1986). Nevertheless, despite the transition from a Sinhala to English dominant environment, my mother tongue remained the medium of instruction. This allowed me to maintain my proficiency in my mother tongue through additive bilingualism (Lambert, 1981).

In contrast, Yaya's language transition from home to school environment is more jarring. She too benefited from increased embodied cultural capital, acquiring and becoming fluent in the dominant languages, all the more so given the inner circle accent, yet she experienced subtractive bilingualism (Lambert, 1981) as her English came at the cost of the mother tongue (Natolo and Matas, 2014). This realization leads me to believe that in the context of inner circle countries, there is a higher tendency to overlook the support for maintaining the home languages of immigrants. In contrast, outer circle countries which cast English as a second language, tend to appreciate the importance of preserving language diversity.

Dialogue B: Representations of Bilingualism

LB When I think about how my experiences as a language learner shape my teaching, class is a key theme for me. It really informed my experience as a student, and as a teacher in Sri Lanka, I am trying to support my students to more confidently wield English as a form of embodied cultural capital. In Sri Lanka, we have a word that we use to refer to the English language: Kaduwa. It means sword. It refers to the aggressive power of English in society, and educators and linguists in Sri Lanka often talk about "Kaduwa vs. Manne" – sword or machete? The machete is a tool that is commonly used in Sri Lankan households. Hence, is English a weapon or a tool?

YY If we're thinking about it as embodied cultural capital, something that is vested with power because of hegemony, there might not be much of a difference between the two.

LB I always teach my students to use it as a tool. It doesn't make you better than someone else that you speak better English, I mean in theory. Using it to disrespect,divide or punish another would be using it as a weapon. But in material terms, in Sri Lanka, it will give you access to better job opportunities, and people will certainly treat you better if you use it in public situations. It's like what we talked about earlier, "Language is power."

YY That's true. Power doesn't necessarily mean "power over."

LB Yes, use of power may not always put others down but can be used to lift yourself up instead. This makes me think of our earlier discussion about accents. It sounds like an accent is very crucial when it comes to the Canadian situation. Can you elaborate more on that, and how you deal with it in the classroom?

YY There is a lot of ethnic diversity in Canada, but still a lot of racism, and a lot of discrimination based on accent. As a child, I consciously put effort into developing a "Canadian accent" because everyone knows we'll get more respect if we speak with a dominant, Anglo Canadian accent. Generally, people don't discriminate against those with Western European or dominant US accents, though. And then a French-accented English would be respected, especially because I was in French Immersion. Thinking about this in relation to your experience of bilingual education, which involved Sinhala, Tamil, and English, I'm realizing that French-English was the gold standard. Growing up, I didn't even really consider myself bilingual, because to me, being bilingual meant that you spoke English and French fluently. The other languages I spoke were not invited into the regular classroom, weren't legitimized by school.

LB This is interesting. Do you encourage your students to acquire a certain accent?

YY I focus on stress patterns and emphasis rather than accent. Of course, we need phonic awareness, but try to focus on intelligibility rather than sounding like a certain kind of speaker. My experience as a "non-native speaker" among mostly Anglo students shapes this. It also means I don't enjoy being prescriptive, so although it's a necessary evil, I try

to do so in a way that shares the role of "the knower," something that can be hard for us as teachers.

Discussion of Dialogue B (Yaya)

In learning about how Lasni's outer circle school experience led to additive bilingualism, I became more aware of how the casting of English and French as the "gold standard" of bilingualism in my inner circle context fed into my experience of subtractive bilingualism. This is also connected to the raciolinguistic class reality in Ontario, where the median income for English-French bilinguals is 20% higher than English monolinguals, 40% higher than French speakers, and well over double of those who speak neither (Statistics Canada, 2023). In the bilingual public school, I attended from age 4 to 11, my classmates were almost entirely from white, upper-middle class liberal families. I still feel that I "failed" at French, far from fluent despite years of study. I hadn't reflected on how that "failure" might be informed by how my linguistic ideals were shaped by white, upper-middle class culture. While access to embodied cultural capital motivated my parents to enroll me in the program, such capital seemed unattainable. This perception is one so many of my Japanese students relate to as educational institutions privilege white "native speaker" instructors from inner circle countries.

Lasni learned English in the first two schools as a subject less connected to an ethnic group in her immediate context. This might have facilitated a more practical, instrumental attitude towards the embodied cultural capital of English as manne (machete/tool) instead of kaduwa (sword/weapon) (Medawattegedara, 2015). Her experience at the third school could be considered an experience of English as kaduwa given the elitist, Western-oriented nature of the school culture. In a post-colonial society like Sri Lanka, conceptualizing English as an instrument rather than a tool of oppression can be understood as an attempt to mitigate the power of English on the linguistic market. Nevertheless, teachers play a key role in supporting students to gain better access to cultural capital while facilitating critical thinking that mitigates the weaponizing of this capital.

Conclusion: Embracing reflective practice

This article captured understandings that have emerged in an ongoing, iterative process of inquiry. The study highlights the situated nature of our practices as teachers from outer circle and inner circle contexts, highlighting commonalities and divergences in our identities as learners and instructors. Cast as buyers and sellers on the linguistic market, the research process allowed us to challenge these interpellations in a productive way. This type of collaborative critical reflexivity inherently confronts the concept of the omniscient teacher. Speaking from our particular intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) social locations across our differences allowed us to question our assumptions and furthered our understanding of reflexivity as an inherently relational endeavor.

As such, our main recommendation is related to language teacher training and in-service professional development. Engaging in duoethnographic and self-reflexive studies to critically understand the connections between formative language learning experiences, teaching practice, and relationships to inner, outer, and expanding circle political dynamics can deepen practice at any stage of one's career. Duoethnography lends itself especially to professional development because of the relational and emerging nature of the methodology, which invites practitioners to embark on the process with a great sense of autonomy, creativity, and partnership. In the realm of language teacher education, the journey of assisting emerging educators in honing the skills of rigorous self-reflexivity begins with us.

Acknowledgment

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Student Perceptions of the Benefits of Free Writing in English

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Japanese university students are often required to perform free writing activities in their EFL classes to encourage and build confidence in writing in English. Free writing activities in this research are writing freely about a given topic for a set time. The authors had students do free writing activities throughout the course of 1 semester of an English composition course and then answer a qualitative questionnaire about their feelings toward free writing activities. This paper provides insight into students' perceptions of the efficacy of free writing, following up on previous research into the efficacy of free writing in English Language writing classes. In spite of quantitative data demonstrating that no significant improvement in English writing results from free writing, this study found that students generally find it beneficial despite its difficulty, keeping with the findings of existing qualitative research.

日本の大学生は EFL の授業で、英語で文章を書くことを奨励し、自信をつけるために、しばしばフリーライティングを行うことを求められる。本研究でいうフリーライティングとは、決められた時間、決められたトピックについて自由に書くことである。筆者らは、英作文の 1 学期を通して学生にフリーライティングを行わせ、その後、フリーライティングに対する学生の感想について質的アンケートに回答させた。本論文は、英語ライティングの授業におけるフリーライティングの有効性に関する先行研究に続き、フリーライティングの有効性に関する学生の認識についての洞察を提供するものである。量的なデータでは、フリーライティングによって英作文に有意な向上は見られないことが示されているにもかかわらず、本研究では、学生はフリーライティングをその難しさにもかかわらず一般的に有益であると感じており、既存の研究結果と一致していることがわかった。

Language teachers have used free writing in foreign language writing instruction for decades, ever since Jacobs' (1986) concept of *quickwriting* and Fox and Suhor's (1986) *free writing* coined terms that formalized that practice. Li (2007) defined free writing as, "writing quickly for a set time from ten to fifteen minutes, just putting down whatever is in the mind, without pausing and worrying about what words to use, and without going back to modify what has been written" (p. 42). Rivers (2007) further clarified free writing as writing continuously for a set time without pausing, thinking, or correcting. Darling (2018) explained that free writing could be either *guided*—with a teacher-defined topic— or *unguided*—with a student-chosen topic. Recently, language teachers in Japan have used free writing activities to encourage learners' confidence and fluency in foreign language writing (Azizi, 2015; Baba & Nitta, 2014; Darling, 2018; Forsythe & MacWhinnie, 2023; Muller, 2014a, b; Piper, 2015; Rivers, 2007; Townsend, 2023).

Even though free writing is a long-standing practice in foreign language education, its efficacy has not been thoroughly researched in the Japanese university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context (Ferreira, 2013). More specifically, the perceptions of students on the practice of free writing in EFL classes has almost no existing research in a Japanese university context. Therefore, this study aims to address that gap in research by exploring Japanese university students' perceptions of free writing in EFL writing classes. This study expands on Baba and Nitta's (2010, 2014) study exploring student perceptions of free writing as part of their research into development of writing fluency. The research question that guided this study was, what are students' perceptions of doing free writing activities in Japanese university EFL writing classes?

Literature Review

Fox and Suhor (1986) found that free writing encouraged the learners to write in less formal language, but that the practice did not "automatically produce better writers" (p. 35). Later, Elbow (1998) recommended free writing because it improved a writer's ability to write more fluently due to them not having to worry about being judged for making mistakes.

Bello (1997) recommended free writing as one of two approaches to improving EFL writing skills, the other approach being *process writing*, and used free writing as a springboard to more extensive process writing (p. 2). Fox and Suhor (1986), and Bello (1997) seemed to view free writing as an activity to warm up the learner's creativity and writing abilities before engaging in more focused writing development activities. Li (2007) provided a strong rationale for the use of free writing to promote students' general academic skills (p. 51) but did not focus on using free writing to improve writing fluency. These are only a few examples of the existing research into free writing in language learning, but the authors feel that they are representative of the conflicting views about its efficacy in the EFL classroom.

In a Japanese university EFL context, free writing has been recommended for teaching writing (Ohno, 2002), even in the face of strong reluctance due to lack of teacher confidence (Iseno, 1991) and some skepticism in the process (Rivers, 2007). One reason for this might be that Japanese high school textbooks were not using free writing to improve students' English writing abilities as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) recommended (Kobayakawa, 2011). Also, few Japanese high school students are given experience with free writing (Darling, 2018; Inoue, 2022; Townsend, 2023). This lack of familiarity with free writing carried over into university EFL classes, therefore, Bradley (2013) stated that the lack of free writing experience of Japanese university students in EFL also has origins in Japanese-language writing instruction methods, so there would be little expectation of L1 to L2 carry over to support the efficacy of free writing in EFL (p. 9). Bradley recommended a mixed approach to EFL writing instruction that included simple and well-explained free writing activities, and Rivers (2007) recommended free writing as a tool to improve Japanese university students' creativity in writing as well as in oral communication with little demands on the teacher for preparation or feedback.

Following these recommendations, several instructors have used free writing in Japanese EFL writing classes—including the authors of this study. Muller (2014) evaluated the use of free writing in Japanese EFL classrooms in both high school (2014a) and university settings (2014b). In the high school-based study, Muller's (2014a) students responded positively to the free writing activities and stated that they felt that their writing had improved. Muller (2014a) provided several recommendations for making free writing more effective, such as providing topics that students are interested in and making the process communicative by having students share their writing with partners (p. 25). These recommendations align with those proffered by Herder and King (2012) who also found that students reported a feeling of positive improvement from the free writing activities (p. 130). At the university level, Muller (2014b) found that the participants had an "overall positive evaluation of free writing…in relation to the results obtained" (p. 29).

Baba and Nitta (2010, 2014) also explored the effects of regular, 10-minute free writing on a given topic with two Japanese university students over a 30-week longitudinal study. Baba and Nitta (2014) did recommend repetitive free writing practice to improve writing fluency over the course of a semester or even longer if possible (p. 30). Their recommendation is likely based on the fact that students' reflective comments became more positive toward their L2 writing (2014, pp. 19, 26) and student interviews showed that students became more reflective of their writing over the course of a year of practice (2010, p. 221).

Leblanc and Fujieda (2012) also found increased positive attitudes and confidence toward EFL writing in participants after free writing activities. Participants in their study believed that free writing was helpful for future English writing (p. 251), and a continuation of free writing practice was desired by participants (p. 251). Further, Dickenson's (2014) participants found English writing was more important and their enjoyment of writing increased over time (p. 20). Their participants also wanted to continue the free writing activities in the future (p. 22). Additionally, Shiobara (2014) found students enjoyed free writing and felt it to be beneficial, but that the choice of topics had an impact on how much they could write (p. 68), and Broekema (2020) revealed that students found free writing to be fun but difficult, also they perceived it as worthwhile for assisting their English writing skills (p. 188). Ottosan and Crane's (2017) participants liked the free writing activities and increased their language skills and their ability to write better over time (pp. 56-57). Two-thirds of their participants wanted to continue the free writing activities in classes (p. 58). Within Piper's (2015) study, participants stated that they believed that their writing skills improved through free writing activities, and that free writing was a good strategy for improving English writing (p. 127). They thought it was useful and enjoyed the free writing done in classes (p. 125).

Azizi (2015) explored free writing in Japanese EFL settings with research similar to Muller's (2014b) in an attempt to encourage the students' tolerance for

ambiguity in language learning and to build the learners' confidence (p. 84). When considering student perceptions of free writing, the participants in Azizi's (2015) study expressed positive feelings toward the efficacy of free writing activities in their EFL classroom. Relatedly, in Darling's (2018) study of using free writing journals in Japanese university EFL classes, the students had only positive comments and felt that the activities helped them improve their writing fluency (p. 22).

Regarding the topics used in free writing, Muller (2014a) found that students prefer to be given a topic to write about and Darling (2018) reported that participants were okay with either teacher-provided or self-selected topics (p. 22). Ferreira (2013) found that participants seemed "to express themselves with a larger variety of words when asked to write about topics of their own choosing. That is, they appear to be more fluent according to the fluency index used…for this research" (p. 304). Ottoson & Crane (2017) found students stated preference for assigned topics but demonstrated increased fluency in self-selected topics (pp. 53-55). As with Ottoson and Crane (2017), Piper (2015) also replicated Bonzo's (2008) research into topic choice in free writing and found that students performed marginally better when writing about teacher-provided topics (p. 120). Interviews also showed that half of the participants preferred teacher-provided topics because the students had difficulty in deciding topic content when they were left to decide the topic (p. 126).

Free writing as a language improvement activity has been used for decades to varying degrees of success, but one theme that seems to be constant across the current research among Japanese university students regarding their feelings about free writing activities: they feel that free writing helps improve their writing fluency even if the quantitative data does not always reveal lexical or grammatical improvements. Therefore, to follow up on the authors' previous quantitative findings that free writing did not improve their students' English writing abilities, this qualitative study was conducted to explore their perceptions about doing free writing in English.

Methods

Participants

The participants of this study were 29 Freshmen English majors at a private university in northern Japan. All participants were informally assessed by authors to be approximately at the CEFR A2 – B1 level of proficiency. Free writing activities were done at the beginning of required English writing classes for one semester at the end of the participants' Freshman year. Informed consent was obtained from all of the participants at the beginning of the study period and students were given the option to opt out of the study at any time.

Data collection

All of the free writing done in this study was done in the classroom by hand in order to eliminate the confounding variables of variances in participants' computer and typing proficiency. Students were given a worksheet with three different topics for that week's free writing assignment (see the Appendix for full list of topics). Topics in the writing assignments were based on topics that were covered in the course textbook, *American Headway* (Soars & Soars, 2016), or on slightly more difficult topics related to content the students were expected to have encountered throughout the year at university or recent news headlines. A variety of topics was provided with the intention of accounting for both student ability and students' interests as recommended by Baba and Nitta (2014).

Students were instructed to choose a topic and then to write about the same topic for two weeks' worth of free writing activities. Students were given 10 minutes for the free writing exercise. Students were allowed, but not encouraged, to use dictionaries for free writing, but they were told not to use machine translation. At the end of 10 minutes, students were instructed to count the number of words they had written and write that number at the bottom of the worksheet before submitting it to the researcher. Participants completed a total of 12 free writing activities in this study. After the final free writing, participants completed a Free Writing Reflection Questionnaire adapted from Baba and Nitta (2014).

Data analysis

Participant Free Writing Reflection Questionnaire responses were independently translated and coded by both authors following Grounded Theory data analysis methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify emerging themes in the qualitative response data.

The Free Writing Reflection Questionnaire based on Baba and Nitta's (2014) post-free writing reflection sheets included the following three questions in English and Japanese (responses were allowed in either language):

1. When writing and using English, how was it?

2. Think about when you started writing at the beginning of the term. Compare it to the final composition you wrote today. How do you feel about it?

3. Looking back at the compositions and thinking about your writing next year, what are your plans?

Results

Based on Baba and Nitta's (2014) study, three common themes were expected in the students' comments: vocabulary, fluency, and grammar. Examples of the vocabulary-related comments that were seen are: "I didn't know what word to use…" (22E04), and "At first I didn't know what expression to use…" (22E14). Examples of the fluency-related responses provided include: "I was disappointed that I couldn't write what I wanted to say." (22E05), and "More in-depth sentences, I want to be able to write more easily" (22E18). The grammar-related comments included such statements as, "I thought that I need to work harder on grammar and vocabulary." (22E24), and "I have a better understanding of grammar than before." (22E09).

In addition to those themes revealed in Baba and Nitta's (2014) research, six other themes emerged from the data: usefulness, enjoyability, content / topic, motivation / effect, L1 / L2 processing, and difficulty. Comments related to the usefulness of free writing included "It was a chance to better understand my own English skill." (22E01). Student statements that expressed that free writing was enjoyable were exemplified by "It was difficult, but it was fun." (22E02). An example of the comments about the content or topic is, "Based on the topics, I could clearly see the difference in what I could write about and what I couldn't write about." (22E10). Regarding motivation or effects of free writing, a student remarked, "Not much changed [over time]. It's because I don't try hard enough." (22E05). The comments about L1/L2 processing included, "I'm still using translators to write, but I think I want to use my own English to write even only a little bit…" (22E33). Finally, statements about the difficulty of free writing were exemplified by, "It was difficult for me to write essay with English…" (22E06).

The following charts show the types of responses provided to each question in the Questionnaire.

Figure 1

Themes that emerged from Question 1 responses
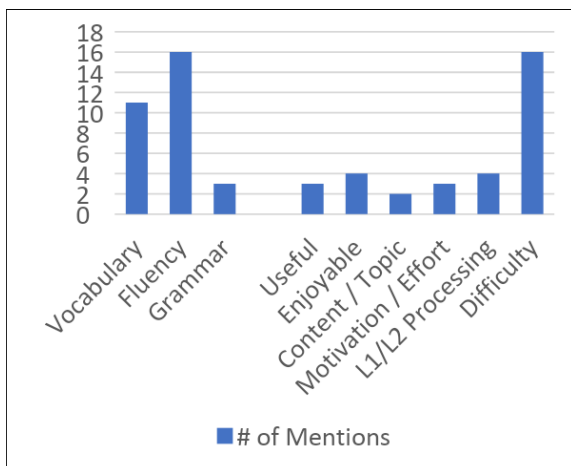
Figure 2 shows the responses to question 2, "Think about when you started writing at the beginning of the term. Compare it to the final composition you wrote today. How do you feel about it?"

Figure 2

Themes that emerged from Question 2 responses
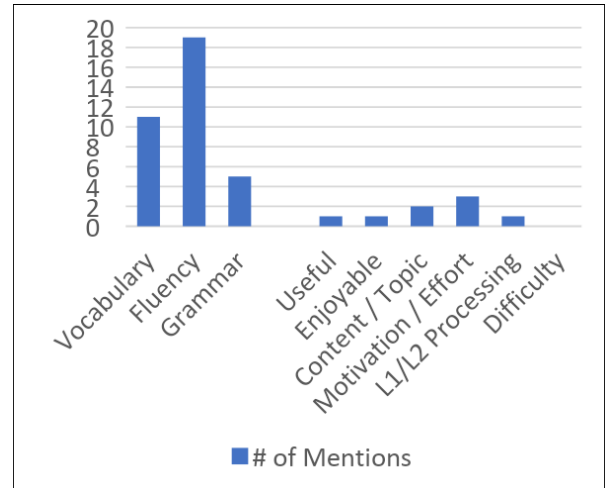
Figure 3 shows the responses to question 3, "Looking back at the compositions and thinking about your writing for the future, what are your plans?"

Figure 3

Themes that emerged from Question 3 responses.
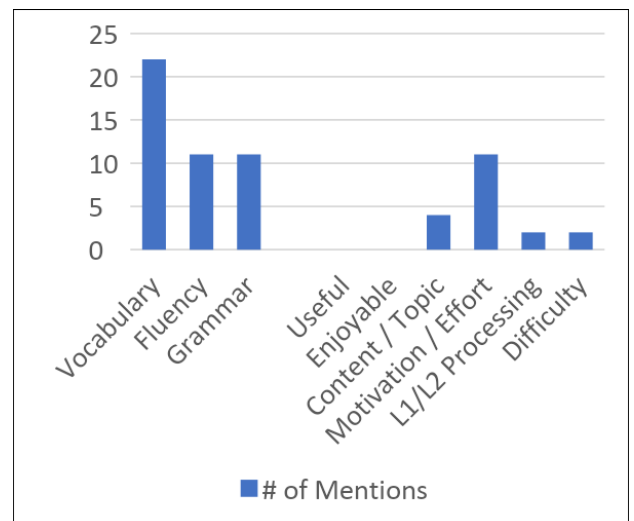
Discussion

The themes that emerged from the participants' reflection questionnaires were in line with Baba and Nitta's (2010, 2014) research that showed students had a generally positive attitude toward free writing (2014, pp. 19-20). In addition, in response to question 1 about participants feelings toward free writing, the comments most commonly revealed feelings of it being difficult and that participants had concerns about their fluency.

Comments that express these feelings include: "It was difficult to start writing quickly." (22E02), "It is difficult. I was disappointed that I couldn't write what I wanted to say." (22E05), and "Creating a long text in English was difficult." (22E11). These results match Ottoson and Crane's (2017) and Broekema's (2020) findings about students finding free writing difficult.

Statements about vocabulary were also common: "I learned new words." (22E09), and "At first I didn't know what expressions to use, but I gradually learned the benefit of writing in English." (22E14). Comments such as these align with Ottoson & Crane's (2017) findings of participants seeing free writing as means to increase vocabulary.

The responses to question 2 about participants' English writing development over the course of free writing matched Baba and Nitta's (2010) findings as well, that students became more reflective about their writing over the term of the free writing (p. 221). The participants' most common responses concerned their fluency, such as: "I think I was maybe able to write a little longer." (22E04 & 22E08), "I think I could improve my skills to express." (22E06), and "When I started writing, all using translators, but I feel without the need to translate some a little bit." (22E12).

Statements about vocabulary improvements were also very common. "I think I developed the ability to use many words to express the information I want to." (22E02), "I also looked up vocabulary I didn't know afterwards, so I gained knowledge." (22E19), and "I felt that equally my vocabulary, writing speed, and thinking speed is improving." (22E27) were examples. These results align with Leblanc and Fujieda's (2012), Ottoson and Crane's (2017), and Shiobara's (2014) findings of participants seeing free writing as means to increase their English writing fluency and vocabulary use.

Finally, regarding the participants' answers to question 3 about future writing goals, comments about vocabulary improvement plans were most common, with comments also tied to improving their own English fluency, grammar, and motivation or effort. Revealing comments about these topics include: "I need more grammar and more words. I'll effort to get them." (22E07), "I believe I want to be able to write texts more like native writers write in English." (22E08), "I want to memorize more grammar and vocabulary and not depend on tools to be able to create texts." (22E11), "I thought I want to work to increase the number of words I can use even more." (22E15), and "I think I want to continue to study with the goal of increasing my vocabulary." (22E21). These results align with Baba and Nitta's (2010, 2014), Dickenson's (2014), Leblanc and Fujieda's (2012), and Ottoson and Crane's (2017)

findings of participants being motivated to improve their vocabulary, fluency, and general writing skills after experience with free writing in their EFL classes.

Looking across the responses to all of the questions, themes emerged about participants' feelings about free writing content and topics. In questions 1 and 2, comments about content / topics having an impact on the participants' writing ability included, "I was able to see the big difference between topics I could write about and topics I couldn't write about." (22E10), "There were vocabulary not used in daily life, so it was terribly difficult to smoothly translate the Japanese I wanted to write into English." (22E21), and "The topics were hard. When the topic was easy to write about, I could write a lot; but the times when I did not have an opinion about the topic, I could only write a little bit." (22E24). These results align with Dickenson (2014), Leblanc and Fujieda (2012), Ottoson and Crane (2017), and Shiobara's (2014) findings that the topics can have a limiting effect on the participants writing fluency. Further, these studies showed that self-selected topics result in greater fluency in writing. This slightly contradicts Piper's (2015) research that showed students performing marginally better on topics chosen by the teacher (p. 120) and that free choice had no real effect on students' writing fluency. In the current study, some students thought that free writing was very difficult, and some topics could increase the difficulty. But this was not a universal response. Therefore, it seems that the selection of free writing topics has little influence on how well the students perform.

The biggest factors commented on by participants were about their own insufficient vocabularies and knowledge about grammar. Generally, the students found free writing to spur their motivation to improve their language skills to be able to communicate what they want in writing. This study, as well as Broekema (2020), Darling (2018), Dickinson (2014), Head (2016), Hwang (2010), Leblanc & Fujieda (2012), Muller (2014a, 2014b), Ottoson & Crane (2017), Piper (2015), and Shiobara (2014), all found that students felt that free writing was enjoyable and beneficial to their English writing skills. Also, Baba and Nitta's (2010, 2014), Dickinson (2014), Leblanc and Fujieda (2012), and Ottoson and Crane (2017) all found that students wanted to continue doing free writing in future EFL writing classes. In the entirety of the literature reviewed for this study as well as the results obtained in the current study, no negative effects stemming from free writing were observed, so there seems to be no harm in doing it even if the data do not strongly support a quantitative increase in students' English writing fluency (Forsythe & MacWhinnie, 2023).

Existing research does provide the following suggestions about making free writing as beneficial as

possible: Broekema (2020) suggests doing learner training at the beginning to explain free writing goals and processes with a focus on fluency over accuracy. Dickinson (2014), Leblanc and Fujieda (2012), Ottoson and Crane (2017) as well as Shiobara (2014) all recommend allowing students the freedom to choose the writing topic, but Piper (2015) also says that instructors should give possible topics to choose from if students have no idea what to write about. Instructors should also encourage students to notice their language gaps as they emerge during free writing and then work to address those gaps through self-study. Baba and Nitta (2010) found that students who were reflective about their free writing improved in their lexical diversity and grammatical complexity over the course of a year of weekly free writing activities (p. 219).

Limitations

The main limitation in this study was the small and relatively homogenous sample size of the population. Future research should expand the sample pool across both public and private universities in a variety of majors to obtain a more balanced view of a diverse student population's views about free writing in EFL classes.

Conclusion

Free writing is a commonly used activity in language classes (Baba & Nitta, 2010, 2014); Bello, 1997; Elbow, 1996; Muller, 2014a, b; Piper, 2015; Rivers, 2007; Shiobara, 2014) and students have a variety of feelings toward doing this widely used English practice activity. Baba and Nitta (2010, 2014) surveyed their participants' feelings toward free writing using a reflection sheet that was used as the basis for the current study's data collection tool to explore the perceptions of Japanese university students toward doing free writing activities in their English writing classes. The participants of this study were 29 first year, private university English majors. The data collected were the responses to Free Writing Reflection Questionnaires completed by the participants after one semester of weekly free writing activities in EFL writing classes.

The findings of this study aligned with Baba and Nitta's (2014) study revealing the three most common themes in the students' comments were related to concerns about their vocabulary, fluency, and grammar. Additionally, six other themes emerged from the participants' response data: usefulness, enjoyable, content / topic, motivation / effect, L1 / L2 processing, and difficulty. The content of the responses aligned with Leblanc and Fujieda's (2012), Ottoson & Crane's (2017) & Shiobara's (2014) findings of participants seeing free writing as means to increase their English writing fluency and vocabulary use. Also, this study's results align with Baba and Nitta's (2010, 2014), Dickenson's

(2014), Leblanc & Fujieda's (2012), and Ottoson and Crane's (2017) findings that participants in free writing activities are motivated to improve their vocabulary, fluency, and general writing skills after experience with free writing in their EFL classes.

Regarding the impact of free writing content or topic choice on the participants' writing ability, the current study's results align with Dickenson (2014), Leblanc and Fujieda (2012), Ottoson and Crane (2017), and Shiobara's (2014) findings that the topics can have a limiting effect on the participants writing fluency. Further, these studies showed that self-selected topics can result in greater fluency in writing, so topics for free writing activities can be left to the students to choose but should also have suggestions by the instructor just in case students are having difficulty deciding on a topic.

In all of the literature reviewed for this study as well as the findings provided from the current study's data, students find free writing to be an enjoyable and useful activity for improving their EFL writing abilities (Baba & Nitta, 2014; Broekema, 2020; Darling, 2018; Dickinson, 2014; Head, 2016; Hwang, 2010; Leblanc & Fujieda, 2012; Muller, 2014a, 2014b; Ottoson & Crane, 2017; Shiobara, 2014), despite the general lack of empirical evidence to support the quantitative improvement of students' English writing fluency through free writing activities (Forsythe & MacWhinnie, 2023; Muller, 2014b). Up to now, no negative effects stemming from free writing have been reported in the literature, so there seems to be no harm in doing it. If instructors are going to continue doing free writing in EFL classes, it should be done so purposefully to help students gain the most from free writing in English.

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Appendix

English Composition IA Class Free Writing Topics

There are six sets of question topics. Each set was used twice (once per week for two consecutive weeks) for a total of 12 free writing sessions.

Set 1: Hobbies, favorite game / sport, favorite movie

Set 2: School days, clubs, part-time jobs, favorite holiday

Set 3: Foreign country to visit, studying at university, favorite food

Set 4: Where you want to live, favorite book, school trips

Set 5: Weekend activities, favorite TV show, pets, animals

Set 6: Summer vacation, North Korea problem, celebrities

Error Analysis of EFL Expository Writing:
Implications for Pre-College Classrooms

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This quantitative study provides an account of the grammatical error Japanese EFL senior high school learners make in expository writing. The study adopts the Error Analysis (EA) approach and is based on the Surface Structure Taxonomies of errors. The research examined errors in a corpus of 392 compositions from 280 students in an urban second-tier metropolitan senior high school. The data were collected and analyzed using WordSmith Tools Version 8.0. Errors were identified and classified into categories to analyze the data from a quantitative perspective. The findings revealed the common types of grammatical error committed by participants and the frequency of their occurrence. The misuse or omission of prepositions and concord were common errors that were found. Other notable errors include punctuations, fragments and ambiguity. Pedagogical implications are discussed in terms of providing remedial action to ensure effective teaching of these grammar components in high school EFL writing contexts.

この定性的研究は、日本人の EFL 高校生学習者が説明的文章を書く際に犯す文法的誤りについて説明するものである。本研究は、誤用分析 (EA) アプローチを採用し、誤用の表層構造分類法に基づいてなされた。本研究では、中堅上位の都立高等学校の生徒 280 名によって書かれた 392 本の作文コーパスにおける誤用を調査した。データは WordSmith Tools Version 8.0 を用いて収集・分析した。定性的な観点からデータを分析するために、誤用を特定し分類した。その結果、被験者がよく犯す文法ミスの種類とその発生頻度が明らかになった。前置詞の誤用や省略、主語と動詞の不一致はよく見られる誤用であった。句読点、断片的な表現、主語等が曖昧である表現なども目立った誤用であった。高等学校の EFL ライティングの授業において、これらの文法要素を効果的に学習指導する上での改善策の提案という観点から、その教育方法について論じる。

It is commonly accepted that English as a foreign language (EFL) writing is gaining traction in many Japanese language classrooms as more universities, particularly national and top private universities, have adopted essay components as part of their university entrance examinations (Watanabe, 2016; Yosef, 2018; Ikeguchi et al., 2023). Many faculties (e.g., law, economics, business) within each tertiary institution commonly include an EFL written component as part of filtering potential national and international applicants who seek to gain placement into competitive programs.

There is thus an increasing demand place on many junior and senior high school EFL teachers in Japan to prepare learners to manage this portion of university entrance examinations. Second- and third-year high school Japanese EFL teachers are required to prepare learners in writing practices for high-stakes national and private universities entrance examinations (Hosoki, 2011). Many assistant language teachers in senior high schools are frequently tasked to teach EFL writing to equip students in paragraph writings such as formulating reasoned responses to expository questions and creating short summaries from state-approved English curriculum textbooks (Kobayakawa, 2011).

As more attention should be given to teaching writing in high school classrooms, the contribution of this study to the body of knowledge of EFL teaching and learning of grammar is believed to be valuable. This study aims at exploring and analyzing the common errors made by senior high school Japanese EFL learners in the context of expository writing.

This study investigated the following two research questions:

1) What are the types of grammatical error that students make in expository writing?

2) What is the frequency of their occurrence in learners' compositions?

Literature Review

Grammar study with a textbook is the most reported type of study in multi-regional parts of Japan (Lockley et al., 2012) where 80% of lessons observed were spent on teacher-led grammar presentations in L1 rather than for activities where the grammar was practiced (Nishimuro & Borg, 2013). Using writing tasks from five different publishers of Japanese senior high school textbooks (English I course textbooks, English II course textbooks and Writing course textbooks), Kobayakawa (2011) examined the various writing tasks in these textbooks for these courses using comparative quantitative analysis. Among the five writing course textbooks series, three out of five senior high school state-mandated textbooks (Crown, Pro-Vision, Unicorn, Vivid, Big Dipper) emphasized grammar translation while only two emphasized controlled writing in the target language (Ishikawa, et al., 2011; Sasahara, 2011; Shimozaki, 2011; Watanabe, 2010). Textbooks tasks and prompts are used as they are simple to execute in terms of task design and instruction.

Several studies have been done on EFL high school and pre-college learners' written production (Alhaisoni et al., 2017; Anakampun & Fithriani, 2023; Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Hussain et al., 2021; Manokaran et al., 2013; Okada, 2005). These studies investigated different kinds of errors such as the absence of copula, subject-verb agreement, misuse of articles in the form of omission or insertion of definite and indefinite articles and intralingual errors due to L1 transference in misspellings.

In reviewing the literature, we found few studies that investigated the errors made in expository writing by Japanese high school students. Only one study investigated the writing of Japanese high school students (Kato, 2006). The data scripts under investigation were competition essays where selected participants were allowed to do translations. More than ten years ago, researchers began noticing the trend. However, since then, there have been few attempts by classroom teachers to modify their teaching from an emphasis on grammar instruction to one on remedial writing and calls for more writing instruction for Japanese high school students have been made in recent times (Yosef, 2018; Cecilia, et al., 2023). There is little current research on how much expository writing Japanese high students are doing for university entrance exams. As there are different kinds of errors and variations in EFL learners' writings, it is important to investigate their written production, particularly in contexts where grammar translation pedagogy (Gorsuch, 2001) is adopted as a main teaching approach where the learners' spoken L1 and translanguaging pedagogy are used as the main medium of foreign language instruction.

Method

The Error Analysis (EA) approach which is based on the Surface Structure Taxonomies of errors (Dulay et al., 1982) was adopted for this study. An error is an idiosyncrasy in the language of the learner which is a direct manifestation of a system within which a learner is operating at the time and this is distinct from a mistake, which refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a "slip," i.e., a failure to utilize a known system correctly (Brown, 2007). The approach view errors as highly systematic and these errors served as windows to learners' development in EFL writing, and is indicative of the potential strategies used by learners to test their hypotheses about the nature of the language form they are learning.

Participants

280 students (157 males, 123 females) from an urban second-tier metropolitan senior high school in a major city in Japan participated in this study. All participants had experienced approximately ten years of education in state elementary and junior high schools. Consent was sought from the school and participants to participate in the research study.

Procedure and Instrument

Data in the form of 401 handwritten compositions of approximately 100 words were collected from 11th grade students over a two-year period. Scripts with less than 80 words and had Japanese inscriptions (kanji characters incorporated as part of sentence constructions) were removed, and several scripts with faint pencil writings were scanned and enlarged. There were no scripts with complete breakdown in communication. A final data of 392 scripts were typed into Microsoft Notepad version 11.2. Errors were identified, coded and subsequently described according to the steps in EA. The corpus consisted of two composition prompts adapted from Dualscope (Kotera et al., 2017), a state-approved English textbook for senior high school: 'Are you for or against school uniform in schools?' and 'Nowadays, many Japanese people are doing volunteer work. Do you think the number of these people will increase in the future?'. Scripts were written during class time and were thus not plagiarized with generative artificial intelligence applications.

Procedural analysis (Ellis, 1994) was adopted to analyze the data from a quantitative perspective. The data was analysed using a Windows-based lexical analysis software, WordSmith Tools Version 8.0. The errors were tagged and coded into error codes and classified into categories (Table 1).

Table 1

Error Codes

Categories	Error codes	Types
Mechanical	E1	Misuse of punctuations
	E2	Wrong forms of verbs
	E3	Inappropriate use of capitalizations
Grammatical	E4	Concord
	E5	Wrong tense usage
	E6	Improper use of articles
	E7	Incorrect usage of prepositions
Structural	E8	Ambiguity
	E9	Fragments

Results

The findings from the corpus data revealed nine types of errors. These are grouped into three broad categories which typified the participants' compositions. Table 2 provides a description of the errors found in students' compositions.

Table 2

Error Types in Senior High School Students' Expository Writing

Errors	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Concord	179	21.5	1
Wrong forms of verb	137	16.5	2
Incorrect usage of prepositions	134	16.1	3
Wrong use of punctuations	100	12.0	4
Wrong tense usage	81	9.7	5
Fragments	73	8.8	6
Improper use of articles	53	6.4	7
Inappropriate use of capitalizations	50	6.0	8
Ambiguity	24	2.9	9
Total	831	100	

Concord recorded the highest frequency of errors in the participants' expository writings. Wrong forms of verbs and incorrect usage of prepositions recorded the second and third most dominant errors. This confirms the findings of other researchers in which errors in subject-verb agreement and improper use of prepositions dominated written texts of EFL learners

from four cultural settings – Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Pakistan (Anakampun & Fithriani, 2023; Darius and Subramaniam, 2009; Hussain et al., 2021; Tseng, 2016).

The errors committed by the Japanese high school student writers highlighted in Table 1 can be grouped into three broad categories: mechanical, grammatical and structural. The mechanical category of errors includes wrong forms of verbs, inaccurate usage of punctuations and inappropriate use of capitalizations. The grammatical categories of errors include students' inability to apply the rules of concord, poor usage of preposition, wrong tense usage and misuse of articles. Structural forms of errors were limited to fragments and ambiguity. Table 3 highlights the overall error distribution.

Table 3

Overall Error Distribution across Major Linguistic Categories

Category	Percentage
Grammatical	55.7%
Mechanical	44.6%
Structural	11.7%

Across the three categories of errors identified in the paragraph writings of Japanese senior high school students, analysis related to the grammatical category of errors was the highest. Table 4 provides the rank distribution of errors captured in this category. There was a total of 447 errors, i.e., 55.7% of overall errors in the data set relates to grammatical inaccuracies. The highest frequency counts of grammatical errors relate to subject-verb agreement while a third involves the incorrect usage of prepositions. Close to a fifth of grammatical errors found were misuses of articles in sentences. Even though grammar errors accounted for more than half, punctuation also featured relatively high after the grammar points among Japanese EFL learners in this study. This is notably in contrast to the aforementioned studies from different cultural settings.

Table 4

Overall Error Distribution across Grammatical Category

Errors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Concord	179	40.0	1
Poor usage of prepositions	134	30.0	2
Wrong tense usage	81	18.1	3
Misuse of articles	53	11.9	4
Total	447	100	

Participants often failed to match plural nouns with their quantifiers, as seen when "way" was incorrectly used

instead of "ways," omitted plural forms in noun phrases, and mistakenly paired plural verbs with singular indefinite pronouns like "everyone." In example 2, omission errors occur where a plural noun has to be adopted but was omitted potentially due to writers not adopting a generalized stance.

Table 5

Sample Errors Related to Concord and their Corresponding Accurate Forms

Wrong usage of agreement	Accurate usage of agreement
1. *In my opinion, it is one of the ***way** to prevent bullying.*	*In my opinion, this is one of the **ways** to prevent bullying.*
2. *So, I think that they should help when ***earthquake**, ***natural disaster** and terrible ***accident** happens.*	*So, I think that they should help when **earthquakes**, **natural disasters** and terrible **accidents** happen.*
3. *Third, when everyone ***put** on the uniform and schools become good…*	*Third, when everyone **puts** on the uniform and schools will improve…*

Misuse of prepositions was the second highest ranked grammatical error. Of the 2008 attempts at using prepositions in sentence formulations, the preposition `upon` was the least employed preposition, and `in` was the most frequently chosen preposition. However, this preposition exhibited a proportionally lower error count in comparison among sixteen types of recorded prepositions. A detailed analysis of the data scripts revealed the omission of `to`, frequently in the form of to-infinitives in adverbial clauses, saw the highest frequency count in this category. In examples 4 and 5 from the sample scripts, the to-infinitives were frequently omitted in these adverbial clauses. The preposition `for` is the second most frequent prepositional error observed for omission while `of` was the third most common prepositional error.

Table 6

Common Prepositional Errors by Japanese EFL writers

Prepositions	Errors	Total attempts	Rank
from	11	32	4
at	2	55	
by	3	62	
during	3	2	
before	1	3	
upon	1	1	
of	13	354	3
for	30	148	2
on	6	97	
in	13	551	3
with	9	99	5
through	1	6	
between	3	6	
to	31	536	1
about	6	45	
without	1	11	

These omissions as noted in examples 5 and 6 led to choppy sentences which compromised cohesion within sentences, but not meaning-making.

Table 7

Errors Related to Incorrect Usage of Prepositions

Wrong usage of prepositions	Accurate usage of prepositions
4. *It is because we do not ***want** waste time to choose clothes.*	*It is because we do not want **to** waste time to choose clothes.*
5. *For example, when the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster happened on March 11 [sic] many people served as volunteers ***help** for victims.*	*For example, when the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster happened on March 11, many people served as volunteers **to** help the victims.*
6. *So [sic] people in Japan are ***afraid** this.*	*So [sic] people in Japan are afraid **of** this.*

Mechanical errors accounted for close to half of total error types (44.6%) made by students. Inaccurate form of verb usage is the most frequent mechanical inaccuracy and is the second highest error count in the entire corpus. As evident in table 8, slightly more than a third of mechanical errors concerned punctuations while close to a fifth were related to incorrect use of capitalizations.

Table 8

Mechanical Category

Errors	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Wrong verb forms	137	47.7	1
Wrong usage of punctuations	100	34.9	2
Inappropriate use of capitalizations	50	17.4	3
Total	287	100	

These verb form errors relate to omission of copula verbs and auxiliaries. The examples in Table 9 typifies the recurring mechanical errors that were found in the data set. In general, students seem to lack knowledge in the use of the copula verb, 'be' in noun phrases and an effective use of auxiliaries in independent clauses.

Table 9

Errors Relating to Wrong Forms of Verb and their Corresponding Correct Forms

	Wrong forms of verb use	Right forms of verb use
7.	*However, I think volunteers *have to invite.*	*However, I think volunteers have to be invited.*
8.	*Secondly, Olympic *will held 2020 in Japan.*	*Secondly, the Olympics will be held in 2020 in Japan.*
9.	*In contrast, if we are to choose our clothes every day, it *takes time.*	*In contrast, if we are to choose our clothes every day, it would take time.*

There were many instances of capitalization errors among students` scripts. Many students would capitalize the first letter of the second word in their topic sentences after a sequential or causal discourse marker at sentence initials (example 10). These learners are unaware of spoken and written registers. Writers pen their thoughts as though they were delivering speeches and potentially misconstruing sequential discourse markers as part of numerating a list of points; and upper casing the first letter of the first content word without differentiating between the beginning of a sentence versus the start of an idea formulation. Another notable error is the addition of capitalizations to general nouns such as `school uniforms` and its omission in the case of proper nouns in example 11.

Table 10

Errors Relating to Wrong Forms of Verb and their Corresponding Correct Forms

	Inappropriate use of capitalizations	Appropriate use
10.	*First, *Many people are interested in volunteer work.*	*First, many people are interested in volunteer work.*
	In conclusion, *The number of volunteers won't increase.	*In conclusion, the number of volunteers won't increase.*
11.	*People who show interest to volunteer are little [sic] among *south tofu high school.*	*People who show interest to volunteer are little [sic] among South Tofu High School.*
12.	*I think *School Uniforms are necessary for students.*	*I think school uniforms are necessary for students.*

Inappropriate punctuations were a fairly common occurrence with participants failing to include commas after sentence initial discourse markers.

Table 11

Errors Relating to Wrong Usage of Punctuations

	Inappropriate use of punctuations	Appropriate use of punctuations
13.	**Third volunteer work helps people think about their future jobs.*	*Third, volunteer work helps people think about their future jobs.*
14.	*It's difficult to administer without *volunteer's help.*	*It's difficult to administer without volunteers' help.*

Table 12 provides a general overview of structural errors found in students' scripts. Out of the total 831 errors identified, only 97 (11.7%) relates to structural category with fragments being the dominant error type in this category followed by ambiguity. *Fragments* are incomplete sentences with either a subject, verb or other parts of speech which have not been included to complete an idea. *Ambiguity* refers to a sentence which has more than one interpretation assigned to one sign as a result of not being explicitly defined (Elena, 2019).

Table 12

Structural Category

Errors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Fragments	73	75.2	1
Ambiguity	24	24.8	2
Total	97	100	

In the context where the students were arguing for the benefits of donning school uniforms and promoting volunteerism among Japanese people, the controlling ideas in the sentences, in examples 15 and 16, are written in point form as opposed to being fully expressed as complete thoughts.

Table 13

Errors Relating to Wrong Usage of Fragments

	Fragments	Complete grammatical constructions
15.	*Second, *save money.*	*Second, we can save money.*
16.	*First, Tokyo Olympics *will be held.*	*First, the Tokyo Olympics will be held in 2020.*

Examples 17 and 18 are instances of ambiguous sentences that concerns expressions with dangling modifiers. These were scripts in which senior high students modified words that were not clearly stated. The bold portion of the above sentences indicate dangling modifiers. In example 17, the dangling modifier, "To have more volunteers for the Olympics" does not have any explicit word that it modifies in the sentence. It behaves as though it is modifying the head noun, "volunteers" of the main clause. Adding a subject within the dangling modifier would potentially avoid ambiguity. Alternatively, a new subject (we) which logically relates

to the modifier could replace the former subject (volunteer) in the main clause.

Table 14

Errors Relating to Ambiguity

	Ambiguous sentences	Disambiguated sentences
17.	**To have more volunteers for the Olympics*, volunteers should be paid.	*For Japan to have more volunteers for the Olympics*, volunteers should be paid. *or* To have more volunteers for the Olympics, we should pay volunteers
18.	**When addressing people*, news was made to get more volunteers.	*When the prime minister was addressing the people*, news was made to get more volunteers. *or* News was made to get more volunteers when the prime minister addressed the people. *or* The prime minister addressed the people and called for more volunteers.

Discussion and Conclusion

As grammatical errors recorded the highest error count among the three linguistic categories in this study, we argue the grammatical section requires the most attention in terms of focused teaching for pre-college Japanese EFL expository writing. This study provides some suggestions to curb these errors from frequent occurrence.

First, classroom teachers should revise and devise more targeted instructional materials to make teaching and learning of grammar in expository writing more effective with added emphasis on the teaching of concord and prepositions, so student writers would be conversant with their applications. This can be done in the form of noticing practices using true/false grammar misconception worksheets with samples of accurate and inaccurate sentences for explicit comparisons.

Second, during high-school vocabulary acquisition classes, a new vocabulary word should be presented in the form of a noun, an adverbial or a prepositional phrase to enable learners to observe their collocative use in prose. Learners can be tasked to construct their own sentences in a notebook as post-class extensive practices upon learning a set of eight to ten new vocabulary; in addition, to the current routine classroom vocabulary practices of rote memorization and testing word meanings. Future state supplementary textbooks would do well to invoke the use of comparison exercises and practices of these common errors.

Additionally, language instructors can incorporate extensive writing practices which use prepositional phrases and complex sentences with targeted dependent clauses that focuses on the following prepositions: `to`, `of` and `for`. Dependent clauses exercises which discriminate between two prepositions in usage with a focus on grammar in the context of expository language would be an appropriate remedy.

Lastly, our findings indicate less knowledge in what constitutes a complete sentence in written expositions, making the case that pre-college EFL student writers require further support in the use of capitalizations and punctuations in cases of possessive nouns. Learners should formulate their own construction of these words and phrases to strengthen the form-meaning connection from a word in silo to its use in a sentence. This would promote within-sentence grammaticality (i.e., the removal of potential errors due to verb forms, omitted articles, fragments and inappropriate collocational forms) and register awareness between spoken and written genres.

In sum, it is important to support learners with numerous samples of written texts and practise extensive sentence constructions after a vocabulary input has been taught, so that the L1 equivalent input during grammar-translation dominant classes recedes as the target language words and their accompanying syntactic structures are repeatedly encountered in different expository proses. Future research could explore longitudinal studies on the impact of grammar-translation pedagogy and translanguaging pedagogy on error frequency count in EFL written proses in similar contexts.

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Critical Thinking Through Comparisons: Strategies From An EMI Course

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This practice-oriented paper introduces strategies to develop critical thinking through comparison based on the authors' teaching experiences in an EMI course in a Tokyo university. The strategies are informed by an international movement to globalize education, which has been adopted by the Japanese government and emphasizes using education to develop transferable or "generic" skills to facilitate international collaboration in an increasingly dynamic and uncertain future. Educators face novel challenges in creating and adapting materials that develop these skills in addition to other requirements of the curricula. In light of this challenge, this paper aims to stimulate further research and dialogue about practical strategies that can meet the multi-leveled challenges and requirements of shifting Japanese higher education. The paper focuses on the use of comparisons as one method to improve conceptual development, media literacy, and activate higher order thinking skills.

日本語概要 この実践論文では、東京に所在する大学の EMI コースにおける著者らの指導経験に基づき、比較を通して批判的思考を育成するための戦略を紹介する。このストラテジーは、日本政府も採用している教育のグローバル化の動きから得たものであり、ダイナミックで不確実な未来において国際的な協力を促進するために、「ジェネリック・スキル（汎用的技能）」を育成するための教育である。教育者は、カリキュラムの他の要件に加えて、これらのスキルを開発する教材を作成し、カリキュラムに適応させるという新たな課題に直面している。この課題に鑑み、本稿は、日本の高等教育が直面する多次元的な課題や要求に対応するための実践的な戦略について、さらなる研究と対話を促すことを目的とする。本稿では、概念的発展、メディア・リテラシーを向上させ、高次の思考スキルを活性化させる方法の一つとして、比較の活用に焦点を当てる。

As Japan adapts its higher education system to an internationalizing world, English-medium instruction (EMI) is being adopted as one strategy to prepare its students. [1] Despite compulsory English education throughout the schooling system, many students have difficulty taking content classes in English. Additionally, government policy now expects universities to help students develop transferable skills. This practice-oriented report is thus situated in an emerging space where teaching conceptually demanding content overlaps with the need to both scaffold students' language and facilitate skill development. First, we provide background for Japan's shift to globalized higher education, in particular EMI classes and the acquisition of transferable skills. We then address specific challenges for educators working in EMI in Japan, especially at universities outside the "global elite." Next, we provide our rationale for and illustrate using comparisons as a strategy to develop students' language, content, and transferable skills with concrete examples. We use various contemporary examples that are familiar to Japanese students, from the personal to the global, to engage and develop their critical thinking skills. Our purpose is to provide concrete ideas for educators working in similar contexts and develop conversation on student-centered EMI courses, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

Background

EMI in Japanese Higher Education

Education in Japanese universities has been evolving to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Since the early 1980s, the Japanese government and businesses have recognized the need to shift from a manufacturing-based to an information-based economy. Education too

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[1] Brown and Bradford (2017) distinguished EMI from Content Language Integrated learning (CLIL) on the basis of pedagogy and whether language was assessable. The ideas in this paper apply to EMI and CLIL classes equally.

is shifting from "rote learning" to learning that helps children "develop flexible and independent mindsets" (Yamanaka & Suzuki 2020, p. 82). Rather than simply educating students in specific academic fields, the education system is now tasked with creating "global human resources" who have the necessary skills to engage on the global stage, "the ability to step forward," "think well," and "work in a team" (Yonezawa 2014, p. 38). This reflects international goals set by UNESCO, which call for an "open system of higher education to build bridges and promote partnerships around the world" (O'Malley & Warden, 2022, para. 10).

In line with the trend towards internationalization, an increasing number of institutions have begun offering EMI courses, with 309 universities offering some English-medium classes and 43 offering students the possibility to graduate with only English-medium classes as of 2020 (MEXT, 2020, p. vii). Many initiatives to promote EMI have been focused on elite universities that can "lead the internationalization of Japanese society" (Rose & McKinley, 2018, p. 111).

However, research shows there is a significant gap between the expected English levels of EMI students and the English levels of the majority of Japanese students entering university (c.f. Bradford, 2016; Graham-Marr & Pellowe, 2016; MEXT, 2022). This creates a struggle both for content teachers, who typically lack training in language acquisition, as well as for language acquisition teachers, who can be assigned content classes in which they have no background or qualifications. However, lack of English is not the only barrier to successful EMI classes, a point we have addressed in previous research (Fujishima & Johnson 2023) see also Bradford, 2019, p. 715). The obstacle that is central to this paper is students' lack of academic skills.

In the EMI classes that we teach, irrespective of the language being used, without scaffolding many students have difficulty with academic skills; for example, speaking out in class (communication); asking questions, questioning information, and recognizing bias (independent thinking); and supporting arguments and presenting evidence (logical thinking). Although it is government policy to have students develop these skills, the onus is on universities and teachers to write curricula that do so. In other words, EMI teachers are not only dealing with content and language, but also with skill development. While there is considerable literature addressing the difficulties of EMI, there remains a gap in the literature about how to tackle the three challenges simultaneously, particularly in East Asian universities, and especially where students' English levels pose an obstacle to understanding. What we have been attempting, therefore, is going beyond the integration of language and content to explicitly incorporate transferable skills into the curriculum. In the remainder of this paper, we illustrate one example of a concrete strategy to this end. We introduce comparisons as a way to develop students' critical thinking skills and ability to engage constructively in an internationalized society.

Introducing Comparisons

The initial teaching of comparisons may not intuitively seem like a step towards critical thinking. When comparatives are introduced in Japanese junior high school English textbooks, the context of the grammar point tends to be used to express objective facts, with the focus on the linguistic form and how to employ it. For example, "The Amazon River is longer than the Shinano River," or "In our class, English is more popular than science" (New Crown 2, 2021, p. 72). Alternatively, comparatives are introduced as a way to express preferences and trends: "This movie is older than that one" (New Horizon 2, 2021, p. 85). Furthermore, comparison is located in the second lowest domain of the 2001 revised Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl 2002, p.228), far removed from the top-level "create."

However, systematic use of comparisons has rich potential for developing critical thinking, a skill that is not a goal in itself but rather a continuous process of engaging actively with information (Scriven & Paul, 1987). Comparing serves as a crucial bridge, connecting "lower- and higher-order skills" (Gerns, 2023, p. 164), moving from simple accumulation of information to "transfer," or being able to make practical use of information learned (looking forward, building upon what was learned to create something new), an indication of "meaningful learning" (Krathwohl 2002, p. 212). This aligns too with bridging the two proposed components of critical thinking by Scriven and Paul, namely the "information and … skills" and "the habit … of using those skills to guide behavior" (1987, para. 1). Comparisons further have been found to facilitate the development of "abstract and relational thinking" and "flexible habits of mind" (Gerns 2023, p. 164), thus promoting skills required of contemporary, international citizens.

More concretely, tasks comparing opinions provide an opportunity for disagreeing constructively whereby students can recognize and understand different experiences, ideas, and perspectives, serving as a foundation for engaging internationally. Being able to engage with people with different backgrounds and values is particularly important in the Japanese context, where differences and resulting disagreement can cause problems. This may have origins in the education system, where students have reported a lack of opportunity (or encouragement) to share opinions, ask questions, or demonstrate independent thinking (Okada 2017).

Discomfort with disagreement potentially hinders both students' in-class learning and their ability to engage constructively with society. For example, Kobayashi and Viswat (2010) found that Japanese students in America struggled to express their disagreements effectively, even remaining silent rather than disagree out loud. Harumi (2011) similarly found reticence among Japanese EFL students towards expressing opinions, finding that the fear of difference was one possible factor behind silence in the classroom. In the context of receiving study abroad students, Yamaguchi and Kobayashi found Japanese student respondents (n=117) demonstrated a tendency to be "unable to accept different cultures" (2020, p. 133). Classroom tasks that provide the opportunity to 'normalize' differences and stimulate curiosity can potentially help to provide a firmer foundation from which students can develop their international understanding and communication abilities, as well as their capacity for critical thinking more generally.

The following examples, developed over the course of more than four years of pedagogical collaboration, introduce an incremental approach to using comparisons to develop critical thinking skills.

Comparison Strategies

Comparisons at the Individual Level

In communicative classes, getting-to-know-you warm-up questions are a common starting point. Questions like "What train line do you live on?" "What is your favorite class?" help build rapport, provide an opportunity to use meaningful English, and increase student motivation. In junior high school, these questions are commonly used as grammar pattern practice. In university classes, these questions can be revitalized by stressing that the purpose is not simply answering the question, but to help students learn about their classmates, broaden their perspectives, and develop English communication skills. Familiar questions provide opportunities to notice similarities and differences.

Based on our years of experience teaching EMI classes, students perform this kind of qualitative task better if they first think about their own answer and write it down (usually for homework) before group discussion. Designing class materials that explicitly provide space for both students' own and their group mates' answers fosters a culture that is accepting of difference and encourages gathering diverse perspectives. This is particularly pertinent in Japan, where intercultural communication consultants caution about disagreeing, noting that "direct disagreement with someone can easily be interpreted as not liking or not respecting him" (Japan Intercultural Consulting, n.d.). Being able to

operate internationally, however, requires the ability to disagree.

Figure 1 shows how materials can be designed to facilitate a constructive attitude to having different ideas. Having students add detail to their answers, such as an example, explanation, or anecdote, enables comparison beyond the answer itself. In exit cards, students often reported interest in classmates having the same idea but for different reasons.

Figure 1

Getting-to-Know-You Activity

Question	My answer + Detail (explain, example, anecdote etc.)	Groups' answers +Detail
What do you do to refresh?		
If you were given 10,000Y, how would you use it?		
Discuss		
Which answers did you have that were unique to you? Which answers did you have that were the same as others? With your answers that were the same, did you have the same reasons?		

As a follow-up activity to build upon the skills developed in simple getting-to-know-you activities, students can work together to determine group answers to a new set of questions (Figure 2). This activity is more open-ended and students are required to develop their own questions, discussing until consensus is reached. While comparisons are more implicit in this case, it helps students to build a bridge from similarities to differences and increases students' level of comfort with differences. Students have reported being motivated by discussions where their classmates share different experiences and opinions.

Figure 2

Getting-to-Know-You Activity Expansion

Required Questions (Answer all of these together!)
1. What are everyone's **names**?
2. What 3 things do all group members have **in common?** (ask about things you can't see)
3. What are 3 things that are **different** for all group members? (ask about things you can't see)

In addition to filling in tables, students can use different visualizations to compare. For example, graphic organizers have been demonstrated to help students process information (Praveen & Rajan 2013). For comparisons, Venn diagrams can be useful to make similarities and differences more apparent. Figure 3 follows a task where students mind-map aspects of their identities.

Figure 3

Identity Venn Diagram
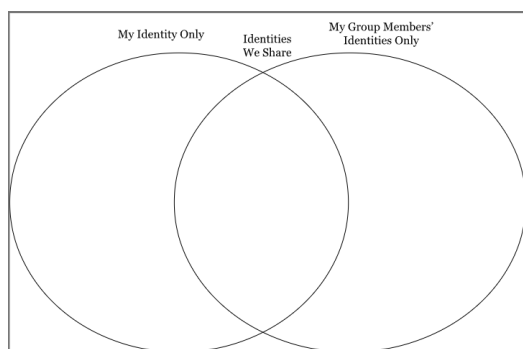
Recognizing individual differences helps create a base to engage constructively with people from different backgrounds and experiences. Moving beyond this, comparisons can also be used to focus on society, which we will explore in the next section.

Comparisons for Analyzing Society

Expanding comparisons of common features from the individual level to the societal level provides an opportunity to progress from differences in people's preferences and experiences to differences in perspectives and standpoints. For example, students utilize comparison to consider their own future as members of the workforce, making personal connections to broader society. In one assignment, students are tasked with finding companies they are potentially interested in working for in the future. Students compare their own values, the values emphasized in the EMI course, and the values stated on the company's website. They then analyze possible reasons for similarities and differences and assess their compatibility. More recently, the authors have begun assigning students to research lists of desirable skills for new graduates and compare the findings with their own skills and experiences.

Students also need to be able to engage with and consider issues beyond the individual level. Making this shift while maintaining a bridge to their own experiences is a useful scaffolding tool. Comparing stakeholders' perspectives in familiar contexts, such as the university, helps to train students to consider multiple perspectives, encouraging them to de-center their own experiences. For example, in an introductory class, students identified different stakeholders at their university including current students, teachers, ground staff, office staff, cleaners, parents, and alumni, among others. Despite potential similarities, their relative standpoints are different. This was illustrated to students with hypothetical examples on-campus; for example, a proposal to change the university from single-sex to co-ed. The students chose four stakeholders and identified possible perspectives of each group. Unlike debating,

which centers on two competing and mutually exclusive points of view, identifying the perspectives of stakeholders provides students with an opportunity to identify similarities, differences, and make decisions that consider a range of perspectives.

Identifying and investigating the perspectives of various stakeholders is a strategy that can be used to deepen the understanding of issues in broader society, including the international sphere.

Comparisons for International Understanding

Most students are limited by the news and media around them, and thus view international events from a Japanese perspective. This is not necessarily a bad thing; however, it is insufficient if students are to become "global human resources" and develop a broad perspective and capacity for critical thinking. Target 7 of the Third Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education specifies that the education system should cultivate students who show "respect for other countries" with a "mindset to contribute to world peace and the development of the international community" (MEXT, 2018). Comparing Japan's perspective to international perspectives increases students' awareness of their complexity, helping them maintain a broader perspective when studying international issues and interacting with people from other countries.

One such activity is comparing government websites about territorial disputes. Students were shown pages from the websites of both the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Japanese page features the title "Japanese Territory, Takeshima" and asserts that "Takeshima is indisputably an inherent territory of Japan, in light of historical facts and based in international law" (MOFA Japan, n.d.). In contrast, the Korean site states "Dokdo, Beautiful Island of Korea" and explains that "Dokdo is an integral part of Korea's territory historically, geographically and under international law" (MOFA, Republic of Korea, n.d.). After identifying the sources, scaffolding the information through summarizing sentences can help make the comparison clear (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Scaffolding Comparisons with Summaries

The goal of the task is not to establish the legitimacy of either claim, although students are encouraged to read the details and supporting evidence for each. It instead

highlights the importance of researching widely and interrogating issues from different standpoints. It also encourages students to (re)consider established ideas about the unshakeable reliability of information published on the Internet, including official government websites.

Comparisons for Domestic Understanding

Comparing differences in international perspectives can be confronting for students; however, it is not usually difficult to grasp that different countries have different perspectives. Moreover, without context, highlighting differences between countries also runs the risk of reinforcing negative stereotypes. Thus, in addition to showing differences between Japan and other countries, we also use comparisons to highlight the range of perspectives within Japan. There are numerous political issues with distinct differences in Japanese domestic political positions, such as nuclear power, United States bases in Japan, and changing Article 9 of the constitution. Although Japan is often stereotyped as a place where people gravitate to similar opinions, there is no shortage of controversial issues which students can explore through the use of comparisons.

In the same introductory class discussed above, students were asked to look at the front page of six different domestic newspapers reporting on the state funeral of former Prime Minister Abe: the Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, Nihon Keizai, Sankei, and Akahata. The first three newspapers were chosen as the major newspapers read in Tokyo, where our university is located. Nihon Keizai was chosen as the major economics newspaper, and the Sankei and Akahata were chosen as representing the right and left sides of the political spectrum, respectively. In the task, students identify information in the newspapers using a grid (Figure 5) and then rank the articles in order from most critical of the state funeral to the most supportive using evidence from the sources. Comparison tables can also focus on other aspects such as *who* reported and published the information, *when* it was published, or *where* it was published.

Figure 5

Newspaper Comparison Grid

Again, the goal of the task is not to assess the suitability of the state funeral, nor to make determinations about Abe, his cabinet, or politics more generally. Rather, it is to raise awareness of the diversity of opinions through comparison, highlight the need for using a variety of sources, and pay attention to the differences therein. This task also trains students to base their opinions on evidence. Although the English component of this task is limited due to the use of Japanese-language newspapers, at higher levels comparisons with international sources such as The Guardian, China Daily (global), and Al Jazeera can be used to further broaden perspectives. This also provides an opportunity to introduce students to English-language news media resources.

To extend this task and consolidate the importance of using different sources, homework can be assigned where students find the same news story reported in different publications and compare, either in students' first language or English. Understanding similarities and differences in accounts is a starting point for developing media literacy.

Comparisons for Problem Solving

Developing critical thinking through comparison also provides an inroad into problem solving, and comparing and contrasting assumes greater importance when applied to real-life situations. In a class that compares Japanese and Korean perceptions of history, students were given a news story about the Japanese men's hockey team from the 2014 Asia Games. Although not recent, the problem provides an accessible opportunity for students to devise solutions for an international problem. The Japanese national hockey team made a goodwill visit to a South Korean school in conjunction with the Asia Games. However, the players caused an international incident when they handed out Japan Hockey Association badges that displayed a rising sun flag, a symbol seen by many Koreans as a reminder of Japanese occupation (AFP/Jiji, 2014).

The comparison task involves students thinking about the goals of the Asia Games expressed in 1951 by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad: "understanding and friendship among all nations … will start a process which … will go on cementing the friendly ties between the peoples of Asia" (1st Asian Games 1951, n.d.). Students consider the motivations of the Japanese hockey players giving out rising sun flags and compare them to the reaction of Korean teachers who lodged a complaint with the Japanese Olympic Committee. By comparing the actions and intentions of both sides, students can evaluate the suitability of the team's actions and develop alternative 'win-win' strategies that can develop friendly connections in line with the objectives of the Asia Games. Moreover, the ability to think critically and from various perspectives and look

for mutually agreeable solutions to international problems is a key target of MEXT education reforms.

Conclusion

Expectations for Japanese higher education have changed, aiming to prepare students for a world with complex problems requiring international cooperation to solve. To meet these demands, educators, particularly in EMI classes, need to develop strategies where students simultaneously improve knowledge, thinking skills, social skills, and language. Comparisons are one strategy that can be used to help students develop these competencies. To date, comments from graduating students support our belief that they are improving through these interventions. However, objective assessment of improvement in generic skills remains elusive.

The strategies introduced in this paper are the result of an ongoing, collaborative process developed through our own experiences teaching and engaging with students through systematic feedback, some of which have been covered in previous papers. Although what we have presented are still works in progress, student feedback, including exit cards, suggests these are effective examples of engaging students through comparisons to develop their thinking and communicative abilities in an EMI course in a way that aligns with the MEXT goals for university students in the 21st century. We hope that this inspires further work and experimentation, and that these strategies help contribute to future student and educator success.

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Finding Meaning in Paintings: Promoting Critical Thinking Through Art

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Art is under-utilized in the foreign language classroom and can be used to foster critical thinking (CT). Art has the power to elicit deep thought and encourage the types of thinking that are essential for CT, such as asking thoughtful questions, exploring new perspectives, and making connections. For this study a three-step process for analyzing artworks was created. For cultural reasons, some Japanese students may feel reluctant to think independently, ask questions, and express their opinions in class. This paper explores the use of art to develop students' disposition to think independently, formulate questions, and share their ideas with classmates. The findings from student surveys that were carried out at the beginning and end of the semester will be discussed.

アートは外国語の授業で十分に活用されていない。外国語の授業の中でアートはクリティカル・シンキングの育成にも活用できる。 アートには深い思考を引き出す力があり、クリティカル・シンキングに不可欠な、思慮深い質問、新しい視点の探求、関連づけといった思考を促す。この研究では、美術作品を分析するための３つのステップを考案した。文化的な理由から、日本の学生の中には、授業中に主体的に考えたり、質問したり、意見を述べたりすることに抵抗を感じる生徒もいるが、本論文では、学生が主体的に考え、問いをもち、クラスメートと意見を交換する態度を養うために、アートを活用する方法を提案する。また、学期始めと終わりに実施した学生アンケートから得られた結果についても考察する。

Universities must prepare students for success in a world that is being rapidly transformed by the forces of globalization and technological advancements. Against this backdrop of accelerating change, critical thinking (CT) has been identified as an essential 21st century skill (DiCerbo, 2014) that is crucial for success in the global workforce (Liu et al., 2014), and is one of the most sought-after skills by employers (Pearson, 2021).

In 2013 the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology proclaimed, "What is truly needed in Japan is independent-minded learning by individuals in order to realize independence, collaboration, and creativity" (MEXT, 2013, para. 1). Kan Suzuki, a Special Advisor to MEXT, advises educators to develop students' abilities to think, make judgements and express themselves in order to respond to unfamiliar situations (Suzuki, 2018). In recent years, many universities in Japan and overseas are increasingly emphasizing CT as a core feature of their curriculums. Natsumi Ikoma, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at International Christian University, describes CT as the foundation of liberal arts education but cautions that critical thinking skills (CTS) are only acquired through great effort and training (Ikoma, 2022).

The term CT is broad in scope, leaving many educators unsure how to incorporate it into their courses. One educational planning tool utilized by educators is Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001), which classifies six different levels of thinking that can be used to teach CT (Westbrook, 2014), particularly the higher- order thinking skills (*analyze*, *evaluate*, *create*). CT is difficult to teach (Persky et al., 2019), but it can be advanced by a learning environment that encourages students to engage in questioning, probing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating (Brookfield, 2012, as cited in Zapalska et al., 2018).

Due to an educational system that often prioritizes rote-learning—in part to prepare students for university entrance tests—many Japanese students may lack experience using English in communicative tasks that require higher-order thinking (Haga, 2018). Moreover, cultural forces can also play a role, such as a desire to maintain group harmony, fear of standing out—or ostracization—from the group, and strict hierarchical relationships. Whereas westerners in general highly regard being different and possessing unique ideas, Japanese may prefer to emphasize their similarities and seek to blend in with the group (Haga, 2018). Okada (2017) explains that some Japanese students may be reluctant to express ideas and ask questions in class because these activities clash with values that they have been raised with, and adds that students are often willing to accept what they are told by authority figures, such as teachers, rather than thinking for themselves.

Therefore, given that language and culture are inextricably linked, Japanese students may feel freer to ask questions and express opinions in English-language classes (Okada, 2017).

Art and Critical Thinking

Researchers in Japan (Mertens, 2019) and overseas (Bowen et al., 2013; Lampert, 2006; Tishman & Palmer, 2006) have examined the use of art to develop CT. Tishman and Palmer (2006) describe a number of reasons why art is an effective classroom tool for developing CT: 1) Art is complex, just like the real world; 2) Artists generally have a message to convey; and 3) Art is open to multiple interpretations. Therefore, art may be well suited for encouraging students to form a variety of ideas and interpretations to share with classmates. Moreover, art provides a less confrontational context in which students can discuss their ideas and opinions in comparison to more emotionally charged topics such as social and political issues. Given that some students may feel uneasy about sharing their ideas and opinions (for the reasons described above), it may be advantageous for students to first build up their confidence by engaging in topics that are intellectually stimulating yet comparatively uncontroversial.

This study is intended as a preliminary phase in a multi-year research project to explore the use of art to develop CT in the EFL classroom and seeks to obtain feedback from students that can be used to modify and improve the classroom activities for the subsequent academic year. Furthermore, it examines students' anxiety and attitudes towards discussing their ideas and opinions in English with classmates. The primary research questions of this study are:

1. Will students feel more comfortable to exchange their ideas and opinions in English with classmates after repeated engagements with the art analysis activity?

2. Is the art analysis activity effective for developing students' disposition to formulate questions?

3. Is the art analysis activity effective for encouraging students to think independently?

Art Analysis Activity Design

For this study, a three-step process (see Appendix A) for analyzing artworks was created:

- Step 1: Observe: students objectively describe what they see and what details they notice.

- Step 2: Investigate: students write questions about aspects of the artwork whose meaning they wonder about.

- Step 3: Interpret: students interpret the meaning of the artwork and their reasons for thinking so.

In addition to encouraging independent thought, this activity seeks to develop students' disposition to formulate questions. The asking of questions propels the thinking process forward and is thought to be a precondition of being an effective thinker (Paul & Elder, 2005). Moreover, this activity involves higher-order thinking skills (*analyze*, *evaluate*) of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy as students must examine and question various elements of the artwork in order to interpret the meaning as well as justify their interpretation with clear reasons.

It is important to bear in mind that learners who possess particular thinking abilities may not be disposed to use them (Perkins & Tishman, 2022). Thinking abilities are a necessary but insufficient condition for CT to occur and it is useful to distinguish between thinking abilities and thinking dispositions (Tishman & Palmer, 2006). The latter is a, "tendency toward a particular pattern of intellectual behavior" (Perkins & Tishman, 2022, para. 3) and are formed by routinely engaging in patterns of behavior and thinking (Tishman & Palmer, 2006).

Methods

This study involved 59 first-year university students from the Department of Intercultural Studies at Yamaguchi Prefectural University (49 females and 10 males), with one exception being a second-year student. These students are enrolled in the mandatory first-year course titled Advanced English, which convenes twice weekly for 90 minutes per session throughout the spring and fall semesters. This research was conducted during the fall semester, wherein students were divided into three proficiency levels (A, B, and C) according to their TOEIC scores from July. Placement into levels ranged from highest scorers in Class A, to next in Class B, and finally to Class C, with most participants scoring between 400-700 on the TOEIC. The study's intervention, an art analysis activity, involved students from the A and B levels, while the C level students served as the control group.

The survey, conducted in Japanese, was distributed to both the experimental and control groups at the start of the fall semester, and again at the semester's end, with extra questions added for the experimental group. In the experimental group, 46 students responded to the initial survey, and 47 to the final one. Notably, 41 students completed both surveys. In the control group, 18 students participated in the initial survey, and 15 to the final one. Only 12 students completed both surveys.

Classroom Procedure

Students analyzed six different artworks throughout the semester by completing the three-step worksheet and sharing their ideas with classmates in English. The six teacher-selected artworks used for the activity were "Separation" by Edvard Munch (1896), "New Kids in the Neighborhood" by Norman Rockwell (1967), "At the Crossroads" by Hugo Simberg (1896), "Girl Before a Mirror" by Pablo Picasso (1932), "Beauty Viewing Cherry Blossoms at Night" by Katsushika Oi (1850), and "The Therapist" by Rene Magritte (1937).

During the in-class procedure, each student received a color printout of the artwork and the art analysis worksheet, with approximately five minutes allocated to complete Step 1. During this step, students noted down the objects and details observed in the artwork. The teacher emphasized to students that for Step 1 they should not include their subjective thoughts, feelings or interpretations but rather just focus on objectively describing what they see in the picture. Next, students were asked to share what they wrote with their classmate sitting next to them. Finally, the teacher called on a number of students to tell the class one of the details that they noticed in the artwork.

For Step 2, students were instructed to formulate questions regarding aspects of the artwork whose meanings sparked their curiosity. First, the teacher shared a couple model questions to help guide the students (e.g., Why is the bird cage door open; Why doesn't the bird fly out of the open bird cage?), and then students were given time (approximately 5 minutes) to write down at least four questions. Next, students shared ideas with the classmate sitting next to them, and then the teacher called on a number of students to share one of their questions with the class.

For Step 3, students were given time (approximately 10 minutes) to write down their ideas about the meaning or message of the artwork and their reasons for thinking so. The teacher emphasized to students that there are no right or wrong answers and that there are often multiple ways to interpret the meaning or message, so they should feel free to write down more than one idea of interpretation. While students were writing down their ideas for Step 3, the teacher wrote the following three questions on the whiteboard:

- What do you think the meaning or message of the artwork is and why?

- How does the artwork make you feel and why?

- What do you like and dislike about the artwork and why?

Next, students were instructed to discuss the three questions with the classmate sitting next to them. After having students discuss for a few minutes, the teacher had students change partners so that they could exchange their ideas with another classmate. This process was repeated, and in total, students discussed with approximately three or four classmates before being asked to return to their seats. Next, the teacher had the students ask their partner, "Who told you something interesting?", which gave the students an opportunity to share one of the interesting ideas of interpretation that a classmate had told them. Finally, the teacher called on a number of students to share their own ideas they wrote down for Step 3 with the class.

Results

Three of the survey questions are particularly relevant to this study's examination of students' anxiety and attitudes towards exchanging ideas and opinions with classmates. Figure 1 shows students' perceived anxiety level when exchanging ideas and opinions with classmates in English. In October, 75.6%, and in February, 70.7%, of the students in the experimental group answered 'Yes' or 'Somewhat yes' to feeling nervous when exchanging ideas and opinions in English. Due to the wording of the question, it is unclear if students who answered affirmatively to feeling nervous did so primarily because the act of exchanging ideas and opinions makes them feel nervous or whether the act of communicating in English makes them feel nervous.

Figure 1

Student anxiety level when exchanging ideas with classmates in English
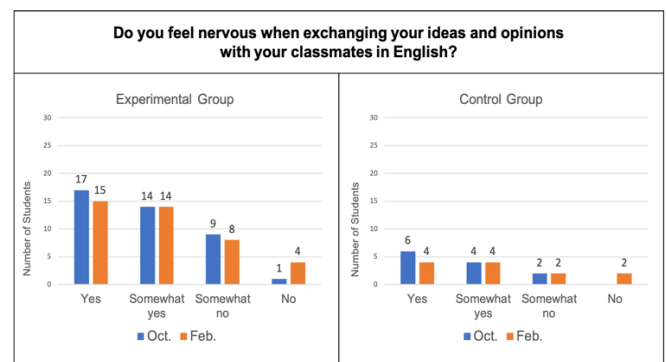
Next, Figure 2 shows students' perceived feelings of uncomfortableness about having ideas or opinions that are different than their classmates. In the experimental group, the most common answer in October was 'Somewhat no', and in February it was 'No'. In addition, in October 29.3% of students in the experimental group answered 'Yes' or 'Somewhat yes', and in February only 17.1%, indicating a slight shift.

Figure 2

Students' level of uncomfortableness when having different ideas or opinions than classmates
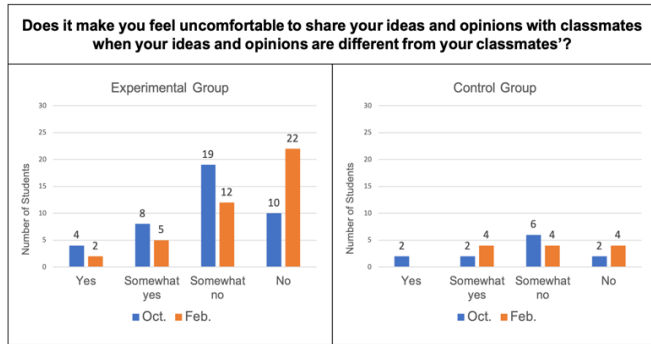
Finally, Figure 3 shows student preference for having the same or different ideas and opinions as their classmates. In the experimental group, in October 14.6% of students answered that they prefer it when their classmates' ideas and opinions are different than their own, and in February it rose to 51.2%. This represents a notable shift from October to February.

Figure 3

Students' preference for having the same or different ideas and opinions than classmates
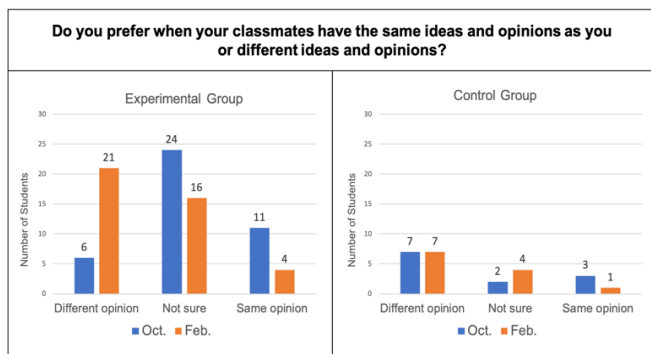
Table 1 shows responses from the 47 students who answered the extra survey questions that were added for the experimental group. Notably, all of the students perceived the art analysis activity as being valuable for their learning. Moreover, 97.9% of students perceived the activity as being effective for developing their ability to formulate questions or to think more deeply. In addition, 93.6% of students perceived the activity as being helpful for improving their English ability.

Table 1

Student Responses to Survey Questions that were Given only to the Experimental Group

Questions	Yes	Somew hat Yes	Somewh at No	No
Did you enjoy studying through art this semester?	46.8%	42.5%	10.6%	0%
Did the art activity in this class develop your ability to formulate questions or to think more deeply?	46.8%	51.1%	2.1%	0%
Was the art activity in this class valuable for your llearning?	51.1%	48.9%	0%	0%
Did the art activity in this class help you to improve your English ability?	38.3%	55.3%	6.4%	0%
Was your interest in art deepened through the activities in this class?	53.2%	36.2%	6.4%	4.2%
If you have the chance in another class to study through art in a similar way, would you like to do so again?	48.9%	36.2%	10.6%	4.2%

Discussion

Regarding the first research question–whether students would feel more comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions in English with classmates after repeated participation in the art analysis activity–the data present a nuanced picture. Figure 1 indicates minimal change in students' self-reported nervousness levels when exchanging ideas and opinions in English. However, Figure 2 reveals a shift in comfort levels with divergent opinions: at the start, in October, 29.3% of students reported feeling 'Yes' or 'Somewhat yes' to discomfort with differing views from classmates, which dropped to 17.1% by February. Additionally, the percentage of students confidently saying 'No' to discomfort rose from 24.4% in October to 53.6% in February. This trend toward greater openness is further supported by Figure 3, where only 14.6% of students initially preferred when classmates had different ideas or opinions, a figure that significantly increased to 51.2% by February.

These results suggest that through repeated engagement with the art activities, some students may have come to enjoy or appreciate it when their classmates had ideas different than their own. This is corroborated by a number of the student survey comments (paraphrased from Japanese into English), including:

- It was fun to listen to points of view that are different from my own, and listening to my classmates' rich and stimulating ideas made me think that they are so wonderful. It reminded me that I like to hear each other's ideas and that everyone has interesting ideas.

- At first, I didn't have interest in studying art and I assumed that everyone would have the same ideas as me and it wouldn't be interesting, but it reminded me that we all have different ideas and opinions and that made the experience enjoyable and meaningful.

- Hearing various ideas from my classmates broadened my perspective.

As to the second research question on whether the art analysis activity was effective for developing students' ability to formulate questions, 97.9% of students perceived the art activity as helping them think deeply or formulate questions. However, the double-barreled survey question makes it impossible to interpret these results. Moreover, the students' perceptions may not reflect any actual change. However, survey comments suggest that the art activity may have been effective for developing some students' disposition to formulate questions. Student comments include:

- I could practice the act of finding things to question.

- Because each classmate had different opinions, it was rewarding to ask them many questions and actively exchange opinions.

As to the third research question on whether the art analysis activity was effective for encouraging students to think independently, student survey comments suggest that the art analysis activity may have encouraged some students to think independently and to try to come up with their own ideas. Student survey comments include:

- There is no correct answer, so it is easy to come up with my own ideas.

- Because there is more than one possible answer, it forces me to think deeply.

- I got in the habit of paying attention to small details.

Rather than just looking at things in a straight-froward way, it was fun to try to consider from various perspectives and vantage points. My classmates inspired me with their ideas which led me to think deeper and deeper so I could also come up with interesting ideas to share.

Conclusion

This study explores the use of art to help students become more comfortable to exchange ideas and opinions with classmates, and to encourage students' independent thinking and disposition to ask questions. Due to limitations and shortcomings of the research design, it is difficult to make definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the classroom activities. One limitation is the small sample size, in particular the control group. Secondly, the survey data is ordinal which limits the analysis to descriptive statistics. Thirdly, the survey included questions that were poorly worded. In spite of these, and other, significant shortcomings, the data obtained in this study can still perhaps reveal

useful insights. Overall, the students enjoyed the art analysis activity, with a number of students specifically mentioning that they were impressed by the various interesting ideas of interpretation that their classmates shared with them. Furthermore, the survey comments suggest that the activity may have been effective for helping students to pay closer attention to details and develop the habit of asking probing questions. In addition, some comments suggested that there being no correct answer helped students to feel more confident to share their unique ideas with classmates. Finally, some students believed that studying through art helped to improve their English proficiency by forcing them to use vocabulary that they do not typically use, including vocabulary for expressing emotions.

Based upon the student feedback, the author is considering new ways to further develop the classroom activities for the next academic year. One change being considered is to have the students (including the teacher) create their own original artwork to bring in to share and discuss with classmates. Also, it may be useful to develop follow-up activities that can broaden and deepen the level of art analysis such as supplemental materials that provide information about the artist and the historical and social background in which the artwork was created, including its critical reception at the time. Lastly, the author would like to refine the research design in order to investigate if students' ability or disposition to think critically was developed in a measurable way rather than simply reporting the students' perceptions. One idea being considered is to design a task in which students are asked to formulate critical questions about a news story or current event. With this task, the author would like to examine if students' ability or inclination to ask critical questions is altered through repeated engagements with the art analysis activity, as well as to test the claim by Tishman and Palmer (2006) that CTS developed in the context of analyzing art can transfer to non-art contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Three Step Process for Analyzing Art

<u>Step 1</u>
Observe: Describe what you see in the painting and what details you notice
（観察：絵に見えるものや気づいたことを書きましょう）

<u>Step 2</u>
Investigate: Write questions about things in the painting that you are wondering about
（掘り下げ：絵の中で疑問に思うことを質問形式で書きましょう）

A)

B)

C)

D)

<u>Step 3</u>
Interpret: Give your opinion about the meaning of this painting and your reasons why
（解釈：この絵の意味について、あなたの意見とその理由を書きましょう）

Appendix B: Survey Questions in Japanese

Questions for both the experimental and control groups:

1. 絵画鑑賞が好きですか。

2. 美術館へ行くことが好きですか

3. 物事について深く考えることが好きですか。

4. 意味が曖昧なものや様々な解釈ができるものについて考えることが好きですか

5. クラスメートと英語で意見や考えを交換するとき緊張すると思いますか。

6. クラスメートと考えや意見を交換する時、クラスメートの考えや意見が自分の考えや意見と違うと気まずく感じると思いますか。

7. クラスメートと絵画について英語で考えを伝えたり意見交換をしたりするための十分な英語力があると思いますか。

8. 自分とクラスメートが同じ考えや意見を持っている方が好きですか、それとも違う考えや意見を持っている方が好きですか。

9. 英語の授業では、簡単な話題と難しい話題のどちらについてクラスメートと話し合うことが好きですか。

10. 日本語の授業では、簡単な話題と難しい話題のどちらについてクラスメートと話し合うことが好きですか。

Questions for the experimental group only:

11. この授業で絵画を用いた学習が自分自身にとって楽しかったと思いますか。

12. この授業で絵画を用いた学習を通して物事に対してより深く考える力や質問する力を身につけたと思いますか。

13. この授業で絵画を用いた学習は有意義だったと思いますか。

14. この授業で絵画を用いた学種が英語力を伸ばすことに役に立ったと思いますか。

15. 絵画をお用いた学習をすることによって、アートや絵画に関する興味が深まったと思いますか。

16. 今後の授業でアートや絵画を用いた学習をする機会があれば、また学習したいと思いますか。

17. 先生が指導の仕方をどのように変えれば、絵画を用いた学習がもっと役に立ったり、楽しみに思えたりすることができると思いますか。

18. 絵画を用いた学習について、他に先生に伝えたいことはありますか。

Appendix C: Survey Questions translated into English by the Researcher

Questions for both the experimental and control groups:

1. Do you like to look at fine arts?

2. Do you like to go to art museums?

3. Do you like to think deeply about things?

4. Do you like to think about things in which the meaning is vague or can have multiple interpretations?

5. Do you feel nervous when exchanging your ideas and opinions with your classmates in English?

6. Does it make you feel uncomfortable to share your ideas and opinions with classmates when your ideas and opinions are different from your classmates'?

7. Do you think that your English ability is sufficient to discuss about art with your classmates?

8. Do you prefer when your classmates have the same ideas and opinions or different ideas and opinions?

9. In English class do you prefer to discuss about easy or difficult topics with your classmates?

10. In a class in which Japanese is the language of instruction, do you prefer to discuss about easy or difficult topics?

Questions for the experimental group only:

11. Did you enjoy studying through art this semester?

12. Did the art activity in this class develop your ability to formulate questions or to think more deeply?

13. Was the art activity in this class valuable for your learning?

14. Did the art activity in this class help you to improve your English ability?

15. Was your interest in art deepened through the activities in this class?

16. If you have the chance in another class to study through art in a similar way, would you like to do so again?

17. What could the teacher do differently to make the art activity more effective or enjoyable?

18. Is there anything else you would like to tell the teacher about the art activity this semester?

Japanese High School Students' Engagement in Online Global PBL

Mari Nakamura

MELEP (Mari's English Language Education Port)

Student engagement is argued to be crucial for learning to occur, and research on student engagement has been attracting attention in the field of foreign language education in recent years. This practice-oriented paper reports on how an online global project-based learning project conducted at a private English language school affected the engagement levels of the participating Japanese students. In the project examined in this study, a group of Japanese high school students engaged in project-based learning with a group of high school students at a national high school in Moldova for five months using online platforms. Through analysis of classroom observations, learning outcomes, a student questionnaire, and interviews, it was revealed that appropriate theme selection, the presence of near peer role models, and delegation of responsibility to students had a positive impact on student engagement. This study also shows the influence of students' self-efficacy and values on their levels of engagement.

学習者エンゲージメントは学びの実現に必須であると言われており、外国語教育研究においても近年注目を集めている。この実践報告では筆者の民間英語スクールで実施されたオンライン国際協働学習プロジェクトが日本の生徒のエンゲージメントに与えた影響を考察する。研究対象となったプロジェクトでは日本人高校生が５カ月に渡ってモルドバの国立高校の生徒とオンライン・プラットフォームを通してプロジェクト型学習に取り組んだ。授業観察記録、学習成果物、アンケート、インタビューの分析からは、適切なテーマ選択、ロール・モデルとなる仲間の存在、生徒への責任譲渡が生徒エンゲージメントに肯定的な影響を及ぼしたことが明らかとなった。また、生徒の自己効力感、価値観がその生徒のエンゲージメントに影響することも示唆された。

The role of student engagement in learning has been discussed in the field of educational psychology and learning theory since the 2000s (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Recent research suggests that high learner engagement has a positive impact on learning, with Sinatra, et al. (2015, p.1) describing student engagement as "the holy grail of learning" and Ellis (2019, p.48) calling it "the major force of learning."

Mercer and Dörnyei, researchers of motivation in language learning, define student engagement as "active participation and involvement in certain behaviors . . . in school-related activities and academic tasks" (2020, p.2) and list two compelling rationales for teachers to prioritize student engagement in modern second language learning.

The first reason is the accelerated proliferation of social media and the vast amount of information and communication opportunities that distract students from their studies. Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) argue that such an environment makes it challenging for teachers to increase and maintain student engagement and that

educators should carefully monitor their students' level and nature of engagement to ensure their learning occurs.

Also, the characteristics embedded in foreign language learning rationalize the teacher's close scrutiny of student engagement. Proficiency in a foreign language demands active participation in purposeful interactions in which learners must adeptly navigate linguistic gaps, for example, by paraphrasing and asking for clarification. Since the realization of high communicative competence requires students' enduring commitment to their own learning, teachers need to consistently implement engaging tasks.

Furthermore, the Course of Study (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2017a, 2017b, 2018), applied to public education in Japan since 2020 advocates active learning in which students engage in learning proactively, interactively, and deeply to adapt to a rapidly changing society. This educational policy makes it vital for educators in Japan to deepen their understanding of student engagement and to create learning environments and tasks that enhance it.

Student engagement consists of four core elements that interact organically with each other: behavior, cognition, society, and affection (Philip & Duchesne, 2016; Sang & Hiver, 2021). *Behavioral engagement* denotes the amount of time and participation in tasks. In foreign language learning, behavioral engagement is the voluntary involvement in utterances and initiatives in verbal exchange (Sang & Hiver, 2021). *Cognitive engagement* refers to the students' mental effort in learning which manifests itself in interactions such as suggestions, hesitation, and repetition (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Cognitive engagement is also found in collaborative learning, such as exchanging opinions, explaining, evaluating opinions, and providing detailed information (Helme & Clarke, 2001). *Social engagement* represents the interaction with others and is considered a key element of engagement in language learning, which requires verbal exchange and mutual support (Svalberg, 2009). *Affective engagement* manifests itself in the form of student enjoyment, enthusiasm, and anticipation, and is reinforced by positive interactions between students and positive relationships with teachers and peers (Sang & Hiver, 2021). This affective aspect has been reported to increase behavioral, cognitive, and social engagement (Baralt, et al., 2016). Of the above four factors, the social and affective features are particularly important for young and adolescent learners who have a strong sense of belonging to the community and whose peers have a significant impact on their learning (Philip & Duchesne, 2016).

Global project-based learning (PBL), which is examined in this paper, involves a project in which "students consider issues both globally and locally through dialogue and collaboration" (Kurita, 2019, p.5). In these projects, each student investigates issues relevant to their lives and forms new perspectives, while thinking critically and communicating over an extended period of time with both classmates and students from other countries with different cultural backgrounds. In addition, they face several problems arising from geographical and physical limitations that can be resolved through constructive discussions. Because of these characteristics of global PBL projects, it could be concluded that they have the potential to stimulate students' behavioral, cognitive, affective, and social engagement. Therefore, I embarked on this study to examine how one of such projects at my private English language school has affected the Japanese students' engagement.

In this article, I first describe the online global PBL project between high school students in Japan and Moldova. The description is followed by my data-based reflection as a teacher about what impact this project had on Japanese students' engagement. This paper concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this study and future implications.

Overview of the Online Global PBL Project

The online global PBL project reported in this paper is organized by the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN). It is called *One Day in the Life* in which "students exchange photographs/images describing days in their lives, and then make cross-cultural comparisons" (iEARN, n.d.). The participants were eight 1st-year and 2nd-year high school students at my private online language school in Kanazawa City, Japan, and nine 3rd-year high school students attending a national school in Nisporeni Town, Moldova. The exchange period was from October 2021 to February 2022 during which the students researched and discussed four themes: (a) love, (b) family, (c) school, and (d) the balance between freedom and order. They exchanged their opinions asynchronously on the online bulletin board *Padlet* (see Appendix A) and also had two real-time virtual meetups on the online video conferencing platform *Zoom* for further discussions.

An English teacher at the high school in Moldova and I started to plan the project one month prior to the launch of the project via email. We agreed to allocate one month to each theme mentioned above to make the content of this project in line with the English study curriculum at the Moldovan school. Although the choice of themes was constrained by the prescribed curriculum at the high school, we attempted to foster learner autonomy by providing them with as many opportunities as possible to make decisions by themselves while on this project.

After a one-month self-introduction phase, the students engaged in research and discussions on the main themes in each school while interacting with their international peers through essays, photos, videos, and comments on the online exchange bulletin board. In five months, there were 49 submissions from Japan and 33 from Moldova. During this period, Japanese students had online classes every other week and engaged in research and discussions about the four themes. They also had opportunities to exchange their research findings and opinions on a separate online bulletin board that was set up for in-class collaboration. Hour-long virtual meetups between Moldovan and Japanese students were held on *Zoom* at the end of November and February. The first session was planned and moderated by the Moldovan students, where participants from both countries delivered detailed presentations on the topics of love and family, which led to thorough discussions. In the second session, the Japanese students took charge of the planning and moderation, engaging the whole group in conversations about the topics of school life and the balance between

freedom and order, proceeding in a similar fashion to the first.

Teacher Reflection

To gain insights into how this online global PBL project has affected the Japanese students' engagement, I analyzed the video recordings and teacher reflection notes of Japanese students' in-class behaviors, interactions among students on the online bulletin boards, the video recordings of virtual meetups, the post-project questionnaire of eight Japanese students, and post-project interviews with four of them. Both the questionnaire and interviews were conducted in Japanese, the native language of the students.

The questionnaire conducted anonymously consists of 12 multiple-choice questions, each followed by a comment section. One separate section for any further comments was also provided. The multiple-choice questions covered the elements that affect the stimulation and retention of student engagement (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020): task level (Question 1), interest (Question 2), boredom (Question 3), surprise (Question 4), value (Question 5), cognitive load (Question 6), collaboration (Question 7: in-class and Question 8: with international peers), opportunities for active participation (Question 9), growth-mindset (Question 10), opportunities for reflection (Question 11), and teacher interventions (Question 12). In Question 13, students were given the opportunity to write their reflections freely. Finally, they were asked if they would be willing to participate in the interview based on the questionnaire responses, to which six students agreed. The anonymity of these students in the questionnaire was thus lost.

The permission to use the data for this study was given in written forms by the partner country's teacher, the Japanese students, and their guardians. The option of not participating in the survey was also given to the Japanese students.

Throughout the project, students were observed to be actively involved in their tasks. The data gathered from both the post-project questionnaire (see Appendix B) and interviews revealed that they themselves assessed this project as engaging: matching their needs, interests, and values, thus offering abundant opportunities for deep thinking and collaboration. The following are four noteworthy findings from the analysis of in-class observations, students' work, the questionnaire, and interviews.

Appropriate Theme Selection

As mentioned above, we selected the collaboration themes in line with the English curriculum of the partner school. Based on the data collected during the project and from survey results, it became clear that the degree of engagement of Japanese students differed depending on the theme. Regarding the school theme, Japanese students expressed strong affective and cognitive engagement (e.g., I hate ..., ... so Japanese schools should...) and offered their own unique interpretations of the school culture in Japan on the online in-class bulletin board. Additionally, on the online exchange bulletin board, all the students extensively contributed detailed comments analyzing and comparing the school cultures between the two countries. Through their language choices (e.g., I was particularly impressed with …, I'm envious of you that …, I think … because …), it is apparent that they were actively engaged in the discussions on this topic behaviorally, cognitively, affectively, and socially.

Also, in the virtual meetup, some students leaned in while listening to the presentations of the Moldovan students and raised their hands to ask questions voluntarily, showing a high level of behavioral and social engagement. In the comment section of the post-project questionnaire, seven students mentioned that the unit theme of school life was of particular interest to them (Question 2), and one student added a short essay to the survey response to express his critical view on Japanese school culture in comparison with that of Moldova. This indicates the student's deep cognitive engagement in this unit of study.

While all the students said that the themes matched or somewhat matched their interests (Question 2) in the questionnaire, it was observed that there was low engagement for the theme of love. They discussed the interpretation of the lyrics of a love song, but in the class discussion, there were comments such as "I haven't thought about it, so I don't know," and "I can't imagine." The students' posts on the online exchange bulletin board and their comments to their Moldovan partners' posts were short, and none of the students had comments or questions during the presentations made by their international peers at the virtual meetup. Being asked about the choice of themes in the interview, Student B, who chose "somewhat agree" for Question 2, said, "I think I would have been able to exchange opinions more actively if my classmates and I had chosen the themes of our interests," and Student C, who also chose "somewhat agree" for Question 2, said, "I felt that I was just following the instructions given by my teacher while on the themes that I was not interested in."

Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) assert the critical role of real-life relevance in maintaining student engagement with learning content. They argue that learners demonstrate greater curiosity towards topics they already have some familiarity with, while showing less interest in unfamiliar ones. The variation in engagement levels observed across different themes in this study underscores the significance of selecting relevant themes for global project-based learning.

Near Peer Role Model

As mentioned earlier, the first virtual meetup between the two schools was planned and moderated by Moldovan students and the second, by Japanese

students. The Japanese students were surprised by the positive attitude and communication skills of the Moldovan students during the first meetup. During a whole-class discussion in their reflection lesson after this meetup, six of them stated that they wanted to emulate them. The Japanese students prepared for and moderated the second meetup collaboratively without my intervention, and all of them were willing to make suggestions and ask questions, showing higher levels of behavioral, cognitive, and social engagement than before. Student A, who ran for the role of the moderator of the second meetup and worked enthusiastically, left the following feedback in the reflective essay after the first meetup:

> The Moldovan students were not only eager to communicate but also prepared for the meeting very carefully to make our exchange meaningful. At the next meetup, I want to be prepared to have more discussions about school so that I can relax and express my opinions more actively. It's okay to make mistakes because we can learn something new from our mistakes.

Student D, who volunteered to be the moderator of the cultural exchange lesson with a Ukrainian student held after this project, explained in the post-project interview that he wanted to try it himself because Student A was successful in this project. At the post-project interview Student C said that he worked hard at the exchange lesson with the Ukrainian student to contribute as much as Moldovan students did during the global PBL project. Student E said that seeing the Moldovan students engaging in critical thinking made a positive impact on her essay writing studies in her Japanese class.

Murphey (1998) argues that witnessing a respectable near peer role model from a similar cultural background and age experiencing success in English language learning leads to increased motivation, and several empirical studies in second language acquisition have confirmed this effect (e.g., Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; Murphey & Arao, 2001). Furthermore, Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) argue that simply observing their peers' successful learning promotes student engagement. The findings of this study strongly suggest that exemplary students in the partner country as well as in the same class have exerted a notable positive impact on the Japanese students' engagement during the project as well as on their subsequent learning.

Teacher Intervention and Group Cohesiveness

In the questionnaire, all the students gave positive evaluations of teacher intervention (Question 12). From the reflective essays, responses to the questionnaire, and the interviews, it became clear that the students found it particularly effective that I gave the students autonomy over the second virtual meetup; they independently handled both the planning session and the event itself. In the planning session, the students were responsible for deciding on the content of the meeting, taking into account the Moldovan students'

English skills, interests, and wishes, as well as their own, and the time and technical constraints. In the interview, Student E revealed that being the moderator at the planning session pushed her to think in new ways, which suggests her high level of cognitive engagement. Regarding the virtual meetup, Student F stated that "our teacher was able to create more opportunities for us to speak freely than usual at the meetup by not encouraging us to ask questions or make comments," and Student G wrote, "we were able to take the initiative because the teacher entrusted us with the moderator and the timekeeper" in the comment section of the questionnaire. It can be thought that this task requiring independent action under pressure aroused their willingness to engage. In the post-meetup reflection essay, Student A, who served as the moderator, wrote:

> What a great time we had! We did everything well from preparation to discussion. Everyone in the classroom was active from start to finish! Without you all, I wouldn't have had such a special experience. Let's learn not only English but also about society by imagining that we will meet our friends in Moldova again!

Seven other students also used the collective pronoun "we" in their reflective essays expressing their gratitude to their classmates. However, similar expressions were not observed in the essays after the first virtual meetup, which was prepared and moderated by the Moldovan students.

The above findings indicate that tackling the challenging tasks of preparing and facilitating the second meetup and solving problems through collaboration played an important role in heightening their cognitive and social engagement. Furthermore, this, in turn, promoted group cohesiveness which has been posited to bolster overall engagement (Fredericks, 2014; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

Self-Efficacy and Values

Even though Japanese students' positive attitudes were observed throughout this project, the post-project reflections and questionnaire revealed that individuals' self-efficacy and values influenced their self-evaluation of engagement in the project. Student H, who chose "somewhat disagree" for Question 9 (active involvement) in the survey, wrote the following in the comment section: "I was not confident in myself, and I thought that it would be better for others to say something, not me. I thought my classmates would learn more that way." He chose the option, "not sure," for Questions 1 (task level), 5 (value), and 10 (growth mindset). In response for Question 1, he stated, "I don't know if this project was good for me because there were words I could not understand." For Question 5, he wrote "I don't want to get a job where I have the opportunity to talk with native speakers in the future." Although this student is as proficient in English as other students, approximately at the CEFR B1 level, in his post-project

reflective essay he wrote, "I think I need to be more confident in English. I'm not good at English."

Research suggests that student engagement is influenced not only by the learning context but also by the individual's self-efficacy and the value they find in learning tasks (Bandura, 1984; Bong, 2001; Schunk & Mullen, 2012; Wang & Mercer, 2021). It can be assumed that Student H's low self-efficacy and low perceived value of learning English negatively affected his engagement in this project.

Conclusion

This paper examined the impact of an online global PBL project on the engagement of Japanese high school students. Teacher reflection, informed by the collected data, revealed that this project had a positive effect on student engagement. It provided students with ample opportunities for autonomous learning, where they could think critically and solve problems through collaboration, which aligns with my initial hypothesis. In particular, the discussion of themes relevant to students' lives and the interaction with peers exhibiting positive attitudes and strong communication skills were observed to be effective in promoting all the fundamental aspects of student engagement, encompassing behavioral, cognitive, social, and affective dimensions. Moreover, empowering students with responsibilities such as task design and virtual meetup facilitation promoted cognitive and social engagement while fostering group cohesion. Although this project yielded positive outcomes in terms of overall student engagement, it was suggested that students' low self-efficacy and lack of perceived value in English language learning could negatively affect their engagement. This observation underscores the inherent limitations that teachers face in influencing students' commitment to their own learning.

Since the above conclusions are based on the analysis by the practitioner-researcher who was involved in the present project, subjective interpretations of data cannot be disregarded. Additionally, it should be noted that the findings in this report based on the study conducted at a private language school do not necessarily apply to other learning contexts.

Regarding the importance of student engagement, Sang and Hiver (2021, p.17) state that "language learning is a long sometimes arduous journey that requires devoted effort to the process of learning." As the pandemic that began in 2020 has accelerated online learning and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan promotes exploratory learning using project-based learning and digital tools (2017a, 2017b, 2018), my hope is that research on the impact of online global PBL on student engagement will be conducted in public school classroom settings in Japan.

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Appendices

Appendix A: A Sample of the Online Exchange Bulletin Board on *Padlet*
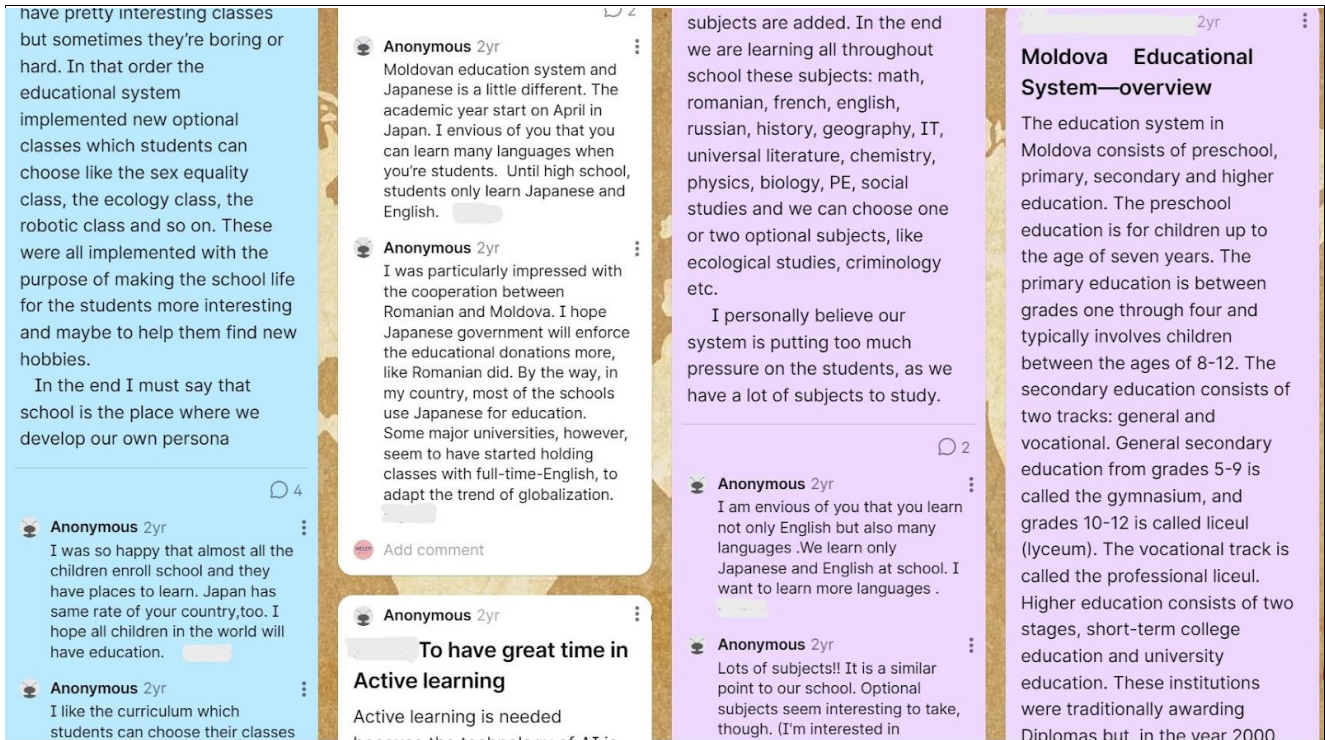
Appendix B: Post-Project Questionnaire Result - Students' Perception of Engagement

Questions	agreed	somewhat agreed	somewhat disagreed	disagreed	not sure
1. The project matched my knowledge and ability.	6 (75%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)
2. The themes in this project matched my interests.	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3. There were some occasions when I felt bored.	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	5 (62.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
4. There were some occasions when I was surprised.	1 (12.5%)	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
5. I felt this project was valuable for me.	7 (87.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)
6. There were opportunities for deep thinking such as comparison and problem solving.	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7. There were opportunities to collaborate with my classmates.	5 (62.5%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
8. There were opportunities to collaborate with Moldovan students.	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9. I participated in the tasks actively.	5 (62.5%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
10. I felt I could grow through my efforts during this project.	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)
11. There were opportunities for reflection.	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
12. My teacher's intervention was appropriate.	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Note. n=8

Do Textbook Dialogues Represent Pragmatically Appropriate Language Use?

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This study explores the most recently published ministry approved EFL textbooks used in Japanese high schools to determine the representativeness of pragmatic language use in the model conversations. These model conversations are examined regarding the interactional features of dialogues and contextual factors such as speaker-hearer power relations, social distance, and intensity of the situation alongside the information about language use. The findings reveal missing features of these model conversations along with the potential in providing learners with the opportunities to practise pragmatically appropriate language use. However, the study also discusses the challenges of solely relying on textbook information to develop learners' pragmatic competence. Consequently, bridging the gap between language use in textbook conversations and authentic interactions is suggested as necessary for improving learners' pragmatic language skills in their target language.

本研究では、最近出版された日本国内の高等学校で使用されている英語の検定教科書に紹介されているモデル会話を調査し、学習者がどの程度語用論的適切な言葉遣いを練習することができるかを明らかにした。この調査は、言葉のやり取りの特徴ならびに話し手と聞き手の関係や対話の状況を含むコンテクストや言葉遣いに関する説明の有無に焦点を合わせて実施をした。結果として本研究は、学習者が語用論的適切な言葉遣いを練習するうえで、教科書のモデル会話が欠如している点及びその可能性とを明らかにした。しかし、教科書に記されている情報に依存するのみでは学習者の語用論的な言語能力の改善は困難であるという考察もなされた。最後に、学習者が語用論的適切な言葉遣いを習得するためには、教科書の言語情報とオーセンティックな会話との隔たりを埋める必要性が示唆された。

Pragmatics is a study of speaker meaning and contextual meaning or communicative action in its social context, and pragmatic knowledge is helpful for successful communication in everyday interaction in an L2 (Kasper, 1997; Yule, 1996). Developing pragmatic ability is one of the most significant goals for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Pragmatic competence appears in theoretical models of communicative competence, involving both knowledge of L2 grammar and the ability to use this system in actual communication (Taguchi, 2012).

In Japan, the instructional goals of foreign language learning at the secondary education level set by the Ministry of Education and Science (MEXT) are to improve the students' ability to use, not just to know about, the target language. The overall objectives of the English section of the Course of Study in Japan have emphasised "communication abilities," and the goal is for the students to achieve the level where they can appropriately communicate information and ideas. Recently, substantial revision of authorised EFL textbooks has been made based on the guideline of the new Course of Study (2018), which was implemented in

2022. In these textbooks, detailed linguistic information has been replaced with model conversations including interactive activities. This study explores the most recently published Japanese high school EFL textbooks with regards to representation of pragmatic knowledge in the model conversations.

Although textbooks play a key role for pedagogical input and to practice the language use in foreign language instruction (McGroarty & Taguchi, 2005; Sheldon, 1988), there are a number of difficulties for teaching pragmatic language use. Most published textbooks for language learning are written according to the authors' intuitions and are not designed to incorporate pragmatics into classroom instruction (Ishihara, 2022; Nguyen, 2011). Grant and Starks (2001) argued that textbook materials rarely present natural spoken discourse, where students can acquire pragmatic competence. More recently, Rover (2022) also noted a gap between a textbook dialogue and an authentic conversation, stating the necessity of the models of appropriate language use in different contexts for EFL learners to practise. Nevertheless, textbooks may be the only source for language instruction, especially in EFL

contexts, and textbook evaluation helps language teachers to select appropriate materials providing ideas on the way to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a particular textbook (McGroarthy & Taguchi, 2005; Nguyen, 2011).

A textbook dialogue typically includes a model for a new language feature and a simple sequential organisation can be used for instructing social actions to novice-level EFL learners, although it may not be completely appropriate for instructing pragmatic language use (Rover, 2022). Sequence organisation involves the way social actions are initiated and how the participants respond to them, e.g., the use of delay or mitigation for dispreferred actions, and thus learners need to be aware of how to initiate/terminate or to shift the topic within a conversation (Nguyen & Canh, 2019). In addition, topic management as such is frequently made with the use of pragmatic markers (Wong & Waring, 2010). The use of pragmatic markers is grammatically optional but pragmatically essential (Brinton, 1996).

However, in many cases, model conversations in EFL textbooks are not authentic enough for learners to practise everyday interactions. Pitaksuksan and Sinwangsuwat (2020) investigated the interactional features of Thai secondary school English textbooks and noticed the sequential structures were mostly goal driven oriented with conversations terminated abruptly. At the same time, they found lack of dispreferred responses, opening/closing sequences, and repair structures, which are prevalent in naturally-occurring conversations. They suggested that more examples of those structures in different contexts could be provided to develop learners' pragmatic competence.

Interactive practice of language instruction may sometimes focus on exercising grammar structures. Bartlett (2021) found the EFL instruction their participants received in high school was heavily focused on grammar translation methods in spite of the MEXT guideline of improving learners' communicative skills in their target language. Glasgow and Paller (2019) observed over 50 percent of the tasks in English Expression I textbooks used in Japanese high schools were mechanical practices with limited opportunities for learners to practise impromptu speaking skills. Similarly, Carroll (2016) pointed out the purpose of practicing grammar structure in the dialogue may cause a teachers' requirement for a full-sentence response to the question in a conversation practice even when the responses with lexical or phrasal units are more preferable to answer wh-questions. Oda-Sheehan (2020) stated that learners' simple answers to polar questions such as "yes, I do. / No, I don't" may be rooted in EFL textbooks' grammar focused exercises. Furthermore, Bury (2020) pointed out the problem that predominates question-answer format conversations in

EFL textbooks may lead learners to short and direct answers. They suggested the necessity that classroom instruction should provide learners with the opportunity to interact more naturally and appropriately without turning their interaction into an interview.

In addition to interactional features of model conversations, contextual information may be an important element for the choice of language use in terms of politeness, formality, and (in)directness. Contextual factors such as speaker-hearer power relations, social distance, and the degree of intensity of the situation have an influence on language use (Ishihara, 2022). However, numerous studies have observed the dearth of contextual factors in dialogues presented in ELT textbooks. Shimizu et al. (2007) found an absence of information regarding politeness in Japanese high school EFL textbooks. Similarly, Tran and Yeh (2020) observed the underrepresentation of interlocutors' relations in conversational samples in Vietnamese EFL textbooks for the pragmatic effect. Mizushima (2016) found the lists of decontextualized example sentences for instructing social actions in Japanese high school EFL textbooks titled "English Expression". The outcomes of these studies implied the difficulty in developing EFL learners' pragmatic competence without providing contextual information.

Additionally, contextualised explanation of language use is often included in metapragmatic information, which is a necessity of formal instruction (Ishihara, 2022). Metapragmatic awareness allows learners to make an appropriate choice of language use (Glasgow, 2008; Ishihara, 2022). Ishihara (2022) argued learners are unlikely to develop pragmatic awareness merely exposed to authentic use of language without metapragmatic information. Nevertheless, information about appropriate language use in context has been underrepresented in EFL materials. Shimizu et al. (2007) found a lack of metapragmatic information as to the degree of formality in Japanese high school EFL textbooks although different linguistic forms for speech acts were present. Nu (2018) also found a paucity of metapragmatic information in upper-secondary level EFL textbooks used in Vietnam, and stated that these textbooks were designed solely to practise language functions. Similarly, Tran and Yeh (2020) pointed out that information about language use in Vietnamese EFL textbooks focused mainly on semantic or syntactic features of English, which was summarised in decontextualised boxes without details of language use situations. Moreover, Ren and Han (2016) observed limited information about pragmatic language use in university level EFL textbooks used in China and stated that teachers should be aware of a wide gap between the real needs for EFL learners and what was provided in the textbooks.

As mentioned above, the dearth of pragmatic input in EFL textbooks has been observed in numerous studies and developing learners' pragmatic competence might be difficult solely relying on these materials. This study investigates model conversations presented in two recently published Japanese secondary-level EFL textbooks with regards to interactional features and how contextual factors alongside information about language use are represented. The aim of this study is to determine missing features relevant to teachers and potentials for developing learners' pragmatic competence in the materials. The paper will seek to answer the following three research questions:

Q1. What are the features of model conversations presented in the selected textbooks?

Q2. Are contextual factors s as speaker-hearer relations alongside the degree of the intensity provided in these model conversations?

Q3. What information about language use is provided in each model conversation?

Method

Data collection

The data used in this study were model conversations presented in two most recently published Japanese high school EFL textbooks authorised by MEXT, *Vista* (Textbook A) and *All Aboard* (Textbook B), as shown in the Appendix. The target users of these textbooks are mainly vocational high school students, who mostly begin work after graduation. For these students, high school English classes may be the last opportunity to undergo formal instruction of foreign language. The textbook selection was made based on the information on the top-selling EFL textbooks provided by sales representatives from textbook publishers.

Data analysis

To conduct the analysis of the interactional features within the model conversations, several key aspects were examined. These included: a) Quantifying the number of turns within each conversation; b) Assessing the frequency of questionless initiations; c) Categorising the types of responses to questions, such as whether they comprised full sentences or extended answers, and d) Scrutinizing the utilization of pragmatic markers. This preliminary investigation took into account several considerations: a) The question-answer format prevalent in textbooks often elicits concise and direct responses (Bury, 2019); b) Conversational grammar exercises commonly mandate full sentence responses (Carroll, 2016); c) Recognising the intent of a question and responding with more extensive answers, even to closed questions, may align more closely with pragmatic appropriateness and politeness (Oda-

Sheehan, 2020). d) The strategic deployment of pragmatic markers is instrumental in maintaining coherence in speech and fostering effective interlocutor relationships (Archer et al., 2012).

Subsequently, the focus of the investigation shifted towards contextual factors. Specifically, an examination was conducted to ascertain whether the model conversations provided indications of the interlocutors' relative power dynamics, social proximity, and the intensity of the situation. These factors were deemed influential in shaping linguistic choices concerning politeness, directness, and formality. Simultaneously, the nature of the interlocutors' relations was categorised into distinct types: a) Close-Equal, akin to those between friends or siblings, b) Close-Unequal such as those between parent and child, c) Distant-Equal primarily observed in service encounters, and d) Distant-Unequal typical of interactions between teacher and student or doctor and patient.

Finally, the study examined whether the model conversations provided explicit information regarding language use. Any identified linguistic cues were classified into various types based on the keywords employed. Ultimately, a comparative observation between the two textbooks was made, highlighting their respective strengths and weaknesses in representing pragmatic features of language use.

Results

Interactional features of model conversations

The total number of 35 model conversations in textbook A and 27 in textbook B were identified respectively. Table 1 shows the number of turns of each model conversation in each textbook. Overall, these model conversations were short without opening/closing sequences and repair mechanisms. The majority of those presented in textbook A involve five turns (19/35) whereas those in textbook B included only two turns (16/27). Interestingly, the number of turns of those in textbook A was mostly an odd number with the first speaker' initiation and closure. In textbook B, on the other hand, the number of turns was an even number in each model conversation.

Table 1

The Number of Turns involved in each model conversation

No. of Turns	Textbook A (35)	Textbook B (27)
2	4	16
3	9	0
4	1	6
5	19	0
6	2	5

A limited number of questionless initiations in model conversations in each textbook were present. The total number was four out of 35 in textbook A and one out of 27 in textbook B. Question-answer format was predominantly used in these two textbooks. Moreover, preferences for the use of full-sentence responses were observed. The number of full-sentence responses identified in textbook A was 26 out of 35 and that in textbook B was 25 out of 27. As for giving longer answers to closed questions, which is pragmatically more appropriate, the responses in 13 out of 35 model conversations in textbook A involve longer answers whereas the number of those in textbook B was only 7 out of 35. Some of them overlapped with full-sentence responses. Additionally, 14 out of 35 model conversations in textbook A used pragmatic markers while a pragmatic marker was used only in a single model conversation in textbook B.

The following examples display typical interactional features of model conversations presented in these two textbooks. The conversation in Example 1 was extracted from textbook A. The first speaker made a questionless initiation, and ended the interaction with a reaction to the second speaker's response, where the response/reaction marker of *oh* was used. "Your turn" in the parenthesis was prepared for textbook users to practise a conversation.

Example 1 (Vista, p.31)

Mike: I called you at eight last night but you didn't answer.

(Your turn): Sorry I was watching TV.

Mike: Oh, were you?

Another model conversation extracted from textbook A is shown in Example 2. The first speaker initiated the interaction with a closed question. The second speaker can choose one of the responses in the parentheses. Both responses were consisted of longer answers not simply "Yes, I do / No, I don't" and a full-sentence response to the second question followed. This interaction ended with the first speaker's assessment of the second speaker's response.

Example 2 (Vista, p.73)

Mr. Brown: Do you have a cleaning robot at home?

(Your turn): (Yes. It's convenient. / No, I don't need one).

Mr. Brown: What kind of robot would you like to have?

(Your turn): I'd like to have a robot for (doing my homework / taking my tests / practicing English).

Mr. Brown: What a good idea!

Example 3 is a typical example of model conversations in textbook B. This model conversation may be prepared to practise the syntax structure of past tense. The first speaker initiated the interaction with a wh-question and the second speaker's response was a full-sentence answer using past tense.

Example 3 (All Aboard, p.27)

A: What did you do last night?

B: I watched TV.

A typical interview-like model conversation in textbook B is shown in Example 4. The first speaker kept asking wh-questions and the second speaker was using a full sentence to respond to each of the first speaker's questions. At the same time, this model conversation might be provided to practise to-infinitives such as "want to."

Example 4

Jun: Where do you want to go next summer?

Sam: I want to go to Okinawa.

Jun: Why do you want to go to Okinawa?

Sam: Because I like _____.

Jun: What do you want to do there?

Sam: I want to _____in the _____.

Contextual factors

The number of model conversations with contextual factors in Textbook A was 34 out of 35 and that in textbook B was 8 out of 27. Table 2 displays the number of those provided with the speaker-hearer relations in each textbook. Almost all the model conversations in textbook A were provided with contextual factors of speaker-hearer relations. In textbook B, on the other hand, such information was included only in a limited number of model conversations. They were all Close-Equal relations such as friends, which also prevailed in textbook A. In addition, Distant-Equal relations in service encounters were identified in four model conversations, and the remaining eight model conversations included Distant-Unequal speaker-hearer relations of teacher-student. None of these model conversations in either of the textbooks provided a high degree of intensity, where polite/indirect language use is required.

Table 2

Speaker-hearer Relations Provided in Model Conversations

Speaker-hearer relations	Textbook A (34)	Textbook B (8)
Close-Equal	22	8

Close-Unequal	0	0
Distant-Equal	4	0
Distant-Unequal	8	0

Note: The number in each parenthesis shows the number of conversations with contextual factors.

Information about Language Use

Slightly more than half of model conversations in textbook A were provided with information about language use while such information was completely absent in textbook B. In Textbook A, information about language use was shown in a small box next to each model conversation. The types of information with the number of model conversations are summarised in Table 3. Language use information related to expressing opinions as agreement, disagreement, and asking for opinions was predominant. Slightly more than half of model conversations provided such information.

Table 3

Information about Language Use in Textbook A

Information about Language Use	Number of Conversations
Agreement	4
Strong agreement	2
Asking for opinions	1
Complimenting	2
Disagreement	1
Weak disagreement	2
Weak negation	1
Not particularly good or bad	1
Pragmatic marker (backchannelling)	2
Politeness	1
Service encounters	2
Softening	2

Discussion

Overall, the model conversations featured in these selected EFL textbooks were short with a question-answer format. Responses to wh-questions primarily consisted of full-sentences, while closed questions typically elicited simple replies like "Yes, I do" or "No, I don't." Additionally, the use of pragmatic markers was notably scarce. These findings suggest that instructional focus may lean heavily towards practising syntax structures or vocabulary in dialogues, potentially leading learners to use their target language unnaturally.

This tendency was more pronounced in textbook B despite each grammar item introduced in the unit being practicable in the model conversations. In contrast, textbook A displayed some efforts to enhance conversational naturalness, incorporating questionless initiations, occasional longer responses to closed questions, and the use of pragmatic markers. However, deficits in authenticity remained in these model conversations. The role of the first speaker and the second speaker was evident. The first speaker initiates a conversation followed by the second speaker's response.

In textbook A, speaker-hearer relations were provided for almost all model conversations, whereas such information was sparse in textbook B. A set of characters primarily in a school setting was introduced at the onset of the textbook. The majority of model conversations in both textbooks depicted Close-Equal speaker-hearer relations. Although other types of speaker-hearer relations were present in textbook A, these contextual factors were not explicitly linked to language use despite information on polite language use. Moreover, although the significance of intensity of a situation has been acknowledged as a determinant of to determine politeness levels, since a high imposition request costs the hearer trouble or inconvenience (Rover, 2022), no examples illustrating language use in contexts of high intensity were found in either textbook. According to Ishihara (2022), contextual factors such as interlocutors' power dynamics, social distance, and intensity of situation or gravity of imposition may influence levels of politeness, directness, and formality. Therefore, these factors should be consistently integrated into instructional contexts at all proficiency levels.

Language use information was present only in textbook A. Although numerous studies have highlighted a dearth of metapragmatic information in pedagogical materials, more than half of model conversations in this textbook included such information. This primarily pertained to expressing opinions such as mitigating negation or disagreement, thereby allowing learners to become aware of specific language use nuances. However, there was no accompanying information linking language use to contextual factors. According to Glasgow (2008) and Ishihara (2022), metapragmatic awareness aids learners in selecting appropriate language use. Even though language use information was provided, without the explanation regarding when, where or to whom certain language should be used, learners' pragmatic awareness may remain underdeveloped. Ishihara (2022) emphasised the necessity of incorporating metapragmatic information in formal language instruction to foster learners' pragmatic competence.

Conclusion

This study revealed a notable lack of emphasis on pragmatic language use within the model conversations presented in Japanese high school EFL textbooks despite offering some potential avenues for enhancing learners' pragmatic awareness. While there were endeavours to make model conversations more natural, relying solely on textbook materials proved insufficient for cultivating learners' pragmatic competence. Considering pragmatic competence as integral to communicative competence, it is evident that the objectives outlined in the Course of Study for senior high school foreign language education—aimed at equipping students with the ability to communicate effectively in their target language—remain unaddressed by these textbooks despite providing thorough linguistic information.

Consequently, educators need to bridge the divide between pedagogical materials and real-world language use. One approach could involve augmenting existing pragmatic information in these textbooks with task-based modifications. By incorporating such tasks, educators can create opportunities for learners to actively engage with and apply pragmatic language skills, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive development of pragmatic competence.

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Appendix

Textbooks Investigated in the Study

- Tokyo Shoseki (2021) *All Aboard English Communication I*

- Sanseido (2021) *Vista English Communication I*

Developing the Reading Anxiety Questionnaire for Japanese Beginner-level College Students

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Since the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (Saito et al., 1999) was created, many researchers have employed it to measure participants' reading anxiety. However, the FLRAS has two issues when administered to Japanese EFL college students, especially those at the beginner level. First, the 20-item FLRAS includes many different adjectives to assess one construct, anxiety. Second, the FLRAS employs a five-point Likert scale which includes the neutral option, "Neither agree nor disagree." This neutral option is controversial because it does not describe a midpoint on a scale and students would easily choose it, which interferes with accurate data collection. To address these two issues, I adapted Kimura's (2011) listening anxiety questionnaire targeting Japanese students and piloted the modified version to examine whether the items function properly. In this paper, I explain how I adapted and modified the questionnaire and how I assessed the validity of the questionnaire items.

The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (Saito ほか, 1999)が発表されて以来、FLRAS は多くの先行研究において、学習者のリーディングに対する不安（Anxiety）測定に活用されてきた。しかし、日本人大学生、特に初級レベルの学生に FLRAS を使用する場合、2 点を考慮する必要がある。1 点目に、FLRAS は 20 の質問項目から成るが、「不安（Anxiety）」を表現するために様々な異なる形容詞が混在している。2 点目に、FLRAS には 5 段階のリッカート尺度が使用されているが、中間選択肢（5 段階中の 3「どちらともいえない」）は、尺度の中間に位置する選択肢なのかという疑問と共に、学生が容易に選択する可能性が高く、正確なデータ収集の点で懸念がある。これら 2 点を考慮し、Kimura (2011)が日本の学生向けに作成したリスニングに対する不安アンケート（Listening Anxiety Questionnaire）をもとに、リーディングに対する不安アンケートを作成し、検証を行った。本稿では、アンケート作成の手順、およびアンケートの質問項目の妥当性検証について論ずる。

Among individual difference variables concerning reading, previous researchers have pointed out the importance of reading anxiety because of its hypothesized influence on foreign language (FL) learners' reading performance. Saito et al. (1999) proposed the construct, foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), which is defined as skill-specific anxiety that FL learners experience during reading, and they suggested that FLRA might negatively impact FL readers' reading comprehension. Chen et al. (2022) noted that researchers have only recently begun giving FLRA attention and that much remains to be discovered about this construct. To measure FL learners' reading anxiety, many researchers have employed the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (Saito et al., 1999) and investigated the impact of reading anxiety on FL learners' reading performances.

However, two issues need to be addressed when the FLRAS is administered to Japanese college students who study English as a foreign language (EFL): the inconsistency of adjective use to express anxiety and the neutral option used in a five-point Likert scale. The purpose of this paper is to address these two issues. I aimed to develop a reading anxiety questionnaire suitable for Japanese EFL college students, especially those at the beginner level. I adapted and modified Kimura's (2011) listening anxiety questionnaire, which had been created for Japanese EFL college students, and piloted the modified questionnaire to examine whether the items function properly. In this paper, I explain how I adapted and modified the questionnaire, how I assessed the validity of the questionnaire items, and whether these items were evaluated as appropriate.

Literature Review

The FLRAS in Previous Studies

Since the FLRAS was released (Saito et al., 1999), many researchers have employed the FLRAS to gauge participants' reading anxiety. Some researchers, such as Ghaith (2020), Lu and Liu (2015), and Khatib and

Jannati (2015), employed the FLRAS to investigate the relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies. For example, Ghaith (2020) targeted 103 native speakers of Arabic (aged 17 to 28) learning EFL in a private university in Lebanon. A path analysis was used to examine the influence of FLRA and reading strategies on reading comprehension. Global reading strategies such as activating background knowledge (β = .23, p < .05) and problem-solving reading strategies such as guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words (β = .22, p < .05) positively contributed to the prediction of reading comprehension. On the other hand, FLRA negatively impacted reading comprehension (β = -.31, p < .01). Ghaith concluded that FLRA negatively affects EFL readers' comprehension because high levels of reading anxiety can lead readers to rely on bottom-up processing, for example, translating to their first language (L1) and "going back and forth in the text to ensure literal comprehension" (p. 1320). This situation limits their ability to utilize top-down reading strategies such as reading between the lines, inferring implied meanings, assessing information in the text, and engaging in problem-solving.

Other researchers who employed the FLRAS have examined variables that can lead to different results in reading anxiety studies. For example, Chen et al. (2022) focused on learners' L1 backgrounds and their use of reading strategies by employing a cross-sectional design. The researchers analyzed responses from two groups of EFL students with intermediate English proficiency (aged 18 to 23): L1 Chinese (n = 35) from a Chinese university and L1 Spanish (n = 37) from a Spanish university. Chen et al. showed that the participants' L1 backgrounds influenced the relationship between reading strategies and reading anxiety; more specifically, Spanish students who had used more strategies had a lower level of reading anxiety (r = -.51, p < .01), whereas strategies did not significantly affect the Chinese students' EFL reading anxiety (r = -.34, p > .05). For another example, Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) focused on the effects of text difficulty on FLRA and reading comprehension. Two groups of Iranian EFL learners aged 18 to 26 (n = 25 each) were provided with texts at different levels for four months, and a reading comprehension test and a version of the FLRAS, adapted to the Iranian context, were administered before and after the treatment. Paired-samples t-tests showed that the difficult-text group's FLRAS significantly increased (t = -3.60, p = .005, d = 0.615), whereas that of the easier-text group significantly decreased (t = 6.36, p < .01, d = 1.303).

Two Issues Found in the FLRAS

Previous researchers, such as those described above, have employed the FLRAS; however, at least two issues need to be considered when the FLRAS is administered to low-proficiency Japanese EFL students.

First, the 20-item FLRAS includes too many different adjectives, all of which are used to assess one construct, reading anxiety. For instance, the following is the first seven items of the FLRAS (bolding added):

1. I **get upset** when I'm not sure whether I understand what I am reading in [language].

2. When reading [language], I often understand the words but still can't quite understand what the author is saying.

3. When I'm reading [language], I **get so confused** I can't remember what I'm reading.

4. I **feel intimidated** whenever I see a whole page of [language] in front of me.

5. I **am nervous** when I am reading a passage in [language] when I am not familiar with.

6. I **get upset** whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading [language].

7. When reading [language], I **get nervous and confused** when I don't understand every word.

Different adjectives were used to express anxiety in items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. When I translated the 20 English items into Japanese, I needed to clarify the nuance of each word (e.g., the difference between *upset* and *intimidated*) and how to translate them appropriately. These different adjectives can confuse low-proficiency students, which should be avoided to ensure the reliability of their responses. Moreover, item 7 can be regarded as a so-called double-barreled question because this item includes two feelings, *get nervous* and *get confused*. Nemoto and Beglar (2014) suggested that, when designing questionnaire items, "conjunctions, such as *and*, *or*, and *but* should not be used, as they generally indicate the presence of two ideas" (p. 3). Some students might not get nervous but get confused, or vice versa; in that case, students' responses to item 7 can vary depending on their interpretation of the item. In addition, item 2 is about reading comprehension and does not include any term suggesting anxiety, which casts doubt on whether this item is appropriate to measure reading anxiety.

Second, the FLRAS uses a five-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly disagree. The neutral option (3) is controversial because researchers have pointed out that a neutral option or a midpoint interferes with accurate data collection (Krosnick & Fabriger, 1997; Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). Nemoto and Beglar (2014) explicitly recommended not to use neutral

categories or midpoints because "neutral categories are inherently illogical in that they do not conform to the fundamental continuum of the scale" (p. 5). In addition, Krosnick and Fabriger (1997) pointed out that many people "might select an offered midpoint because it provides an easy choice that requires little effort and is easy to justify" (p. 147). Especially for low-proficiency university students, who tend to have low motivation to study English (e.g., Dunn & Iwaniec, 2022), the neutral option (3) would be an easy option, and many of them would select it without considering each item carefully. To address the above-mentioned issues caused by neutral categories or midpoints, Nemoto and Beglar (2014) proposed a six-point Likert scale to "permit the possibility of increased measurement precision" (p. 5). Moreover, contrary to FIRAS scales from (1) Strongly agree to (5) Strongly disagree, Nemoto and Beglar suggested that the scale should move from a weaker endorsement to a stronger endorsement of the item, such as from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*.

Method

As described above, the FLRAS has two issues that need to be addressed; therefore, I aimed to develop a reading anxiety questionnaire more suitable for Japanese EFL college students using the following four steps.

Step 1: Modifying Kimura's (2011) Questionnaire

I adapted Kimura's (2011) listening anxiety questionnaire into a reading questionnaire. Although Kimura's study concerned listening anxiety, each questionnaire item was focused on anxiety, and the questionnaire was created for Japanese EFL college students, which fits the current context. Kimura's (2011) listening anxiety questionnaire consists of two sections: Section I: Self-Focused Apprehension (14 items) and Section II: Task-Focused Apprehension (13 items). In each section, I first omitted the questions irrelevant to reading (e.g., "I am not confident in listening to English without a chance to read the transcription of speech" [Section I, Item 3]) and then modified the listening anxiety questionnaire items to reading items. Considering the two issues found in the FLRAS, I used the same adjectives consistently in each section: "It is difficult to…" and "confused" in Section I, and "worry (feel worried)" in Section II. I also changed the five-point Likert scale into a six-point Likert scale without a neutral option, based on the above-mentioned suggestions by Nemoto and Beglar (2014): (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Slightly Disagree, (4) Slightly Agree, (5) Agree, and (6) Strongly agree.

The newly developed reading anxiety questionnaire, based on Kimura (2011), is included in the Appendix.

Step 2: Translating English Version into Japanese

I decided to administer the questionnaire in the students' L1, Japanese, because of their low English proficiency, following Nemoto and Beglar's (2014) suggestion that the questionnaire items should be written either in a language the respondents understand well or in their L1. A Japanese translation was first produced by me and checked by two native Japanese speakers teaching English in Japanese universities. I also asked these two native Japanese teachers to check for any items that might be unclear for Japanese EFL college students. Both teachers confirmed that all items would be clearly understood by Japanese students.

Step 3: Piloting to Japanese College Students

Japanese EFL college students (*N* = 100) voluntarily participated in the piloting of this reading anxiety questionnaire. They were all enrolled in an elective English course to prepare for the TOEIC exam for one 14-week (100-minute lessons × 14 weeks) academic semester. Because it was an elective course, students from the first to fourth year (aged 18 to 22) were included. Initially, I collected data from 114 students. The questionnaire was administered outside of lesson time as a paper-based survey under my supervision in a classroom. Among these 114 students, I focused on Japanese L1 students, so I excluded the responses given by international students whose L1s were not Japanese. I also excluded the responses from students who did not answer all questions. All the students were non-English majors, and the majority had TOEIC scores ranging from 400 to 600. All participants provided written informed consent for me to use their data.

Step 4: Validating Using Rasch Analyses

Construct validity refers to whether the instruments reflect a particular construct interested in the study, and Bond et al. (2021) argued that "we must keep validity forefront in our minds at every stage of any test-construction process" (p. 222). As Baghaei (2008) suggested that "Rasch analysis is a powerful tool for evaluating construct validity" (p. 1145), Rasch fit statistics are indications of construct irrelevant variance, and the items that do not fit the Rasch model are candidates for modification or for being discarded. In other words, Rasch analysis can be used to examine whether the items function properly. The data obtained from the reading anxiety questionnaire were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, exported to WINSTEPS 4.4.7 (Linacre, 2022), and calibrated using the Rasch rating scale model.

Results and Discussion

Section I: Self-Focused Apprehension

First, the Rasch analysis indicated that item reliability (separation) was .97 (5.88). According to Fisher's (2007) criteria for interpreting reliability and separation coefficients, both the item reliability estimate and the separation statistic were excellent.

Second, unidimensionality, which means that a set of items measures a single construct, was inspected. The differences between the actual observed item values and the expected values are called residuals, and the principal components analysis (PCA) of Rasch residuals reports eigenvalues and indicates whether there is any evidence for the presence of secondary variables (Bond et al., 2021). According to Linacre (2020), an eigenvalue of < 3.0 for the residual contrasts in a Rasch PCA of item residuals analysis suggests unidimensionality. The eigenvalue of unexplained variance in the first residual contrast, or "first PCA

component in the correlation matrix of residuals" (Bond et al., 2021, p. 255), was 1.80, showing that the items formed a fundamentally unidimensional construct.

Next, the fit of each item to the Rasch model was inspected. According to Fisher (2007), item model fit mean-square (MNSQ) values are evaluated as follows: excellent (0.77–1.30), very good (0.71–1.40), good (0.50–2.00), and fair (0.34–2.90). In addition, Bond et al. (2021) explained that items with infit MNSQ higher than 2.00 indicate more noise or random irregularity than information and should be investigated. As Table 1 shows, infit MNSQ values ranged from 0.76 to 1.35, which was within the 0.71–1.40 range and considered very good (Fisher, 2007). The point-measure correlation values were all greater than .30, which also indicated good fit to the Rasch model.

Based on the above results, the questionnaire items for Section I, Self-Focused Apprehension, functioned appropriately.

Table 1

Rasch Descriptive Statistics for Section I: Self-Focused Apprehension

Question item	Rasch measure	*SE*	Infit MNSQ	Infit ZSTD	Outfit MNSQ	Outfit ZSTD	Point-measure correlation
2	1.06	0.13	1.35	2.34	1.38	2.50	.57
4	-0.10	0.12	1.30	2.12	1.31.	2.16	.60
9	0.42	0.12	1.19	1.41	1.21	1.50	.68
10	0.38	0.12	0.93	-0.47	0.94	-0.41	.72
6	0.67	0.12	0.91	-0.65	0.92	-0.59	.73
8	-1.15	0.13	0.92	-0.53	0.90	-0.68	.71
7	-0.56	0.12	0.88	-0.83	0.89	-0.78	.67
3	0.96	0.12	0.84	-1.19	0.80	-1.50	.73
5	-0.91	0.13	0.80	-1.49	0.82	-1.35	.73
1	-0.78	0.13	0.76	-1.84	0.72	-2.13	.75

Section II: Task-Focused Apprehension

Similar to Section I above, first, item reliability and unidimensionality were inspected. Item reliability (separation) was .88 (2.72), indicating that item reliability was good, and the separation statistic was fair (Fisher, 2007). The eigenvalue of the first residual contrast was 2.39, which is less than 3.00 (Linacre, 2020), indicating that the items formed a fundamentally unidimensional construct.

Next, item fit to the Rasch model was evaluated. As Table 2 shows, infit MNSQ values ranged from 0.70 to 1.39, which were nearly within the 0.71–1.40 range (Fisher, 2007). The point-measure correlation values were all greater than .30. Both values indicated acceptable fit to the Rasch model.

Together these results indicate that the questionnaire items in Section II also functioned appropriately.

Table 2

Rasch Descriptive Statistics for Section II: Task-Focused Apprehension

Question item	Rasch measure	SE	Infit MNSQ	Infit ZSTD	Outfit MNSQ	Outfit ZSTD	Point-measure correlation
5	0.24	0.11	1.39	2.68	1.47	3.06	.61
1	-0.04	0.11	1.07	0.55	1.25	1.70	.67
2	-0.22	0.11	1.11	0.83	1.13	0.95	.60
7	-0.05	0.11	1.09	0.72	1.10	0.73	.71
9	-0.67	0.12	1.01	0.15	1.00	0.03	.73
8	0.15	0.11	0.98	-0.07	0.97	-0.20	.71
10	0.08	0.11	0.89	-0.81	0.95	-0.36	.69
4	-0.09	0.11	0.90	-0.76	0.87	-0.97	.74
3	-0.14	0.11	0.81	-1.50	0.77	-1.78	.74
6	0.74	0.12	0.70	-2.40	0.73	-2.13	.74

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to describe the process of developing a reading anxiety questionnaire suitable for Japanese EFL college students, especially those at the beginner level. I addressed two issues found in the FLRAS (Saito et al., 1999): the inconsistency of adjective use and the neutral option used in a five-point Likert scale. I adapted and modified Kimura's (2011) listening anxiety questionnaire into a reading questionnaire, used the same adjectives consistently to express one construct, anxiety, and change from a five-point Likert scale to a six-point Likert scale based on the suggestions of previous literature (Krosnick & Fabriger, 1997; Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). After obtaining a check of the Japanese translation, I piloted the reading anxiety questionnaire to examine whether the items functioned properly with 100 Japanese EFL college students. The Rasch analyses showed that the 20 items that comprised Sections I and II were reliable, fundamentally unidimensional, and they displayed adequate fit to the Rasch model. In other words, the 20 items were evaluated as appropriate, and the results of the analyses provided evidence for construct validity.

It cannot be denied that there are limitations in this study. First, this questionnaire was piloted only once with one sample population (N = 100) attending the same institution. Further studies, especially those targeting students with different backgrounds, such as institutions, majors, and academic levels, are expected to enhance this instrument's generalizability, applicability, and validity. Secondly, qualitative data collection, such as follow-up interviews with some of the participants, could have been done to examine whether they understood questionnaire items as I expected them to do. These limitations should be addressed in future studies.

Ensuring the validity of an instrument is easy to say but difficult to do. Bond et al. (2021) described the worst case—researchers give their participants "surveys with not enough response options, too many options, ambiguous options, or questions we [researchers] don't even understand" (p. 223). Researchers such as Ghaith (2020) and Khatib and Jannati (2015) have suggested that English teachers should facilitate positive emotional states and help students lower their reading anxiety because reading anxiety can negatively affect their reading performance. To do so, a validated instrument to gauge how learners feel toward reading is essential. This paper partially addresses this need. Through the process of instrument development and validation, described in this paper, I expect this reading anxiety questionnaire will contribute to assessing learners' reading anxiety more accurately.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

The Reading Anxiety Questionnaire

1 = Strongly disagree　　　全くそう思わない

2 = Disagree　　　　　　　思わない

3 = Slightly disagreeどちらかといえばそう思わない

4 = Slightly agree　どちらかといえばそう思う

5 = Agree　　　　そう思う

6 = Strongly agree　とてもそう思う

Section I: Self-Focused Apprehension　セクションⅠ：自身に関すること

1. When reading English, it is difficult to guess the meaning of parts I cannot understand.
英文を読んでいるとき、自分が理解できない部分の意味を推測することが難しい。

2. It is difficult to understand instructions written in English in my English textbooks.
英語の教科書の中の、英語で書かれている指示を理解することが難しい。

3. I often feel confused when reading short passages in English.
英語で書かれた短い文章を読んでいるとき、混乱することが頻繁にある。

4. I often cannot remember what I have read in English.
英語で読んだ内容を、覚えていないことが頻繁にある。

5. I often feel confused when reading long passages in English.
英語で書かれた長い文章を読んでいるとき、混乱することが頻繁にある。

6. When reading English, I often feel confused even when I translate word by word.
英文を読んでいるとき、一語一語訳しても、混乱することが頻繁にある。

7. I get confused when reading new information in English.
英語で新しい情報について読んでいるとき、混乱することがある。

8. When reading English, it is difficult to guess the meaning of new words.
英文を読んでいるとき、新出単語の意味を推測するのが難しい。

9. English spelling is confusing.
英語の綴りのせいで、混乱することがある。

10. I often do not understand what English texts say even when I know the words.
英単語を知っていても、英文が何を言っているか理解できないことが頻繁にある。

Section II: Task-Focused Apprehension　セクションⅡ：タスクに関すること

1. When reading English, I feel worried when I come across one or two unfamiliar words.
英文を読んでいるとき、知らない単語が１つか２つ出てくると不安になる。

2. When reading English, I feel worried if I only read a passage once.

   英文を読んでいるとき、文章を一回読むだけでは、不安になる。

3. When reading English, I feel worried when I'm not familiar with the topic.

   英文を読んでいるとき、そのトピックに馴染みが無いと、不安になる。

4. When reading English, I worry that I might have missed important information.

   英文を読んでいるとき、自分が大切な情報を見落としてしまっているのではないかと不安になる。

5. When reading English, I feel worried when I don't understand every word.

   英文を読んでいるとき、全ての単語が理解できないと不安になる。

6. When reading English, I worry I might have inadequate knowledge about the topic.

   英文を読んでいるとき、自分にそのトピックに対して十分な知識がないかもしれないのではないかと不安になる。

7. I feel worried when I have little time to think about what I have read in English.

   自分が英語で読んだことについて、考える時間がほとんど無いと不安になる。

8. I feel worried when I cannot read English at a comfortable pace.

   自分にとって心地良いペースで英文が読めないと、不安になる。

9. I feel worried when I'm not sure whether I have understood what reading texts say.

   英文が何を言っているかを、自分が理解できているかどうか分からないとき、不安になる。

10. When reading English, I worry that I may be missing key words.

    英文を読んでいるとき、キーワードを見落としているかもしれないと不安になる

Enhancing IELTS Prep with Phrasal Verb Analysis:
A Corpus-based Study

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The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is widely utilized as an indicator of language proficiency for employment and academic purposes in countries like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. However, there is a lack of comprehensive corpus analyses examining its content. Thus, this study aimed to analyze the frequency and usage of phrasal verbs (PVs) in the IELTS Academic practice test books 14-17 published by Cambridge Assessment English. The texts were scanned and transcribed, allowing for linguistic analysis using *AntConc* software to identify collocates of adverbial particles and prepositions, such as "on" and "up." The findings found a 0.37% higher PV frequency, surpassing Gardner and Davies' (2007) predictions. These findings indicate that PVs are highly prevalent in IELTS examinations and highlight the importance of incorporating PVs into vocabulary instruction for IELTS preparation. Additionally, vocabulary study decks were created on platforms like *Anki* and *Memrise* and shared with participants of the presentation.

International English Language Testing System（IELTS）は、オーストラリア、カナダ、ニュージーランドなどの国々で、就職や学業を目的とした語学力の指標として広く活用されている。しかし、その内容を包括的に分析したコーパス研究はまだ不十分である。そこで、本研究では Cambridge Assessment English から出版されている IELTS アカデミック模擬試験問題集の 14 から 17 版における句動詞の頻度を分析することを目的とした。問題集をスキャンおよび転写し、AntConc ソフトウェアを用いて、「on」や「up」といった副助詞や前置詞と結びつく句動詞を特定するため言語分析を行った。その結果、問題集上の句動詞の頻度は Gardner and Davies（2007）の推定を 0.37%上回ることがわかった。これは、句動詞が IELTS 試験でも広く使用されていることを示しており、IELTS 試験学習のための語彙指導に句動詞を取り入れることの重要性を強調している。また、Anki や Memrise などのプラットフォームで語彙学習デッキを作成し、プレゼンテーションの参加者と共有した。

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) serves as a crucial benchmark for assessing language proficiency, particularly for individuals seeking work and study opportunities in English-speaking countries like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. With over 4 million test takers in 2024 alone, it is evident that IELTS plays a significant role in evaluating foreign language competence (British Council, 2024). Despite its widespread use, limited research has been conducted to analyze the content of the IELTS exam through corpus-based investigations.

In this study we aimed to address this gap by utilizing *AntConc* (Anthony, 2022) to delve into a corpus of IELTS exams. Our primary focus lies in exploring the frequency of phrasal verbs (PVs) within the test material. Phrasal verbs, characterized by their verb-particle combinations, present unique challenges for English language learners. Native speakers effortlessly employ these expressions in their daily communication, leaving non-native speakers perplexed by their seemingly endless variations and idiomatic usage.

The motivation for this study stems from personal experiences as a language learner, struggling to comprehend and utilize PVs effectively, even in relatively informal interactions with native speakers. Common PVs like *hash out* and *roll out* are frequently employed by native speakers, but learners often find them puzzling due to their figurative meanings or contextual variations. The discrepancy in PV usage between native speakers and non-native learners prompted the exploration of how frequently and how prominently PVs are featured in the IELTS exams.

What is the frequency of PVs in the books of IELTS Academic practice tests 14-17 published by Cambridge Assessment English?

Phrasal Verbs

PVs belong to a category of language known as formulaic sequences (FSs), which play a crucial role in both spoken and written discourse (Gyllstad & Schmitt, 2018). PVs consist of a verb combined with an adverbial particle (e.g., *on*, *off*, *in*, *out*, *up*, *down*), and the inclusion of the particle significantly alters the meaning of the verb (Gardner & Davies, 2007; Liu, 2011). For example, the verb "put" has different meanings when combined with "up" (*put up*) versus "out" (*put out*). Due to their intricate nature, PVs present challenges for language learners in terms of acquisition and usage.

PVs hold great importance for learners as they are prevalent in everyday spoken language, informal contexts, and even in academic settings, although they are relatively less common in written registers such as magazines, newspapers, and academic writing (Liu, 2011). Gardner and Davies (2007) note that learners encounter PVs at an average rate of one PV per every 150 English words. PVs are just a subset of the vast number of FSs present in English, which may exceed the number of individual words in the lexicon (Jackendoff, 1995; Pawley & Syder, 1983). Thus, PVs are considered fundamental and essential components of verbal expressions, alongside single words, despite their complex multi-word structure (Gardner & Davies, 2007; Liu, 2011; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003).

It is important to note that many PVs have lexical equivalents or counterparts. For example, "postpone" can be seen as a lexical equivalent of *put off*, "execute" of *carry out*, and "occur" of *take place*. However, PVs possess distinct meanings that differentiate them from their lexical verb counterparts. "Postpone" often implies the rescheduling of a formal or planned event, while "put off" conveys a sense of procrastination or avoidance. Due to these nuanced meanings and the varied usage patterns of PVs, learners often encounter difficulties in comprehending and acquiring them.

Definitions of Phrasal Verbs

PVs are a complex linguistic phenomenon that have garnered attention from researchers, yet there is no consensus on their precise definition. There are various definitions proposed by different researchers, highlighting the divergent perspectives on PVs.

Biber et al. (1999, p.403) define PVs as "multi-word units consisting of a verb followed by an adverbial particle (e.g., *carry out*, *find out*, and *pick up*)." Moreover, they note that prepositional verbs usually express single semantic units that cannot be inferred from the meanings of their individual components, similar to PVs (e.g. "*look up*" means "observe") (p.403). On the other hand, Gardner and Davies (2007, p. 341) focus on PVs found in the British National Corpus and define them as "two-part verbs consisting of a lexical verb followed by an adverbial particle." They specify that the particle can be either contiguous (adjacent) or noncontiguous to the verb. The disparity between these definitions highlights the variation in approaches to understanding PVs. Biber et al.'s definition encompasses a broader range of multi-word units, including both adverbial particles and prepositions, while Gardner and Davies' (2007) definition narrows the focus to two-part verbs with adverbial particles.

In this study, the decision was made to adopt both definitions. PVs are defined as: verb-particle or verb-preposition combinations that cannot be inferred from the individual word meanings. It is important to consider the implications of this definition for learners of English. Prepositions are taught in the early stages of EFL learning and a multi-word unit such as "*go up* (increase)" might be readily understood by anyone with elementary lexical knowledge, but that cannot be assumed. By identifying PV like "*catch up* (reach)," we hope to provide useful insight into how PVs are used in IELTS exams. It is reasonable to believe that both authors' definitions are pedagogically valuable.

Corpus Analysis of Phrasal Verbs

Gardner and Davies (2007) compiled a list of the top 100 common PVs by analyzing the British National Corpus (BNC). Their findings revealed that the top 20 lexical verbs in PV constructions (e.g., *go*, *come*, and *take*) accounted for 53.7% of all PV occurrences in the BNC. Another list, developed by Liu (2011), expanded the scope by incorporating data from both the BNC and the BYU Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) across different registers. Liu (2011) found that PVs are commonly used in everyday spoken language, informal situations, and even in academic contexts. However, it is worth noting that PVs are used less frequently in writing-oriented registers such as magazines, newspapers, and academic writing.

Following Liu, Garnier and Schmitt (2015) created the PHaVE List, consisting of the 150 most frequent PVs. They conducted a corpus search based on Liu's list to identify the most common senses, which accounted for over 70% of the occurrences. Less common senses were also included if their frequency was at least 10%, along with corresponding percentages for each meaning. This information helps learners and teachers prioritize meanings in PV instruction.

It is important to note that there may be dialectal variations in PV usage. Comparing American English and British English PVs, corpus analyses have

identified differences in frequency between the COCA and the BNC (Liu, 2011). The observed frequency of the 150 PVs in COCA is 1,424,836, while in the BNC, it is 322,517. However, temporal differences should be considered, as the COCA covers a more recent time span (1990-2020) compared to the BNC (1980s-1993). Consequently, PVs that emerged or gained prominence after the BNC's data collection may exhibit higher frequencies in the COCA. Furthermore, shifts in cultural and societal norms over time may influence the prevalence and contextual usage of certain PVs, contributing to the observed differences between American and British English.

Moreover, specific PVs may exhibit distinct usage patterns in different varieties of English. For example, the frequency disparity of "*shut down*" between the BNC and COCA can be attributed to differences in British and American English usage. In British English, temporarily closing a business is often expressed as "*shut up*," whereas in American English, "*shut down*" is predominantly used. These usage variations underscore the importance of considering both overall frequencies and specific contexts and meanings associated with PVs in different varieties of Englishes.

Flashcard Learning

Flashcard learning has become a widely-adopted strategy for self-regulated study, enabling learners to effectively acquire vocabulary (Kornell & Bjork, 2007). When coupled with spaced retrieval practice, flashcard learning has been recognized as an effective method for vocabulary acquisition (Baddeley, 1997; Kornell, 2009). Retrieval is essential for long-term memory retention; without it, memories fade and are easily forgotten (Ebbinghaus, 1993). Previous studies have highlighted the importance of flashcard learning in facilitating the retention of vocabulary in short-term studies (Fitzpatrick et al., 2008; Nation, 2001).

For instance, Fitzpatrick et al. (2008) conducted a study where a linguistics instructor was tasked with learning 300 high-frequency Arabic vocabulary words over 20 days using flashcards. Through repeated learning sessions and subsequent tests, it was found that the instructor retained a significant number of correct responses even after a 10-week period. Nakata (2008) further emphasized the benefits of flashcard learning by comparing different methods among high school students. The results indicated that learners using computer-based flashcards outperformed those using printed word lists, highlighting the effectiveness of retrieval practice.

By incorporating flashcard learning with spaced repetition into vocabulary programs, educators can provide learners with an effective and efficient approach to vocabulary acquisition and retention. Thus, in this study, we created flashcard decks to offer educators and learners a valuable resource for reinforcing their understanding of possible PVs found in IELTS exam practice books.

Methods

Choosing Texts

In order to analyze the PVs in this study, we selected texts from the recent IELTS Academic practice test books 14-17, which were published by Cambridge Assessment English between 2019 and 2022 as part of an annual series. There are two types of IELTS exams: General Training and Academic. In this study, the Academic version of the IELTS exams was specifically analyzed because this version is commonly required by language schools and for overseas university admissions.

The IELTS Academic practice test books provide preparatory materials for individuals planning to take the IELTS Academic exam. These books typically contain a variety of reading passages, listening recordings, writing prompts, and speaking tasks designed to simulate the format and content of the actual IELTS exam. The texts included in these practice test books also include a range of genres commonly encountered in academic settings, such as academic articles, research reports, essays, and editorials. The word counts for the passages may vary depending on the specific tasks and sections within each book, but they generally contain texts of varying lengths to provide a comprehensive preparation experience for test takers. The rationale for selecting the texts of practice test books 14-17 is grounded in several factors. These may include the recent publication dates, ensuring that the language and content are reflective of contemporary academic English usage. Additionally, the decision to sample from multiple editions allows for a broader representation of topics, styles, and language features encountered in the IELTS Academic exam. This approach aims to provide a diverse and comprehensive dataset for the analysis of PVs in the context of IELTS preparation. As past IELTS exams are generally not openly accessible to the public, these authentic examination papers published by Cambridge Assessment English serve as a reliable alternative, because they are specifically created to simulate the format and content of authentic IELTS exams. While they are designed to replicate the structure and difficulty level of the actual exams, they are not past exam papers administered during official testing sessions. By choosing these texts, we ensured that our analysis was based on materials closely aligned with the actual IELTS exams, allowing us to gain insights into the frequency of PVs in the context of IELTS preparation.

To obtain the texts for analysis, an iPhone was used to scan the pages, and any errors in the scanned texts were manually corrected. Afterward, the scanned texts were converted into a text file, which enabled the convenient loading of the texts into *AntConc* (Anthony, 2022), a powerful linguistic analysis software. The texts encompassed all the sentences found in the Listening, Reading, Writing, and Listening Audioscripts sections of the IELTS Academic practice test books.

Finding Phrasal Verbs

There were eight steps to identify particles and prepositions associated with potential PVs using *AntConc*:

1. Search for two- and three-word clusters: The analysis began by searching for two- and three-word clusters within the corpus data, focusing on verb-particle combinations that indicate potential PVs.

2. Specify right side: To refine the search, particular attention was given to the right side of the two-word clusters, as it typically contains the adverbial particle or preposition associated with PVs.

3. Query a particle: The identified clusters were then queried using the particle as a search term to isolate instances of potential PVs.

4. Scan results: The search results were thoroughly scanned to identify and extract the instances of genuine PVs based on the context in which they appeared.

5. Find Phrasal Verbs: Through this scanning process, genuine PVs were identified and separated from other linguistic constructions or false positives.

6. Search as a Wildcard in Key Word in Context (KWIC): To gain further insights into the usage and contexts of the identified PVs, a KWIC analysis was conducted, using the PV as a wildcard to retrieve sentences or phrases containing the specific PV construction. This ensured that all forms of the verb, such as past and progressive, were located. At this stage, wildcard markers (*) were added between the verb and the particle to produce separable PVs which were in the data. As an example, the term "devot* * * * * * to" produces results of the PV separated by up to five words, which was the longest found.

7. Subtract Non-PV Tokens: In order to ensure accuracy, any non-PV tokens or irrelevant linguistic units were subtracted from the collected data, leaving only the relevant PV instances. Non-PV tokens include word constructions that are literal in meaning.

8. Input PV and Token Count into Excel: The final step involved recording the identified PVs and their corresponding token counts into a spreadsheet software such as Excel, allowing for further quantitative analysis and comparison.

Recording Phrasal Verbs

In recording PVs for the study, the tense of the PVs was recorded in their root form in principle. However, if the vast majority of tokens of a PV with a regular verb were in the past tense, that PV was recorded as past tense. Examples of this include based on, where 26 tokens are in the past tense and only three are in the present tense, and carried out, where 20 tokens are in the past and only four are in the present tense. Irregular past forms of PVs were recorded separately. This ensured that the irregularity of the past form was captured in the data analysis.

Learning the Phrasal Verbs

Two flashcard learning tools are recommended, *Anki* and *Memrise*, to facilitate the study of PVs found in the analysis. These tools utilize a spaced repetition system, which has been shown to be highly effective for long-term retention of learned material. By utilizing *Anki* and *Memrise*, learners are provided with a systematic approach to review and reinforce their understanding of PVs over time. The tools are freely and readily available on the web, making them easily accessible to a wide range of learners.

Results

The results of the *AntConc* analysis (Table 1) revealed the top three frequently occurring PVs in the analyzed text:

Table 1

Frequently Occurring PVs

Rank	Observed times	Phrasal verbs	Example sentences
1	46	look at	… got much information, have you? No. We'll need to *look at* some websites. Shouldn't take too long.
2	41	focus on	... it is a relatively easy read. Chapters eight and nine *focus on* the birth of Midtown and the building boom …
3	29	based on	… AI has to offer. Trust in other people is often *based on* our understanding of how others think and having …
3	29	set up	… the mid-90s, two Danes asked for his help to *set up* a system in Copenhagen. The result was the …

Additionally, the analysis identified PVs with the lowest frequency in the analyzed text. *Look up* and *conjure up*

appeared only once each in the analyzed text, although *look up* is commonly used in everyday language. In one instance, "Oh don't worry - I can *look* them *up*. I've also been surfing in County Mayo, which…," and in another context, "...collection of marine debris in the northern Pacific Ocean - might *conjure up* a vast, floating trash island." *Look up* was used to describe locating information, while *conjure up* was used to describe the creation of a mental image or idea.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed several commonly-used but infrequent PVs that appeared only once in the text, *come back*, *look up*, *come around*, *look forward*, *stress out*, *get over*, and *meet up*. Some of these PVs are recognized in the PHaVE List by Garnier and Schmitt (2015), with *come back* ranking 3rd out of 150 PVs, *get back* ranking 19th, *look up* ranking 20th, and *come around* ranking 140th.

The frequency distribution of PVs in the analyzed text revealed that the majority of PVs appeared once or twice, with fewer PVs occurring more frequently. Specifically, there were 176 PVs that appeared once, 66 PVs that appeared twice, 33 PVs that appeared three times, 20 PVs that appeared four times, seven PVs that appeared five times, four PVs that appeared six times, seven PVs that appeared seven times, five PVs that appeared eight or nine times.

Despite their relatively infrequent occurrence in the analyzed text, these PVs hold significant meaning and deserve attention in vocabulary learning. The usage of PVs in the analyzed text reflects their significance in conveying specific meanings and nuances within various contexts. For instance, PVs such as "*look up*" and "*conjure up*" are employed to express actions and concepts that may not be adequately conveyed by single-word verbs. It is also important to note that out of the 111,711 tokens in the analyzed text, a total of 1,165 PVs were identified, resulting in a frequency of 1.04%. This frequency slightly exceeds the rate proposed by Gardner and Davies (2007), who suggested that PVs are encountered at an average rate of one PV per every 150 English words (0.67%). The frequency figure of 1.04% was calculated directly by counting the total number of phrasal verbs (PVs) in the four books and dividing it by the total number of words in those books. This percentage represents the proportion of PVs to the total text content. While the figure was not adjusted or standardized specifically for comparison with Gardner and Davies (2007), it provides an indication of the prevalence of PVs in the analyzed texts. Consequently, these findings show the prevalence and importance of PVs in the text, underscoring the need to consider and study PVs as an integral part of English language learning and comprehension (see the appendix for all PVs found in the texts in this study).

Conclusions and Implications

The analysis of PVs in the corpus revealed interesting patterns and frequencies. The most frequently-occurring PVs were *look at*, *focus on*, and *based on*, and *set up*. These PVs appeared multiple times throughout the text, indicating their prevalence and importance.

In contrast, the frequency distribution demonstrated that most PVs appeared once or twice. PVs such as *look up* and *conjure up* had the lowest frequency, appearing only once each. It is interesting to note that *look up*, which ranks 20th on PHaVE List by Garnier and Schmitt (2015), is commonly encountered in everyday life, but appeared only once in the analyzed texts. These findings suggest that the usage and distribution of PVs in the IELTS Academic practice books may differ from general language usage as represented in corpora such as the BNC.

Although the sample size is small, our findings suggest a higher frequency than Gardner and Davies (2007) predicted is possible. Liu (2011) suggests that academic writing, specifically in the context of IELTS reading, as well as British English, would have fewer PVs compared to spoken language and American English. However, the results of this study challenge those expectations.

Furthermore, it was discovered that incorporating PVs with particles and prepositions positioned more than two words away from the verb has the potential to further elevate the frequency of PVs within the remaining sample. This suggests that considering a broader range of PV constructions can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of their prevalence. This approach recognizes the diverse usage patterns of PVs and prepares learners for the complexities of everyday English.

The results of this study underscore the significance of incorporating PVs into vocabulary instruction materials and resources for IELTS preparation. Learners can benefit from targeted study decks designed to address PVs; such decks can be created and utilized on platforms like *Anki* and *Memrise*. By focusing on PVs, learners can enhance their comprehension and usage of commonly-encountered two-word parts, thereby improving their overall language proficiency and performance on the IELTS examination.

Future Directions / Next Steps

Future studies could examine the usage of PVs in contexts where their meaning is figurative because there are differences in frequency between literal and non-literal (figurative) meanings of PVs. By investigating how PVs are used in figurative senses, the study could

provide insight into the varied and nuanced ways in which these PVs are employed in language. This analysis could contribute to a deeper understanding of the usage patterns and semantic flexibility of PVs in language. In our analysis, we refer to 'semantic flexibility' to describe the capacity of PVs to convey various meanings and interpretations depending on context. This term underscores the dynamic nature of language, where words and phrases can adapt to different contexts to express nuanced meanings.

Moreover, it would be valuable to conduct a comprehensive comparison of PV usage across different language skills, specifically reading and listening. By examining each skill individually, we could gain a deeper understanding of how PVs are employed in various language domains and their impact on learner comprehension.

Lastly, a comparison could be made between PVs and academic words to assess their relative frequency and importance in vocabulary learning for IELTS. This investigation could provide insights into the distinct roles and significance of PVs and academic vocabulary, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of vocabulary acquisition and usage in academic contexts.

Acknowledgement

Materials

The flashcard decks of *Anki* and *Memrise* that we created for this study are available upon request. We welcome individuals who are interested in accessing these decks to contact us and request them.

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Appendix

Phrasal Verbs in IELTS Practice Tests 14-17

Count	Phrasal Verb
46	look at
41	focus on
29	based on
29	set up
24	carried out
23	depend on
21	result in
21	lead to
22	tend to
18	deal with
17	rely on
17	led to
16	go on
16	associated with
15	be involved in
15	do with
14	find out
14	relate to
13	turn into
13	consist of
13	belong to
13	get to
13	refer to
12	work out
10	work on
9	bring back
9	look for
9	take into
9	point out
9	add to
8	date back
8	come from
8	went into
8	move on
8	come to
7	look after
7	be aimed at
7	go back
7	invest in
7	look out
7	came to
7	end up (with)
6	account for
6	decide on
6	put on
6	pick up
5	call for
5	date from
5	come in
5	get on (with)
5	passed on
5	turned out
5	happen to
4	thought about
4	go ahead
4	keep away

Count	Phrasal Verb
4	move away
4	look back
4	sit down
4	care for
4	derived from
4	result from
4	believe in
4	dispose of
4	concentrate on
4	take on
4	figure out
4	get out
4	run through
4	be limited to
4	dress up
4	gave up
4	make up
3	go about
3	brought back
3	held back
3	left behind
3	break down
3	cut down
3	wrote down
3	go for
3	came from
3	keep from
3	call in
3	join in
3	come into
3	go into
3	put off
3	feed on
3	die out
3	help out
3	set out
3	take over
3	took over
3	go through
3	devote to
3	build up
3	get up
3	give up
3	grow up
3	made up of
3	open up
3	take up
3	took up
3	come up with
3	fill with
2	came about
2	wander around
2	take away
2	turn away
2	step back
2	take back

Count	Phrasal Verb
2	went down
2	knock down
2	put down
2	settle down
2	slow down
2	write down
2	go forward
2	put forward
2	drawn from
2	be caught in
2	engage in
2	fall in
2	go in
2	stay in
2	take in
2	be built into 30
2	looking into
2	fenced off
2	fight off
2	head off
2	ran off
2	start off
2	switch off
2	built on
2	look on
2	modelled on
2	fell out (of)
2	handed out
2	run out
2	seek out
2	stand out
2	wipe out
2	be given over (to)
2	talk over
2	go round
2	come through
2	talk through
2	attend to
2	catering to
2	kept to
2	stick to
2	be suited to
2	turn to
2	get together
2	put together
2	add up
2	break up
2	clear up
2	drawn up
2	ground up
2	hold up (to)
2	mixed up
2	pop up
2	think up
2	use up
2	wake up

Count	Phrasal Verb
2	confronted with
2	engage with
2	live with
2	work with
1	come about
1	bring about
1	cut across
1	stumbled across
1	named after

Count	Phrasal Verb
1	crept into
1	delve into
1	fallen into
1	get into
1	grew into
1	melt into
1	move into
1	put into
1	venturing into

Count	Phrasal Verb
1	play out
1	roll out
1	send out
1	sorted out
1	stress out
1	take out
1	thaw out
1	be tired out
1	try out

1	think ahead	1	make of	1	come over
1	bring along	1	tire of	1	get over
1	take along	1	block off 30	1	knocking over
1	come around	1	broke off	1	walk round
1	get around	1	closing off	1	come through (to)
1	look around	1	cut off	1	cut through
1	revolve around	1	dying off	1	take through
1	setting aside	1	fall off	1	went through
1	aim at	1	get off	1	got to
1	arrive at	1	head off (back)	1	look to
1	pull at	1	let off	1	meaning to
1	clear away	1	pulling off	1	resort to
1	drain away	1	rush off	1	be subjected to
1	run away	1	send off	1	bring together
1	threw away	1	set off	1	come together
1	thrown away	1	taken off	1	go together
1	took away	1	wash off	1	pieced together
1	wash away	1	act on	1	fell under
1	coming back	1	build on	1	boil up
1	fight back	1	came on	1	catch up
1	get back	1	carry on	1	clean up
1	got back	1	caught on	1	conjure up
1	report back	1	draw on	1	dug up
1	stretch back	1	feast on	1	fill up
1	think back	1	fed on	1	held up
1	turned back	1	get on	1	hook up
1	leave behind	1	insisted on	1	leading up (to)
1	abide by	1	keep on	1	look up
1	blown down	1	live on	1	met up
1	keep down	1	preying on	1	meet up
1	lying down	1	reflect on	1	pack up
1	marked down	1	open onto	1	put up
1	passed down	1	bear out	1	put up with
1	pulled down	1	be borne out	1	ring up
1	turned down	1	be breathed out	1	speed up
1	wash down	1	broke out	1	stock up
1	allow for	1	built out	1	be tied up
1	cater for	1	burned out	1	top up
1	stand in for	1	come out	1	touch up
1	stand up for	1	cross out	1	warmed up
1	look forward	1	cut out (of)	1	work up
1	kept from	1	dying out	1	came up with
1	stem from	1	fallen out (of)	1	expand upon
1	breathe in	1	filtered out	1	insist upon
1	gave in	1	found out	1	rely upon
1	get in	1	hit out	1	go with
1	got in	1	laid out	1	did with
1	lock in	1	leading out (onto)	1	interfere with
1	send in	1	leave out	1	mess with
1	bring into	1	locked out (of)	1	be stuck with
1	creep into	1	miss out	1	teem with

A Survey of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in TESOL

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The TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Organization launched an initiative in June 2021 with the goal of increasing DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) across all aspects of the field. To investigate the current state of affairs, this study surveyed 101 present and former instructors, representing a wide range of genders, ages, working locations, and ethnicities. Experiences were found to vary widely, with 57.4% indicating they felt some form of discrimination while applying for TESOL jobs, and 60.4% reporting continued discrimination once on the job. Participants also reflected on how these experiences influenced how they felt about themselves, the industry, and their teaching practices.

TESOL（Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages）機構は 2021 年 6 月、この分野のあらゆる側面で DEI（多様性、公平性、包摂性）を高めることを目的としたイニシアチブを開始した。その現状を調査するため、本研究では、性別、年齢、勤務地、民族など幅広い顔ぶれの 101 人の現・元講師を対象に調査を行った。その結果、57.4％が TESOL の求人に応募する際に何らかの差別を感じたと回答し、60.4％が就職後も差別を受け続けたと報告するなど、体験はさまざまであることがわかった。参加者はまた、こうした経験が、自分自身やこの業界、教育実践についてどのように感じているかに影響を与えたかについても振り返った。

> TESOL strongly opposes discrimination against nonnative English speakers in the field of English language teaching. Rather, English language proficiency, teaching experience, and professionalism should be assessed along on a continuum of professional preparation. (TESOL, 2006).

Above is the official position statement of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), the global authority which seeks to advance the field of second language (L2) English instruction. This has remained the public stance of the association for more than 16 years, strongly opposing discrimination against nonnative speakers as teachers of English. While this particular form of discrimination (native speakerism) has been well-documented in the field of English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) in the past (Holliday, 2006; Jenkins, 2017), it is not the only metric by which people can find themselves unfairly excluded from employment opportunities. Findings from our precursor studies indicate that the preference for certain types of English teachers is still prevalent in the field, either from students or employers (Lee & Bailey, 2020, 2021). We will thus briefly recount recent findings on discriminatory practices to see how these compare with TESOL's stated goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Native-Nonnative Bias

> The native speaker still has a privileged position in English language teaching, representing both the model speaker and the ideal teacher. Non-native-speaker teachers of English are often perceived as having a lower status than their native-speaking counterparts and have been shown to face discriminatory attitudes when applying for teaching jobs. (Clark & Paran, 2007, p. 407).

English is the most widely spoken language in the world (Kachru & Nelson, 2006) and remains the primary language of international communication around the world. English has official status or is widely used in over 75 territories in the world (Crystal, 2003) and yet, most of these people are not considered to be native speakers (NS) of English. Instead, the definition of a NS is usually narrowly restricted to a few countries–the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and anglophone Canada–which Kachru (1990) termed the inner circle. Post-colonial countries (e.g., India, Singapore, Jamaica and South Africa) are not afforded NS status, despite using English as an official language. Kachru labeled these countries as the outer circle. Finally, countries where English does not have official status are referred to as

expanding circle countries, irrespective of how predominantly (or proficiently) individuals from these nations speak the language.

However, these views which base NS status on nationality breakdown immediately upon inspection. In the United States alone, American English is comprised of an estimated 30 regional dialects (FluencyCorp, 2020), with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. In addition, a child born to American parents overseas can claim US citizenship without ever setting foot in the country and grow up not speaking English at all. Therefore, while the concept of a NS at first appears to be a common-sense idea, many scholars point to its theoretical ambiguity (Davies, 2003), concluding that NS and NNS (nonnative speaker) are inadequate labels that should be replaced by more precise definitions (Lee, 2005; Tiina, 2019).

Unfortunately, despite near universal rejection of the NS/NNS dichotomy, Mahboob and Golden's (2013) investigation of TESOL job advertisements found that "nativeness was the single most frequent criterion mentioned in the advertisements across two regions" (p. 73), the rationale appearing to stem from the assumption that a NS would make a better teacher.

> "It is usually assumed that native speakers have privileged access to their mother tongue: they do not produce errors as non-native speakers do, and if they do, they can identify and correct them themselves while non-native speakers are incapable of this feat" (Piller, 2001, p. 2).

At other times employers have explicitly stated that they would rather hire unqualified NS than qualified NNS (Braine, 1999)–the reason being that they felt their students would prefer NS instructors. However, our precursor research has provided counterevidence on this point. Students in Japan reported no statistical difference in their preference for NS vs. Japanese instructors (Lee & Bailey, 2020). Reasons given were that they would feel less anxious and be able to communicate more freely with a Japanese instructor, who would also be able to advise them on learning strategies as they, themselves, had once gone through the same processes (Lee & Bailey, 2021).

Other Forms of Discrimination

Though discrimination based on nativeness is the most well-documented, other forms of bias have also been reported. Country of birth, cultural background, and ethnicity have also been cited (Fang, 2018), along with age discrimination (Walsh, 2012). Some European recruitment campaigns have asked for candidates aged 30 or less, as schools claim to seek youthful teachers. Walsh continues that, in Japan, the JET Programme (a government-sponsored recruiting program) has an upper age limit of 39. Other Asian countries have similar guidelines, with ads in China stating that successful candidates must be 55 or younger.

Gender imbalances in TESOL have also drawn significant attention, with literature focusing on the unbalanced portrayal of women and their capacity to lead. Yphantides (2019) reported that women have been stereotyped as weak, ill-suited for leadership, and primarily caregivers who belong in the private sphere. Women in Japan, for example, constitute a mere 15.8% of positions in higher education (12% Japanese; 3.8% foreign women in Japan), 20% of which are TESOL (Japanese Ministry of Education, 2012). This area perhaps has shown the clearest efforts towards improvement worldwide, with Japan explicitly stating their desire to increase women in the workforce (Japanese Ministry of Education, 2016), including higher education. This trend is echoed in several countries, with reports from several global bodies tracking the progress of gender equality showing trends towards correcting the imbalance, particularly since the MeToo movement of 2017 (e.g., European Commission, 2022). This movement is credited with highlighting sexual violence within the United States and across the world, while calling for accountability and examining power structures in the workplace. Its purpose has expanded to factor in gender equality in the workplace and legal reforms to eliminate barriers that prohibited victims from coming forward (Murphy, 2019).

The current study asked the following research questions (RQs):

1. To what degree do TESOL professionals feel they have faced discrimination while searching for a job in TESOL?

2. To what degree do TESOL professionals feel they have faced discrimination while working in TESOL?

3. What kinds of specific forms of discrimination do TESOL professionals report to have experienced?

4. How have discriminatory experiences affected the way in which TESOL professionals see themselves and the field as a whole?

Methods

Data Collection Instrument

An original questionnaire was created by the authors, beginning with an Informed Consent statement and biographical data section, followed by three sections totaling nine items (see Appendix). Section One asked participants about their experiences with hiring practices. Section Two elicited feedback on working conditions. Finally, the third section gathered

participants' feelings regarding other aspects of working within TESOL and asked participants to reflect on how any discriminatory acts they encountered affected their feelings about themselves, their teaching practices, or the field of TESOL in general.

The survey was created in English and delivered electronically via Google Forms. All items were mandatory except for the open-ended ones, which asked participants to expand on their answers in the case that they answered yes, indicating that they had experienced discrimination.

Table 1

Overview of Participants' Biographical Data

Area of origin	n	Ethnicity	n	Geographical location of TESOL work	n
North America	39	White	54	Asia	95
Asia	18	Asian	20	European Union	20
European Union	15	Black	14	North America	13
The Caribbean	9	Mixed race	6	Middle East	8
Oceania	7	Hispanic / Latin	4	Oceania	6
Africa	4	Indian	2	South America	5
Eastern Europe	4	Middle Eastern	1	Eastern Europe	5
South America	4			Africa	4
Middle East	1			Central America	3

Note: Multiple responses were accepted for geographical location of TESOL work, resulting in a higher number of responses than *N* = 101.

Participants

Invitations were posted on TESOL listservs and social media sites over a period of 14 days. In total, 101 people responded to the survey. Table 1 outlines the biographical details of the participants.

Results

Research Questions 1 & 2

The quantitative results of Item One are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Responses to Item One: Have You Ever Been Discriminated Against While Trying to Find a Job in TESOL?

Yes (%)	I think so, but I have no proof (%)	Not that I am aware of (%)	No (%)
39 (38.6)	19 (18.8)	32 (31.7)	11 (10.9)

Of the 101 respondents, n = 39 (38.6%) reported being discriminated against and n = 19 (18.8%) suspected they had been while searching for employment in the TESOL field. This is compared to the 42.6% of respondents who said they were not (n = 11; 10.9%) or were not aware of being (n = 32; 31.7%) subject to discrimination.

Item Two asked participants who responded to Item One in the affirmative to provide more details as to why they felt they were subjected to bias in the hiring process. The themes that emerged, and their relative frequencies, are reported below in Table 3.

Table 3

Item Two: Emergent Qualitative Themes and Number of Responses

Positive Effect	n	Negative Effect	n
Ethnicity	2	Native-speakerism	20
Appearance	1	Ethnicity	19
Marital Status	1	Nationality	12
		Gender	12
		Age	6
		Appearance	3
		Marital / Parental Status	3
		Education Level / Certificates	3
		Residential Status	1
		Political Affiliation	1
		Religion	1

As shown in Table 3, the two largest sources of discrimination cited were ethnicity (n = 19) and native-speakerism (n = 17), followed closely by nationality and gender (both n = 12). While these factors are often conflated, the current study highlights that they are, in fact, disparate. For example, several respondents commented that despite being American citizens, they faced ethnic discrimination and doubts as to the "nativeness" of their English as in the following excerpt:

> I had several companies be nice and cordial … once they saw my photo, the position was magically filled. They actually doubted that English was my first language, although the recruiters tried defending me. (Black, North America)

Gender issues were brought up by several respondents, though interestingly, being female was noted in both a positive and negative light. While one candidate reported the following:

> I was told by an interviewer that they were sorry, but their ideal candidate was a Caucasian female (I am an Asian male) (Asian, North America),

Another reported the opposite:

> I was told that I was too much of a risk as a married woman. They said I would just get pregnant and quit, so my qualifications didn't matter. (White, North America)

Note that the second response was coded as one instance of both gender and marital status.

Item Three of the survey asked participants to report how often they felt they were experiencing discriminatory treatment during the hiring process (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Responses to: How Often Have You Faced Discriminatory Practices While Applying for TESOL Jobs?
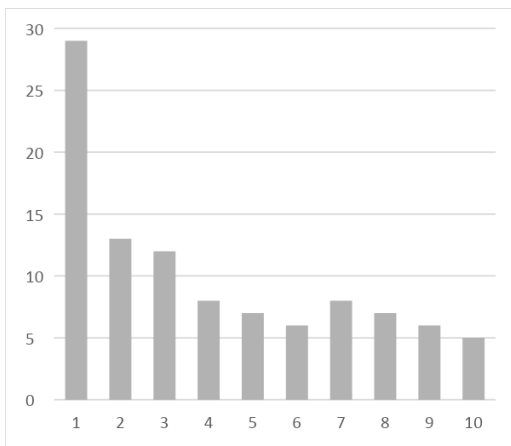
Note: 1 = Never; 10 = Every Time

Part Two of the survey sought to address RQ2:(t)o what degree do TESOL professionals feel they have faced discrimination while working in TESOL? The quantitative results of Item Four are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Responses to Item Four: Have You Ever Been Discriminated Against While Working Within TESOL

Yes (%)	I think so, but I have no proof (%)	Not that I am aware of (%)	No (%)
43 (42.6)	18 (17.8)	26 (25.7)	14 (13.9)

Responses mirror those of Item One, with the plurality of participants indicating that they had experienced some form of discrimination even after having been successfully employed, n = 43 (42.6%), with a further n = 18 (17.8%) feeling like they had been but without concrete proof. The remaining 39.6% of participants reported to have had no problems regarding discrimination.

With Item Five, participants were asked to recount episodes which could provide insight into their quantitative responses. Table 5 shows the themes and relative frequencies that emerged.

Table 5

Item Five: Emergent Qualitative Themes and Number of Responses

Positive Effect	n	Negative Effect	n
Appearance	2	Ethnicity	29
Ethnicity	1	Native-speakerism	21
Accent	1	Appearance	16
		Nationality	15
		Gender	14
		Marital / Parental Status	3
		Sexual Orientation	2
		Education Level / Certificates	1
		Age	1

The top responses were related to *ethnicity* (n = 29) and *native-speakerism* (n = 21), however, *appearance* was mentioned much more predominantly in this section. Some excerpts of the responses received are as follows:

> *Ethnicity*: My own students called me "monkey" and "gorilla" many times (Black, Africa).

> *Native-speakerism*: I was told my 'English' is not the correct English because I do not have an American accent (Black, Caribbean).

> *Appearance*: I used to be overweight, and students made fun of me by drawing me or name-calling (Asian, Asia).

> *Parental Status*: I was strongly discouraged from applying for a position because it would involve travel or after-hours meetings after the contact person learned I had children (White, North America).

Item Five of the survey (Figure 2) asked participants who responded affirmatively to Item Four to report how often they felt these discriminatory acts.

Figure 2

Responses to: If You Answered 'Yes', can You Tell Us How Often These Discriminatory Acts Happened?
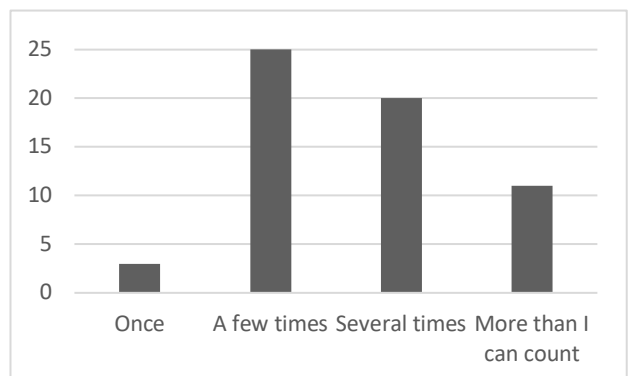
Research Question 3

The elaborations provided in response to Items Two and Five (Tables 3 & 5) already form the basis of our answer to RQ3: (w)hat kinds of specific forms of discrimination do TESOL professional report to have experienced? However, we also included a discrete item which was intended to explicitly address this particular RQ (Table 6).

Table 6

Forms of Perceived Discrimination and Number of Responses

Positive Effect	n	Negative Effect	n
Receiving Preferential Treatment	2	Offensive Comments (other)	23
Not Asked to Do Extra Work	2	Passed Over for Promotion / Jobs	20
Receiving Highly Visible Roles	1	Isolation / Exclusion	15
		Limited Opportunities	10
		Offensive Comments (sexual)	8
		Opinions Not Valued	7
		Extra Work	2
		Used Only as Entertainment	2
		Losing a Job	2
		Physical Violence	1
		Not Receiving Credit	1

The most common form of discrimination reported was *offensive comments* (n = 23):

> I've always been told how articulate I am, stemming from a general lack of an expectation that I would be educated and capable of speaking standard English, because I'm black AND from the Caribbean (Black, Caribbean).

The second most commonly cited form of discrimination was being passed over or promotion / jobs (n = 20), as in the following:

> I worked in hiring (for a company in Asia) and was told that I cannot hire males, people of Korean descent, or people with Indian accents (Asian, Asia).

Participants also reported being subject to social isolation and exclusion (n = 15):

> I am routinely excluded from decision-making processes and treated like a permanent guest (White, North America).

Limited opportunities refer to acts which hindered the participant from engaging in activities which would aid in professional development:

> Females are treated as lesser. But that's a worldwide problem. I was not allowed to be photographed or asked to do presentations despite being the most educated /senior teacher due to my gender (White, Oceania)

Research Question 4

Finally, with RQ4, we asked, (h)ow have discriminatory experiences affected the way in which TESOL professionals see themselves and the field on the whole (Table 7)?

Table 7

How Did These Discriminatory Acts Influence How You Feel About Yourself?

Positive Effect	n	Negative Effect	n
Confident	5	Angry / Disgusted / Vengeful	17
Invigorated	3	Sad / Depressed / Suicidal	13
Powerful	1	Inferior / Fake	8
		Reassess Choices	7
		Paranoid / Self-conscious	6
		Demotivated	5
		Self-conscious	3
		Ignored	3
		Ashamed / Humiliated	3
		Victimized	2
No Change	45	Confused	1

Forty-five respondents reported having no significant changes in their cognition or emotive states. On the negative side, *anger/disgust/vengefulness* (*n* = 17) was followed by *sad/depressed/suicidal* (*n* = 13). Note that many of the responses touched upon multiple emotions and are therefore coded under multiple categories. Also of note is that while the majority of the responses were negative, some reported feeling more confident (n = 5) or invigorated (n = 3) as a result of their experiences, either due to their being on the benefitting end of discriminatory practices or born from a desire to prove themselves to those around them.

Finally, participants were asked how their experiences with discrimination have affected their feelings toward the field of TESOL in general, and their teaching practices (Table 8).

Table 8

How Did These Discriminatory Acts Influence Your Perception of the TESOL Profession and Your Teaching Practice?

Positive Effect	n	Negative Effect	n
Privileged	2	Demotivated	10
Strive to out-do peers	2	Considering Quitting	9
Stive to educate others	3	TESOL is an Elitist/Imperialist Club	8
More self-reliant	1	Teaching is Just a Performance	6
		Needs More Diversity	5
		TESOL is Full of Ignorance	3
		TESOL Reinforces Stereotypes	2
No Change	49	Lack of Professionalism	1

Forty-nine people reported no significant changes in their feelings. Of the remainder, the largest two negative results reported were becoming *demotivated* (n = 10) and *considering quitting* (n = 9). One exasperated participant summarized his feelings with the following:

> It is hypocritical to say you value inclusion yet have been silent about this issue. Our stories can be used by researchers but we're not really sure if it'll make a difference. We're still paid less and discriminated against more. What we can get from this? Who could help us? (Asian, Asia).

Discussion and Implications

Our findings revealed a general belief that biases are prevalent in TESOL, both at the recruiting stage and once employed. Of note is that some reported feeling they were the beneficiaries of bias (i.e., favoritism), noting that they experienced preferential treatment merely due to their ethnicity, gender, or other such factors (Table 6). Though many participants did not report feeling subject to discrimination, the presence of such a large body of TESOL professionals attesting to its existence is compelling, regardless if the bias is against skin color, weight, gender, or overall perceived attractiveness. Our findings also highlighted issues of bias based on age, gender, marital status, parental status, or sexual orientation - issues that are not only limited to the field of TESOL. The increased visibility of these issues has resulted in great progress being made on achieving DEI in these areas, and the current study hopes to similarly bring to light these issues in our own field.

Finally, the impact on teachers, and thus, the quality of education they can provide, is a major aspect of our study. The toll on our participants' mental health is clear, with common responses of anger, depression, and (in some cases) contemplation of suicide (Table 7). This should be a major concern for all, as teachers are in daily close contact with young, impressionable students, and teachers' mental health matters. A recent study of TESOL teacher motivation showed that while helping students was the most driving motivator, being treated fairly by their organizations was a very close second (Lee et al., 2022). These findings are in congruence with the current study, as it highlights the position of teachers at the very center of the educational structure. It thus benefits stakeholders to be cognizant of teachers' mental health, as stated in the following:

> …the teacher's level of enthusiasm and commitment is one of the most important factors that can affect learners' motivation to learn. Broadly speaking, if a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance that his or her students will be motivated to learn. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 158).

Limitations and Future Directions

While extensive care was put into the construction of the question items, it was difficult to account for sampling or non-response biases. Responses came from 10 geographic regions, eight ethnicities, and referenced nine global work locations. However, the majority were Caucasians who had sought employment in Asia. Of course, Asia is one of the most popular TESOL centers, and the majority of TESOL professionals are indeed White. Nevertheless, the relatively small sample limits generalizability.

Less clear is the impact of non-response bias. Typically, people who are interested in a topic are more likely to respond, resulting in bias. However, a large portion of our sample gave null responses (42.6%, Table 2; 39.6%, Table 4, respectively). We interpret this number of null responses to be an indicator of a successful implementation of our testing instrument. In fact, this helped elucidate the unexpected finding that many had not experienced disadvantageous discrimination, but had possibly received an unfair advantage or witnessed discrimination against their peers.

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Appendix

Research Instrument

Regarding Hiring Practices:

Q1: Have you ever been discriminated against while trying to FIND A JOB in TESOL? (e.g., age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, accent, appearance, first language, education, etc.)

a. Yes   b. I think so, but I have no proof

c. Not that I am aware of   d. No

Q2: If you answered "yes", can you describe why you felt discriminated against while trying to find a job in TESOL?

Q3: How often have you faced discriminatory practices while applying for TESOL jobs?

(Never)   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   (Every time)

Regarding Working Conditions:

Q4: Have you ever experienced discriminatory practices initiated against you WHILE WORKING within TESOL? (e.g., age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, appearance, accent, first language, education, etc.)

a. Yes   b. I think so, but I have no proof

c. Not that I am aware of   d. No

Q5: If you answered 'yes', can you tell us how often these discriminatory acts happened?

a. Once   b. A few times

c. Several times   d. More than I can count

Q6: Can you provide more information about the discriminatory acts that you experienced?

Other:

Q7: What kind of discriminatory acts have you experienced within the field of TESOL in general? (e.g., With regard to presentations, publications, social settings, etc.)

Q8: How did these discriminatory acts influence how you feel about yourself?

Q9: How did these discriminatory acts influence your perception of the TESOL profession and your teaching practice?

Student Debates: Scaffolding for Success in Task-based Learning

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One of the most discussed and debated issues related to task-based language teaching (TBLT) is the very definition of "task" itself. There are, however, certain key features that are generally accepted, such as the need for a task to be meaning-focused (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). This practice-based paper describes the implementation of student debates into English classes following an approach designed to integrate task-based learning at every stage. After justifying regarding these debates as "tasks", the steps taken in implementing them and their rationale are explained. In particular, the ways in which an attempt was made to provide scaffolding to allow the students to move towards spontaneous and meaning-focused use of language are highlighted. The results of the final implementation of the debates are then discussed. Finally, there is a reflection on this implementation, including ways in which it could be improved and some suggestions for future research.

タスクに基づく言語教育（TBLT）に関連して最も議論されている問題の一つは、「タスク」の定義そのものである。しかし一般的に受け入れられている重要な特徴、例えばタスクの意味に焦点をあてる必要がある（Ellis & Shintani, 2014）。この実践に基づく論文は、タスク・ベースの学習をあらゆる段階で統合するようにデザインされたアプローチに従って、英語の授業に生徒ディベートを導入したことについて述べている。ディベートを「タスク」と位置づけることを正当化した上で、その実施手順と根拠を説明する。特に、生徒が自発的に意味を重視した言語使用に移行できるよう、場を提供しようとした方法が強調されている。そして、ディベートの最終的な実施結果が論じられる。最後に改善可能な方法を含め、実施内容を振り返り、今後の研究に対するいくつかの提案を行う。

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is well supported in the literature as an effective means of facilitating second language acquisition (SLA) (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017; Ellis et al., 2019). Nonetheless, its implementation, especially in Japanese and other Asian contexts, has often been seen as extremely difficult, if not impossible, due to factors such as cultural differences and more traditional expectations (Luo & Xing, 2015; Sato, 2009). In spite of this, many teachers in Japanese contexts do implement TBLT in their classrooms in a variety of ways (Harris, 2018). This paper describes an attempt to implement TBLT into university English communication classes by means of student debates.

Student group or whole-class presentations are a common feature of English curriculums at many Japanese universities. However, as Toland et al. (2016) note:

> More often than not, university learners find this activity creates a tremendous amount of anxiety and discomfort. In addition, students often memorize scripts or read text-heavy slides, which not only defeats the purpose of enhancing their public speaking abilities, but is also a boring experience for the audience (p. 180).

While there are certainly many ways of addressing these concerns, one solution seemed to be to replace one of the planned presentations in my first-and second-year English communication skills courses with student debates. Debates have a number of advantages over presentations. As Nur (2018, p. 6) explains, because students cannot be fully prepared for debates in advance, they are required to use English "in a meaningful way" and "spontaneously". This spontaneous and meaning-focused use of language not only seemed to overcome the limitations of presentations noted above, but also suggested an opportunity for implementing TBLT in the classroom. However, this would first require ensuring the debates implemented corresponded satisfactorily to a widely accepted definition of "task".

The definition of "task" in TBLT remains contentious. Van der Branden (2006, p. 3) gives an overview of definitions from a variety of authors and contexts, and states that "almost anything related to educational activity can now be called a 'task'." Ellis et al. (2019, p. 9) argue for a single definition that can be "applicable

across contexts and purposes." They go on to give four main criteria which a class workplan should conform to if it is to be considered a true "task" (Ellis et al., 2019, p. 10). The first of these is a "primary focus on meaning", i.e. that the learners should primarily be focused on communicating or understanding meaningful language, rather that producing correct forms. The second criterion is that there should be a "gap" which creates "a need to covey information, to reason or to express an opinion." Thirdly, the learners should rely on their "own linguistic and non-linguistic resources", without the teacher providing model forms and vocabulary. Finally, there should be a "clearly defined communicative outcome", i.e. whether the task has been accomplished should be decided based on a goal requiring successful communication, rather than on the correct use of certain grammatical forms. It will be argued that the student debates discussed in this paper satisfactorily conform to all four criteria.

I would argue that student debates meet the above criteria, or, at least, can be made to meet them provided certain decisions are taken at the task design stage. That debates are meaning-focused should be quite clear; they are certainly not focused on practising certain forms or creating grammatically correct sentences, but rather on actually debating the topic at hand. The existence of a gap would also seem to be uncontentious, provided the debates are designed so that students do not know their counterparts' arguments in advance. Ensuring students rely on their own resources requires the task designer not to give them a set of general-purpose forms which they can use by simply filling in the blanks, and I was careful not to do so in this case. The required clearly defined outcome could easily be identified as winning the debate. However, this would be problematic since it would suggest the losing party had failed to reach the goal. Instead, I would argue that students striving to deliver the best arguments they can and attempting to rebut those of those of their counterparts can be regarded as a sufficiently clear outcome. It is an outcome that certainly requires effective communication, and one that obviously does not involve the use of language as a mere end in itself.

Finally, there are previous studies which approached the implementation of debates from the perspective of TBLT. Smith (2022) describes the design and implementation of debates in which various preparatory practice exercises were designed to fit the definition of "task" (p. 142). Similar opinion-gap tasks to help students develop debate skills were also proposed by Arulselvi (2017). The following section will describe the task design process, keeping in mind the points raised above as well as other factors that were more fundamental.

Task Design and Preparation

While the above-mentioned issues were certainly important, there were more fundamental considerations that occurred when approaching the design stage of this debate task. In order to explain these fundamental concerns, it will first be necessary to give more detail about the context in which this task was to be implemented. As already stated, the students belonged to two classes, one first year and the other second year. The course, titled English Communication Skills, was a four-skills course with greater emphasis placed on speaking and listening. The students were not English majors but were studying in the department of international studies. Their CEFR levels ranged from high A2 to low B1 (according to placement tests not administered by the university), though they tended to perform much more strongly in written tasks than spoken, and their speaking level, if taken in isolation, would likely fall somewhat lower in most cases.

The obvious difficulty with implementing a debate task in this context is that the students would seem unlikely to have the necessary resources for the spontaneous, meaning-focused use of English that the task required. Supplying such resources in the form of easily reusable sentence patterns that could be memorised would obviously contradict the third criterion in the above definition of task. The best way forward seemed to be helping the students build up their ability and confidence in using language in this way in carefully planned and highly scaffolded steps. Scaffolding has been proposed by a number of researchers as an effective means of enabling students new to TBLT, or lacking resources for it, to engage with it successfully (Fang et al., 2021; Harris, 2018; Widodo, 2015).

Before describing the task design process in more detail, it will be necessary first to attempt to define what is meant by the term "scaffolding". Buitrago (2019, p. 22) defines scaffolding as "a process of providing assistance that allows beginner learners to be able to do certain tasks, solve problems, or achieve certain goals that cannot be done alone without the help of others". Verity (2005, p. 4) defines it as "the cognitive support given to a novice learner to reduce the cognitive load of the task". However, these are very broad definitions and, as Hamidi and Bagherzadeh (2018) point out, definitions of this sort could be applied to almost anything that takes place in a classroom. A full treatment of the controversy surrounding the definition of scaffolding is beyond the scope of this paper. In this paper, scaffolding will be understood in terms that address the problems identified above (i.e. student lack of ability to produce spontaneous, meaning-focused language when first attempting debate tasks). As such, for the purposes of this paper, the term will be understood as teaching and learning events that fulfil

the three conditions described by Mercer and Fisher (1993, in Wells 1999), viz., events that "a) enable the learners to carry out the task which they would not have been able to manage on their own; b) be intended to bring the learner to a state of competence which will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own; and c) be followed by evidence of the learners having achieved some greater level of independent competence as a result of the scaffolding experience" (Wells 1999, p. 221).

(#7) One of the teachers interviewed by Harris (2018, p. 144) explains her use of scaffolding in terms that would appear to meet these criteria, starting with very structured "grammar-centered" tasks, and gradually reducing the scaffolding until students are able to complete the tasks independently.

In implementing these class debates, it was decided to follow a similar method, starting with very structured activities in which a lot of content and language is given to students, and then gradually moving in the direction of more reliance on students' own resources.

The first necessary step was to design a template that would be used by students when planning their debates. Space was given for three arguments in support of the students' position, as well as space for the students to write down three possible arguments that their counterparts might use, as well as rebuttals of those three arguments. This template was adapted for each practice stage leading up to the final debate, with less being already filled in for the students each time.

The first practice stage served as an introduction to the concept of debates as well as the first time the students saw the template. They were put into pairs and would stay with the same partner for every stage including the final debates. In the first practice stage, everything was given to the students. A simple topic (dogs vs. cats) was chosen, and all three arguments, counterarguments and rebuttals were already filled in. The pairs of students only had to get together with another pair that had sheets in support of the opposite argument and read everything out at the right time, although they were given encouragement and assistance with natural pronunciation and intonation. Once this stage was complete, it was explained to the students that in the next practice, although the topic would remain the same, they would have to use some of their own arguments. New templates were given to students, but with only one argument, one possible counterargument and one rebuttal filled in. Working in their pairs, and with guidance and support from the teacher, the students were required to compose two arguments of their own, predict two possible counterarguments, and compose rebuttals to those possible counterarguments.

It was at this stage that students would first encounter an element of unpredictability and be required to respond spontaneously. It was predicted that in cases where students had failed to correctly predict an argument by their counterparts, putting together a rebuttal would prove extremely difficult and teacher support would be needed. When it came to implementing this stage, this prediction proved to be true in both classes. In fact, there was not a single instance in which a pair managed to make a rebuttal in a reasonable amount of time and without teacher support after encountering an argument they had not prepared for. In a class discussion after the activity, students identified this need to compose rebuttals in real time as their chief difficulty. It was then explained to students that the next practice stage would be aimed at helping them improve this skill.

Since this stage focused on rebuttals, students were given sheets similar to those they had used in previous stages, but only consisting of the counterargument and rebuttal sections. These were already filled in with three possible counterarguments and three rebuttals. It was explained to the students that they would hear another argument different from the arguments on their sheets but in favour of the same proposition. Working in their pairs, they would have to identify which of the arguments on their sheet was most similar to the one they had just heard and alter its rebuttal so that it applied to the new argument. This practice became regular, with a different topic each time, in the lead-up to the final debates. The teacher was able to support the students while observing their improvement. It was found that the students overall became much faster at adapting rebuttals, and responding to unexpected arguments in real time, as a result of this practice.

An example will now be given of one of the rebuttal practice activities. Students were given the practice sheet in which three arguments for the mountains being better than the sea are given and rebutted. The teacher then read out a fourth argument: "The mountains are better than the sea because we can go camping in the mountains." The student pairs then worked as fast as possible to adapt one of the rebuttals they already had to the new argument. In both classes, the majority of pairs chose to adapt the rebuttal to the second argument, related to the trouble caused by insects when hiking. Some pairs made creative efforts at adapting one of the other two rebuttals, and the pros and cons of these attempts were also discussed by the class. As this regular practice at adapting rebuttals progressed, a general improvement could be seen, on a week-by-week basis, both in terms of the speed at which pairs were able to adapt rebuttals and also in their ability to choose the rebuttal most suited to adaptation.

While continuing with the regular practice described above, students began to prepare for the final debates. They chose topics out of a hat containing four pairs of opposing topics, and were given their final, blank copies of the preparation sheet. Teacher support was available to help the students improve their arguments, and they were encouraged to practise delivering their arguments as well as adapting their rebuttals to other possible arguments beyond the three they had already predicted.

Implementation and Results

When it came time to hold the final debates, students had received a great deal of support and time for practice, as described above, and a majority of them had shown significant improvement compared with their first attempt at debating. Nonetheless, there was still a degree of tension owing to the fact that students had obviously not seen their counterparts' prepared arguments and were going into the debate blind. Their success or otherwise in accomplishing the task chiefly rested on their ability to adapt rebuttals to arguments they had not anticipated. This was something they had found themselves unable to do on their first attempt, but also something they had been working on for several weeks.

Since this paper is purely practice-oriented, no quantitative data was collected which can be described here. In spite of this, the notes I made during the debate sessions are sufficient to answer one key question: whether or not the students' successfully completed the task. As stated above, successful task completion will be defined as students having given logical arguments for their own position, as well as having logically rebutted arguments from their counterparts together with any necessary adaptation. All 16 pairs succeeded on the first point. Also, all pairs managed at least one successful adaptation of a rebuttal (with no pairs being lucky enough to have anticipated all three of their opponents' arguments). There were only three pairs that each made a single, rather unsuccessful adaptation (in that I judged their adaptation not to have been logically consistent with the argument they were attempting to rebut). Each of these pairs managed at least one successful adaptation of another rebuttal, however. Furthermore, there was not a single instance in which silence prevailed and a group gave up altogether in their attempts to rebut an argument. This is a remarkable outcome, considering this sort of total shutdown was a common occurrence on the first occasion students encountered arguments for which they were unprepared. There were certainly tense periods of silence on occasion, but these always gave way to sudden, whispered discussion followed by a (usually) successful deployment of an adapted argument.

An illustrative example, based on student written work and my own notes, will now be described. One pair of second year students was tasked with defending the proposition that "aliens probably exist, and we will likely have contact with them in the future" against another pair tasked with preparing arguments for the opposite position. The students prepared three arguments supporting their stance, the specifics of which are not necessary to detail here. Additionally, they anticipated three arguments the opposing pair might present, crafting a rebuttal for each. The latter set of arguments and their corresponding rebuttals are as follows:

1. The chance is very low for aliens to evolve to be as advanced as people

Even so, it doesn't mean that they don't exist. Even simple creatures on other planets are aliens.

2. People who say they saw UFOs are lying obviously.

Some of them may be lying, but it is difficult to come up something without precedent. So, somebody must have seen aliens in the past.

3. Earth is a unique planet that can support life.

Actually, astronomers already found 20 planets that can support life.

When it came to the debate, the first argument made by the opposing team was very similar to the third anticipated argument above, and was thus easily answered. However, the opposing team's second argument was as follows: "If aliens exist, they would be trying to find us. But there is no evidence they are trying to find us." This led to a pause, some whispered discussion, and another pause. However, just when I was about to step in and help, one of the students expressed the following rebuttal (paraphrased based on my notes): "Even simple life that can't contact us is still life, so there can still be aliens." Clearly the team had been successful at thinking on the spot and had adapted their first planned rebuttal to answer and unexpected argument from their opponents. This is one of many such examples of students attempting to adapt their rebuttals. Some attempts where, of course, more successful than others, but overall, the students were far more successful at this process of adapting arguments in real time than they had been when we first began to practice debates.

From my perspective, as the classroom teacher, the marked difference between the students' first attempt at debating and their final performance on the day was more than sufficient evidence for the overall success of the project. Student feedback (collected by means of an online survey) was similarly positive, with many students commenting on their own perceived improvement and how they went from believing they would never be able to achieve success in such debates to finding they were able to do so confidently. Comments included "It was a great way to practice my ability to think about sentences on the spot." and "I growed up my English skills, and could speak English

smoothly in this debate." The only critical comments referred to the need for more thinking time, though since a time limit on student thinking time was not imposed, I am unsure exactly what was meant by this. While implementing such a specific time limit could be beneficial, it would seem it could also increase the pressure on students. Nonetheless, it is something to bear in mind in future iterations of these debate tasks.

Discussion

In the implementation of the work plan described above, my goal was to utilize a task-based learning approach, focusing on harnessing the inherent communicative advantages of debates over presentations. By working through several stages, each slightly less scaffolded than the last, students were ultimately able to engage in meaning-focused debates which, I would argue, met the definition of TBLT given above (Ellis et al., 2019). The key element to the scaffolding process was without a doubt the focus on adapting rebuttals in real time in order to answer unexpected arguments from the students' counterparts. This ultimately enabled students to engage in spontaneous and meaning-focused use of English, in a way they were unable to achieve at the outset of this project. There are various ways this could be extended and built upon. For example, in a following stage, students could be encouraged to work on responding to rebuttals and defending their original arguments. The ultimate aim could be to have students continue to engage in such back-and-forth discussion of a single argument for as long as they are able. Ultimately, once students realise they are able to respond meaningfully without having everything pre-planned, many possibilities for meaningful use of the language present themselves.

Regarding future research, I am working on replicating the process outlined above while also incorporating the collection of quantitative data. This approach necessitates addressing specific challenges, including the precise definition of what constitutes a successful rebuttal adaptation, among others. Plans are in place to collect data during the debates and throughout the preparatory stages (such as turns taken and successful adaptations). Furthermore, the possibility of gathering data from both pre- and post-task group discussions is being explored. The aim is to determine whether successful engagement in task-based learning significantly impacts students' overall speaking abilities.

I also intend to collect a greater amount of qualitative data, not only looking at student feedback at the end of the task, but also aiming at shedding light on students' changing perceptions of their own and their peers' performance at various stages of the process. Finally, for those not interested in implementing debates in their classes, a similar form of scaffolding based on adaptation of pre-planned language could conceivably be applied to a plethora of different tasks, provided they require spontaneous, meaning-focused production.

Conclusion

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in English language learning classes in Japan is challenging. The approach described above is an example of successfully applying this method. Hopefully, this marks a starting point for further productive research and practice in this area.

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Making monsters: sociocultural creativity and language classroom tasks

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Creativity has long been framed as a property of an individual, by researchers, educators, and as a subject of neoliberal education policy. However, recent developments in creativity theory have looked to resolve the problems that arise out of this perspective. In particular, the challenge of how we can be creative together. This paper uses the sociocultural approach of Glaveanu to outline how language teachers can manage creative tasks better in the classroom. In particular, the creation of a common representational space – an area of shared knowledge and understanding – is key to helping the exchange of ideas and advice. It thus emphasizes the importance of EFL teachers having content knowledge as well as language teaching skills.

創造性は長い間、研究者や教育者、そして新自由主義的な教育政策の対象として、個人の性質とみなされてきた。しかし、近年の創造性理論の発展において、この視点から生じる問題の解決に目を向けられるようになった。特に、人と人が関わる中で、どうすれば共に創造的になれるかという課題である。本稿では、Glăveanu の社会文化的アプローチを用いて、外国語教師が教室で創造的な課題をよりよく展開させていく方法を概説する。特に、共通の表象空間（知識や理解を共有する領域）を作ることが、アイデアやアドバイスの交換を助ける鍵となる。そのため、EFL 教師が言語教授スキルだけでなく、題材に関する知識を持つことの重要性を強調している。

Language teachers are interested in creativity for several reasons. Some are directly associated with second language acquisition narrowly understood: that language production is a creative act, that learning languages may be a (constructivist) creative act, and that creative students are more likely to produce fluent, more extensive output. The implication is that more creative students (innately or because of supportive environments) make better language learners. Other reasons are more connected to our general responsibility as educators: the promotion of critical and creative thinking, the use of creative tasks to boost student motivation, workplace interpersonal skills, and the ability to engage in language play and creative expression to support real-world relationship building.

Whether or not innately more creative people are better at language learning is unclear. Research typically compares creative traits (originality, fluency, etc.) as measured by psychometric tests with second language test scores or task performance (Albert & Kormos, 2004; McDonough, Crawford & Mackey, 2015; Ottó, 1998). Although some positive relationships have been found, they tend to be weak, inconsistent, and also accompanied by some negative relationships, particularly with assessed student originality (Fernández-Fontecha, 2021). There is stronger evidence for a reverse relationship: multilingual skills and experiences likely enhance creativity (Kharkhurin et al., 2023). However, such research in general suffers from problems with the predictive validity of creativity psychometrics, discussed later.

In a previous paper (Smith, 2021), I outlined how developments in creativity theory might be applied to a model of foreign language learning. This current paper focuses on helping students succeed in creative foreign language tasks, and how the sociocultural approach outlined here reflects those theoretical developments and global changes to educational policy goals. Crucially, it focuses on how students and teachers can collaborate in being creative together, a specific challenge that recent innovations in creativity research address.

Defining creativity

The robust basic definition of creativity found in the literature has two aspects: the production of something that is in some respect new and in some respect useful (Mumford, 2003; Walia, 2019). Each of these aspects can be unpacked to produce a range of what counts as creative. Something can be new to an individual (but in no way historically original), new to their professional community, or new to the world. "Useful" can mean valuable, beautiful, effective, etc. depending on the context, audience, and how and by whom the degree of usefulness is assessed. The definition thus captures both everyday individual creativity and creativity on a

world historic level, and ~~also~~ creativity in all domains (arts, sciences, technology, sports, etc). In the EFL context, the usefulness of language is the purpose in speaking (pragmatic, aesthetic, etc), and the novelty can be in the learner's assembly of new combinations of language (whether individual phrase or whole text). In this ~~particular~~ paper, the definition is applied to a task where students create texts to describe their own new *yokai,* mythical creatures in a Japanese tradition.

However, the basic definition's robustness is not the same as completeness. Recent influential work has focused on inserting a human element into the definition, such as Walia (2019) looking at intentionality, and sensitivity and response to needs and problems, while Glăveanu and Beghetto (2021) considered the human-to-world interactive experience of creativity. There are also attempts to integrate the product-oriented definition given above with accounts of creativity as a dynamic, open-ended process in search of (but not always achieving) novel value (Corazza, 2016).

Of specific interest to this paper is not so much what creativity is, but how it occurs and how we can encourage it in language classrooms. The next three sections of this paper put forward the proposition that changes in how education policy makers approach creativity parallel developments in creativity theory, in particular, the sociocultural approach of creativity put forward most prominently by Glăveanu (2014).

The evolution of creativity as educational priority

The advent of globalization and the information revolution has propelled creativity as a priority in education systems around the world (Patston et al., 2021; Rojanapanich & Pimpa, 2011). In the first decade of the 2000s when policy makers tended to see the future more optimistically, it was listed as one of 15 OECD "21st century skills" (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009) necessary for individuals to thrive in the knowledge economy:

> Developments in society and economy require that educational systems equip young people with new skills and competencies, which allow them to benefit from the emerging new forms of socialisation and to contribute actively to economic development under a system where the main asset is knowledge. (p. 5)

By contrast, ten years later, the OECD position paper *The future of education and skills: Education 2030* (OECD, 2018) sees the future as one of collective, collaborative challenges and crises as well as individual opportunities:

> Children entering school in 2018 will need to abandon the notion that resources are limitless and are there to be exploited; they will need to value common prosperity, sustainability and well-being. They will need to be responsible and empowered, placing collaboration above division, and sustainability above short-term gain. (p. 3)

They identify three "transformative competencies": creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility. Of the first, they say:

> To prepare for 2030, people should be able to think creatively, develop new products and services, new jobs, new processes and methods, new ways of thinking and living, new enterprises, new sectors, new business models and new social models. Increasingly, innovation springs not from individuals thinking and working alone, but through co-operation and collaboration with others to draw on existing knowledge to create new knowledge. The constructs that underpin the competency include adaptability, creativity, curiosity, and open-mindedness. (p. 5)

There is, therefore, not only an increasing priority placed on creativity, but also a shift from the creativity as an individual skill to a collaborative one, and from one where individuals need to justify their worth to one with greater awareness of collective needs. This shift in focus to creativity as cooperation rather than individual advantage in the labour market parallels changes in how researchers think about creativity.

Understanding creativity

Perhaps because of its origins in psychology, creativity research has largely focused on individuals: on the nature of creative cognition and on identifying those individual and environmental characteristics that make one person more creative than another. This approach is exemplified by the use of psychometric creativity tests. These tests are used particularly in gifted child education policies, to identify students whose talents recommend them for extra support (Kim, 2006), as well as in creativity training in business (Zeng et al., 2011). Such tests and training typically focus on divergent thinking: the ability of an individual to produce responses to prompts with fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. (Plucker et al., 2019).

However, confidence among researchers in the predictive value of divergent thinking tests is limited: the evidence is not strong that higher scorers are more likely to be creatively successful, and it is not clear how much these tests are effectively measuring general fluid intelligence. (Batey et al., 2010; Plucker et al., 2019).

These tests are commonly used in research into individual creativity and second language acquisition; such research should be treated with caution.

Research suggests there is a need for educators to recognise that general divergent thinking skills in themselves are far from the whole picture of human creativity. One survey of research shows teacher's understandings of creativity are often incomplete and poorly articulated, with a focus on imagination and originality at the expense of usefulness, and a bias towards viewing creativity as an expressive, arts subject activity (Mulleta et al., 2016). The focus on an "inner" creative skill can also crowd out appreciation of the external social and material aspects of creativity (Glaveanu et al., 2013).

A fuller model of creativity should also include elements such as problem sensitivity and framing, knowledge review, and convergent thinking (Kim et al., 2011; Mumford, 2001). It should take account of how individuals are encouraged to be creative: clear goal setting and support are superior both to micromanagement and to goal-free tasks, while a playful atmosphere is better than one organized around material incentives, at least for non-professional creatives (Amabile, 1998). For equity and motivation, a classroom model of creativity should de-emphasise the prejudice that some are just more creative than others (Clapp, 2017)

However, three particular research findings are relevant for how we can (and in the real world do) collaborate creatively together, not just alone/as individuals._The first is that group divergent thinking – group brainstorming – tends to inhibit rather than encourage creativity, a repeated finding that contradicts a common prejudice not only in language teaching but in the world generally (Rietzschel et al., 2006). It transpires that verbalising ideas in front of others leads to inhibition, free-riding and group-think. Our model of creativity thus needs to account for how originality and innovation occur when people work together, so goes beyond "inner" models of individuals sharing the creative output of their several minds (Glăveanu, 2011). The second finding is that creativity is in large part domain specific (Baer, 2016). That is, on the one hand, domain knowledge, training, and expertise helps people to be more creative in that domain (arts, physics, history, etc.), while on the other, that someone is creative in one area does not mean they will be creative in other areas. Put bluntly: knowing stuff matters. Language teachers may have experienced this obstacle in class: for example, school and university students struggle to be creative in business topics because they simply have no experience or knowledge of the area. The third finding –better understood as a theoretical development – is the insight that the individual model of creativity fails to

encapsulate real-world interaction between creators and between creators and their audience. Iconic figures of creativity include Leonardo da Vinci, Mozart, Picasso, Einstein and so on. They represent individual genius breaking boundaries, people who "own" their creative products. However, for most people, creativity occurs collaboratively in organisations, between people with long-term relationships, and with an audience or customer base they interact with. No one person creatively owns the product. That is the kind of creativity that the OECD educational policy calls for. The competence to take part in that process is something educators should foster.

The sociocultural model of creativity and classroom tasks

A classic categorisation of the factors effecting creativity is the four P model (Rhodes, 1961): Person (individual creative potential), Place (environment, including incentives), Process (how creativity occurs), and Product (what objects are considered creative). A weakness in this model is that it merely organises disparate findings without tying them together in a model of how creativity occurs. Glăveanu (2013, 2014) proposed an alternative "Five A's" sociocultural model that embeds creativity in the world as a social phenomenon. Creativity is an "action engaged with by various actors… in relation to multiple audiences… exploiting the affordances of the cultural world (symbolic and material) and leading to the generation of artefacts" (Glăveanu, 2014, p. 27). This formulation integrates domain knowledge (affordances), the social value of creativity (audiences and actors), as well as decentres the individual (actor) without simultaneously dismissing the importance of the creative experience (action). Instead of individual geniuses, the model for everyday creative action is the craftsperson in a workshop, exchanging ideas with individuals with greater or different expertise and experiences but nevertheless a shared representational space, working with the materials available, while engaging with and reflecting upon the needs of the audience.

In the language classroom, this turns the teacher into one of the craftspeople – most often, the master – and students into apprentices. The implication for classroom tasks is that the teacher should have skills and knowledge in executing that task that they can share with students. This expectation is accepted in standard language tasks such as essay writing. EFL teachers should be able to write A grade essays in response to the sorts of prompts they give students. Their task is helping students to become more competent at the genre, and with peer editing, become better at helping each other improve over the long term. We know that student topic selection helps motivation and writing success, and that students tend to choose topics they

know more about (Bonyadi, 2014). The model here frames that finding as students operating from their representational space i.e., what they know and are competent to speak about. Teachers and classmates who share some of that representational space are also in a better position to help each other improve output.

This paper argues that such principles should apply to creative tasks in the classroom. Teachers should be in a position of expertise to help students with their projects, not only as language experts, but as people with shareable knowledge in the genre/content area. This is already a principle understood by EFL teachers of creative writing who invest time in teaching the "craft" of plot, characterization, etc. (e.g., Maloney, 2022). For the remainder of this paper, I will give an example of what a teacher should know for the creative task of making a new yokai, a traditional Japanese mythical creature, and describing it in English.

The task as craft

A naive approach to the task of creating a yokai (the nature of which is detailed below) would emphasise the importance of not limiting the students' imagination. Teachers should allow the students to express themselves without being bound by rules. However, this supposedly liberating approach faces two problems. One is the so-called "fear of the blank canvas": where does one start? Students will almost certainly have never undertaken such a task before, let alone in their second language. The other problem is that it undermines the ability of students and teachers to work together. Without first establishing what a yokai is, there is no established common representational space through which people can communicate. If we cannot evaluate the yokai-ness of someone's creation, how can we help each other improve it? How can we bring students' various knowledge about yokai together to benefit from the class's diversity of experience? So, to prepare for this task, as an instructor, I had to research what yokai were. I needed to be able to describe the key elements of a yokai, including identifying the possibilities available to students to innovate in their creations.

What is a yokai?

Yokai imagery is everywhere in Japan. A leading sushi chain is named after the popular river yokai *kappa*; the long nosed, red-faced *tengu* is commonplace in animation, films and video games; many izakayas (Japanese pubs) have outside statues of *bake-danuki*, a fun-loving and mischief-making yokai version of the Japanese raccoon-dog or tanuki. Yokai are, therefore, a good topic for Japanese students to learn how to explain in English. For my research, I consulted a number of texts: *The Book of Yokai* (Foster, 2015), *An Introduction to Yokai Culture* (Komatsu & Yoda, 2018),

Japandemonium Illustrated (Toriyama, 2017), and a book aimed at younger readers, *Yokai Attack!* (Yoda & Alt, 2012). I used these to assemble key points that students should consider when creating a yokai:

- Yokai are shapeshifting creatures that are essentially mysterious: they cannot be explained completely.

- They are often used to explain natural phenomena. For example, *kappa* are said to be responsible for river drownings. The long-tongued *tenjin-name* explains damp spots on the ceilings of houses. Transparent *Beto-beto-san* explains that feeling of being followed at night when no one is there.

- They have a huge variety of forms. For example, the *roku-roku-bi* is a frightening long-necked woman, while the *kasa-obake* is in the form of an umbrella.

- One particular class of yokai, *tsukumogami* are object-yokai. They are part of the traditional belief that objects, like living things, contain spirits. Old objects that had been mistreated could become vengeful yokai, driving the idea that tools should be treated with respect.

- There are modern as well as traditional yokai. Japanese schoolchildren typically know the urban legend of *toire-no-Hanako-san*, the spirit of a young girl who possibly had a violent death who now haunts school toilets. In the 1970s, rumours spread of the *kuchisake-onna*, a woman in a mask who would, depending on the conversation, reveal her face to show her mouth cut open from ear to ear.

- Yokai are often regional in origin; a feature of post-unification Edo-period Japan was the *hyaku monogatari* (100 stories) tradition. Traders from different parts of Japan who had travelled Edo (modern-day Tokyo) would sit in a room with a hundred candles lit. Each would tell a story of a yokai from their home region then extinguish a candle. When the last candle went out, it was said, all the yokai would appear simultaneously. Thus, the story of a yokai often makes the listener shiver.

This information is presented to students as a short lecture. In my experience, although students know what yokai are, they have never had that implicit knowledge organized and systematized. The presentation is followed by exercises in how to describe creatures in English, including vocabulary such as paws, scaly, cat/dog/bird-like, etc.

Task setting and execution

Students are given a set of questions to guide yokai design. As alluded to above, the lecture is designed to explore the possibilities of answers.

- What is its name? What does the name mean?

- Where does it come from?

- What does it look like?

- What places do you see it?

- How does it interact with people?

- Does it explain any natural phenomena?

Students are also given an example of the task (appendix A). Note that the sample drawing is deliberately poor quality: from experience, for time constraint reasons, one needs to discourage students from spending too long on initial illustrations.

Students draw a picture of their yokai and draft an explanatory text, with the teacher monitoring, and problem-solving where needed. They then work with a partner to improve the content of their text according to the task questions before presenting their yokai to a group of students who can ask free questions to help develop the creation further. It is emphasized that the purpose of the task questions is to improve the yokai. If something feels amiss, consult the "rules" of what a yokai should be. However, if the yokai feels right and detailed enough, it doesn't matter if the rules haven't all been followed. After class, students work with the teacher to correct the text for language errors. They also have the opportunity to improve their illustrations.

The success of the task can be seen in two ways. First, in the output of the students, who average TOEIC scores of between 300 to 600 (See appendix B for samples). They were able to create yokai in some detail that *feel* like yokai. That is, they featured successful combinations of the characteristics described in the previous section, such as the variety of forms and the use of yokai to explain everyday phenomena. Secondly, in the feedback, which showed how students valued the opportunity to interact. This lesson took place during a three-day on-campus summer English immersion course with 18 students (12 first years, 5 second years and 1 third year). At the end of each day, the students wrote a reflection in English 100-150 words long on how they felt about that day's activities. Thus, students had the opportunity to give unguided comments about the yokai activity. Four categories of comments emerged. First, that the activity of creating was itself fun ("fun"; "the best activity") given by 61% of students; 44% that they learned something new ("I'm Japanese, but I didn't know about yokai"; "I learned about yokai and it was interesting"), and 89% commented on the enjoyment of interacting with other students as they reviewed each other's creations ("the monsters my friends made were very distinctive and interesting to watch"; "It was the most fun to create original yokai and discuss them with everyone. Everyone has a lot of imagination"; "I was

glad everyone said [my yokai] was awesome"). Finally, 33% said they found creating their own yokai difficult ("It was difficult to think about how I wanted the look and character to be"; "It was very difficult to make my own original yokai") although two of these six students expressed satisfaction at how they achieved the task despite this difficulty.

While one must take into account the issue of reflexivity in analysing these comments (students will understandably not want to offend teachers by being too critical of the tasks they are given), it is striking that nearly all chose specifically to mention the value of interacting with classmates in discussing and sharing their creations. This result is consistent with the argument of this paper that creating a shared representational space—in this case, the history and nature of yokai—helps to foster creative interactions between students as well as support teachers in showing students how to undertake a creative task. In terms of Glăveanu's Five A's model, students have been empowered both as actors and as audience by establishing a common understanding of the affordances (the yokai tradition; the in-class deadline to complete the task) they face in producing their artefacts (their new yokai). The diversity and originality of the yokai created indicate that students were able to exploit the possibilities the tradition afforded them. That is, guiding students in the nature of their task as if it is a specific craft to master, far from limiting what they can do, can help to promote more creative output.

Conclusion

Developments in creativity theory show how better to support students in creative tasks. In particular, it is important to establish a common representational space of knowledge and understanding between students, and between students and teachers, that enables them to share and respond to creative ideas. To do this, language teachers need to establish a certain degree of content expertise or mastery of the tasks and topics in which they would have student creativity take place. Gaining such expertise takes time and resources but is worthwhile.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Example of the task

My Yokai

Kohi-name (coffee-licker)
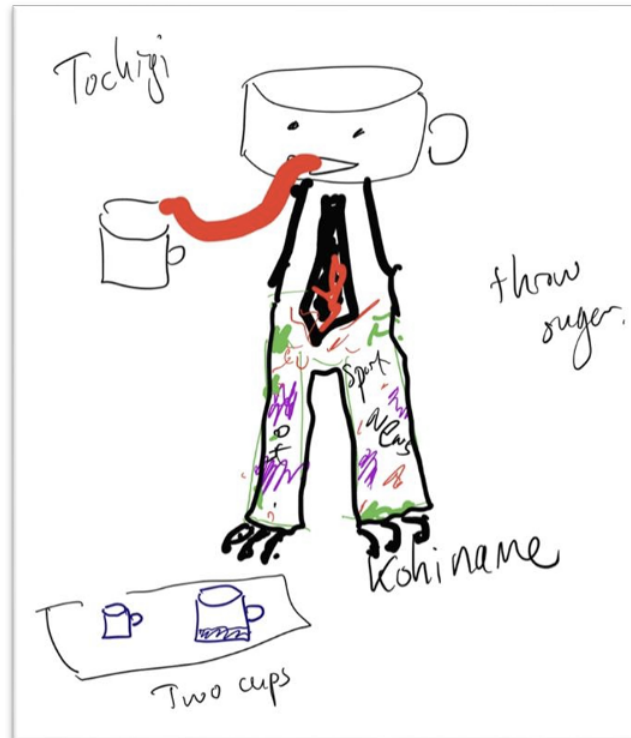
This Yokai is called *kohi-name*. It means "coffee licker". You know that feeling when you look for your coffee cup because you want to finish drinking it, and you discover the cup is already empty? That's because of this yokai. If you leave your cup with about one-third full or less, this yokai will come and finish your coffee when you are not looking.

It has a cup for a head, and a long red tongue that it uses to lick up coffee. It lives in cafes, especially older cafes. It's about the size of a small dog. Its trousers are made of old magazines stolen from the magazine rack in the café. It wears a shirt and tie, much like a "salaryman". Stories about this yokai began in Tochigi Prefecture in the 1960s, as the Japanese economic boom really got started.

If you don't want the *kohi-name* to steal your coffee, then there is a good trick. If you have a second cup next to your coffee cup, the kohi-name gets confused and cannot choose which cup. This is why, in many cafes in Tochigi prefecture, they serve you coffee with a small extra second cup to stop the *kohi-name* stealing your coffee. Also, if you see it, you can throw packets of sugar at it. It tries to catch the sugar with its tongue because it has no arms. If its tongue is holding the sugar, it can't lick up your coffee.

Appendix B: Student samples

Nusu-zaru (steal-something)

This Yokai is called *nusu-zaru*. It means "steal something". It looks like a monkey. *Nusu-zaru* come from Kyushu.

Have you ever put something on your desk or in your bag, but when you go to use it, you cannot find it? That is because of this yokai. At first, *nusu-zaru* lived like an animal monkey, but as it grew up, it started stealing something from humans. If you leave your watch, book, etc. on the desk or in plain sight and leave your seat, the specter will steal it while you are away. *Nusu-zaru* has a bag to put things in on its back and lots of hands to use to steal things. It lives in a university, shopping mall, and other crowded places. It is about the size of a baby monkey. *Nusu-zaru* usually eat the same bananas as monkeys. *Nusu-zaru* are so small and fast that they are basically invisible. Furthermore, if anything stolen gets into *Nusu-zaru*'s bag, it will never come back. To avoid having your things stolen by monsters, do not leave your seat without them.

Zouri-kakushi (hide a shoe)

This yokai is called Zouri-kakushi. It means "hide a shoe". It has the appearance of a young girl. Also, it looks like a five or six years old. It often appears where people take off their shoes. For example, an entrance, a veranda and so on. Especially, it appears in traditional Japanese houses.

In Japan, there is etiquette about the shoes. When you go up to the entrance of a home, you should arrange your shoes after you take them off. If you don't arrange your shoes after you take them off, this yokai appears and hides one shoe. This yokai is hidden near the entrance or the veranda, and it watches carefully whether people have good manners and follow. This yokai likes playing pranks on people. So, this yokai may hide something you like if you have bad manners or don't follow.

Zouri -kakushi likes traditional Japanese "wagashi " snacks very much. Especially, it likes ohagi. If you want the yokai to give back something, it will be good to give wagashi to the yokai.

Stories about this yokai are over 1000 years old, and began in Kyoto. These stories continue have been handed down as lesson for people since a very long time ago by Japanese people.

Okanebuta
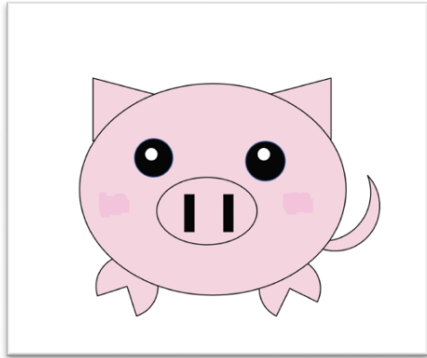
I will tell you about a yokai. Please look at the picture. Its name is Okanebuta. The name in English means "money pig". It looks like a savings box. You can see it in your house. Especially, it is found in living rooms.

It often behaves like a savings box, and when you save some money, it eats your money and hides the money in its belly. It was originally a human being, but when it was child, it was poor, so it ate money. When you realize its true colors, you mustn't break it. If you break it, your money won't be returned to you. If you realize you have lost money and want it to return the money, you have two solutions. First of two, you should save a lot of money, so it cannot eat the money and must return the money that it has eaten so far. Second, actually, it is kind, so if you say, "Give me my money back!", it will return the money. If you see it, you should be kind to Okanebuta!

Photos vs Drawings: Effect on Vocabulary Retention

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The value of images in communicating words and ideas has long been understood by language teachers. But are some pictures worth more? Less, perhaps? With a wide variety of imagery and multimedia available, it is appropriate to ask whether some forms are more effective than others in helping learners retain vocabulary and teachers maintain students' attention. Are illustrations a better tool than photos, considering the excessive detail that the latter often contain? Or does photographic realism accomplish this better? This study undertakes to measure the vocabulary retention of different groups of university students one week after being given textual representations supplemented by either photos or simple drawings which aim to convey the same basic message.

言葉やアイデアを伝えるための画像の価値は、長らく言語教師によって理解されてきた。しかし、一部の画像は他よりも価値があるのだろうか？そうでないかもしれない。多種多様な画像やマルチメディアが利用可能な中で、学習者が語彙を定着させるのに特定の形式が他よりも効果的か、また教師が生徒の注意を引き続けるのにある形式が他よりも有効かどうかを問うのは、当然のことである。イラストは写真よりも優れたツールなのだろうか？それとも写真のリアリズムの方がより効果的なのだろうか？本研究では、同じ基本的なメッセージを伝えることを目的とした、写真または簡単な絵で補足されたテキスト表現を与えられた１週間後の、異なるグループの大学生の語彙保持率を測定する。

The acquisition of vocabulary is even more important than grammar in language learning, for little can be conveyed if one does not know grammar, but without vocabulary, nothing at all can be conveyed (Wilkins, 1972, p.110-111). How to best teach vocabulary is still a question that has not yet been definitively answered. One of the defining features of the Direct Method was the use of realia and pictures in language learning as an alternative to more mentally taxing approaches such as the grammar translation method (Bolulu, 2019). Mayer expanded on this, observing that students' retention of vocabulary is improved when they are presented with information in both visual and textual forms. To supplement textual representations, the use of imagery, whether photographic, drawn, or computer generated:

a. allows the viewer to move more quickly through the initial steps of the cognitive learning process (observing → perception → interpreting) and into meaning construction, and

b. creates a larger number of strong cognitive associations for a given concept.

Central to Mayer's multimedia learning is that "In the process of trying to build connections between words and pictures, learners are able to create a deeper understanding than from words or pictures alone." (2009, p.27)

Although he advocates the use of a full range of modern multimedia in education – e-courses, slideshows, and the like, specifically which media tends to produce what effect on vocabulary retention is not described, and is therefore a legitimate avenue for research. This study does not cover the full range of possible classroom media. Given the successive failures over the past 100 years of educational technologies (radio, movies, television, and computers) to, as was variously predicted, revolutionise education, supplant textbooks, or replace teachers (Cuban, 1986), it is useful to examine the relative merits of humbler forms of media which have stood the test of time and remain available to every instructor. This study will focus more narrowly on the lower end of the technological scale - photographs versus the straightforward illustrations described decades ago by Horsburgh (1967).

Method

In 2022, as part of the English language study curriculum at two Japanese universities, one class of 2nd-year undergraduate rehabilitation and two classes of 2nd-year medical technology students were taught a short list of six hospital-related words. No hard data regarding the students' English proficiency ranges was available. Based on in-class observations, however, their overall level was thought to be in the low

intermediate range. The number of participants in the classes were 24, 62, and 41. Under the universities' COVID-19 prevention regime, the use of masks was required at all times by students and teacher.

The 24 rehabilitation students, hereafter referred to as Class A, were presented with a PowerPoint slideshow of six simple illustrations, all structured as the sample image on the left half of Figure 1. A large drawing appeared on the left, with Japanese and English translations on the right, and an example sentence.

Figure 1

Slide with illustration (Class A) & slide with photograph (Class B)
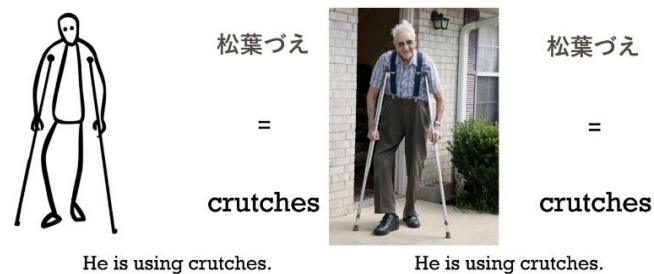
Hailing from the same university as Class A, one class of 62 medical technology students, hereafter dubbed Class B, received a similar six-image PowerPoint slideshow, except photos were substituted for illustrations. The reason for this unusually large number was that it was in fact two classes combined into one by the university for purposes of infection control. One of the slides they were shown is on the right in Figure 1: the text is the same, but a photo substituted for the illustration.

In Class C, made up of 41 medical technology students, vocabulary was written and illustrations which adhered to Horsburgh's four central guidelines (described in the Discussion) were done on the spot using blackboard and chalk. This was to test whether witnessing the act of drawing had any effect on learner engagement and vocabulary retention.

Photographs were found online using Google, and illustrations were then drawn of them to mimic as closely as possible the positioning and angle of the objects and people within. This was done to make the photographs and drawings similar so that the data sets gathered from them could be more validly compared. Drawings were done to replicate the simplicity and low stroke count recommended by Horsburgh in *How to Use the Blackboard in Teaching English.* "… (A) simple picture, with very little detail, can give us all we want for language teaching" (1967. p.6). The photos themselves were of sundry types; some were little more than a given object against a featureless background, while others contained people, other objects, and backgrounds of varying complexity which may or may not have been related to the target vocabulary. These photos had

higher information density, and therefore presumably required greater processing and paring of the information within to extract the intended message. The illustrations did not contain these extra details.

In this experiment, six high-relevancy words were chosen from a medical English textbook at the beginning of the semester, and were therefore likely yet unknown to the participants. Six was selected as it falls within the recognised range of the number of new words an average person can learn in a day (Nagy & Anderson, 1984), and it was considered sufficient to gather meaningful data within a reasonable duration of classroom time. To the exclusion of other grammatical forms, nouns and verbs were selected because they are the standard building blocks of a clause (Webb, 2005, p.37), and they lend themselves more easily to visual representation. Care was taken to select words which have a simple Japanese-to-English x=y relationship (Campbell-Larsen & Romney, 2016) and are free of cultural and socio-economic connotation (Hack, 2014) so as to minimise confusion, reduce the possible number of answers to one, and produce the clearest data set. The six target words, chosen to be at or slightly above the learners' current level (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013), were: appetite, crutches, inject, stethoscope, thermometer, and wheelchair. L1 (Japanese) equivalents were given for two reasons, (1) a number of researchers argue for the benefits of using L1 in contrastive analysis and translation activities (James, 2005 and Laufer & Girsai, 2008), and (2) in the questionnaire to follow, participants would be asked to write English translations of the target vocabulary after being provided the same words in Japanese. Furthermore, in view of Oxford and Scarcella's (1994) contention that de-contextualised language is better suited to short-term than long-term memory, an example sentence was given to help contextualise each word's meaning and use. This would thereby help provide a platform for the target vocabulary to remain in the participants' memory until the administration of the questionnaire seven days later. Presenting the photographs and illustrations, respectively, with the above considerations and supporting structures in place was done to more closely replicate a real-world teaching environment and to produce a greater number of correct responses from the participants.

The questionnaires provided the target vocabulary in both textual and visual forms. For Classes A & C, the illustrations which had been shown in class appeared on the questionnaire. Class B received a questionnaire featuring photos. To the immediate right of the images, the L1 (Japanese) equivalent of the target vocabulary was given. To the right of that was a blank space for their response. This format was chosen to check whether the participants could recall the words with the

assistance of the prompts they had viewed the week before.

Figure 2

Sample question from questionnaire

To measure questionnaire engagement among the participants, the number of blank responses was tallied.

Table 1

Questionnaire Response Data

Class	Correct responses	Incorrect responses	Blanks	Total responses
A (Power Point drawings)	64 (44.4%)	80 (55.5%)	63 (43.8%)	144
B (Power Point photos)	131 (34.1%)	253 (65.9%)	222 (57.8%)	384
C (live drawings)	96 (44.4%)	120 (55.5%)	98 (45.4%)	216

Classes A and C had similar results, while Class B's rate of blank responses was greater. To answer the question, "Was there a significantly better response rate among the classes who viewed illustrations?", a one-sided t-test was done. Any response, whether correct or not, was given a score of 1. Blanks were scored as 0. The test yielded a p value of 0.0002. Student engagement with the questionnaire – that is, their willingness or ability to provide responses – was significantly higher among Classes A & C, suggesting that the drawings created a more inviting environment than did the photographs.

Not only was the response rate better among the students who had been shown the illustrations, but the number of correct responses was also higher. Classes A & C had 160 correct responses out of 360, or 44.4%. For Class B, which had viewed the photos, it was 131 correct out of 384, or 34.1%. To answer the question, "Were there significantly more correct answers among the students who had seen the drawings?", a one-sided t-test was done. Correct answers were scored as 1 and incorrect answers and blanks scored as 0. The p value was 1.979×10^{-3}, showing that results from Classes A & C were significantly better.

There was, however, no significant difference in the number of correct responses between Class A, who had seen the PowerPoint illustrations, and Class C, who had observed the live drawing and writing of text on the blackboard. In fact, there was no difference at all. Interestingly, both classes answered correctly 44.4% of the time. This was contrary to pre-study expectations which had anticipated superior results among Class C. The small sample size represented by Class A's 24 participants may have been a factor contributing to this result.

Perfect responses, or those which contained small mistakes in spelling, especially regarding near misses with vowels (e.g., wheelchear) were counted as *correct*. These words often contained incorrect vowels substituted for correct ones in schwa syllables (e.g., "appitite" instead of "appetite"), and therefore posed no major obstacle to comprehension on the part of the listener or reader. More serious spelling mistakes, but still phonetically understandable (e.g., surmometer) were categorised as *correct*. Where the participants made an attempt to answer, but were unfortunately not understandable (e.g., *sticks* instead of *crutches,* or *heart* instead of *thermometer*), their response was placed in the *incorrect* category. These criteria were even-handedly applied to questionnaires from every class.

Discussion and Conclussions

In line with Mayer's contention that vocabulary should be presented to learners in both visual and textual forms, Liu writes that "Knowledge without any deep processing, e.g., learning words from lists, will be easily forgotten" (Liu, 2011, p.16). Thornbury observes "The more decisions the learner makes about a word, and the more cognitively demanding these decisions, the better the word is remembered." (2002, p.25) The necessary deep processing here is *decisions made about a word*, not decisions made about extraneous information unconnected to the word. Processing colourful or texture-laden backgrounds, facial features, and clothing styles is cognitively demanding, but has little or nothing to do with the memorisation process involving the word at hand. The decisions Thornbury describes must be directed toward scaffolding around and processing of the word itself, and the foundations for the cognitively demanding part are laid out in the lines of the illustration provided by the teacher. The stripped-down intensity of a visual style simplified toward a purpose enables the viewer to travel into another realm, where the great power locked in a few simple lines is releasable only by the mind (McCloud, 1993).

Photos containing nonessential information are less able to accurately communicate a simple idea. Peripheral data create barriers between the viewer and the intended message which must be overcome, waded

through, and filtered before learning can take place. Nonessential information in imagery, whether in photography or illustration, can distract the viewer and lead them down irrelevant pathways toward unintended interpretations, making learning outcomes less predictable and, as the results of this study suggest, less effective. As a visual fait accompli, the message contained in data-rich imagery must be extracted rather than constructed. This mandates a subtractive process where the learner sorts, ignores, and deletes components of an image down to what one hopes is its essential meaning.

When absorbing information in the short-term which will be processed later on into long-term memories, the brain draws a sort of visuospatial sketch which focuses more closely on some details over others. Quickly-rendered, data-light sketches by the instructor mimic this, and thereby perform three vital functions:

1. They allow the viewer to make this mental sketch more quickly. Horsburgh's clean lines act as cognitive frameworks which aid in the organising and interpreting of the information.

2. They provide a template around which the viewer's imagination can fill in details. Illustrations contain less information than photographs, and thus compel the viewer to construct the remainder of the image for themselves in a mental information-gap exercise, elevating them from passive observers to active ones.

3. They eliminate distractions in the form of gratuitous elements, and prevent one from becoming overwhelmed or distracted by excess or non-relevant stimuli frequently found in photographs.

Horsburgh describes the criteria drawings should adhere to if they are to be a successful aid to language learning:

1. They are symbolic rather than realistic.

2. They must obviously be what they are supposed to be.

3. They are drawn boldly, with fairly thick strokes.

4. They are drawn with speed: no more than 15-20 seconds. (1967, p.4)

All four of these points are surely intended to minimise distractions for the viewer and increase their active participation in the construction of the intended meaning. The bold strokes capture their attention, while the speed of the rendering does not allow it to stray; unfortunately, this study was not able to support the contention that the act of drawing itself affected participants' vocabulary retention. Nevertheless, whether drawn on the spot or not, these strokes act as an uncomplicated framework which not only delivers the intended message to the receiver by limiting the range of possible interpretations, their crude charm and lack of detail provides an inviting arena for their minds to play, consider, and construct meaning. With abstract, simplified drawings, the teacher obliges the learner to begin by adding detail, which seems a much more positive and forward-looking stance. Moreover, by following Horsburgh's 4 principles, a teacher need not be a natural artist, for the shapes he describes and shows are simple enough for anyone to draw. Those who lack confidence in their drawing ability need only spend a short time practicing the images in Horsburgh's book before minimal competence, which is all that is required, can be achieved.

Digital illustrations prepared before the lesson are acceptable, but students are denied the opportunity to gradually construct the image in their minds while the instructor is drawing. If AI art is done extemporaneously using current technology, a prompt must first be typed, which is followed by a dry interlude of up to 20 seconds where the image is generated. Here, the lesson may stall. To complicate matters, the AI image may not accurately represent what the teacher wants.

Although this experiment is replicable, it measures non-observable behaviours of the mediation process, so its conclusions are open to challenge. There is little doubt that further practice and review using a variety of techniques such as generating output, whether spoken or written, over a period of weeks or months would lead to better longer-term results. Not only in the long term but also short-term distributed practice – presentation of two or three vocabulary items, review, presentation of a few more – would likely have produced more accurate results among the participants. However, this was intentionally not done. The focus of this study was to attempt to isolate, free from the influence of other methods, the effect of drawings versus photography on the students' shorter term vocabulary acquisition after only a single presentation.

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Collaborative Writing - A Report About Integrating Technology as a Virtual Partner

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Writing is generally perceived as a solitary, individual endeavor, and technology-integrated collaborative writing (CW) is an innovative idea. However, it is not yet widely accepted in classrooms. This paper reports the effectiveness of incorporating technology as a partner in CW. Data were collected from Japanese EFL university students (n = 11) individual writings over the final 4 weeks of CW during their second semester in year two. Student writing was assessed using content analysis against a rubric and language analysis of word-and-sentence count, CEFR level, and text complexity using online writing assessment tools. The results indicate that most students wrote longer essays after the CW experience, although the complexity and CEFR levels had decreased marginally. The results suggest that CW is beneficial in improving students' writing in terms of content richness and does not increase its complexity. The framework is provided for writing instructors to integrate CW into their writing curriculums.

一般的に、ライティングは孤独な個人の取り組みと見なされており、テクノロジーを統合した協働的ライティング（CW）は革新的である。しかし、CW は広く受け入れられていない。本論は、テクノロジーを共同執筆のパートナーとして組み込む効果を報告する。データは、日本人大学生（n = 11）の、2 年次の後半の 4 週間において作成された個別の英作文から集められた。学生の英作文は、コンテンツ分析と、オンラインライテイング評価ツールを通して得られた単語数と文数、CEFR レベル、及びテキストの複雑さの言語分析を用いて評価された。その結果、CW を体験したほとんどの学生がより長く、内容的に豊かな英作文を書くことができるようになったことが分かった。しかし、複雑さと CEFR レベルは僅かに低下していたことから、ライティングの複雑さには貢献しないことが示唆された。本論では、カリキュラムに CW を取り込むための枠組みも提供する。

Writing is commonly perceived as an individual endeavor, but collaborating on writing tasks is an innovative approach (Li, 2018). Collaboration is broadly defined as when two or more people attempt to learn something together (Dillenbourg, 1999), and collaborative writing (CW) is defined as the joint production of a single text by two or more writers (Ede & Lunsford, 1985).

CW is a distinct process and product where students interact and work with a "peer" during all stages of the writing process. In the CW process, students usually work in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, meaning, and producing some artifact (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). The collaborative process includes planning, generating ideas, thinking about text structures, editing, and revising (Storch, 2011). The product of CW, on the other hand, is a jointly produced and shared text, where each individual's effort cannot be distinguished, and the final written product becomes the collective property of all the writers involved (Storch, 2019).

The collective effort causes some to question how to assess CW. There is a prevailing belief that writing development thrives in solitary settings, reinforced by traditional assessment methods that prioritize individual achievements (McDonough, 2004). Even when CW has positive impacts on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills, concerns remain regarding fairness in teamwork contribution and assessment (Eren & Atay, 2021). There are also problems with resolving co-ownership and unequal participation from group members (Arnold et al., 2012).

Other influences on the effectiveness of CW have also been investigated. Teachers (McDonough, 2004) and students (Peretz, 2005) often favor individual writing over CW because of the negative influence of peer dynamics. In group dynamics, one notable concern is that collaboration could be more efficient because it is

time-consuming (Krause, 2007). Collaboration is complicated by conflict resolution issues and dominance within groups (Yong, 2011). Individual concerns include students' difficulties managing time constraints while merging different opinions (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016). Some students may question the value of their contribution due to concerns about language proficiency and, therefore, be reluctant to engage with others (Lee, 2010).

CW has received growing attention over the past few decades despite these challenges. Students benefit from opportunities to develop autonomy through collaborative writing (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010). CW provides students with space to collaborate with peers, instructors, and new technology, which encourages a sense of ownership (Chang & Windeatt, 2016). CW has received growing attention over the past few decades since the development of Web 2.0 tools such as Wikis and Google Docs (Brodahl et al., 2011). Furthermore, Ortega (2007) argued that in today's tech-driven landscape, integrating computer-mediated activities in language classes is not just beneficial but essential. Therefore, the exploration of tech integration with the advantages of CW in language learning is important to the advancement of efficient and effective education.

Technology-Integrated Collaborative Writing

Previous studies have demonstrated that tech-integrated CW can enhance linguistic knowledge and writing skills that can be transferred to individual writing tasks. For example, Jiang and Eslami (2022) examined the effects of task type, dyadic arrangement, and language proficiency on writing complexity, accuracy, fluency, and overall individual writing performance among Chinese EFL learners. Through a pre-and post-test design, they found positive gains in overall writing proficiency and fluency, particularly among intermediate learners. However, possibly due to the short duration, accuracy and complexity had yet to develop enough to yield substantial gains.

In a similar pre-and post-test design, Bikowski and Vithanage (2016) compared various writing aspects between groups engaged in collaborative web-based writing and those involved in individual web-based writing in an EAP class. Despite both groups improving in the post-writing test, statistically significant enhancements were observed in the collaborative web-based writing group, suggesting the efficacy of collaborative approaches in bolstering writing skills across various dimensions, including content, organization, academic style, and grammar.

Cahyono et al. (2021) offered further insights into the dynamics of CW by showing its role in fostering the independent production of more precise and complex texts. Participation in collaborative tasks creates opportunities for Language Related Episodes, which facilitate the exchange of language knowledge among students (Cahyono et al., 2021). Through collaboration, students combine their knowledge, enhancing their experience with and comprehension of various linguistic structures, consequently fostering a deeper mastery of language.

These studies suggest that CW and CW with technology have the potential as a pedagogical tool to enhance language learning and writing instruction when introduced in an appropriate framework.

Theoretical Framework

CW finds its justification within the theoretical frameworks of social-constructivist learning. Collaborative learning theories, rooted in socio-constructivism, emphasize the communal creation of knowledge in social settings or communities, which aligns with Vygotsky's belief in learning within knowledge communities (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In this framework, learning is perceived as an interactive and social process where learners actively construct knowledge by engaging with their environment.

In educational settings, collaborative learning includes peer interaction under teacher guidance. By their very nature, these social settings provide scaffolding within individuals' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), facilitating the transition between current and potential abilities for learners. Collaborative learning enables learners to exceed their individual capacities (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). The integration of technology as a scaffolding tool and collaborative partner has become increasingly prevalent, prompting further exploration in the next section.

Technology as a Collaborative Partner

Technological advancements have transformed writing practices over the past few decades, offering tools and resources to support writers (Rimmershaw, 1992). Web 2.0 technologies and CW tools like wikis, blogs, Google Docs, and Microsoft Teams have become ubiquitous in research and classrooms in enhancing CW experiences (Parker & Chao, 2007). These platforms facilitate knowledge exchange, critical discussions, and collaboration within learning communities.

Moreover, technology has become interactive and, recently, an intelligent collaborative partner in CW (Hewett & Robidoux, 2010). While current technology assists in the writing process, future advancements like generative AI have the potential to act as a virtual writing partner, interacting with writers and generating texts independently. Despite concerns about generative AI's reliability, its efficiency in providing synchronous and

asynchronous support without human limitations is evident (Hewett & Robidoux, 2010).

However, leveraging technology as a collaborative partner is challenging. Students' limited confidence in using CW tools, organizing work, and tracking edits can initially be daunting and impede collaboration efforts (Brodahl et al., 2011), particularly for novices. As technology evolves, its role in the writing process as a collaborative partner is expected to grow, justifying our interest in studying technology integration in the CW process.

This paper reports the effectiveness of technology-integrated CW on university students through an exploratory study. The study investigated how CW sessions influence individual writing. Over 4 weeks, students engaged in CW sessions under the guidance of their teacher, using course and online materials, collaborating with peers, and ChatGPT (under instruction) for additional points of view. Following each week's sessions, students reflected on these verbal and textual interactions, and each compiled and produced an individual essay for assessment. To understand the effectiveness of technology-integrated CW, the following research questions are investigated:

1. How does CW influence the content quality of individual writing regarding the inclusion of pros, cons, and opinions?

2. Does CW significantly impact (p = .01) individual writing in terms of word and sentence counts, text complexity, and the CEFR level?

Methods

Course and Participants

Participants in this study (N=11, Males=6, Females=5) were all Japanese undergrad students (19 to 21 years old) enrolled in the researcher's second term, 2-year university English course in Tokyo in 2022. This opportunity sample was ideal because their maturity, language and communication ability, and overall competence with technology (e.g., Grammarly, Google Docs, Online Searches, and with instruction, how to train and query ChatGPT) were conducive to tech-integrated collaborative writing.

Participants were assessed using an English Language Proficiency Assessment, ELPA® placement test (Level 4, TOEIC 380-440) as CEFR A2 by the university at the beginning of this course. Therefore, a CEFR text analyzer was used to gauge the pre-and post-test essays.

The 14-week course (Table 1) provided students with the skills to communicate ideas and opinions about Japan in the global community while communicating through various forms of interaction with peers and technology. By the end of this course, students were assessed on how they could research and discuss information from multiple sources, critically evaluate information, understand cultural differences, and present their opinions to small and large groups. The aim was to develop skills that will be useful beyond the classroom in the international English-speaking community, assessed in the production of a short final essay.

Table 1

Writing Topics on Each Module From Week 10 to Week 15

Week	Module	Topic Title	Collaboration
1-9	M1-3	Course Material and Skill Preparation	No
10	M3	Essay Structure & First Essay (Choose 1 of the following) Pros and Cons of Medical Marijuana? Is Vaping with E-Cigarettes Safe?	Yes
11	M4	Should Vaccines Be Required for Children?	Yes
12	M4	Pros and Cons of Milk? / Do Dairy Foods Reach Bones?	Yes
13	M4	Pros and Cons of Vegetarianism?	Yes
14	Final Essay	Rewrite any previous essay incorporating feedback	No

Procedure

The CW research period spanned 4 weeks (Weeks 10-13). Classes were held once a week for 100 minutes. In the 14th week, students utilized feedback from the instructor to revise their previous essays and submit them as the final assignment. Consequently, data from the 14th week were not included in this study.

A task-based learning approach was used with scaffolded task repetition, facilitating skill acquisition and language focus (Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe, 2007). The source material was from debate topics because these debate discussions focus on foreign issues that interest students. Furthermore, these debates give at least two sides of an argument, thus providing another voice from within the text.

Students were permitted to search the internet for information as another source of knowledge and trained on using the collected information in providing Chat GPT with context to get a virtual partner's intellectual opinion; in 11th and 12th week, this use was monitored. Samples of ChatGPT are not the focus of this study and are therefore considered mere discussions in building

students' knowledge, similar to how the human peers and the teacher were not reported. A detailed explanation of the procedure for each week is included in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Results

Data were collected from each student's writing in the CW practice's first (Week 10) and final weeks (Week 13). The text data were first checked and "cleaned" to remove comments and teacher notes. Two experienced independent raters analyzed the student writings in terms of content and language, and inconsistencies were discussed until a consensus was reached.

Content Analysis and Results

Figure 1

Results of Each Student's Writing Based on Content Analysis Rubric
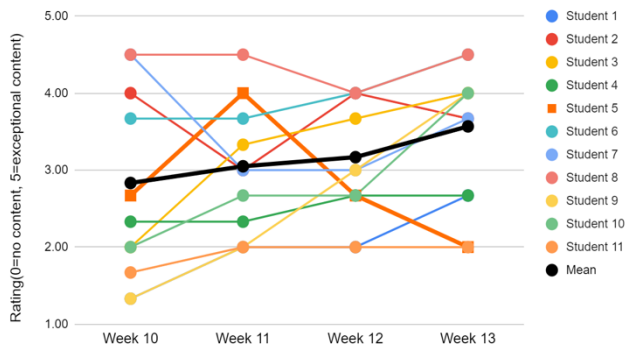
Content was graded against a rubric (Appendix B). The rubric is based on the English course requirements and gauges the writing skills of summarizing, contrasting, or synthesizing the information gathered during their CW experience. A score of 0 represents no relevant content, and 5 represents outstanding engagement with the topic. The scores assigned to each essay were then used to calculate each student's mean and standard deviation and identify any trends or changes in writing performance over the 4-week CW period (Figure 1).

The results from each participant indicate a general improvement over the 4-week period. The average score increased from Week 10 ($\bar{x}10 = 2.83$, $\sigma10 = 1.24$) to Week 13 ($\bar{x}13 = 3.57$, $\sigma13 = 0.84$), which is a moderate effect size (Cohen's d = 0.698). Additionally, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.108$) indicates that about 10.87% of the variance in the content average score can be explained by the change over the 4-week period. Overall, these results suggest that the improvement in the content average from Week 10 to Week 13 is statistically significant ($\alpha = 0.01$, p-value < 0.01).

Each participant's results are indicated with a unique color, and the thick black line indicates the class average. Overall, the average increases gradually from Week 10 to Week 13. While most participants showed improvement from week to week, Student 5 had little interest in repeating the CW process, explaining the drop in their content after Week 11 (indicated by a thicker orange line with square markers). A writing sample of content improvement (Figure 2) illustrates how writing content improved over this short 4-week period.

Figure 2

Student 9 Written Samples From Week 1 and Week 13 of the CW Period

This writing sample from Student 9 illustrates how much more information can be gathered, processed, and recorded in a CW class of only 100 minutes after just 4 weeks. Student 9 shared their opinion in both samples (final green paragraphs). In Week 10, the introduction and the negative aspects of the vaccine were neglected, probably because the student could only concentrate on one part of the argument and neglected the other mechanics of writing a report. By the end of Week 13, however, the negative aspects of the discussion were included in the third paragraph (in blue), and the introduction was included (first green box in Week 13). The text became considerably more comprehensive in only 4 weeks, yielding increased word-and-sentence count. This evidence supports the claim that the collaborative writing process aids individual writing.

Language Analysis and Results

Language in student writings was analyzed using online analysis tools, Cathoven AI text analyzer and Charactercalculator.com, which are used in the university to provide word-and-sentence count, text complexity, CEFR level based on written text, and the Flesch Kincaid index. Word-and-sentence counts were used to indicate complexity. CEFR was used to monitor any effect during the CW period, and the Flesch Kincaid index was chosen as an indicator because it shows how easy the text is to read (cf. used by Hamada, 2016 to analyze shadowing texts).

All the scores were normalized for ease of comparison (Figure 3). Normalization is a scientific method of making the maximum score equal to one, which indicates the relativity of other results and is useful in visual analysis only (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Average Class Results (Normalized) From Text Analysis Using Cathoven AI Text Analyzer to Measure FKI, SC, CEFR Level, and Word-and-sentence Count
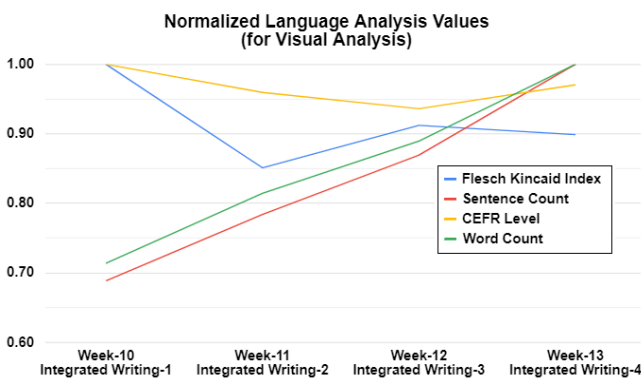
The average word-and-sentence counts increased over the weeks because students incorporated the pros and cons of a topic, integrating the information they have learned in collaborative experiences. These counts increased even with the teacher withdrawing direct intervention as the weeks progressed.

The average Flesch Kincaid reading index and CEFR level decreased by the end of Week 13. In Week 10, students initially used words directly from the reading materials, not fully understanding the pragmatics or content. These words included some difficult words that were not used appropriately (e.g., "dissenting" and "fortified"). However, as writing skills improved, students became more aware of using words appropriately while incorporating ideas from peers, teacher feedback, and online sources. This development in writing skills resulted in students using words that they were more familiar with, which tended to lower the Flesch-Kinkaid index and the measured CEFR level.

Discussion

In the 4-week CW period, students in the study learned how to integrate various elements of information from multiple sources through collaboration with peers and by receiving feedback from other students and the teacher, either face-to-face or through Google Docs. The writing product was gathered from the stimulus material (debate topics and readings), internet searches, and discussions with humans and a virtual partner (ChatGPT). Throughout this CW period, students acquired the skill of sourcing, sharing, and incorporating feedback from communication across all areas.

The most remarkable observation was watching the students transition from collaborative writing with a heavy dependence on approval and salient information to trusting their ability and becoming more independent. This transition was observed in the writing evidence and in how students incorporated technology into their reasoning. This evidence suggests that collaboration is an effective scaffold for independent writing (Jiang & Eslami, 2022), aligning with the findings that collaborative writing enhances linguistic knowledge and writing skills that can be transferred to independent writing tasks (Cahyono et al., 2021).

Collaborative writing offers unique advantages, particularly in facilitating an understanding of the teacher's expectations, curriculum objectives, and assignment requirements within students' Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In larger classes where personalized feedback is challenging due to class size, collaborative writing presents a viable alternative, especially when supported by technology, as highlighted by previous research emphasizing the pedagogical value of tech-integrated collaborative writing (Parker & Chao, 2007).

Feedback in the form of discussions was provided in smaller classes, enabling the teacher to closely monitor progress and offer assistance as needed, in line with the

findings that collaborative tasks create opportunities for Language Related Episodes, facilitating the exchange of language knowledge among students (Cahyono et al., 2021). However, in larger classes, students must adeptly use technology to fully benefit, echoing concerns from literature about their willingness to use collaborative writing tools (Brodahl et al., 2011).

In summary, while collaborative writing should be assessed based on participation and progress rather than solely on the final output, the ultimate test lies in students' ability to apply collaborative learning experiences to their independent writing endeavors, echoing the call for a comprehensive approach that considers both technological and human aspects of collaboration (Brodahl et al., 2011). Recognizing the value of programming AI-based tools effectively and framing queries intelligently to maximize their utility in the learning process is crucial, underscoring the importance of further research and development in this area (Hewett & Robidoux, 2010).

Conclusion

This paper examines the effectiveness of CW as a method to improve lower-level second-year university students' independent writing skills. CW was assessed as a process and a product using pre-and post-test designs similar to previous research. While CW did not increase text complexity and CEFR level, it notably enhanced content, structure, and word-and-sentence counts. The results support the claim that tech-integrated CW can enhance linguistic knowledge and writing skills that can be transferred to individual writing tasks. Qualitative analysis of student writing suggests that this reduction in text complexity and CEFR level stemmed from a heightened awareness of pragmatics and a shift towards a more concise writing style in line with skill acquisition and experience. These results challenge the notion that CW is impractical or ineffective in Japanese classrooms and supports, where discussions generally converge on socially accepted common ground. This study underscores the pivotal role of teachers and technology in facilitating effective CW. However, limitations include a small sample size and lack of a control group, warranting further research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Details of the Lesson Procedure Between Week 10 and Week 14

Week 10 Instructed CW (Pre-test data)

This phase introduced students to collaborate, a step-by-step guide encouraging them to explore topics, identify information gaps, seek opinions, and initiate basic research. Given their second-year status, the focus was on laying foundational writing skills (100 mins + homework).

Week 11 Guided CW

Students engaged in reconstructing the process practiced in the previous week using teacher-selected debate topics linked to available resources. Students were tasked with extracting information from provided and self-selected sources. The writing was structured (100 mins + homework).

Week 12 Independent Monitored CW

At this stage, students could initiate the CW process independently, forming teams, discussing topics, and composing individual essays. The collaboration continued, albeit with reduced instructor intervention.

Week 13 Assessed CW (Post-test Data Collection)

The instructor provided guidance throughout each stage, initially focusing on formative aspects and gradually emphasizing overall improvement. Suggestions on writing style, content, and word usage were provided, either by the instructor or through technology (e.g., Grammarly, ChatGPT, and comments in Google Docs).

Week 14 Evaluated CW

Evaluation encompassed monitoring participation across the writing process, engagement with feedback at each stage, and ipsative assessment (i.e., measuring progress against a previous baseline or model). In this case, the overall effect of this approach was evaluated by comparing the first writing attempt against all subsequent essay submissions. Week 14 results are not included in the CW data analysis due to internal inconsistency in the type of teacher feedback provided at this stage; teacher feedback is provided on text written previously during weeks 10 to 13.

Appendix B: Writing Content Analysis Rubric

Writing Content Analysis Rubric

Score	Description
0	Irrelevant: The essay contains no relevant content.
1	Ineffective: The essay inadequately integrates pros and cons from various readings and fails to incorporate the student's own viewpoints. Writing lacks coherence and depth.
2	Adequate: The essay somewhat integrates pros and cons from various readings but may lack depth or clarity. Students attempt to incorporate their own viewpoints but with limited success.
3	Satisfactory: The essay effectively integrates pros and cons from various readings and incorporates the student's own viewpoints to a satisfactory degree. Writing demonstrates some level of coherence and organization.
4	Effective: The essay proficiently integrates pros and cons from various readings and effectively incorporates the student's own viewpoints. Writing demonstrates coherence, organization, and insight.
5	Outstanding: The essay outstandingly integrates pros and cons from various readings and masterfully incorporates the student's own viewpoints. Writing demonstrates exceptional coherence, organization, and insight, engaging deeply with the topic.

Exploring Student Engagement in an Online Environment

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This paper discusses the second cycle of an action research study that examined students' engagement with provided tasks and with peers in groups as they completed them in an online learning environment. The paper begins by discussing the first cycle of the study and describes the revisions made in the second cycle. These revisions include the introduction of weekly reflective questions, which were used to understand students' experiences working in groups, along with an in-group peer evaluation form used also in the previous cycle. The paper concludes by raising questions about how much guidance students may need in self-regulated learning, and the need to find better connections between students' interests and course material as a way to engender more valuable learning experiences.

本稿では、オンライン学習環境において、学生がグループ課題に取り組む姿勢やグループ内の他の学生との関わりを調査したアクション・リサーチの Cycle 2 について論じる。まず、Cycle 1 についておよび Cycle 2 に加えた修正について述べる。この修正には Cycle 1 で使用したグループ内相互評価をに加えて、振り返り質問を各週導入することでグループ内での各学生の経験を把握することを試みた。本稿では、自己調整学習を支援する際に学生にどの程度のガイダンスが必要なのか、また、より価値のある学習経験を生み出す方法として、学生の興味と指定教材との間に、より良いつながりを見い出す必要があるのではないか、という疑問を提起している。

This paper discusses an action research project attempted to investigate the level of student engagement with assigned tasks, as well as their interactions with peers with group settings during the task completion. As part of their coursework, students formed groups to complete online self-directed projects. These projects were designed to provide students with choice in their learning, and to avoid them becoming passive and bored in the online environment. The major reason for adopting a learner-centred approach in the course was to provide students with the opportunity to pursue their own interests and skills needed by themselves. Dresel et al. (2015) note that this is a move from teacher-directed learning in secondary education towards self-regulated learning, which may be a big jump for some students. At Japanese universities, English language skills-based courses are often compulsory for students to fulfil their graduation requirements. For a variety of reasons, students often lack interest in these courses and it can be difficult to motivate them. Compounding this, course objectives and schedules are often decided by each university's English Language Programme (ELP), which limits how instructors can tailor courses to address their students' interests. The course discussed in this paper differed from this pattern in being semi-coordinated, so that only some, not all, materials and assessment components were decided by the ELP. This afforded some flexibility in the course design, and to address these motivation problems and to encourage self-regulated learning, the instructor decided to include group projects that allowed

the students to make choices about how to pursue their own learning.

The study focused on ways to monitor the engagement of students in their tasks and interactions with other students. Its purpose was to explore the following two points:

1. How might an instructor evaluate students' engagement with set tasks?

2. How might an instructor help students maintain engagement with other students to improve the quality of their work?

To explore these points, students were given weekly reflection questions to solicit their feedback on their project throughout the semester.

Student Engagement

Engagement, as I employ the term in this paper, refers simply to whether students are actively involved in tasks, during class time but also after class, and perhaps until the following week throughout the semester. In this, I follow Oga-Baldwin (2019), who cautions against confusing engagement with confounding constructs such as motivation and *intended effort* and recommends understanding engagement as "a flexible set of constructs with many measurement possibilities" (p. 2; see also Mercer, 2011; Adelman & Taylor, 2012).

Oga-Baldwin's definition is helpful insofar as it allows to observe that the amount of motivation and the intention to achieve good results that students had at the beginning of the semester may gradually fade and not last until the end of the semester.

Action Research

Burns (2010) notes that Action Research (AR) is a "self-reflective, inquiry-oriented and critical process" (p.196) that enables practical improvements. AR is accordingly understood as a "cyclical activity" (Lomax, 2002, p.123), in which a plan is formulated, carried out, monitored, and scrutinized in order to move critically forward. Though AR is context-based, McNiff and Whitehead (2006) mention that AR not only enables teachers to reflect upon their practices but also to link theory to practice. In Tsukamoto (2022), the author critiques her attempt to improve students' engagement and the quality of their group work submissions. The current study represents a continuation of the AR initiated previously.

Context and Participants

The class examined in this study was held via Zoom for the entire 15-week semester, which was determined by university policies in the English Language Programme (ELP). In this semi-coordinated course, aside from required components (such as including the use of a textbook and completion of online programmes), the rest of the course design was left to each instructor. I decided to have the students work on a group project. The theme of the project was world heritage sites, related to the content of the textbook to maintain course integrity, but each group could decide their own topic.

The class comprised 18 first-year students and three second-year students (retakers). 19 of these students (all 18 first-year students and one second-year student) were enrolled in another course taught by the same instructor. This course met in person for the first four weeks and last four weeks of the semester, and via Zoom for all other classes. Therefore, albeit in another course, I was able to meet with 19 of the 21 enrolled students in person at least eight times throughout the semester.

The Group Project

Students worked on the project in groups of three to four. The project had two main components: (i) a midterm submission in which each group had to provide some basic information on the topic they chose with a reference list, and (ii) a final submission consisting of a set of presentation slides. In addition, students were required to submit individual weekly reflections on their group work experience throughout the project. They were also required to evaluate the final presentations

submitted by the other groups, and to submit a final peer evaluation of their group members' contributions to the project.

This group project was structured incorporating insights from Liu (2008) and Godwin-Jones (2011) and Ashcroft (2019). Liu reports that students' motivation levels increase when everyone involved in a project cooperates, leading to a good environment and improved social interaction. Godwin-Jones (2011) found that the development of effective learner autonomy involves maintaining a peer network. Finally, Ashcroft (2019) presented the idea of having students in each group evaluate each other at the end of a group project in order to avoid any "social loafing". The participation evaluation sheet asked students to explain the reasons for their evaluations. My hope was that in the long run working in groups and reflecting on their contributions would prove a good learning experience for the students. As the first pre-cycle in Tsukamoto (2022) revealed, even if the classes were held in person, the instructors cannot always know how the students proceed with their group work, or who is doing how much work. Although it may not be perfect, this participation evaluation sheet is a way to give the students an opportunity to inform the instructors of how much they contributed and how others in the group evaluated them.

Research Design

The action research proceeded in two cycles, the second of which is the main focus of this paper. The first cycle was, however, preceded by two pre-cycles which provided the basis for this research (Figure 1). Tsukamoto (2022) describes the first pre-cycle, which was her first attempt to facilitate a semester-long student-centred learning course that revolved around project-based learning. As the classes were held in-person, it was possible to monitor students at work in the classroom, it did not seem necessary to solicit their reactions to their learning each week. The second pre-cycle, (unpublished), took place in a completely online-environment, similar to Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. However, the use of Zoom was not available in this second pre-cycle, and students' communication with each other and the instructor was limited to emails or the learning management system (LMS). This took place in the first year that university courses were moved online due to the outbreak of Covid-19, and instructors were told not to overburden students. My notes from this time mention my decision to not include students' individual reports to avoid them having to spend extra time on their computer devices. However, the absence of formal student progress reports prevented me from closely observing their engagement with group work, particularly tasks they conducted outside of classroom hours. As a result, in Cycle 1, I

recognized the necessity to try and implement methods that would allow for a more detailed examination of students' ongoing progress.

Figure 1

Action Research Cycles
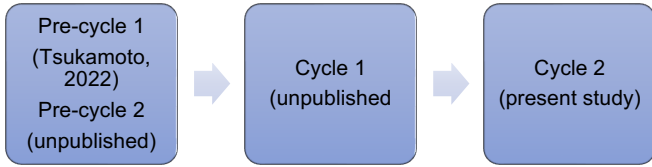
Cycle 1

For the group project part of the class time, students worked in Zoom breakout rooms for 30-45 minutes each week, depending on their progress on textbook work, with the instructor visiting breakout rooms throughout the class to monitor progress and see if students were having any issues. At the end of each class, each group was required to submit a progress report detailing (i) what they had planned to work on during the class, (ii) whether they had been able to meet their goals for the day, (iii) what each member needed to finish for the following class, and (iv) any issues or questions they had regarding the group work. These reports were intended to keep the students on track, and for the instructor to see if the students were having any problems or difficulties proceeding with the project. Sometimes, students asked how to do certain things or for clarification of project instructions. When similar questions seemed likely to be asked by other groups, I prepared short workshops to be conducted the following week. Though the midterm submissions were not outstanding, they included the required content and did not show issues that needed to be addressed. Nevertheless, a short feedback session was conducted in the following class, in anticipation of possible issues that might arise with the final submission. When the final submissions were received, it was thus unfortunate that they did not meet expectations. For example, of the seven groups, only two groups revised and added more details to their project based on midterm feedback provided. Four groups made only very minor changes and one group made no changes at all. This raised concerns regarding the level of student engagement with the project This made me question the students' engagement with the project, the quality of the submissions and their weekly reports. The students were assessed based on the final group project, but also on an in-group participation evaluation derived from Ashcroft (2019).

Cycle 2

When planning the course for the new academic year, I looked back at the lesson plans and notes that I had kept in Cycle 1 and identified the major issues to be addressed in Cycle 2, namely the inconsistency between the content of the weekly progress reports and the quality of the final submissions. My solution was to address these issues in two ways. First, the weekly progress reports completed by each group were replaced with individual responses to questions about group progress or how time was spent in the breakout rooms. Students were told that the content of these responses would not be assessed, but that submitting responses would count as their participation grade for each class. My hope was that through this change I would receive a more honest picture of how students used time in the breakout room sessions, as well as how the group work was progressing. Second, the quality of final submissions was addressed by redesigning the entire course schedule. Instead of following the course design suggested by the ELP (which was to spend the first half of each class on the textbook, and the second half on other assignments), I redesigned the course so that the students would work on the textbook and the group projects on alternate weeks. On group project days, I would prepare workshops for the first half of the class to address problems that students had faced in Cycle 1. These workshops were on such topics as citing and referencing, summarising, preparing visual aids, and writing academic paragraphs. After giving a short lecture, students would discuss questions I gave them or complete practice exercises, and I would give feedback on their responses. The idea behind this change was that students would be able to focus more on course tasks. In Cycle 1, before the class structure change, students needed to shift their focus every week from the textbook to their group project. The revised structure, however, allowed students to focus on textbook work entirely for a class, and the following week to focus entirely on their group projects. Table 1 shows the summary of the context.

Table 1

Summary of the Research Context

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2 (the current study)
Students' profile	Students in 1st-4th year at a university in Japan (22 1st years, 5 2nd years +)	1st and 2nd year students at a university in Japan (19 1st years, 2 2nd years)
Students' proficiency level	Intermediate (by the university's standards)	Intermediate (by the university's standards)
Course details	90 mins/week (30-45 mins on group work every week) 15 weeks All classes on Zoom.	90 mins /week (- 60 mins on group work on alternate weeks) 15 weeks All classes on Zoom.
Additional information	22 students in-person for 8 weeks for another course.	19 students in-person for weeks 1-4 and 11-15 for another course.

Data Collection

The data for this study comprised (i) the students' responses to the weekly questions, (ii) the students' group participation evaluation sheets, and (iii) the notes kept during and after each class.

Regarding the students' responses to weekly reflection questions, it was important for students to know that the content of their responses did not matter for their final grade and that they could express their honest feelings. This was made clear to them, as the main purpose was to gain some understanding of the students' experiences in the breakout rooms. After the midterm submission, students were asked to give a score to each of their group members. This gave them a chance to reflect on and improve their contributions to the group on the final submission. Another purpose of the weekly questions was to have the students take a moment to reflect on their contribution or the work that they did so as to improve it for the following week. It was hoped that the significance of the submission would encourage students to provide more honest opinions, regardless of the content of their responses.

The second source of data was the participation evaluation sheets that all students submitted on the final day of class. In their groups, each student evaluated all other group members, and explained the reasons for the evaluation. No student knew how they were evaluated by their peers. With these evaluation sheets, I was able to see how students assessed the contribution of each group member, as per Ashcroft (2019), and could use them to judge the integrity of the responses to the weekly reflection questions. If students' self-reflections suggested one thing, but their peers' evaluations another, then I had reasons to question the sincerity of the student's response or the transparency of the group dynamics.

The third source of data was the notes taken during and after each class. After each class, my notes included students' reactions to the workshops and the questions they sent me. I also examined the students' responses to the weekly questions and made notes accordingly. After marking the midterm submissions, my notes were longer than usual, as they included what specific feedback I had to give to some groups, and what instruction I felt all students needed to be told. After evaluating the midterm submissions, my notes were more detailed than usual, outlining specific feedback for certain groups as well as instructions that I deemed necessary for all students. Table 2 shows a brief summary of the data source for the study.

Table 2

Data for the Study

Data source	Evaluator	Subject evaluated
Weekly reflective questions	Each student	Themselves
Midterm/final submission	Instructor	Student groups
Participation evaluation	Each student	Self and students in the group
Reflective notes	Instructor	Student engagement and progress

Discussion

Students' Engagement with the Tasks

Although some students were clearly comfortable sharing negative feedback on fellow group members, the overall positive responses from students–and the lack of concerns or questions raised during class gave me little reason to suspect any problems or issues with the progress of student projects. Instead, students shared what they appreciated about working with other students, and discussed what information they were able to exchange with others. They also commented on how it was helpful to work with other students as well as being able to learn from them. However, as in Cycle 1, the positive responses did not correspond with the work they submitted. Of the seven groups, six groups were required to resubmit the midterm assignment as it did not meet instruction requirements or reflect content covered in the workshops. Following Dam's (2019) idea of 'letting go' of students and Oga-Baldwin's (2019) idea of engagement, I had anticipated that students would be engaged with their project outside the classroom if they were able to choose how to complete it during class hours. Although the framework of the group project was decided by the instructor, it was each group that decided which topic to explore, and the members who decided the project's content and completion timeline. The use of participation evaluation submitted by the students was partially intended for the instructor to see the work that the students had put into the group project. In evaluating their own and others' group contributions, my presumption was that students who brought more work to each meeting would receive higher contribution scores from other students. Although they were provided with an example on how to complete the group contribution sheet, very few students provided examples to justify their scores. It is possible they needed to be more directed in how they were to explain their group members' contributions.

Students' Engagement with the Group Members

Whilst Cycle 1 took place when students were attending all courses either on Zoom or on-demand, Cycle 2 took

place when most courses had returned to in-person instruction. Thus, although the course in this study was conducted via Zoom, the students interacted in-person in their other courses. My presumption as such was that compared to Cycle 1, the students would be better at communicating with each other, especially since they chose which other members to work with. However, after assessing the quality of the midterm and final submissions, I had reason to question their in-group engagement. Storch (2005, 2007) and Tanaka (2021) report the positive effects of collaboration and how group environment affects learners' motivation. Throughout the course, not many students asked questions about the group project. The rather disappointing quality of their work thus raised questions the nature of their group dynamics. To address this, after the midterm submissions, I began to ask about how time was spent in the breakout rooms in the weekly reflection questions. Their responses made me realise that Zoom breakout rooms were not functioning well for all groups. For example, in response to a weekly question, "Describe your group work time in the breakout rooms in one word," students in the same group responded in incompatible ways: while one student wrote "good" and another "productive", others wrote "silent" or "not sure". The participation evaluation that students submitted at the end of the semester (and which was reflected in their course grades) confirmed that some group members failed to contribute to the collective work, either in the breakout rooms during class or through working on tasks outside of class hours.

Students' Engagement with the Instructor

The reflective notes revealed an interesting observation. Throughout the semester, only a few students asked questions about the group project, and always from the same groups. However, they asked these questions not during class time on Zoom, but after class in another course I was teaching in-person that they took with me. Accordingly, not only the quality but also the accuracy of the student submissions seems to be influenced by whether the course was held online or in person. The study discussed in Tsukamoto (2022) took place at a different university and in a different course design, but because the classes were held in person, I was able to see how groups were progressing with their projects, spot any issues, and conduct impromptu workshops as necessary. It seemed that there was no need for the students to reach out for assistance, as I was able to reach out to them. Perhaps it was easier for them to engage with the instructor in person rather than online via email or Zoom chat, which then affected their submissions.

Improving the Quality of Students' Submissions

In Cycle 1, groups provided weekly progress reports detailing their intentions for each meeting and their accomplishments, and their planned preparations for their next meeting. This, however, proved problematic because of the mismatch between self-reported progress and the final product, and because individual students were unable to communicate any difficulties they were having while working in their groups. To address this, Cycle 2 revisions were intended to allow students to report on their own weekly contributions, to improve overall progress throughout the course. This was in accordance with Storch (2005, 2007) and Tanaka (2021) who suggest that improving group work dynamics leads to higher quality submissions.

However, so far as the result of this action research shows, it has proven that the issue needs to be addressed separately. When classes are conducted in-person in the classroom, it is easier for instructors to see the progress of the students' work, and to point out issues or provide suggestions as to how improve the quality of work. It is also possible to conduct short workshops to address those issues with the whole class as in Tsukamoto (2022). When classes are held online, however, spotting these issues is not as easy. Joining students in their breakout rooms is generally awkward, and not usually conducive to seeing what they are working on.

Conclusion

In concluding the study, the results of Cycle 2 remind us of the question that Dam (2019) raises of when to 'let go' and when to 'hold on' to students. When should students be free to self-regulate, and when do they need to be guided? Despite the possible benefits of self-regulated learning, the study seemed to reveal a disconnect between students' motivations and their achievement, suggesting that self-regulation may best take place within certain parameters. The difficulty with setting parameters, however, is that they might undermine the very purpose of self-regulated learning. To demonstrate, a possible solution to some of the problems the students experienced would have been to provide them with case examples of what to expect as a final submission. This may help the students in their early planning to avoid some of the problems that beset their midterm submissions. At the same time, illustrating a sample end product might have encouraged its replication and thus compromised students' innovation in conceiving their own project. If such examples were provided, then, would this affect how students' work should be assessed? If students replicated the model should that replication be rewarded, or should it be penalized as failing to show autonomous engagement? Reeve & Jang (2006) have found that teachers' controlling students' behaviours removes their agency and thwarts their autonomy. However, it may be difficult to distinguish between controlling and guiding behaviour. Indeed, when does guidance constitute

control? Does giving students' an example to follow thwart their autonomy? Or, is it possible for students to follow a model yet still be meaningfully autonomous? If not, how else can students be guided to better performance recognising that guidance is sometimes necessary? Further reflection on these questions is needed, since just opposing self-guided to instructor-guided instruction appears to be far too simple.

The findings of the action research discussed above suggest difficulties with self-directed group projects in online classes. However, perhaps whether classes are held in-person or online is in the end not the main issue. As Tsukamoto (2022) concluded, unless students see value in their assignments, they seem to find it difficult to motivate themselves and to proceed with their tasks. Students in the current study did not ask questions, which precluded the instructor determining if tasks were too challenging. However, given that not all the students in the class were interested in improving their English language skills, but were attending courses to fulfil graduation requirements, perhaps motivation must be found by other means. If connections can thus be found between these mandatory courses and the courses students choose for their major, then regardless of course delivery method, their self-directed learning can be valuably pursued as informed by their interests from outside the course.

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Pairing Contemporary Issues and Poetry

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This paper describes the development of a university course to engage language learners with contemporary social issues and poetry. Designed using Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (2003), the course objectives include reading and analyzing texts, as well as developing English communication skills. Thematic units, including migration, urban development, and the environment, address current issues and are related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By pairing academic and journalistic articles with poetry by diverse authors, students have access to information from different perspectives. Many of the poems utilized in the course were written for digital spaces or shared on social media sites, and through writing their own poems, students have an opportunity to convey their own thoughts and experiences related to current events. Teacher and student reflections suggest that engaging with different forms of expression can provide learners with multiple points of view on complex social issues.

本稿では、現代の社会問題や詩を語学学習者に取り上げるための大学コースの開発について述べる。Fink の Taxonomy of Significant Learning (2003)を用いて設計されたこのコースの目標は、テキストの読解と分析、そして英語でのコミュニケーション能力の育成である。テーマ別ユニットでは、移民、都市開発、環境など、持続可能な開発目標（SDGs）に関連する時事問題を取り上げる。学術論文やジャーナリスティックな記事と多様な作者の詩を組み合わせることで、生徒は異なる視点からの情報に触れることができる。このコースで使用された詩の多くは、デジタルスペース用に書かれたり、ソーシャルメディアサイトで共有されたりしており、生徒たちは自分で詩を書くことで、時事問題に関連する自分の考えや経験を伝える機会を得ている。教師と生徒の振り返りから、さまざまな表現形式を取り入れることで、複雑な社会問題に対する多角的な視点を学習者に提供できることが示唆された。

Using literature in the language classroom can offer several advantages. Carter and Long (1991) outlined three models of use for literature: the cultural model, the language model, and the personal growth model. While some educators may choose to focus on one of these areas, many have opted for an integrated approach (Savvidou, 2004; Healy, 2010), using literature to foster intercultural awareness, learn about the English language, and discuss ideas from the text. While printed forms of novels, short stories, and poems have traditionally been used for these purposes in the classroom, to address changing literacy skills and student interests (see Thompson and McIlnay, 2019), the use of digital or multimodal forms has been gaining some momentum. This may be due, in part, to overall trends in publishing and reading (see Thaler, 2019), and to the desire to consume content online or through streaming services (e.g., websites, social media, song lyrics, movies or shows) in another language. To read and listen to this content, students need to develop language and literacy skills in the target language. According to Warner and Dupuy (2017), "Given the ubiquity of digital and new media communications …, learners' first encounter with new languages and cultures is increasingly often mediated through literacy practices."

The literary texts selected for classroom use should be meaningful and relevant, as well as level appropriate, and when considering both learner interest and the educational context, it was determined that internet poetry would likely be engaging for university students due to language, content, and length. In terms of the context, internet poetry often deals with issues related to global risks (e.g., climate change, migration, conflict), so it is relevant to a course with social issues content. *Internet poetry* can be defined simply as "… poems of all sorts that have circulated widely on the internet" (Ardam, 2022). Using this definition, internet poetry can include poems which were originally published in books or other print media and then shared online, poems published in online journals, or poems which have been shared to social media platforms, such as Tumblr, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, or TikTok.

In fact, poetry has been widely shared on social media in response to a variety of current events and social issues, with the following being just a few of the poignant examples from 2022. After the Uvalde school shooting in Texas, the first Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman (2022) posted her poem to Twitter (the platform's name at the time) which begins "Schools scared to death. / The truth is, one education under

desks, / Stooped low from bullets …". It is not just writers, but also netizens worldwide who share poems via social media. Ukrainian American poet Ilya Kaminsky's 2013 poem "We lived happily during the war" went semi-viral online after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Kois, 2022). These show the power of poetry to convey emotions surrounding pivotal events in society. Moreover, more people are reading or listening to poetry online: according to the National Endowment for the Arts' 2022 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 22.4 million people in the United States read poetry in the past year, with approximately 11.5 percent of adults reading poetry on social media or listening to it on podcasts or other audio recordings (Iyengar, 2023).

This juncture of digital literature and social issues inspired the integration of internet poetry into the English language classroom. While traditional literary forms still have a role in language education, new forms of poetry are easily accessible and offer a different lens for students to engage with language, culture, and issues, thereby fostering engagement and motivation. This article explores the potential of specific poems from Instagram and YouTube, emphasizing their role in a curriculum designed to create opportunities for significant learning experiences.

The Taxonomy of Significant Learning

The social issues and poetry course described in this article is a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) university course (see Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) while applying Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning. Unlike Bloom's Taxonomy (see Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) which is a hierarchical model with six levels of cognition (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating), the Taxonomy of Significant Learning is represented by a circle with six interacting and converging areas. These are cognitive areas (knowledge, application, integration), affective areas (human dimension, caring), and meta-cognition (learning how to learn), with significant learning occurring at the nexus (Fink, 2003; see Figure 1). To design a course for significant learning, it is necessary to consider and then integrate situational factors, learning goals, feedback and assessment, and teaching and learning activities.

Figure 1

The Interactive Nature of Significant Learning (Reprinted from Fink, n.d., p. 6)
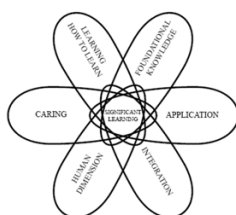
Situational factors

The course is offered within a university department, and it is open to students enrolled in its English minor program. The class size varies but usually has from 15 to 20 students with a high intermediate level of English who are in their second year or higher of university studies. The class is offered for the full academic year, and students can take part one in the spring semester and part two of in the fall semester, with each semester consisting of fifteen 90-minute classes. Because of the relatively small class size, it is feasible to conduct small group and whole class discussions, as well as individual presentations.

The first iteration of the course was taught in the 2020 academic year, and because of the COVID-19 pandemic, classes have been conducted online, in-person, or some combination thereof, with the class format shifting according to government and university guidelines. During emergency remote teaching in Spring 2020, the course was conducted asynchronously through the learning management system, and the following semester a percentage of classes were offered synchronously through video conferencing software, although most classes were still conducted asynchronously. Gradually, the students returned to the classroom for face-to-face instruction, with some students continuing to attend online until the 2023 school year when in-person classes became the norm again. These situational factors affected the course design, especially the choice of reading texts, as there was a desire to make them as accessible as possible for students studying in changing learning environments.

Learning goals

The overall course theme of social issues is guided by institutional expectations, and the specific course objectives are to read and analyze texts on social issues (e.g., academic, journalistic, literary), improve speaking skills (e.g., discussion, presentation), and demonstrate understanding of social issues (e.g., presentations, written assessments). Throughout the course, students engaged in activities corresponding with Fink's model: the acquisition of "foundational knowledge" through reading about social issues; the "application" of knowledge through critical and creative thinking activities; the "integration" of knowledge though connecting information from various sources in a presentation; the "human dimension" by exploring the opinions of the self and others through discussion; and "caring" by cultivating feelings and interests throughout the semester.

The course is divided into three thematic units which are each five weeks in length. The unit topics vary slightly and are revised annually according to student feedback and relevance to current events, but urban development, migration, and the environment have been consistently

included. These topics are also linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). In the first three weeks of the unit cycle, the course materials revolve around readings (news articles and poems), which are accompanied by vocabulary exercises, comprehension questions, and discussion topics. The reading passages are primarily from English news sources, with three journalistic articles included in each unit, and at least one poem. Regardless of text type, the academic word list and important topic vocabulary are included in the vocabulary exercises. Furthermore, the readings are scaffolded with graphic organizers, visual aids, or additional teacher and peer explanations to help learners link their previous knowledge with new information (Lang, 2016). Discussion questions are designed to engage higher order thinking skills, specifically critical and creative thinking.

Feedback and assessment procedures

Continuous assessment is used, and class participation is based on the completion of homework and in-class tasks, especially contributing to small group discussions. Throughout the semester, regular opportunities for self-monitoring of groupwork skills (e.g., listening, contributing, encouraging others, staying on task) are provided (see Bean, 2001). Writing short reflections on their experiences encourages metacognition or "learning how to learn".

In addition, at the end of each unit, students take a written quiz which includes both closed and open-ended questions. The latter requires students to use the vocabulary in context to answer questions related to course content, with some of these being "forward-looking assessment questions" (Fink, 2003); in other words, these questions ask students to apply information to a future real-life context. For example, in a unit on migration, students have been asked to imagine themselves in working overseas in the future and to predict what kinds of support they would need in daily life or to imagine themselves in a position to give recommendations to the government on whether to accept more refugees to the country.

At the end of the course, students undertake an analysis of authentic materials based on one of the unit themes and deliver a short presentation to the class. For this project, students choose a research topic and then independently choose and read articles to synthesize for their presentation. For instance, student-chosen topics related to migration ranged from Ukrainian refugees, the foreign technical trainee program in Japan, to the physical borders between the United States and Mexico.

Teaching and learning activities

As previously mentioned, because of the changing class format due to the global pandemic, providing students with readings that were available online was an important consideration as was the desire to assign poems which were short and accessible. As a result, internet poetry complemented academic and journalistic articles, and served as a basis for teaching and learning activities. One feature of internet poetry is that it is often multimodal (e.g., text, images, music) and therefore encourages the development of modern literacy skills. Multiliteracies (see New London Group, 1996) widens the traditional definition of literacy, which was previously restricted to the written word, to include new forms and ways of using language that span people's professional, public, and private lives. This section focuses on the application of multiliteracies through classroom activities related to multimodal poetry which is available on social media sites.

Instapoetry: Poems on Instagram

One engaging type of internet poetry is *Instapoetry*, which is defined as "short, free verse poems that are often paired with a symbolic sketch or shared on an image that represents the poem" (Gray, 2019). Literary texts such as Instapoetry can be an effective way not only to explore the issue of migration and exile which is related to SDG 10: Reduce Inequity, but also to build learner intercultural competence (Eide, Skalle, & Gjesdel, 2022). The following examples of poems and classroom activities are taken from a unit focusing on immigration and refugee issues.

Rupi Kaur is one of the most well-known Instapoets, and when she was young, she moved from India to Canada, so one theme of her poetry is immigration. Three of her poems, which shed light on the emotions experienced by immigrants, were used in class. Kaur's poem "immigrant" conveys the experience and is accompanied by a line drawing of a boat. Two other poems on the topic do not have titles: one begins "leaving her country / was not easy for my mother …" with a drawing of the ingredients for a meal pictured, and the another begins "perhaps we are all immigrants / trading one home for another …" with a drawing of people moving on the globe (Kaur, 2017). The poems are read aloud by the teacher, and then the students read the poems aloud again with a partner. After taking some time to think about the poems, students discuss ideas with a partner before asking questions to the teacher. As students understanding of the poem develops, they discuss how it connects to what they have learned in class about the unit theme of migration.

One common objection to using literature in the classroom is its difficulty level (see Boldireff and Bober, 2022); however, Instapoetry may be more

approachable for students because it is often short in length and includes a visual artifact. Of a poetry class in the United States, Alfano (2023) said, "Kaur taught my students that they were already poetry critics." The same was true in this class: when students were asked what they thought of pairing a poem and an image, they were able to answer the question without hesitation. Some students responded that it is easier to understand poems which are accompanied by illustrations, especially those that refer to abstract emotions or expressions. On the other hand, some students responded that the illustration took away from the pleasure of imagining or interpreting the poem on an individual basis.

As an extension to reading poems, students can compose their own Instapoetry. For this activity, students were asked to choose any social issue that they were passionate about, whether it was covered in the class or not. One student said that they wanted to tell others about poverty through a poem and pictures that they had taken themselves during an overseas volunteer trip. Another student said they would like to write a poem about microaggressions experienced by women in daily life. In both examples, students connected their personal experience with social issues and appealed to readers through their poems.

YouTube: Poetry videos

This section explores the use of YouTube as a medium for poetry readings, enhancing students' reading experiences and promoting meaningful discussions. Students are guided through the initial reading of the poem, then they watch the corresponding video: this multimodal approach not only cultivates language comprehension but also supports reading comprehension. Below are three examples of poetry readings from YouTube that have been effectively integrated into the course.

The first example is a poem "Allowables" by Nikki Giovanni. It has been shared on social media in response to incidents of police brutality because it revolves around the killing of a harmless spider out of fear. After reading the text, students watch a video of Tabia Yapp reading the poem (Ours Poetica, 2020). In class, students have mentioned that they think that the poem also resonates with the societal concern of bullying in Japan. Engaging students in critical conversations related to these themes aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace and Justice. Combining textual and auditory elements, the video enhances students' overall comprehension of the poem.

Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" addresses issues of race and gender, fostering discussions around SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.

The poem has been presented in class using two different videos. One features Angelou reading the poem herself (Literature Today, 2014) and the other shows Serena Williams reading the poem accompanied by video footage of her playing tennis (Berwouts, 2016). While the former has garnered positive responses due to the author's emotional expression, the latter's effectiveness was tempered by students' lack of familiarity with Serena Williams. This underscores the importance of choosing materials that resonate with students' background knowledge.

The final example is a video of a poem titled "Asibuyele kuyo imvelo: Let's go back to the Environment" (Poets for the planet, 2021) by Sindiswa Zulu. In contrast to Giovanni and Angelou, Zulu's poem is not originally written in English, but is translated from isiZulu one of the official languages of South Africa, and she pairs her poem with music. The poem is about the environment, aligning with various SDG's, including SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. The poem was inspired by a collaboration between poets and climate researchers for The UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) called "Poets for the Planet." According to the Grantham Institute (2022), many of the poems resulting from this project were "… reflections on the exchange, or the emotions it brought up." This reflects the "caring" aspect of Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning; additionally, it underscores the dynamic interplay between science and art and the potential of poetry to engage students in cross-disciplinary discussions.

As a class activity, students can create their own poetry videos, thereby fostering creativity and collaborative learning. These videos can be shared in class or through the learning management system. Incorporating poetry readings from YouTube harnesses the power of multimedia to deepen language learners' engagement with poetic texts, fostering critical discussions and enabling them to view poetry as a dynamic means of communication beyond borders.

Student and teacher reflections

To evaluate the course and its effectiveness, it is important to collect feedback from students through various means and reflect on the teaching experience. During a wrap-up task at the end of the course, students are asked about their impressions of reading articles and poems to understand social issues. In response, some stated the articles were more effective for them to understand issues because statistics and graphs are accurate and easy to verify. Students mentioned that news articles are generally easier for them to understand because of their familiarity with the genre. On the other hand, some students replied that poems allow readers to see various sides of issues, and by evoking feelings, people can develop a deeper

interest in these issues and be moved to take action within their communities.

Furthermore, at the end of the semester, students informally discuss which specific readings and classroom activities they found most useful, meaningful, and relevant. Although their responses vary according to personal preferences and interests, in general, students respond favorably to poems from Instagram and YouTube and find the combination of text and images memorable. Having the opportunity to discuss the readings in small groups and individually choose topics for in-class presentations are also usually viewed favorably by students because they are actively involved in the learning process.

Based on informal in-class responses and ratings received in course evaluations, adjustments will be made for the next iteration of the course. Articles might be updated with new information or scaffolded through additional means. Different poems might be trialed to see if they are more accessible or relatable to students. In the future, developing a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions to measure learner perceptions of poems and comparing them over time could lead to a more detailed understanding of their experience of the literary texts within the course curriculum.

Another point to consider when evaluating the course is the classroom environment. This includes looking at student-teacher interaction and student-student interaction to gauge the degree to which students feel comfortable discussing ideas and opinions. When listening to student discussions or reading written assignments, for example, the expression of multiple points of views is one way to ensure that students feel comfortable expressing themselves. Former United States Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo said, "Poetry is an art form … and can be interpreted however the person experiencing it wants to understand it as." (as cited in Wilson, 2022). Students should be encouraged to develop and support their own interpretations of poems and opinions about social issues and how to approach them.

Conclusion

This article has described an approach to teaching an English language course based on both social issues and poetry. The development of the course was guided by the Taxonomy of Significant Learning (Fink, 2003). Although the overall response to the course has been positive, there are limitations to implementing such a course. One is the amount of time required to find resources and develop teaching materials. Another is the linguistic challenge of using authentic materials in the language learning classroom. Materials development initiatives (commercial textbooks or open educational resources) related to literature in language

teaching would benefit those who are seeking to implement a similar approach in the classroom.

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Classroom Ideas for Teaching Circumlocution to False Beginners

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For language learners, trying to express oneself without the necessary vocabulary can be an anxiety-provoking experience. While learners who are unaccustomed to speaking may often abandon their message in such an instance, more competent speakers can adeptly use various communicative strategies to overcome gaps in their vocabulary. One such strategy is called circumlocution, in which a speaker attempts to describe, illustrate, or exemplify the properties of an unknown or forgotten lexical item. This practice-oriented paper will detail a rationale behind teaching circumlocution, especially at the false beginner level and, most importantly, will propose some classroom ideas for introducing and practicing this skill. The activities and teaching techniques presented are based on guidelines from the SLA literature, incorporating well-established pedagogical goals, such as consciousness-raising, providing L2 models of strategy use, fluency development, and metacognitive strategy training.

言語学習者にとって、必要な語彙を持たずに自己表現しようとすることは、不安を煽る経験になりかねない。話すことに慣れていない学習者は、このような場合、しばしば言いたいことを放棄してしまうかもしれないが、より有能な話し手は、語彙の不足を克服するために様々なコミュニケーション戦略を巧みに使うことができる。そのようなストラテジーのひとつが circumlocution と呼ばれるもので、話し手が未知の語彙や忘れてしまった語彙の特性を説明、又は例示しようとするものである。この実践志向の論文では、特に疑似初級レベルで circumlocution を教える根拠を説明し、最も重要なこととして、このコミュニケーション戦略を導入し実践するための教室でのアイデアを提案する。提示される活動や教授法は、SLA 文献のガイドラインに基づいており、意識化指導、ストラテジー使用の L2 モデルの提供、流暢性の発達、メタ認知ストラテジーの訓練などの教授目標が組み込まれている。

In a recent class of high school English in Japan, I asked a student why he wanted to visit Hokkaido. The student responded by saying, "I want to try…," but no words followed. The student gazed downward and began to grow noticeably more anxious, as he was not able to come up with the English word for "scallop." While this student was not able to circumlocute the missing word, a student with a higher level of strategic competence may have been able to utter something like, "It's in the ocean. It's in a shell. It's white and soft." This process of describing, illustrating, or exemplifying the properties of unknown or forgotten lexical item(s) is circumlocution.

This common classroom occurrence speaks strongly to Canale and Swain's (1980) notion of communicative competence, which has been a lens through which researchers and practitioners have examined second and foreign language output. Their model consists of four core competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. The first and last of the four are particularly relevant for word searches involving circumlocution. Although it is typical for vocabulary and grammar to take center stage in the beginning years of traditional EFL instruction, what happens when gaps in one's lexical knowledge inevitably arise? This is where strategic competence plays a key role in determining the success of communication. By attending to breakdowns in communication and applying appropriate solutions, learners can overcome deficiencies in their grammatical competence.

This paper will highlight circumlocution as one particular tool that comprises strategic competence. To begin, the importance of teaching circumlocution will be discussed. The next section will detail some guidelines that have been put forward regarding the teaching of communication strategies (CSs). Finally, based on these guidelines, a few classroom ideas for implementing circumlocution instruction will be suggested.

Literature Review

Why Teach Circumlocution?

Circumlocution is one of many CSs that learners can use to overcome obstacles in their interactions. Dörnyei (1995) groups these strategies into two main varieties.

One of the groups is what he refers to as achievement strategies. Circumlocution falls into this category, along with a handful of others, such as approximation, word-coinage, use of non-linguistic means, code-switching, and appealing for help. The second of the two groups is less desirable and, therefore, referred to as avoidance strategies. These include message abandonment and topic avoidance. A common tendency for novice learners is to favor avoidance strategies when continuing to speak becomes overly challenging.

If, however, learners are able to capitalize more frequently on achievement strategies like circumlocution, it affords several advantages for language acquisition. First, from an interactionist perspective, circumlocution is a way for learners to extend their participation in an interaction, providing more opportunities for comprehensible input and forced output (Scullen & Joudain, 2000). Circumlocution, also being a result of joint and coordinated action by speaker and addressee(s) (Fernandez Dobao, 2007), can facilitate negotiation of meaning, which has been a central theory in the SLA literature (Pica, 1996). From a vocabulary learning point of view, circumlocution presents a meaningful, self-constructed context in which a word is needed and searched for and thus supplies a fertile learning environment for vocabulary acquisition to take place (Folse, 2004). Finally, a socio-cognitive position argues that increased strategic competence relieves L2 learning anxiety and enables more dynamic interaction to unfold during cooperative learning (Bejarano et al., 1997).

It should be noted that not all proficiency levels may benefit to the same degree from strategic instruction (Lam, 2010). Intermediate and advanced learners are likely to be strategically competent enough to self-solve, and true beginners may find it demanding to carry out more complicated strategies. This brings us to a prime candidate for explicit strategy instruction: the false beginner. This level is characterized by learners who, despite having years of language learning experience, struggle to produce even simple sentences of self-expression. When interacting in their L2, these learners have a baseline of language knowledge to perform rudimentary circumlocution, for instance stringing together simple lexical items and syntactic structures, accompanied by sounds, gestures, and other non-linguistic means. However, their lack of experience interacting in their L2 is reflected in their inability to instinctively mobilize strategic resources when their grammatical competence proves to be insufficient. It is precisely these learners that stand to gain the most from circumlocution instruction. Ultimately, maximizing the grammatical competence these learners do possess by elevating their awareness of and fluency in using communication strategies is vital to their language development.

Some Guidelines for Explicit CS Instruction

Research has suggested that explicit training in CSs has a positive impact on the language use and task performance of low-proficiency learners (Lam, 2010). If so, how can effective strategy training be realized in the language classroom? Dörnyei (1995; 63-64) proposes five guidelines that apply to the teaching of circumlocution:

1. Raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs

2. Encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs

3. Providing L2 models of CSs

4. Teaching CSs directly

5. Providing opportunities for practice in strategy use

A few explications are in order. Corroborating the first guideline, Nakatani (2005) urges for metacognitive strategy training when teaching CSs. If learners are able to form a connection between successful communication and their use of CSs, it will encourage them to continue using these strategies as part of their communicative repertoire. Therefore, it is critical to not only teach, how, when, and why to use circumlocution, but also to set aside time for learners to self-evaluate their performance as it pertains to repairing communication breakdowns. Second, Dörnyei emphasizes the need to view CSs as fully functional devices only once their use has reached automatization. Thus, a vital phase of circumlocution training is proceduralizing the use of circumlocution so it can be fluently employed outside the context of controlled skill practice.

Heeding these suggestions, the following section will detail some tasks and teaching techniques for circumlocution.

Classroom Ideas

The author implemented the following teaching techniques in 3ʳᵈ-year and 5ᵗʰ-year classes at a technical college in Japan. The lessons for both courses were heavily oral communication based, and often centered on a task-based language teaching approach that aimed to develop students' interactional competence. The following ideas, however, can be adjusted to meet the needs and interests of a wide range of learners.

Explaining the Importance of Circumlocution

This first task incorporates the first three guidelines that Dörnyei outlines: building awareness of circumlocution, encouraging students to take risks, and providing L2

models of circumlocution. The first issue is how to make learners conscious of the practicality of circumlocution in language learning. To achieve this, it is helpful to show students examples of other English learners making use of circumlocution while highlighting the outcomes of their interactions. In my classes, I show students video clips of Tetsuro Degawa (Komeo, 2021), a Japanese comedian famous for his extremely low grammatical competence in English. Mr. Degawa is an ideal model because he uses CSs unabashedly to accomplish the communicative missions that his producers assign to him. In one example, he is at the National Space Museum in Washington D.C. and is tasked with finding the location where he can try space food. Although he does not know how to say "space," Mr. Degawa still communicates his intent through circumlocution. He uses similar words, such as "up" and "sky," accompanied by gestures and changes in gaze. He even attempts to associate "space" by singing the theme song of the movie "E.T." In class, I instruct students to identify the strategies that Mr. Degawa uses to achieve successful communication. It is also helpful to show these clips next to examples of other speakers who fail to communicate because they elect to use abandonment strategies rather than achievement strategies.

Mr. Degawa is not only a fitting model for circumlocution, but his name can also serve as a verbal cue to replace the lengthy and forgettable term, "circumlocution." Instructing students to "circumlocute" may not register with many students. On the other hand, telling students to use "Degawa skills" is more likely to bring about its intended effect. A notable hurdle in teaching circumlocution is that learners can circumlocute in a controlled task, but once the task focus shifts from using CSs to one more meaning-based, students' wherewithal to use circumlocution suddenly declines. For this reason, quickly reminding learners to use circumlocution in a way that will not distract from the task at hand is paramount to any training regimen. Another advantage of using the term "Degawa skills" is that it can conveniently pack meaning that "circumlocution" cannot. "Degawa skills," of course, is a cue to circumlocute unknown words but, if introduced appropriately, can also remind learners of the risk-taking mindset that is needed to communicate in an L2. It may be easy for students who lack oral communication experience to view circumlocution as an undesirable, desperate means of interaction. Thus, a reminder that CSs are critical for interaction should be regularly present.

Practicing Circumlocution

Before circumlocution practice can get underway, it is necessary to think about the linguistic building blocks students will need to verbalize their circumlocutions. Simple syntactic structures should be taught in tandem with the CS itself to ensure a more efficient delivery. An example would be a sentence with a main clause to define a general property of the searched-for word, followed by a relative clause to describe a more detailed characteristic. When circumlocuting "scallop," for instance, students can be trained to say something like, "It is a seafood that comes from a shell." For students who struggle to fluently employ these grammatical structures, it may be necessary to provide some supplementary materials for them to reference during the activities introduced below.

Describing Pictures

Once students have reviewed the necessary underlying syntactic structure, instruction can move into the practicing stage. Three activities will be introduced for this. The first task is called "Describing Pictures." It begins by separating students into small groups. The teacher distributes a card containing four pictures to the leader of the group. The card may have, for instance, a picture of a hot air balloon, tongs, a thief, and a dragon. The leader then attempts to circumlocute the first picture he/she sees on the card. As the leader circumlocutes, the other students should be encouraged to offer guesses and ask questions to clarify any misunderstandings. This is an essential part of the task, as it emphasizes to students that circumlocution is not strictly a skill in an individual's possession, but it is something that is jointly managed and interactionally achieved. Nonetheless, leaders should be instructed to continue circumlocuting until they have completed all four pictures on the card. A new leader for each group is then selected and the process repeats. The activity ends once each student in the group has had a chance to be the leader. This activity, and those to follow, can be slightly altered to target fluency development by imposing a time restriction.

Heads Up

Another iteration of the same task concept is a game called "Heads Up". In this activity, the teacher distributes a set of four cards to each group. Each card has a word written on it. For example, the set may include cards with the words "DAISO," "belt," "penguin," and "fork." Words that are familiar to all students in the group should be carefully selected in advance. One student (the cardholder) holds the top card in the set to his/her forehead so that it can be seen by the rest of the group but not by the cardholder. The other students then work together to circumlocute the pictures they see on the card. Then, the cardholder displays the next card, and the process repeats until students have circumlocted all of the cards in the set. The task concludes once each student in the group has had a chance to be the cardholder. One notable difference between this activity and "Describing Pictures" is the level of difficulty. Because "Heads Up" allows students

to work as a team to circumlocute, it may be more suitable for less confident learners or as a precursor to "Describing Pictures".

Telling Stories

The two previously introduced tasks have focused on helping students circumlocute for single lexical items. However, students may elect avoidance strategies not because of one unknown vocabulary word, but a whole phrase, sentence, or idea that is difficult to express. In this case, students would benefit from circumlocution practice that targets longer utterances. By replacing the individual words with whole sentences, the previous activity can accomplish such a purpose. Another activity is called "Telling Stories." Students are divided into pairs. One main student is selected to sit with his/her back facing the video monitor at the front of the classroom. The monitor shows a short story in Japanese. The other student must circumlocute the story until the main student can grasp its overall meaning. After this, another short story is shown, and the process repeats for several stories. The students then switch roles, and a new set of stories are successively displayed on the screen.

Of course, the order and the content of the stories can be adjusted according to the particular needs of the students. It is highly recommended to order the stories so that they gradually increase in length and complexity. In this way, less confident students can slowly build up their ability to circumlocute longer messages. Regarding content, familiar stories (from popular movies, TV shows, books, etc.) may be suitable, at least initially, for younger and/or less proficient students. Otherwise, stories that are unpredictable and (somewhat) unrealistic are a fun challenge because students are less dependent on their schemata when deciphering the meaning of the circumlocuted parts of the stories. Here is an example of a story: A brother gets annoyed with his sister because she always leaves caps half open on containers around the house. One day, the brother shakes the salad dressing bottle. The cap flies off and dressing splatters into his eye. He goes to the hospital, and the doctor tells him that he has to wear an eye patch because he has an eye infection. The brother is upset only to realize that next week is Halloween, so he can dress as a pirate.

Modeling Circumlocution for Students

One final comment is needed regarding the practicing stage of circumlocution training. While students should be given ample opportunity for practice, the importance of consistently providing students with models of circumlocution use should not be overlooked. Of course, this can happen by way of videos and other types of media as previously suggested; however, this can also be achieved by teachers themselves. As Cervantes and Rodríguez (2012) urge, language teachers too often do not use the strategies they preach as models for students. Although circumlocuting for already-known words may not be a teacher's first instinct, such input becomes a constant reminder of how the teacher expects learners to practice using their strategic competence. These models can also be easily embedded within the flow of any teacher-fronted talk.

Metacognitive Strategy Training

As previously alluded to, when novice learners first learn to use CSs, it can be a struggle for them to apply their newly acquired skills to meaning-based tasks and real-world communication. To facilitate this, it is beneficial to have students analyze and reflect on their own classroom interactions. Students can be asked to record their interactions with classmates and self-assess the types of communication problems that occurred, along with how they attempted to deal with these issues. Students who were not able to resolve their issues should be encouraged to think about how they might have been able to address those circumstances differently. This is a pivotal final stage in the training cycle because it is an opportunity for learners to form a connection between successful communication and the strategies they use. This kind of realization may spur students into using the same communication strategies in their future interactions.

As it relates to the practical concerns of this reflection task, one student in a group/pair can use their smartphone to record any classroom task. Alternatively, teachers can provide voice recorders. To begin, it may be helpful for students to work together to analyze instances of communication breakdowns. Once students learn how to identify these occurrences, this task can be assigned outside of class, and may even be extrapolated as part of a larger project wherein students longitudinally record their interactions and self-asses how their communication strategies have evolved.

Conclusion

The teaching suggestions in this paper have been inspired by the author's own experiences teaching novice learners. Seeing learners who try to express themselves but give up is frustrating for both educators and learners themselves. While educators understand that a shortage of vocabulary can be compensated for through various strategic means, novice learners too often see these very same situations as primarily a need to acquire more vocabulary. This gap in understanding how successful communication can be achieved limits the language practice opportunities that learners would otherwise be able to create for themselves. The activities and techniques presented in this paper attempt to bridge this gap by empowering learners to

become more self-sufficient in tackling obstacles that come in the way of their self-expression.

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Investigating Homeroom Teacher Influence on Student Self-efficacy in Elementary Schools

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Homeroom teachers (HRTs) are a contributing factor in students' ability to achieve self-efficacy, where the student believes that he or she can achieve a goal. Since HRTs play such a pivotal role in the classroom, their expertise should not go unnoticed, despite the 2020 MEXT reform to mandate English as a foreign language (EFL) a compulsory subject in elementary schools for fifth and six graders. It is important to gain a full understanding of the impact that HRTs have on students as they learn English in their formative years, and what role they can play in the future of EFL education at the elementary school level. This qualitative research study implements the research proposal of achieving student self-efficacy by HRTs within Japanese elementary school EFL classrooms (Kuziw, 2022).

担任の先生（HRT）は、子どもが「自分は目標を達成できる」という自己効力感を獲得するための一因である。2020 年の文部科学省改革により、小学校 5・6 年生で英語が必修化されるにもかかわらず、HRT は教室で極めて重要な役割を担っている。HRT が児童の形成期にどのような影響を与えるのか、また、今後の小学校 EFL 教育において HRT がどのような役割を果たすことができるのか、HRT の専門性を十分に理解することが重要である。この質的研究は、日本の小学校 EFL 教室における HRT による子どもの自己効力感の達成という研究提案を実践するものである（Kuziw, 2022）。

As a response to rapid globalization, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2014) has mandated that English be taught as a subject for all fifth and sixth grade students across Japan which started in April 2020. Kuziw (2022) proposed a qualitative phenomenological study to assess the effects on students' self-efficacy in the English classroom where homeroom teachers (HRTs henceforth) are teaching the subject area. The proposal focused specifically on HRTs at the elementary school level that do not have any formal qualifications or licensure in teaching English. This study is the implementation of that proposal.

MEXT (2014) states that, "schools should verify and adopt an evaluation method, etc. which covers various aspects including students' motivation and attitude for active learning", achieved by focusing on students' interests, motivation, and attitude towards communication equitably through an egalitarian approach. From the impetus of English language activities in elementary schools in the 1990s, the responsibility of conducting effective classroom lessons starting from the third grade was placed on the HRTs. Even to this day, the effectiveness of HRT-led classrooms, as it applies to MEXT's outline seems to indicate a complicated experience among those HRTs (Butler, 2007; Kambaru, 2016). However, HRTs are advocates to help students align one's learning towards their goals. Self-efficacy is at the focal point of this potential, which is determined by an individual's motivation. Understanding the ways self-efficacy and motivation are built within the classroom creates a dynamic which promotes the current and future success of EFL.

The aim of this study is summarized through three research questions stated below. These questions are based on the assumptions that the HRT is a current elementary school teacher, without an English-teaching license, with one or more years of experience teaching English to students in or throughout grades three to six. The following research questions were explored:

Q1. What role does the HRT play in supporting students' overall self-efficacy when teaching English?

Q2. To what extent can HRTs support students in building their self-efficacy?

Q3. What benefits does an HRT have in teaching their homeroom students English?

Literature Review

Teacher Self-efficacy and Attitudes

The theoretical framework underlying teacher self-efficacy is Bandura's (1993) cognitive theory, which describes that individuals are viewed as agents of change who both influence and are influenced by the contexts in which they operate. Self-efficacy, he states, "is people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives" (p.118). In a quantitative study exploring teacher motivation at a Japanese university, Tsutsumi (2014) found that five factors, including stress, restricted autonomy, insufficient self-efficacy, lack of intellectual challenges and inadequate career structure appear to affect teacher motivation. By recognizing these factors, instructors can be made aware of their proclivities towards their own students' motivation, attitudes, and skill levels, suggesting an interrelationship present between teacher and student motivation (p.125).

Motivation in EFL

In Japan, "motivated learning behaviour [in EFL] is considered to be a crucial factor in promoting learner autonomy" (Ueki & Takeuchi, 2013, p.249) which likens Tsutumi's (2014) research to teacher motivation. Furthermore, Zoltan Dörnyei, a prominent expert in the field of motivation in foreign language studies suggests, "self-regulatory strategies directly influence motivation, as they both concern the antecedents of increased learner achievement" (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p.612). Meanwhile, researchers Madrid et al. (1993) concluded that, "attitudes and motivation are the most important determinant factors in the learning or acquisition of second languages" (p.19). To understand the main sources of motivation in EFL, the researchers asked various cohorts to rank in order of influence six different factors and found that the youngest cohort rated "academic training of their EFL teacher" as very important. In a study titled "Research and Study on Learning Motivation", conducted by the National Institute of Educational Policy Research (as cited in MEXT, 2002), it was revealed that children tend to increase their motivation when they *better understood* classes, felt them *interesting*, and *grew concerned about their future career*.

Metacognitive Awareness

Werner and Kobayashi (2015) conducted a study which revealed that teachers in a Tokyo district elementary school were giving students an opportunity to "learn how to learn" (p.402) when it came to studying EFL. "[Teachers] emphasized the fact that English is an academic subject, and while learning can be fun, it is also a serious part of the day" (p.404), which some students described as the reason for their added motivation towards EFL. Through a qualitative analysis based on the grounded theory approach, the researchers were able to collect data, "via observation notes and interview transcripts through the year [which] where categorized and coded according to an emergent framework" (p.404). Saito et al. (2015) determined that students should be made aware of specific behavioural objectives, employing models such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) to determine which skills have been individually achieved based on pre-prescribed objective needs. Students who are invested in their individual development have greater self-efficacy and thus greater motivation in their effort to learn English.

Learning Environment and EFL Training

The learning environment considers the relationship teachers have with their students. Gorsuch (2000) argues that certain characteristics brought upon by the HRT have an influence on Japanese learners including their learning environment, which could inhibit effective learning. One of the methods of assuring quality EFL programming, Hosoki (2010) suggests, is through the "upgrading of the teaching abilities of English language teachers" (p.211). Reducing anxiety in teaching a foreign language appears to be a significant outcome achieved through training, according to Machida (2016, p.44). However, teaching EFL pedagogy through professional development is determined by the local governments, which cannot be guaranteed on a periodic basis. Thus, teachers cannot rely on frequent training and instead manage their language classrooms themselves, which is not an ideal situation.

To date, there is no regulatory standard on preparing elementary school pre-service or in-service teachers to teach EFL, leaving many underqualified. Thus, as previously mentioned, since EFL has become a subject area for 5th and 6th graders, some local governments have begun placing licensed junior high school English teachers into elementary schools.

Limitations of Literature Review

Studies which specifically look at the perspectives of the HRTs and their propensity to promote student self-efficacy in English as a subject are limited. Machida (2016) highlights HRTs' potential reluctance and anxiety towards EFL in the classroom, however, the study overlooks the realistic efforts taken on by HRTs. This is further characterized by the lack of understanding regarding classroom strategies that have been successful, and which can be developed to increase students' self-efficacy.

Also, research in the understanding of teacher self-efficacy as it applies to students' own self-efficacy in the EFL elementary classroom is also lacking. While

teacher self-efficacy has been researched at the secondary and post-secondary school levels (Tsutsumi, 2014; Henry & Thorsen, 2018), it is not clear how teachers perceive themselves and their ability to conduct effective lessons at the elementary level.

Methods

Data Collection and Procedures

The primary source of data was collected using investigative questionnaires which participants completed through an online form using Microsoft Forms. To access the questionnaire, potential participants received a personalized letter including a QR code. The entirety of the questionnaire was conducted online, accessed only through this QR code. This method also secures proper data collection, which was compiled neatly and accurately, preventing privacy issues and any loss of data.

Participants were required to answer two sets of statements using a Likert-scale. The first set of statements focused on the teacher's own capacity to instill self-efficacy among students, while the second set of statements looked at self-efficacy of the students from the viewpoint of the teacher. A third set of statements were optional open-ended questions giving participants an opportunity to freely express their feelings about their experience teaching EFL to their own students. This was followed by a choice to be contacted directly for in-depth interviews and classroom observation.

As mentioned above, participants had the option to have their classrooms observed to gain insight into the classroom environment during English lessons and to compare the HRTs' answers in the questionnaire to the actual teaching situation. An observer-as-participant approach took place, where the participants know the research goals of the observer, who plays a neutral role throughout the observation. An interpretive approach was used where, "knowledge takes the form of explanations of how others interpret and make sense of their day-to-day life and interactions" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p.16). As a supplement to the classroom observation, consented interviews with the participants themselves were conducted (Tilley, 2016, p.54), clarifying the participants' thoughts, feelings, actions and attitudes towards both teacher and student self-efficacy. Given that the context is cross-cultural, special consideration was taken to understand whether, "the knowledge and skills to conduct…research in international and/or cross-cultural contexts [exits] before deciding to do so" (Tilley, 2016, p.53). This means that the observer had to be sensitive to cultural differences, including language. Participants could choose whether to answer questions or take part in an interview in either English or Japanese.

Participant Recruitment

The sampling strategy used to recruit participants included purposive and snowball sampling methods (Kuziw, 2022). The pool of participants includes at least 10 in-service HRTs teaching English as a subject to their homeroom students, and must have had at least one year of experience teaching EFL. While the curriculum and frequency of lessons differs between third and four grades and fifth and sixth grades, the latter being compulsory, the scope of the participants is not limited to only one grade. One potential barrier was to determine exactly which teachers are both HRTs and teach English to their classroom students.

The local municipal board of education, which overseas English education at the elementary school level, was informed of the study to ensure teacher cooperation across all schools. Per their request, and with the help of elementary school assistant language teachers (ALTs) 20 schools were contacted to identify potential participants. Of the pool of suitable candidates identified, more than the expected 10 participants was achieved (n=19). Two participants, both working at the same school, chose the option to open their classrooms to observation and participate in a post-observation interview.

Informed consent was acquired from everyone after being fully informed of the research process and data collection through a Japanese explanation of the study (Tilley, 2016, p.82). It is important to note that participation was completely voluntary, which predicts a low harm risk level (p.82). Given that the study takes place in a non-English speaking environment, materials were provided in both English and Japanese, to ensure clear information and to avoid any potential misunderstandings (p.82).

Data Analysis

Data from question sets one and two were collected from the online questionnaires and divided by question and results from the Likert scale. Analyzing responses collectively was the chosen method used to determine how relatively strong the respondents felt about each question. Each question was then analyzed separately with participants' names concealed, guaranteeing anonymity to their responses on other questions. Given the number of responses received, this paper does not include the optional open-ended questions.

Results

Figure 1 shows that 13 teachers (68%) perceived themselves as able to create strong bonds with their students. Without having to compare HRTs' bond with students in other subjects, the general disposition of the teacher and their relationship with students, it is evident that those surveyed had positive experiences in the EFL

classroom. This supports Bandura's (1993) suggestion that individuals, in this case, the HRTs, are positive agents of change.

Figure 1

*HRT Ability to Create a Bond with Students in English Class*
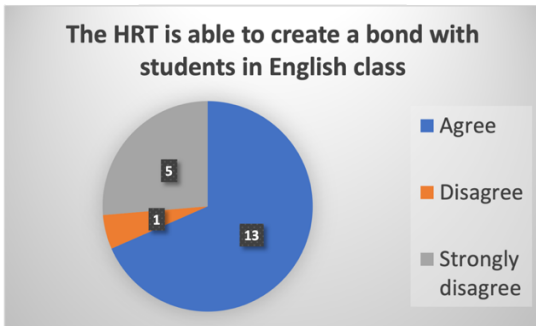
Through the classroom observation, it became evident that even though an HRTs may lack a high English level proficiency, speaking (either L1 or L2) can create a bond with students. Some examples of how this was achieved included students' ability to follow the HRT's instructions, general interaction with the teacher, making use of their common L1 (Japanese) when necessary and recognizing that the teacher is also an active participant in the lesson.

Figure 2 indicates that 17 teachers (90%) want to learn and speak English to better communicate with students despite already indicating strong bonds between students and teacher. This suggests that the HRTs have a vested interest in bettering themselves for the benefit of their students by better preparing for EFL lessons. By being able to learn and speak English themselves, teachers can perceive their ability to conduct EFL lessons more adequately. As output increases among students, teachers must be prepared to not only interact with students as they would in other subject areas, but expect to communicate their thoughts to one another. This is a positive indication that teachers believe interactive communication between student and teacher is vital.

Figure 2

HRT Initiative to Communicate with Students in English
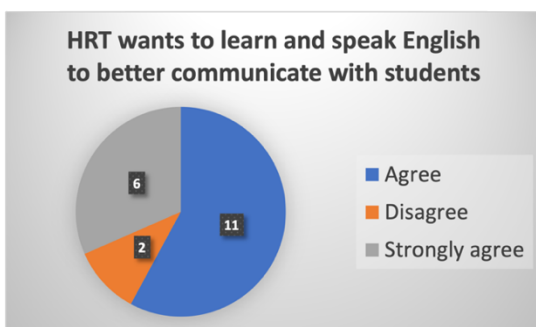
At the same time, as shown in Figure 3, 63% (n=12) of teachers perceive that students also enjoy interacting with their teacher when using English. Upon further inquiry, the use of English in these cases was not limited to the English used during EFL lessons, but rather holistically throughout the day. This suggests that students are not bothered by the ability of their teacher (a non-licensed English teacher) and are simply using English without hesitation in an enjoyable way. As a result of the interactions with their students, HRTs are able to build their own self-efficacy towards English, recognizing Tsutsumi's (2014) elements of teacher-student motivation.

By conducting post-questionnaire observations of the EFL classroom, it was evident that HRTs created a positive and encouraging atmosphere to speak English. While teachers followed materials created by MEXT, supplementary activities were created, catering to students' interest and needs. Part of the hidden curriculum here was that these activities were essential for students to communicate using English. Furthermore, evidence of praise in English was offered to students post-activity, answering questions or doing short presentations. English was overwhelmingly the expected method of communication during EFL lessons.

Figure 3

Positive Student Interaction with HRTs in English
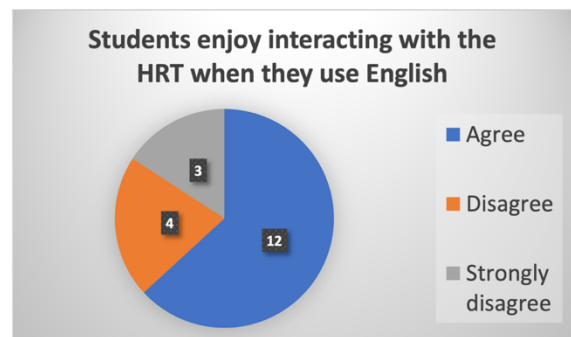
Figure 4 shows that 17 HRTs (90%) encourage students to use English when they chose to do so. This attitude leads to suggest that HRTs are aware of the impact they have on their students' English learning abilities, the output they show in class and the safe environment of the classroom to study English. Simply knowing these facts is enough to suggest that teachers are a positive motivational factor for their students, creating an environment where students can receive the appropriate education and are meeting the standards and expectations set forth by the school and by MEXT (2014) despite not having licensure to teach English as a subject.

Figure 4

HRT Agreement with English Usage for Expression

If students want to express themselves in English, the HRT encourages them to do so

■ Agree — 5
■ Disagree — 2
■ Strongly agree — 12
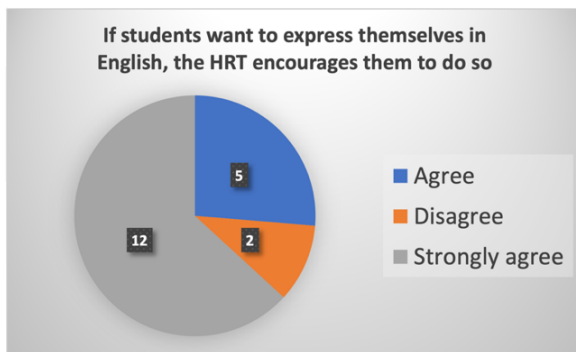
Discussion

Of the data sample collected through the questionnaire, four distinct data points were chosen to be analyzed: (1) HRT ability to create a bond with students in English class; (2) HRT initiative to communicate with students in English; (3) Positive student interaction with HRTs in English; and (4) HRT agreement with English usage for expression. Based on the results of the data gathered, HRTs conduct lessons that aim to achieve self-efficacy among students. Furthermore, the results show that the HRT plays a positive role in supporting students' overall self-efficacy when teaching English, acting as agents of change, as related to Bandura's (1993) cognitive theory. Since motivation is a key factor in gaining self-efficacy, it supports the findings by MEXT (2002), that children tend to increase their motivation when they *better understood* classes and felt them *interesting.* This is being achieved through a variety of teaching strategies which were noted during classroom observations and post-observation interviews.

Implications

The results of this study can support Municipal Boards of Education to assign responsibilities of teaching English to HRTs in grades three through six knowing that positive self-efficacy is leading to motivational outcomes in the classroom. Currently, HRTs across Japan are responsible for conducting their own English lessons for their students and while there are further contributing factors that can improve the outcomes of EFL at elementary school, the capabilities of HRTs as English teachers are justifiable.

Study Limitations

The process of data collection and participant recruitment highlighted certain challenges, including a reluctance on the part of the Board of Education to provide detailed information about teachers' teaching backgrounds. This presented a potential bias and was a notable constraint of the study. Alternative interpretations of these challenges exist, but these were not within the study's scope. Instead, a more targeted

approach was adopted, which entailed contacting schools directly to recruit participants. However, this approach was considerably time-intensive and required substantial effort, which may be a consideration for future research replication or design.

As issue emerged during the questionnaire phase due to a lack of explicit criteria in the participant recruitment information, leading to an inadvertent inclusion of a qualified English teacher in the sample intended exclusively for HRTs without an English-teaching license. This occurrence highlighted a potential oversight in the recruitment process, raising questions about the specificity of the sample. It is therefore, unclear how many participants outside the targeted demographic may have been included in the study. While this does not necessarily invalidate the findings, it introduces a level of uncertainly that must be considered when interpreting the results. Future research should incorporate more stringent verification measures to ensure the sample strictly adheres to the defined participant criteria.

Finally, while the focus of the study was to gain insights in the promotion of self-efficacy among students, the impact by HRTs qualified to teach EFL should not be undervalued. This is especially true of qualified HRTs who teach their own classroom students, which as mentioned above is sometimes the case. Their effectiveness compared to a non-licensed HRT became out of scope for this study. While the number of qualified English HRTs at the elementary school level is changing year by year, the information is still limited.

Future Research

Based on the results of this study, a comparative study promoting self-efficacy in elementary school students by both qualified and unqualified HRTs would be a unique and enlightening study, especially when other subjects such as math, physical education, music, among others are already being taught by qualified teachers. By conducting a comparative study to measure the achieved self-efficacy among students would indicate a trend that could potentially be significant and be applied to the management of English as a subject in elementary schools.

Teachers' reluctance to be observed and interviewed (in-person) should be strongly considered when conducting future studies related to the role of HRTs in the classroom. To mitigate this issue, more time should be allotted to become more familiar with the HRTs and create a strong bond with them, which may require a significant amount of time. However, if time is of the essence and strong bonds cannot be created, this should be better reflected in the questionnaire (See Appendix) itself, knowing that the HRTs will be hesitant

to allow access to the classroom or to being interviewed.

Conclusion

Achieving self-efficacy among students at the elementary school level is not yet well understood. This is further compounded by the lack of studies looking at the attainment of self-efficacy in English as a subject among elementary school teachers. For this reason, this study was conceived with the hope to enlighten researchers and in-service teachers of the current state and the potentials of unlicensed HRTs teaching English. This investigation was conducted with Bandura's cognitive theory (1993) at its roots, suggesting that change can occur despite any formal EFL training on the part of the HRTs.

Based on the results of the study, HRTs conduct lessons that aim to achieve self-efficacy among students, which is connected to the teacher-student bonds created in the classroom, a willingness on the part of the HRT to learn English, positive teacher-student interaction, and building an environment where using English is encouraged. It can be stated with confidence that research questions 1, 2 and 3 have been explored and are reasonably justified. The results of this study can be used by Municipal Boards of Education to assign English teaching responsibilities to HRTs. HRTs across Japan are already being given this responsibility and while other contributing factors that can improve the outcomes of EFL at elementary school should be considered, the current HRTs conducting their own English lessons is commendable. Moving forward, it is suggested that further studies be conducted to include a broader analysis and investigate the factors that allow HRTs to achieve their goals in the EFL classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Non-Certified EFL Teachers in Elementary Schools I

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am able to create a bond with the students. 子どもたちと仲良くなることができる。	5	1	13	0
	26%	5%	68%	0%
2. I am able to understand students' needs. 子どもたちのニーズを理解することができる。	1	4	8	6
	5%	21%	42%	32%
3. I am able to get the students motivated to study English. 子どもたちの勉強に対するモチベーションを上げることができる。	5	5	9	0
	26%	26%	47%	0%
4. I am able to increase students' memory of what they learned previously. 子どもたちに、以前習ったことを思い出させることができる。	0	2	10	7
	0%	11%	53%	37%
5. I am able to increase students' awareness of communicating in English. 英語でコミュニケーションすることに対する子どもたちの意識を高めることができる。	0	5	8	6
	0%	26%	42%	32%
6. I am able to communicate with students in English. 子どもたちと英語でコミュニケーションをとることができる。	2	5	9	3
	11%	26%	47%	16%
7. I praise students when they do well in English class. 英語の授業中、褒め言葉「英語を話すのがうまいね。」を使う。	1	2	9	7
	5%	11%	47%	37%
8. I am worried that I cannot communicate in English. 必要になったときに、自分が英語でコミュニケーションをとれるか心配だ。	2	4	5	8
	11%	21%	26%	42%
9. I want to learn and speak English to better communicate with students. 子どもたちとのコミュニケーションをスムーズに行うために、英語を勉強したい。	0	2	11	6
	0%	11%	58%	32%
10. I want assistants who can speak English to join the classroom. 英語ができる助手(ALT)教室に参加してほしい。	0	0	3	16
	0%	0%	16%	84%

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Non-Certified EFL Teachers in Elementary Schools II

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Students are happy to participate during English class. 子どもたちは喜んで英語の時間に勉強している。	7	3	9	0
	37%	16%	47%	0%
2. Students are motivated to participate during English class. 子どもたちがやる気を持って英語の時間に勉強している。	5	4	10	0
	26%	21%	53%	0%
3. Students enjoy interacting with me when they use English. 子どもたちは英語を使うと、楽しく交流することができる。	3	4	12	0
	16%	21%	63%	0%
4. Students feel at ease when I use English. 僕（担任の先生）が英語を使っていると、子どもたちは安心する。	3	6	10	0
	16%	32%	53%	0%
5．Students enjoy interacting with an ALT when they use English. 子どもたちは助手（ALT）と英語を使うと、楽しく交流することができる。	12	3	4	0
	63%	16%	21%	0%
6．Students feel at ease when the ALT uses English. 英語の助手（ALT）が英語を使っていると、子どもたちは安心する。	1	7	3	8
	5%	37%	16%	42%
7．If students want to express themselves during English class, I encourage them to use English. 子どもたちが英語を勉強する時間に、英語を使った方がいいと思う。	0	2	5	12
	0%	11%	26%	63%
8．Students are able to understand their level of English comprehension 子ども一人ひとりが自分の英語力を分かっている。	1	7	8	3
	5%	37%	42%	16%
9．Students are able to understand the teacher's demands of English comprehension. 子どもが英語の理解度の要求を分かっている。	1	12	6	0
	5%	63%	32%	0%
10. Students are admired by other students when they speak English. 子どもが英語を話すと、他の子どもたちから憧れられる。	0	5	9	5
	0%	26%	47%	26%

Self-stimulated Recall for Continuing Professional Development in Advising

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In this practice-oriented paper, I discuss how I engage with continuing professional development for my practice of advising in language learning as the only language learning advisor at my university. I begin by describing what advising is and the various ways that others may take part in continuing professional development opportunities offered in their advising contexts. I then turn to my own advising practice and how reflective practice (Farrell, 2015; Gibbs, 1988; Schön, 1983) facilitated by an adapted version of the introspective method of stimulated recall (Bloom, 1953; Gass & Mackey, 2005) assists me in my own professional development. Finally, I provide an example to illustrate how I employ this method for my reflective practice and conclude with both the benefits and challenges of this method.

この論文では、私が所属する大学で唯一の言語学習アドバイザーとして、言語学習におけるアドバイジングの実践のために、どのように継続的専門能力開発に取り組んでいるかについて述べる。まず、アドバイジングとは何か、そして他の人がアドバイジングの場面で提供される継続的専門能力開発の機会に参加する様々な方法について説明する。次に、私自身のアドバイジングの実践と、内観法である再生刺激法（Bloom, 1953; Gass & Mackey, 2005）の適応版によって促進される反省的実践（Farrell, 2015; Gibbs, 1988; Schön, 1983）が私自身の専門能力開発をどのように支援しているかについて述べる。最後に、この方法を私の反省的実践にどのように採用しているかを例示し、この方法の利点と課題の両方について結論を述べる。

Advising in language learning has grown in recent years as one of the ways to assist learners in becoming more autonomous in their language learning. Universities such as Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages, Kanda University of International Studies, Sojo University and Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University just to name a few have language learning advising programs that employ full-time language learning advisors. At places like these, advisors may not only receive initial training but also opportunities for continuing professional development. However, at other institutions, like my university, there may be no established program with a full-time staff. Instead, there may be a teacher like me who decided to offer such a service voluntarily on their own in order to offer a different way of supporting their students' language learning. In such a situation, beyond initial training programs available online, there may not be onsite follow-up support for continuing professional development.

In such a context, therefore, how can one engage with continuing professional development? One possible way is through *reflective practice* (Farrell, 2015; Gibbs, 1988; Schön, 1983) and one aid to facilitate this can be in a modified form of *stimulated recall* (Bloom, 1953; Mackey & Gass, 2005) or what will be called *self-stimulated recall*.

What is advising in language learning?

Kato and Mynard (2016) define advising in language learning as the "the process of helping someone to become an effective, aware, and reflective language learner. Dialogue between an advisor and a learner is central to the process of helping learners to reflect" (p. 1). This dialogue, which Kato (2012) calls *intentional reflective dialogue*, is a type of dialogue that is intentionally structured in a way to encourage the learner to reflect more deeply on their learning. For Kato and Mynard (2016), an advisor "supports a learner in going beyond improving language proficiency. The learner's existing beliefs are challenged in order to raise awareness of learning, translate the learner's awareness into action, and finally, make a fundamental change in the nature of learning" (p. 9). According to Carson and Mynard (2012), the goal of a learning advisor "is the development of learner autonomy which includes fostering the ability in learners to identify language needs and personalize the learning experience by selecting appropriate resources, planning, monitoring and evaluating ongoing language learning" (p. 14). This differs from a teacher's aim since a teacher's goal is likely to help their students "develop mastery in the language-related areas for the purposes of completing a pre-determined syllabus" (p. 14). Crucial to offering successful language learning advising is following the three principles of focusing on

the learner, keeping an open mind and taking a neutral position (Kato & Mynard, 2016). In other words, a language learning advisor is someone who supports a learner to become more self-directed in their language learning journey by encouraging the learner to take control of their own learning and not depend completely on another to do so. The key is not to show the learner the answers to their language learning questions but allow them the opportunity through dialogue to find their own answers thereby ultimately supporting them in becoming more autonomous in their language learning.

Advising at HUE

After being introduced to the concept of advising in language learning at a JALT conference, and understanding its potential for enhancing students' autonomy, language learning advising services were initiated voluntarily at the university. Later, such services were developed further via the enrollment in a formal training program offered online by the Research Institute for Learner Autonomy Education. Since completion of the program, language learning advising has been offered during the spring and fall semesters with both online and face-to-face sessions available upon request. It is reservation-based on a first-come, first-served basis utilizing a Google Form with each session lasting about 30 minutes and can be conducted in either English or Japanese based on the learner's preference.

Continuing professional development for advising

As with many professional practices, once initial training is over, in order to maintain one's level of expertise or to become better at it, continuing professional development becomes essential. In the field of language learning advising in Japan, some examples of continuing professional development have included participating in peer observation and workshops (Inoue, 2017), building and encouraging engagement with a community of practice (Kodate & Foale, 2012; See also Wenger, 1998), and experiencing intentional reflective dialogue themselves (Kato, 2012). These examples show the importance of belonging to a team with both beginning and experienced language learning advisors because in such environments, advisors can have many opportunities for sharing, discussing and learning from one another's experiences on a regular basis.

Continuing professional development when one is the sole advisor

The aforementioned opportunities for continuing professional development have many benefits. However, depending on one's context, physical and time constraints may prevent one from engaging in such opportunities. Furthermore, if one is the sole language

learning advisor on their campus, then there is most likely no onsite community of practice that is often found at the universities mentioned earlier to foster such sharing and development of practice.

Therefore, in such a context, continuing professional development may entail attending conferences, keeping up on current research and reviewing such research, and most importantly, and the focus of this paper, engaging in reflective practice (Farrell, 2015; Gibbs, 1988; Schön, 1983). In education, 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, while engaging in dialogue with others, use the data to make informed decisions about their practice" (p. 123). It should be noted that while this definition highlights the importance of working with someone, it is in fact possible for reflective practice to be implemented individually (Farrell, 2023) thereby offering a potential means for continuing professional development when one is the only practicing advisor.

There is much research on reflective practice and various ways to conduct it (Farrell, 2015; Gibbs, 1988; Schön, 1983). Among these, I have chosen Gibbs' (1988) framework for its simplicity as the stages therein provide a clear guide for facilitating such reflective practice. Gibbs (1988) includes questions to consider for each stage to which the University of Edinburgh (2020) has added further questions for guidance. Based on both of these, I have developed an adapted version to ensure that the reflective practice I engage in remains straightforward and time-efficient. Therefore, the stages incorporated into the reflective practice approach, along with the guiding questions for each stage, are as follows:

Stage 1: Description

Q1. What happened during this particular time during the advising?

Stage 2: Feelings, Evaluation and Analysis

Q2. How did I feel about my advising at that time?

Q3. Why did I feel that way?

Stage 3: Conclusions and Future Action Plan

Q4. Was there anything I could/should have said/done differently?

Q5. What can I do next time in a similar situation?

Self-stimulated recall for reflective practice

To facilitate my reflective practice, stimulated recall could be an appropriate aid as it is an introspective

method used to understand better one's "thought processes or strategies" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 78) during an activity or experience. According to Bloom (1953):

> The basic idea underlying the method of stimulated recall is that a subject may be enabled to relive an original situation with vividness and accuracy if he [sic] is presented with a large number of the cues of stimuli which occurred during the original situation. (p. 161)

While stimulated recall has been around for some time, it was McCarthy's (2012) paper that first employed the method for encouraging an advisor's continuing professional development since "…recording thoughts that came to mind during a session would possibly offer the learning advisor greater insight into her/his cognitive processes while engaged in advising" (p. 110). Stimulated recall typically requires two parties for it to be carried out for research purposes. However, given the unique position of being the sole advisor at my institution and the use of the method as an aid for reflective practice within professional development, a modified version of this method, referred to as self-stimulated recall, could hold significant potential.

Self-stimulated recall – Procedure

For self-stimulated recall to be most effective, it should be conducted as soon as the advising session is over since one's memories of the event will be easiest to access at this time (Ericsson & Simon, 1987; Mackey & Gass, 2005). It is possible, however, to conduct it later if necessary (Dörnyei, 2007; Henderson & Tallman, 2006), but one needs to keep in mind that by doing so, there is that risk of forgetting one's reasons for their actions. Therefore, even if it cannot be done immediately after, doing it that day is highly recommended.

To facilitate self-stimulated recall, either video or audio recordings can be used. I offer both online and face-to-face advising and have access to both kinds of stimuli. However, most of my sessions are conducted face-to-face and during such sessions only audio recordings are kept. It is important to note though that using video recordings has great potential as it can offer opportunities for multi-modal analysis of such sessions which may further one's reflective practice.

The audio recordings of sessions are uploaded to a computer for ease of playback. During the review of these recordings, pauses are made at moments deemed important for potential professional development to engage in reflective questioning. The entire session may be replayed to ensure comprehensive reflection and avoid overlooking significant insights. In instances where time is

constrained, maintaining notes during the session and using them to guide the self-stimulated recall process serves as an alternative method. With stimulated recall, the researcher often transcribes the discourse for the participant (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). However, due to the time required to transcribe, and in some cases translate the sessions prior to said transcription, unless it is deemed essential for reflective practice, for self-stimulated recall, this stage can be omitted with the audio recording alone being an appropriate stimulus.

Example of self-stimulated recall for reflective practice

To provide a clearer picture of how self-stimulated recall is used to support my reflective practice as part of my continuing professional development in advising, one part of an advising session will be used (See Appendix). As with all of my advising sessions, I (A) always ask the learner (L) which language they would like to use and then request permission to record the session explaining that the data may be used either for professional development or for research, and that in either case, all personal information will be removed.

Stage 1. What happened during this particular time during the advising?

This is the initial exchange of our advising session. After finding out what the learner wanted, I began by asking the reason for TOEIC. The learner wanted to check their level of English but was finding it hard to study for the listening section. After confirming this, I moved on to IELTS to which the learner said that they needed it because they wanted to study abroad but that they had not yet taken the test. This particular exchange ended with me asking about the learner's TOEIC experience.

Stage 2. How did I feel about my advising at that time?

I felt that there were things that I did well, but overall, I felt that I could have done better.

Stage 2. Why did I feel that way?

Starting with the positive points, I believe I used strategies such as repetition and restating well (See Kato & Mynard, 2016). Regarding areas for improvement, I believe I changed too quickly to IELTS. I think I did this because I felt I needed to help with both in this session. I was also letting my teacher identity and my feelings toward TOEIC and IELTS lead the session because the two tests are quite different and are often taken for different purposes, so I was trying to understand why the learner wanted to do both at the same time. In the end, what I was doing actually went against the three principles of advising mentioned above.

Stage 3. Was there anything I could/should have said/done differently?

There were probably many different paths I could/should have taken, but I could have asked the learner which test they wanted to focus on more for that session. I could have also asked for more information about why they wanted to use TOEIC to check their level, or I could have asked the learner more about why they were having difficulty with listening. I should not have worried about covering everything in one session. Most importantly though, I should have kept more of an open mind and focused more on them and not let my feelings toward TOEIC and IELTS get in the way.

Stage 3. What can I do next time in a similar situation?

As with the previous question, there are many ways I can try to deal with similar cases better. For example, I can recommend limiting the discussion to one test and encourage them to come back for another session to talk about the other one. If that is not possible, I can try spending more time on one test and then talk about the other one if there is enough time, or I can encourage the learner to consider ways to study for both tests at the same time. Another option altogether is to ask the learner about how they have been preparing for the tests. Finally, going back to the three principles, I need to try to stay neutral, keep an open mind and make sure the focus is on the learner and not my feelings about English tests.

Benefits and challenges of self-stimulated recall

Self-stimulated recall can be rather effective for reflective practice as it can be done without the need of others. It also does not require too much time to complete. While it is possible to transcribe the whole session or parts of it for reflective practice, the audio recording itself is usually enough for doing self-stimulated recall. Finally, it facilitates deeper reflection as the advisor is able to stand back and relive the experience as the participant thereby allowing themselves the possibility of noticing things that may be missed otherwise.

While there are benefits, the challenges cannot be ignored. As the sole advisor on campus, and as advising is my secondary role with teaching being the primary one, doing self-stimulated recall regularly can be difficult since one does need motivation to continue doing it. One possible way to overcome this challenge though is to limit the number of the sessions used for self-stimulated recall. For example, choosing to use one session a week or every other week could make such reflective practice more feasible and thus easier to continue over time.

Another challenge is that it may not always be possible to do it immediately after the session has finished. I usually have my advising during the lunchbreak and then may have a class immediately afterward. Of course, it is possible to do it after the class, but that may not always be possible either, and the longer one waits, the harder it becomes to access the memories. Therefore, scheduling such reflective practice for a time when one does not have other obligations after the advising session could resolve this issue.

Finally, what may be the biggest challenge to using self-stimulated recall for reflective practice is that since it is ultimately an individual endeavor, there is a risk of being too critical or not critical enough of your own practice. While it is important for the advisor to make sure they look at both the positive and negative aspects of the session and try to stay objective in their reflections of the experience, this may not always be so simple. As one can easily be overcritical of their practice, one can also have blind spots to their practice, something that a colleague or a critical friend (Costa & Kallick, 1993) who is also an advisor may be able to point out.

Conclusion

This paper has described how continuing professional development for language learning advising can be carried out through reflective practice facilitated by self-stimulated recall. While such continuing professional development may be best conducted within a support network allowing dialogues to take place with potential critical friends, in contexts such as my own, that is not possible at present. In such a situation, rather than avoiding such development altogether, there are benefits with using such a tool for reflective practice. Therefore, I would encourage anyone in a similar working environment to consider implementing such a method in their own continuing professional development.

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Appendix

Example of self-stimulated recall for reflective practice

A: How can I help you today?

L: Uh, I want to know how to study TOEIC and IELTS

A: OK. TOEIC…OK. So, my first question uhm is why TOEIC?

L: Uh TOEIC um I want to know my English level so I want to take it.

A: OK.

L: But um I don't know how to study for especially listening so yeah

A: OK. Now so you are looking at TOEIC um you want to check your English level WITH TOEIC, right?

L: Yes.

A: OK. And you're having some difficulty with how to study for the listening

L: Yes.

A: OK. Um how about IELTS? So why are you Why do you want to take IELTS?

L: Uh I want to study abroad and I need to take IELTS maybe so I haven't taken yet but yeah, I have to take IELTS

A: OK so um so you have no experience with the IELTS. How about TOEIC? Do you have any experience with TOEIC?

Likert Scale Survey of Team Teaching Communication Challenges in Japan

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There are multiple barriers to communication between Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) who are team teaching (TT) in Japan (Hiratsuka, 2022). This study was conducted through a Likert scale survey regarding three different categories of potential difficulty: language proficiency (LP), interpersonal and intercultural differences (II), and workplace logistics considerations (WL). Forty-seven EFL teachers responded to our survey: 26 JTEs and 21 ALTs. Participants were also asked to select the category of communication barrier they perceived as the most challenging. The majority of ALTs selected WL as the most challenging area of workplace communication, while JTE responses were more balanced between WL and LP. Responses to Likert scale items, however, showed that both ALTs and JTEs rated items in the WL category as highest on average. These results indicate a possible mismatch between JTE and ALT perceptions of communication difficulties and the reasons they occur.

日本では、英語教師（JTE）と外国語指導助手（ALT）がチームティーチングを 行う際、コミュニケーションに関する複数の問題が存在する（Hiratsuka, 2022）。本稿では、コミュニケーションにおける潜在的な困難の３つの異なる分野：言語能力（LP）、対人関係や文化の違い（II）、職場運営への配慮（WL）に関する要素についてリッカート尺度式アンケート調査をした。調査には JTE26 名と ALT21 名の計 47 人の外国語教師が回答した。また、参加者は、３つの分野のうち最も困難であると感じるものを選ぶよう求められた。ALT の大多数は、最も困難な分野として WL を選んだが、JTE は、WL と LP に大きな偏りなく回答が集中した。しかし、リッカート尺度式アンケートの項目に対する回答は、ALT と JTE ともに、平均的に WL の分野に含まれる項目を最も多く選択していた。これらの結果は、JTE と ALT が感じるコミュニケーション上の困難と、その原因の認識の間に不一致が生じている可能性を示している。

Team teaching in English education in Japan has become prevalent throughout the country, especially in the last decade. As Japan endeavors to sustain its economic growth amidst ongoing globalization and internationalization, policies towards English education have shifted gradually to place emphasis on creating future citizens who can accommodate its global economic goals (Barrett & Miyashita, 2016; Fritz & Sandu, 2020; MEXT, 2012). With the intention of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) to cultivate linguistic and social communicative English abilities to the national population of learners in schools, one of the policies put in place is the utilization of L1 English users in the form of assistant language teachers (ALTs) to assist in the EFL classroom (MEXT, 2003). Thus began the team teaching (TT) style of Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and ALTs teaching English classes in tandem. Since elementary schools were required to provide English lessons to the 5th and 6th grade levels as of 2011, with oral communication as the main objective (MEXT, 2008), TT was also implemented. Currently, the provision of English lessons has started as early as grade 3 for most schools, and ALTs are present for those lessons as much as circumstances allow. Therefore, TT is now a component of the English curriculum in Japan from elementary grade 3 all the way through the last year of high school.

Receiving English education through a lesson taught using TT while having exposure to different styles of spoken English and various insights into distinct cultures through an ALT within the English learning environment is undoubtedly beneficial to the learners (Nunan, 2003).

However, TT has its own challenges. Issues such as lack of L2 proficiency for JTEs and an inability to comprehend what the ALT has said to them, as well as

the inability to respond or express their thoughts, creates anxiety and also possible resentment toward ALTs for being the root cause of the unease they feel (Aspinall, 2013). Other issues such as the misinterpretation of the role of the ALTs by both JTEs and ALTs lead to ALTs feeling underutilized and inferior in the workplace (Glasgow & Paller, 2016). On the other hand, there is also a noticeable discrepancy of expected educational qualification between JTEs and ALTs, given that ALTs do not need a teaching license or any experience in English pedagogy to apply for the position (Machida & Walsh, 2015), though ALT hiring qualifications at multiple dispatch companies and programs now include teaching experience and/or credentials as "preferred,' "desired," or "look[ed] for" (Altia Central, n.d.; Borderlink, n.d.; Heart Corporation, n.d.; Link Interac, n.d.), and as of 2024, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) states that "ALT applicants must…[b]e qualified as a language teacher or be strongly motivated to take part in the teaching of foreign languages," with language and/or general teaching skills meriting "additional consideration" (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, n.d.). In other words, formal credentials remain optional for ALTs and, when present, are typically earned outside the Japanese education system; moreover, ALTs who have extensive experience teaching in Japan often lack accreditation commensurate with that experience. As such, the caliber of ALTs' teaching abilities vary widely depending on the individual, causing frustrations and worry for JTEs. Further, some ALTs also struggle with acclimation to ideologies and expectations held by others in the classroom and workplace, which often lead to grappling with their identity (Takeda, 2022). These are only a few of the challenges which can be experienced in TT.

We believe that many of the challenges mentioned above have realistic solutions and protocols that can be put in place to avoid such issues. To do so, it is first necessary to filter through many of the challenges and issues that arise in TT and understand which of the many issues might be most common. Thus, we developed a survey asking about three areas of communication in TT that we thought might generate various issues and challenges for the teachers.

Firstly, the survey was created to specifically examine the root causes of communication breakdowns between team teachers and what affects their willingness to communicate (WTC). WTC is a construct related to the predisposition of learners towards or away from communication in a second/foreign language; social, individual, situational, and motivational factors can all contribute to WTC both short- and long-term (MacIntyre et al., 1998). We note that the theory based on WTC in L2 (L2 WTC) typically refers to the willingness of L2

communication from a learner communicating to an interlocutor, who is usually a teacher or a fellow learner (Cao, 2011; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998; McIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Morita, 2004; Yashima, 2002). However, many of the factors mentioned within L2 WTC can be analogized directly to the teacher-to-teacher L2 communication required for TT. The survey divides TT communication into three categories that we believe affect TT and affect teachers' L2 WTC: language proficiency (LP), interpersonal/intercultural differences (II), and workplace logistics (LP).

Language proficiency difficulties can greatly affect TT dynamics as well as TT success (Hiratsuka, 2022). Its impact can be direct (due to actual proficiency levels) or indirect (due to JTEs' anxieties about self-perceived low linguistic competence). These difficulties are a salient barrier to communication in many contexts, but especially at the elementary school level, where recent changes in the curriculum have left JTEs feeling ill-prepared to teach English (Kano et al., 2016; Hougham et al., 2017). Thus, we asked JTEs and ALTs questions regarding perceptions of their language proficiency as well as their anxieties towards them.

Interpersonal/intercultural differences can refer to challenges arising from anything from individual personality incompatibility to the influence of cultural stereotypes. A straightforward example of an interpersonal factor would be if a teacher does not like their team teacher, and thus has no (or negative) emotional incentive to talk to them. An example of an intercultural barrier to communication would be one TT avoiding certain topics with the other that they would normally address, due to their perception that cultural differences would make it difficult to communicate effectively about that topic. For this area, JTEs and ALTs were asked about any cultural challenges or misunderstandings that they experienced during TT. Additionally, questions were asked regarding personal compatibility as well as issues such as harassment.

The logistics and workplace information factor covers challenges that tend to arise as a result of working in a specific school, or department, with specific colleagues. It extends to administrative factors as well as how communication, workload, and scheduling is handled within the school. For this area, questions were asked regarding administrative communications and logistical problems in the workplace that might make communication in the workplace more difficult. For example, teachers were asked if they were able to receive reliable information or forewarning of upcoming school events or days off consistently.

Based on this model, a survey was created to explore and observe some of the common issues and challenges ALTs and JTEs have. Our current analysis

of the results of this survey aims to answer the following questions:

1. Do ALT and JTE perceptions of greatest communication challenges differ?

2. Do these perceptions match TT experiences as reported in the Likert scale survey items?

3. What specific items caused the greatest challenges for respondents?

Methods

Our research used a mixed methodology (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018) to gather data on ALT and JTE perceptions of TT communication challenges. The focus of the current study is the quantitative portions, specifically, one multiple-choice item of interest as well as the 38 Likert scale items.

Participants

The study involved 47 individuals who participated in the surveys. These participants were Japanese Teacher of English (JTEs) and Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), all of whom were presently team teaching or had prior experience in such environments. Out of the total, 26 were JTEs, and the remaining 21 were ALTs. The teachers' instructional levels spanned from elementary to high school. Additionally, the educators possessed a range of expertise, ranging from new instructors who had yet to gain experience and build their ability and style in teaching, to highly seasoned instructors who were self-regulatory and efficient in their teaching. Furthermore, their proficiency in the second language (L2) varied, with some facing challenges in maintaining everyday conversations and basic interactions, while others encountered no such difficulties.

Surveys

The survey was created based on the guidelines mentioned by Nemoto and Beglar (2014), with the aim of minimizing ambiguity and creating a scale of responses that was comfortable for respondents and would provide informative results. Once produced, the surveys themselves were conducted either in paper form (in Japanese) or via Google Forms (in Japanese and in English). Aside from the consent and interview opt-in sections, it was divided into five parts. First, an introductory section composed of 7 multiple-choice questions regarding the teacher's background including teaching context and some demographic information such as frequency of teaching days in one or multiple locations and the grade level at which they taught. The next section included 38 Likert scale items separated into three parts for each of the three identified challenge areas in communication; language proficiency, interpersonal/intercultural factors, and workplace logistics. It was then followed by a closing section where 9 open-ended questions were given asking instructors for further elaboration on memorable or difficult moments in their team teaching thus far, what specific strategies they implemented when faced with those challenges, and asking participants to select the area they found most challenging overall. For this section, feedback was optional for the participants as each teacher's experience of team teaching varies vastly and some of the questions might not have been relative in their teaching context. Including the end of the survey as well as throughout, a total of 4 feed-back requests were established where survey takers could comment on or provide feedback regarding the survey or survey questions themselves. All survey questions were first created in English and its contents and wordings were examined by (a researcher and practitioner well versed in SLA and pedagogy as well as the English education system in Japan). The questions were then translated into Japanese and the translations were checked and approved by an L1 Japanese speaker who had a background in Japanese education.

A list of survey items (including all Likert scale items) can be found in the Appendix.

Data Collection

The participants were gathered through word-of-mouth and online snowball data collection techniques in which the majority of the participants were made up of teachers within the Kansai region. For the JTEs ($n = 26$), most participants preferred the paper form of the survey, and thus direct visitations of each school was necessary, as well as acquiring permission from the principal or division head. JTEs primarily taught at schools that were visited by one researcher, and they filled out physical versions of the Japanese-language survey that were later converted into digital form. ALTs ($n = 21$) were gathered using the snowball data collection method: the researchers asked acquaintances and respondents to introduce ALT acquaintances of their own to the survey. Therefore, the ALT respondents were dispersed across a wider area.

Results

The data we consider in this analysis comes in two parts. The first is a single multiple-choice item in which respondents were asked which area (LP, II, or WL) they personally perceived as the greatest challenge to TT communication. The second part is the 38-item Likert scale items, which are analyzed by group (ALT and JTE) as well as compositely. The averages in individual categories for each group show some specific challenges, and possible inconsistencies between overall perception and specific issues.

Perceptions and Reports of TT Communication Challenges

Our first research question was, "Do ALT and JTE perceptions of greatest communication challenges differ?" When asked directly whether they found LP, II, or WD issues the most challenging in the workplace, there was a marked difference between JTE and ALT respondents' selections. Table 1 shows the response rates of ALTs and JTEs to this item. The majority of ALTs selected WL issues as the greatest communication challenge, with 67% of respondents identifying it as the area of greatest communicative difficulty. JTEs were more evenly split between identifying WL and LP as the greatest problem, at 42% and 38% respectively. Relatively few participants in either group (10% of ALTs and 19% of JTEs) selected II as the predominant communication issue with their TTs. The Likert scale responses, however, provide some additional nuance to the responses selected for this overarching survey item, which is explored further in the discussion section.

Table 1

Perceptions of Greatest TT Communication Difficulty

	ALTs (*n* = 21)	JTEs (*n* = 26)	Combined (*n* = 47)
Language proficiency (LP)	24%	38%	32%
Interpersonal and intercultural differences (II)	10%	19%	15%
Workplace logistics (WL)	67%	42%	53%

Likert Scale Responses Versus Perceptions

Our second research question, "Do these perceptions [of areas of greatest TT difficulty] match TT experiences as reported in the Likert scale survey items?" The answer to this question differs for ALTs and JTEs. Table 2 shows the average response to items in each category (LP, II, and WL) for JTEs and ALTs respectively. While nearly the same proportions of JTEs selected WL and LP when asked directly, items in the WL section of the survey had the highest average score among both ALTs and JTEs. LP was the only section in which JTEs, on average, rated challenges as being greater than ALTs, who rated both II and WL as greater issues compared to the JTE averages. However, even the highest-scoring section, that of WL, only had an average slightly over 2 for JTEs and ALTs, indicating that the majority of respondents disagreed that the area was a significant challenge overall.

Table 2

Average Likert Scale Item Responses for Each TT Communication Area

	ALT average	JTE average
Language proficiency (LP)	1.52	1.87
Interpersonal and intercultural differences (II)	1.8	1.72
Workplace logistics (WL)	2.24	2.1
Combined average	1.85	1.9

Notes. 1 indicates least reported challenge, while 4 indicates greatest.

Specific Areas of Difficulty

The average response to Likert items across all three categories for both groups scored below 2.00, indicating an average response between "strongly disagree" and "slightly disagree" (Table 2). This indicates that, generally speaking, the issue raised in each Likert scale item was not a significant problem for the majority of TT respondents. However, certain specific items received a high enough score to indicate some specific problems that commonly arose for respondents. These items are the focus of our third and final research question: "What specific items caused the greatest challenges for respondents?"

For the purpose of this analysis, an average response of 2.5 (the halfway point of the survey) or greater seems to indicate that a significant number of respondents identified the problem described as a challenge they had experienced; (i.e., on average, respondents selected an 3 or 4 in response to statements indicating a challenge, or 2 or 1 to reverse-coded items. Three such items emerged among the 38 items described when JTEs and ALTs responses were separated.

For ALTs, all three items scoring over 2.5 were in the WL section: "I regularly receive the information I need to perform my job satisfactorily" (2.52, reverse-coded), "I regularly receive information about workplace events before the day they occur" (2.50, reverse-coded), and "I am informed about changes in school schedule in a timely manner" (2.70, reverse-coded). JTEs had only one statement that approached the cutoff, with "My TT is easy to talk to, even about embarrassing topics" at an average of 2.48 (reverse-coded). Notably, all the items scoring near or over this threshold were reverse-coded, the implications of which will be addressed below.

Discussion

There are a few indications of interest to be found in this data. First, fully two-thirds of ALT respondents rated WL as the greatest area of TT communication challenge for them; they also rated it as a greater area of difficulty than JTEs, and all ALT responses to specific items in

which the average indicated greatest difficulty were included in the WL section. They also rated II as a greater challenge, on average, than JTE respondents (Table 2), despite fewer ALTs than JTEs selecting it as their area of greatest difficulty (Table 1). These results all indicate ALT respondents can be particularly sensitive to WL communication issues. This is likely aggravated by their status as a minority of (or, in some cases, only) L2 Japanese speakers in L1-Japanese contexts. However, JTEs also reported WL issues, indicating that this might not be limited to ALTs alone. Some of the logistical details that ALTs are missing might also be difficult for JTEs to acquire in a timely manner, due to the chaos and busyness that is at times inherent to primary and secondary education.

The way that these categories relate to one another is significant when interpreting these results. One possible reason for the difference in JTE and ALT responses on the topic of LP could be that while LP causes communication problems directly, it is a salient root cause of other communication issues in some cases. This cause-and-effect relationship may have contributed to the split between the selection of LP and WL in the JTE group, though there are many other possible contributing factors.

A more in-depth explanation for this difference in perception might be the amount and quality of information that ALTs and JTEs regularly receive in the workplace. In a primary Japanese-language workplace, only ALTs with high Japanese proficiency would expect to receive all the information around them, with most focusing by necessity on receiving the bare minimum of logistical information needed to do their jobs. Thus, ALTs would be most aware of communications related to the most salient of concerns, seeing the trees of crucial information like time and place, whereas JTEs, with more access to contextual information that ALTs are unaware of, see the forest of missed information and perceive the language barrier as its root cause.

In general, to improve the quality of this data, a greater sample size of respondents and a more generalized sampling method are of course desirable. However, there are some possible inconsistencies within our survey that could have also affected the results. For instance, while the questions were created with readability in mind, certain elements may have contributed to respondent confusion or influenced responses. Further development of the survey instrument itself is also needed. Specific survey item response patterns as well as free-response and interview responses elsewhere in our data indicate that certain questions may not have been interpreted consistently across groups. Further collection and analysis of qualitative data may shed light on ways to improve our survey instrument, and more advanced quantitative analysis techniques can also be used to seek out inconsistencies in survey responses.

Another possible issue with the survey itself is the distribution of reverse-coded questions across the three categories. The focus on clarity in item development led to most of the LP section identifying problems via "agree" responses, while the WL section was mostly reverse-coded questions in which "disagree" indicated the presence of communication challenges; the II section was a fairly even mix of these types. The high rate of JTE response to LP items, as well as the low rating of items in II by both groups regardless of reverse coding, indicates that this imbalance of normal- and reverse-coded items did not fully skew results; however, an even spread of reverse-coded questions might contribute to a different result in the future.

Conclusion

Every pair (or more) of educators involved in a TT relationship experiences a microcosm of interlanguage and intercultural social interaction. This relationship is itself a foundation for the teaching experience that TTs provide for their students. The aim of our survey was to better understand ways in which TT perceptions of communication with each other might differ, rather than focusing on teaching practices or communication challenges between teachers and students. While a great deal of research has covered TT practices in the classroom, and identity is also explored, the influence of specific challenges for dynamics of TTs as coworkers seemed worthy of further exploration.

The highly individualized nature of TT working relationships makes it difficult to generalize about problems as broad as communication challenges. That said, our current research, while incomplete, indicates a possible trend of mismatches between JTE and ALT understandings of difficulties in TT communication. ALTs may be most aware of specific, actionable information they do not receive, whereas JTEs may be focused on the more holistic challenge of keeping an L2-Japanese employee informed in an L1-Japanese workplace. A good first step to improve communication (and associated TT satisfaction) might be building a shared understanding of issues that have arisen and their possible causes, so that solutions can be devised. There is little to be done about the L1 and L2 proficiency levels of ALTs and JTEs, for instance, but solutions that focus on finding ways to quickly and easily circumvent the language barrier could help to convey concrete information and instructions. This would be helpful in some cases to alleviate ALT frustration with workplace communication difficulties.

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Appendix

Survey Items (English Version)

Below is the complete list of survey items included in the current analysis:

Multiple Choice Item

Overall, which aspect of communicating with your TT do you find most challenging?

- Language proficiency (Japanese and/or English)

- Interpersonal and/or intercultural differences

- Workplace and/or logistical issues

Likert Scale Items

Note: An (R) after an item indicates that responses for that item were reverse-coded in the data analysis.

Language proficiency (LP)

1. My Japanese speaking proficiency is inadequate for my professional needs.

2. I avoid communicating with coworkers in Japanese because of anxiety about my Japanese proficiency.

3. Anxiety about my Japanese proficiency stops me from using Japanese while teaching.

4. Anxiety about my Japanese proficiency stops me from using Japanese outside of class.

5. I avoid communicating with my TT in Japanese during class because they may not understand me.

6. I avoid communicating with my TT in Japanese outside of class because they may not understand me.

7. I avoid communicating with students in Japanese because they may not understand me.

8. I avoid communicating with coworkers and staff in Japanese because they may not understand me.

9. I have trouble understanding my TT's spoken Japanese, even when they use vocabulary and grammar I am familiar with.

10. I fear losing the respect of students because of my poor Japanese.

11. I fear losing the respect of my TT because of my poor Japanese.

Interpersonal and Intercultural Differences (II)

12. I have treated been unfairly by my TT in the past.

13. I or my TT have been treated unfairly by coworkers in the past.

14. I or my TT have experienced ostracization and/or hostility from staff at my school.

15. I feel like an outsider in my workplace because of my identity (age, sex, LGBT+, disability, etc.).

16. I hide parts of my identity to avoid facing discrimination at work.

17. I like my TT's personality. (R)

18. I would enjoy spending time with my TT outside of work. (R)

19. My TT is easy to talk to, even about embarrassing topics. (R)

20. My TT's communication style sometimes confuses me.

21. I can trust my TT's judgment. (R)

22. My TT and I have incompatible personalities.

23. I have trouble understanding my TT's perspective on life.

24. I see myself as an outsider in most social situations, regardless of culture.

25. My TT understands my cultural background. (R)

26. I understand my TT's cultural background. (R)

27. My TT and I often clash because of our different cultural backgrounds.

28. I lack information about bridging cultural gaps with my TT.

Workplace Logistics (WL)

29. I regularly receive the information I need to perform my job satisfactorily. (R)

30. I understand the expectations related to my work duties. (R)

31. I am able to use my knowledge of teaching in my workplace. (R)

32. I know how to access the information I need to perform my work duties. (R)

33. I know the rules and expectations my school holds for students. (R)

34. I regularly receive information about workplace events before the day they occur. (R)

35. I am informed about changes of school schedule in a timely manner. (R)

36. My co-workers and I help each other stay informed of new information, such as schedule changes. (R)

37. My co-workers seem generally aware of school policy, schedule changes, etc. (R)

38. Staff will attempt to share information with me if necessary. (R)

Responding to MEXT: Pre-Entry Programs at Japanese Universities

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This paper reports on a comprehensive survey conducted across 60 Japanese university to examine their pre-entry programs, accompanied by insights from pilot study interviews. The study explores the potential impact of core curricula emphasizing pragmatic communication, the dissemination of 'best practices' among institutions, and the universal availability of pre-entry schooling on students' subsequent academic experiences. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the efficacy of pre-entry programs and inform modifications to the study protocols for the next phase of research at tertiary institutions.

本稿では、日本の大学 60 校を対象に実施した入学前プログラムに関する包括的な調査と、パイロット・スタディによるインタビューから得た知見について報告する。本研究では、語用論的なコミュニケーションを重視したコア・カリキュラム、教育機関間の「ベスト・プラクティス」の普及、入学前教育の普遍的な利用の可能性が、学生の入学後の学術的経験に及ぼす潜在的影響を探る。得られた知見は、入学前教育の有効性をより深く理解することに貢献し、高等教育機関における次の段階の研究プロトコルの現行の改訂案に役立つものである。

In 2015, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) issued a directive to universities recommending adoption of pre-entry education for early admission students (MEXT, 2015), i.e. students accepted through alternative routes such as interviews and selective exams known as *Gakko Suisen-gata Senbatsu* [学校推薦型選抜] (MEXT, 2020). The *usual* route for admission in Japan is for students to sit for the common test for university admissions in January or sit for an exam created by the university. The MEXT Directive 3-5-1 indicated universities and high schools should jointly ensure that students remain motivated after acceptance to a university in their last few months of high school. MEXT outlined a system of pre-entry education (*nyuugaku mae kyou iku,* 入学前教育) for implementation. The directive reads:

> From the perspective of maintaining a desire to learn after students pass early stage entrance exams, MEXT is promoting the following points for university education:
>
> (1) Proactively provide pre-entry education, especially for those who complete admission procedures before December.

> (2) High schools should cooperate with universities and strive to provide the necessary guidance to maintain students' motivation to learn.
>
> (3) In the case of school-recommendation-type admission, the high school-university effort should be made under the guidance of the high school even after the student has made a decision to enter a university. (For example, the high school might require that students make a study plan before entering a university and have them report the progress of their pre-entry education to the university through their senior high school, and similar measures). (MEXT, 2015, translation by authors)

Guidelines for implementation are notably absent from the directive and the subsequent MEXT guidance. This omission has led to diverse approaches by universities and colleges in Japan in implementing pre-entry education programs, which is explored by this study.

Rationale for directive

MEXT (2015) indicated that linking secondary and tertiary education was critical to Japan's globalization. Filling gaps in what students covered during high school

and what was needed at university has been noted. Kawai, 2018) indicated that Japanese curricula at high schools and universities must focus on education rather than test preparation. MEXT (2008) suggestions for pre-entry education provided a starting point. However, the actual knowledge students need and ways to provide this have not been outlined by MEXT. At English-medium institutions, Taguchi (2014), noting the disregard politeness and poor pragmatic competence of incoming students, suggested they needed sociocultural language awareness. All communication environments (face-to-face, text, online) require this competence. For instance, if students are expected to email professors, they need to use appropriate language (Usó-Juan, 2022). Taguchi (2014) also suggested that first-language (L1) speakers needed this competence. This is supported by research in L1 literacy. Students lacking L1 literacy, especially sentence-level reading skills, find subject matter classes difficult (e.g., Quezada & Westmacott, 2019). Thus, one suggestion for pre-entry education is to provide practical and academic skills (e.g., Hendry et al., 2023; Leadley-Meade & Goodwin, 2019). Second-language (L2) speakers of Japanese need similar pragmatic training. In short, the lack of thorough exploration in pragmatic competence (González-Lloret, 2019; Taguchi, 2020) indicates the need for pre-entry programs to incorporate pragmatic skills.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider how pre-entry education is being provided. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most programs were conducted on campus or by mail. During the pandemic, pre-entry programs adopted a flipped-learning approach, where content is provided through online and print materials for home study (Teachthought, 2014). (The effectiveness and implementation of flipped learning classrooms, particularly those utilizing information and communication technologies (ICTs), have been the subject of various studies (Chen & Yamashita, 2020; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015; Hao, 2016; Khoza, 2020).

During the pandemic, all education was flipped, with pre-entry education provided in multiple formats: mail, email, asynchronous (on demand), and synchronous (online via online meeting apps). Once safety restrictions eased, many institutions maintained online programs, with some also re-instituting programs on campus. (Further discussion of pre-entry programs appears in the Examination of University Websites section below.)

To date, however, we have not located research regarding how pre-entry programs address MEXT's (2015) directive. If the goal is to prepare incoming students for university, understanding how pre-entry programs are organized and whether they help prepare incoming students for university study is essential.

Aim of the study and research questions

Given the lack of information provided to universities or high schools from MEXT (2008, 2015), the researchers decided that further investigation into how Japanese universities are implementing pre-entry programs for the students they accepted using alternative routes is warranted. A limited amount of information is available on university websites. Therefore, with pre-entry program administrators and faculty were needed, with this supplemented by a survey of websites, to identify the "best practices" for the implementation of pre-entry programs. With this in mind, our research questions are:

1. How are pre-entry programs managed at Japanese tertiary institutions in terms of their types, organization, determination of eligibility, and expectations?

2. What do university pre-entry program administrators think about the pre-entry program?

3. How might Japanese universities best implement pre-entry education?

Methodology

Examination of University Websites

Our initial examination was to survey websites to determine how universities discuss pre-entry programs. In April 2023, we conducted a keyword search in Japanese using the terms *nyugaku mae kyoiku* (pre-entry education) and "*daigaku*" (university) so that both private and public college and university programs appeared in the search results. Initially, more than 50,000 results were returned but duplicates, specialty programs, and high school websites were eliminated, leaving 60 university or college websites. We then translated the information into English and coded the site in both Japanese and the English translation, with the Japanese interpretation preferred when our opinions differed. We determined that these institutions had adopted a variety of approaches to implementation of MEXT's 2015 directive (see Table 1), with some organizing the programs by department and others not providing this information.

Table 1

Japanese Universities Approaches to Pre-Entry Education (N = 60)

	Institutional organization of program	
	Department	Unspecified
In person	1	3
In person & on demand	4	7
On demand	20	24
Not specified	1	
Total	26	34

The examination found that five pre-entry programs specifically mentioned using a cram school (*juku*) or provided the name of a cram school regarding the development of the university's pre-entry program. We identified 11 other programs as potentially using a cram school based on the wording, which was nearly identical in these cases. Two institutions provided graduation credits for completion of pre-entry programs, awarding 1 and 4 credits, respectively. Three institutions charged for pre-entry courses, with fees ranging from ¥3,000 to ¥20,000. One institution had optional courses that pre-entry schooling students could pay to attend. Pre-entry program developers included (a) faculty, who created and taught courses, (b) university centers employing staff members to monitor the students, and (c) use of subcontractors such as cram schools to set up and manage programs.

Pilot interviews with pre-entry program administrators

This section discusses the pilot study of pre-entry Two pre-entry program administrators working in the general affairs section at one private university in western Japan participated together in an audio-recorded 90-minute semi-structured interview in September 2022. The interview with these L1-Japanese speakers was transcribed, entered into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis, and translated into English. The data were coded in either Japanese or English, with the L1-Japanese researchers coding the original text and the L1-English research coding the English translation.

The three coders first read portions independently and then met to share initial codings before establishing a coding scheme following the steps outlined by Saldaña (2021). Once all data were coded, the researchers returned to the coding scheme to identify themes in the data. Only quotes from one participant, P1, are included in this paper as those from P2 were restatements or agreements of P1's comments.

The interview followed a semi-structured approach designed to check the question wording. The types of questions, asked in Japanese, included:

1) What kinds of pre-entry education does A university provide?

2) How many times does A university conduct a year?

3) How do you make sure that these first-year students acquire academic skills?

4) How would you like to work on pre-entry education as a center?

5) What are the future plans for pre-entry education and first-year education?

Results

Three main themes emerged from the pilot study interview data: (a) academic considerations, (b) student considerations, and (c) institutional considerations. Comments were then categorized as positive, negative, or neutral. Comments unrelated to pre-entry programs were ignored. This paper focuses on positive and negative comments.

Academic considerations

The data suggest three positive academic considerations of the pre-entry programs:

1) Literacy skills: Interviewees noted improved technological and media literacy skills since incoming students received training from elementary school.

2) Communicative skills: An emphasis on language needed at the start of their tertiary education led to increased awareness of communication pragmatics and prepared students to participate in the cultural life of the university. This included opportunities to develop skills such as note-taking needed during their studies.

3) Self-discovery: The pre-entry program provided an early start to self-discovery and development of life goals.

The first academic consideration, literacy skills, is found in comments such as "They have already been seeing [using] computers since they were very young and when smartphones arrived. In this way, they will already have been using computers since they were in elementary school" (P1). Comments such as this might indicate that pre-entry programs help students bridge the academic expectations of ICT literacy needs for high school to those needed for university success.

Communicative skill development is seen in comments such as

> I think it would be better if students knew the vocabulary necessary for university life from the point of view of pragmatics. I was also aware of the cultural life of the university. Well, [they should receive] an assignment on this in any case. (P1)

These suggest that programs might move students into the cultural life of the university.

Regarding self-discovery, program administrators comments included reference to specific skills:

> The Learning Support Center offers note-taking first, then four about designing four years of learning. The fifth one is self-discovery and life

approach and the sixth is goal-setting and time management in the middle of the university. Well, we are providing those things, plus, well, the other departments are giving lessons on how to use the library, and so on. (P1)

I'm going to make sure that they [the incoming students] thoroughly develop the kind of learning skills that are necessary for the college. More like, well, you know, focusing on some kind of awareness or mental orientation, including making friends? (P1)

These comments indicate a view of pre-entry programs as helping students transition to university.

However, negative comments related to academic considerations include computer skills, language skills, and subject mastery. While the pandemic gave students a crash course in computers for education, lack of access to a computer remains an issue. For many, their digital device is a smartphone. While people can communicate with them, they are insufficient for university work, a concern voiced by program administrators. One such comment was "Also, I wonder if there are children who don't have access to a computer. That was the only thing that everyone was worried about" (P1.) The students' lack of computer access meant that administrators had to contact students using both digital and traditional means.

But if we didn't know whose email address it was, then it would probably be something related to the parents, something related to admissions procedures, right? So instead of email, I said I would mail it and contact them by phone. (P1)

This was also seen in comments like, "But not all high school students have Google accounts. I was not sure if all high school students have a Google account or not, and I was not sure if they would want to join ours" (P1), and "But I couldn't tell whether they were the e-mail addresses of the parents or the e-mail addresses of the students themselves" (P1).

Moreover, regarding language skills, many of these comments related to the difficulty that L2 speakers of Japanese had keeping up with classes taught in their second language. "In the case of our university, there are many cases where students have difficulty in keeping up with the Japanese classes" (P1). There were also comments regarding the ability of first-language (L1) speakers of Japanese, such as "Or, as for reading and writing, how about their report writing skills? Inability to write logically" (P1). This was also seen earlier in the discussion: "I think, well, I think that it is true that the ability of the students, including their language skills, has deteriorated" (P1).

Comments also referred to how a lack of basic knowledge might cause some students to drop out as weak reading and writing skills hinder both L1- and L2-speakers of Japanese. "There are also cases where students are unable to master the subject matter or stop coming to the university" (P1). Additionally, negative comments were found regarding pragmatic ability, especially in email and letter writing:

For example, there were cases where the stamps were not affixed, or there was insufficient postage, etc. High school students are not really used to sending out such mail or letters . . . I think that many of them don't even address their letters properly, and it's quite a big problem when there is no sender. (P1)

Student considerations

A second set of comments was coded for student considerations, particularly motivation and social integration. While it might be argued that these overlap with the academic considerations of learning and self-discovery, we treated them separately, viewing them as addressing behaviors or perceived deficiencies by the program administrators. Motivation-related positive comments included:

Well, you get accepted [to a university] early, and then you have to wait for almost six months, a long time [from acceptance to entry] . . . . How do you ensure that the students are aware that they have to make good use of time? How do you keep them motivated to make the best use of their time? I think that is the key to keeping them motivated. (P1)

Program administrators are aware that early acceptance might negatively impact students' motivation to study during their last few months of high school. Therefore, maintaining students' motivation was considered essential prior to entry.

Furthermore, administrators hope that opportunities to meet future classmates might ease their social integration into university life.

Making friends is an important function of pre-entrance learning. It is usually considered to be an important function, but since it is only for students who entered the school in the fall, it is not a good idea to make friends in this way. (P1)

This suggests that the goals for pre-entry programs are broader than bridging gaps in the students' academic knowledge. Within this comment, there are both positive and negative reactions.

There were also comments connected to the administrators' perception that students' ability to make friends had declined, possibly due to the pandemic. A representative comment is "The evaluation of *usefulness* has not changed. While the evaluation of such areas has not changed, there has been a significant decline in the area of making friends online" (P1).

Moreover, negative comments regarding social considerations included lack of awareness of standard social practices and even the importance of showing up: "From the admissions center, I asked the guidance counselor at the high school to make sure that the students attend the campus study" (P1).

Regardless, there is an awareness that the program can help prepare students to participate in university life. "I'm going to make sure that they thoroughly develop the kind of learning skills that are necessary for that college. More like, well, you know, 'what about focusing on some kind of awareness or mental orientation, including making friends?'" (P1).

Institutional considerations

A third set of comments was in terms of the institutional considerations, particularly such as school programs and pre-entry policies. Positive comments focus on the institutional concerns such as securing enrollment, as in "Well, I think it is a part of orientation to be aware of. I think it will be a strategy to secure students as early as possible" (P1). Participants also considered the organization of the programs:

> Some departments dare to include the meal time in the program, and have students communicate with each other there. Some departments have interactive classes where students can communicate with each other, or in places like the breakout room in Zoom, but there are still limitations. The results of the survey clearly show this. This is the point, isn't it? (P1)

Comments were also found in the Internal views of the program:

> There are many voices, and I have received compliments from some professors, but other universities outsource the work, so I really feel that we are doing the best we can, and that is why we are getting a lot of compliments from the teachers. (P1)

Administrators also spoke about program expansion. "The number of students who are eligible for this program has been increasing every year due to the start of various high school entrance examinations" (P1). A bit later in the discussion, the participant mentioned the use of the university's learning management system *LMS): "Well, we are just now considering whether or not to use moodle as a labor-saving tool. But in the end, I think we will probably continue with this style [email and paper-based] for this year" (P1).

On the other hand, negative comments focus on declining first-year enrollment, such as "on average, the number of students is definitely declining" (P1) as a major issue forcing them to hold pre-entry education.

The willingness of high schools to support pre-entry programs was another concern:

> We hope that they will go on to our university in the future, but, well, maybe the high school side might think that such a thing is a nuisance. If you go to another university and think you have a good system, you may not want to tell them about our university all the time. (P1)

Limiting the program to early entry students is also viewed negatively as students who enter through the general examinations are ineligible. Scheduling is also viewed negatively, particularly as there are other events in high school students' lives:

> There were times when school events conflicted with each other, and there were also times when the university's schedule was not set up properly. In such cases, we received a large number of notices saying that students could not attend. Well, for example, there were March graduation ceremonies and entrance examinations. (P1)

Online programs received particular attention as they do not provide for a full experience.

Discussion

The results from the pilot study indicate that further exploration of pre-entry programs is warranted for us to address our research questions, but the data collected does provide some insights. Furthermore, the pilot study findings suggest that much needs to be done to help reduce the frustration found in the implementation of MEXT's 2015 directive.

Moving forward, pre-entry programs need to address two issues: maintaining motivation and building programs that work with high schools. MEXT's (2015) unvoiced concern for pre-entry education is to maintain students' motivation in high school after they are accepted into a university (Kawai, 2018). One suggestion is to move motivation to study back to the high schools and make university acceptance contingent on the students' final grades at the end of their last term of study.

Similarly, the concern expressed about students' computer literacy and its potential impact upon their university studies, as raised by Chen & Yamashita (202), also need to be addressed. Access during high school to the tools needed at the college and university level, particularly computers, might warrant MEXT attention. While this was not related to the pre-entry program itself, the importance of technological literacy is clear given the rapid changes we are seeing in education, which suggests that universities and high schools should find ways to build these skills.

One concern kept coming up in the interview regarding pre-entry programs that was unrelated to the programs themselves. This is the need for universities to improve the quality of education in Japan while being pressured to accept students with lower entry-level skills, which was coded as an academic consideration. The suggestions emerging from the interviews, which will require further exploration as we move forward, focus on linking successful completion of the final term of high school, not simply graduation, to university enrollment. In effect, university admittance would be contingent upon the final evaluation of competence in specific subjects at high school. The results from the pilot study indicate that further exploration of pre-entry programs is warranted for us to address our research questions. However, the data collected indicates that changes to the current system of early entry might be warranted. This could include extending provisional acceptance based on successful completion of high school courses as is done in the U.S. and other countries. Alternatively, Japan might adopt a national matriculation exam similar to the A-level exams in the U.K. to raise the level of Japanese universities on international rankings, which MEXT advocates. In short, rigor at the secondary level, for all years, is more likely to have an impact on students than one or two pre-entry sessions.

Related to this is the need to maintain economic viability beyond the top-tier schools. An unfortunate outcome of the falling number of high school graduates is acceptance of students who might not be ready for university education (Kawai, 2018). When faced with the disconnect between their current abilities and what they need to know and do upon entry, it is not surprising that students lose motivation to study. This showed up as one of the institutional considerations but overlaps with student considerations. This suggests that researchers need to explore the issue of falling enrollment at Japanese high schools on university admissions and the impact of pre-entry programs on enrollment.

Another institutional consideration is the demands of MEXT, high schools, students, and society on universities. Currently, each university must either develop a pre-entry program or contract with preparatory institutions to create one (Hendry et al., 2023; Leadley-Meade & Goodwin, 2019). This has created a situation where high schools are requested to monitor students from multiple universities following different pre-entry curriculums, as determined by the data from the website examination.

On a positive note, through pre-entry education, students have an opportunity to interact with future classmates. This was noted as a major reason that pre-entry programs are considered successful in the initial interviews. Improved communication between students was noted as helping them transition to university with friends.

Conclusion

Although the data are only from the website examination and the pilot study interview for this project, which was conducted to evaluate the procedures and make changes to the interview protocols, five points stand out. First, MEXT officials need to clarify their expectations for pre-entry programs, with an integrated approach used by all tertiary institutions suggested as it would be the most likely to be implemented with the cooperation of high schools.

Secondly, universities should share best practices for pre-entry schooling programs across multiple disciplines. Third, universities must make clear to high schools the skills they are expected to have prior to entry, including linguistic and pragmatic L1 and L2 abilities. Next, students need to understand the institution's expectations in order to develop autonomy, which means that high schools and universities must cooperate to help those planning to enter tertiary education participate fully in academic life.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, university entry must be meaningfully connected to high school completion, with satisfactory performance in the final months considered essential for actual admission. This might address the unstated concern in the MEXT (2008, 2015) directives: keep students engaged in their high school studies after they have been admitted to a university or college.

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Examining Student Perspectives on Improving Online Self-Access Learning

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Due to the pandemic, the shift towards online access has accelerated. In addition to open education resource (OER) expansion, research from many disciplines shows that students increasingly seek information online and self-access centers need to radically transform to remain current. This project analyzed the website for a university self-access center and presented the results of a structured qualitative opinion survey distributed to the university's students. The bilingual English/Japanese survey gathered student opinions on the website's visual and linguistic accessibility, subject relevance, diversity of content and cultural/linguistic representation, and aesthetic appeal. The survey was distributed in late January to early February 2023 using Google Forms. Results indicated most students were satisfied, though recommended changes included fonts, coloring, images, menu links, advertisements, Japanese language access, and text quantity. Although survey results at one institution are not fully generalizable to all university students, readers can gather ideas for their own educational contexts.

世界的流行の影響で、オンライン・アクセスへのシフトが加速している。多くの分野の調査から、学生がますますオンラインで情報を求めるようになっており、セルフアクセス・センターが最新の状態を維持するためには、抜本的な変革が必要であることが示されている。このプロジェクトでは、ある大学のセルフアクセス・センターのウェブサイトを分析し、同大学の学生に配布した構造化質的意見調査の結果を発表した。英語と日本語による調査では、ウェブサイトに関する学生の意見を収集した。調査は 2022 の秋学期末に Google フォームを使って配布された。その結果、ほとんどの学生が満足していることがわかったが、美的魅力、メニューリンク、広告、日本語へのアクセス、テキスト量などの変更が推奨された。ある大学での調査結果は、すべての大学生に完全に一般化できるものではないが、読者はそれぞれの教育の文脈に合ったアイデアを集めることができる。

Online self-access language learning is an established concept in tertiary education, though some faculty and administrators may approach it with trepidation. Even before COVID-19, some self-access centers invested in creating an online presence for students to engage with content (see Shucart et al., 2008). However, the pandemic has accelerated the transition to web-based university self-access language learning across the globe (Davies et al., 2020; Mynard et al., 2022; Telfer et al., 2022), uncovering a variety of new challenges for institutions of higher learning. This forced expansion has broadened the conversation about modernizing integrated self-access language centers (SALC) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in online spaces as faculty and administrators with diverse proficiencies and priorities engage with the increasing digitalization of education.

A Brief History of CALL and SALC

There has been a shift towards online learning, content, and engagement in education for decades. CALL became an emergent topic in the 1960s (Butler-Pascoe, 2011) and has expanded rapidly with the increasing accessibility and use of the internet. Although CALL is not a new area, its constant self-reinvention through its ties to current technological trends lends it currency. In recent years, the field has arguably seen the highest growth and fastest evolution in EFL, thanks to industry partnerships, societal changes, an educational narrative of *embracing the future*, and other trends.

Meanwhile, SALC grew out of the gaps left by abandoned audiolingual-method language laboratories (Mach, 2015) and is tapping into evolving trends of generational learning needs and expectations. What started as an effort to reuse language labs and foster a communicative space has become an entire discipline of research combining sociocultural SLA theories such as learner autonomy, learner motivation, and the zone of proximal development (Armstrong, 2016; Mach, 2015; Mynard et al., 2022). It is also a developing area in that some institutions are still questioning the utility of SALCs for learners' proficiency; for example, Takahashi (2017) compared learners' increases in proficiency and motivation after SALC usage for institutional validation.

SALC administrators, much like technological innovators in CALL, have been compelled within the past decade to justify their existence to budget-

conscious administrations (Armstrong, 2016; Mach, 2015; Takahashi, 2017). Modern universities that do not embrace online resources for students may be abandoned as irrelevant (Armstrong, 2016). Inevitably, these two developing fields have started collaborating to create truly on-demand self-access content (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014) and are now considered to be "closely associated" (Mynard et al., 2022, p. 34) because online access for students is an increasingly essential way to achieve a core SALC goal of fostering autonomy (Castellano et al., 2011) and is a socioeconomic equalizer for working students (Mynard et al., 2022). Before 2020, online self-access services in Japan were scarcely researched (Davies et al., 2020). Spurred on by the pandemic, institutions in Japan are expanding online SALCs, as discussed below.

The Evolution of Online SALC

Online SALC has existed in different forms for decades, enabling students to practice on-demand (Davies et al., 2020). Lázaro & Reinders (2006) found Internet-based resources were already prevalent in three-quarters of surveyed SALCs in 2006 (cited in Castellano et al., 2011), though many digital materials were purchased computer software like Rosetta Stone (Shearon, 2010). Although innovative SALC administrators quickly explored creative ways of providing online access through LMS-integrated online self-access learning spaces (Shucart et al., 2008), most materials were created within the SALC as specialized practice activities.

However, internet resources had expanded exponentially by the time the pandemic led to the rapid creation of many online SALC spaces, such as the emergency remote support established at the self-access center at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (Ohara & Ishimura, 2020), the LMS-integrated self-access learning lab in Indonesia (Anas et al., 2020), and the online writing support center at the University of Technology in Jamaica (Telfer et al., 2022). (For additional examples, see Mynard et al., 2020.) Nowadays, free resources can easily be linked to a modern SALC website, i.e., one that is mobile-optimized (Castellano et al., 2011).

Though the historical challenge was resource scarcity, the modern challenge is sifting through masses of online content to find appropriate activities and presenting them in an accessible and appealing manner (Mach, 2015). Indeed, students may have become overloaded with content during the pandemic as SALC coordinators felt pressure to do more in response to the uncertain learning environment (Davies et al., 2020). As Armstrong (2016) remarked, it is not access that is the challenge for today's students; it is discernment.

Learner Motivation and SALC Design

Keeping students' interest and attention can be challenging, especially during a global crisis. Online resources provide an opportunity for a greater variety of activities in an on-demand setting. However, they can easily become overwhelming in number or hard to navigate, leading to calls for greater simplicity, training for students, and more selective offerings for online SALC materials (Armstrong, 2016; Mach, 2015).

One limitation of online SALC use is that usage patterns and obstacles can be hard to identify, so administrators and faculty must actively collect feedback from students. It is especially difficult to quantify online SALC spaces' proficiency benefits, since the starting proficiency of students and their quantity and quality of SALC use all vary (Morrison, 2005). However, as Rubesch and Barrs (2014) observed, maintaining a web presence is now as essential to a SALC as to any other vendor or service organization in the modern age. Users will seek out information online such as opening hours, availability, available products or resources, contact information, and FAQs. Furthermore, there is evidence that adult learners like using technology to study language independently, both on computers and on mobile phones (see Castellano et al., 2011). Gamification is also popular with students (Telfer et al., 2022). However, online resources cannot unilaterally provide a complete language education. Research also clearly indicates most students require guidance and a sense of community to adopt these systems (Armstrong, 2016; Castellano et al., 2011), a role which the SALC can fill.

The SALC and Learner Autonomy

As Rubesch and Barrs (2014) observed, the purpose of self-access learning is to allow students to independently direct their learning process by giving them the tools to utilize language outside of the teacher-directed classroom environment, encouraging learner autonomy. However, a traditional SALC is a physically restricted space (whether a room or a building) with limited availability, just like the classroom. This limitation is "paradoxical" and may even contradict the principle of "self-access" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 42). In acknowledging self-access language learning's close ties to CALL, administrators may design self-access content according to the principles of "Big Data" by aiming for a large "volume, velocity, and variety of resources" (p. 43). However, they also cautioned against overwhelming learners with myriad options and no guidance; in other words, it is important to moderate the volume and variety.

How much is too much? Ultimately, self-access materials should serve the actual needs and interests of the intended population, not just administrators'

theories and predictions. After all, the latter may be inaccurate (Fukuda & Sakata, 2012). SALC research often treats learner feedback as uninformed data to be interpreted through theoretical lenses, showing researchers' lack of belief in students' self-assessment. But students know what interests or confuses them, and part of cultivating learner autonomy is showing students that their perspectives will be included.

The Research Setting:
A Detailed Look at the University's SALC

The context for this study is a prefectural university in Japan serving approximately 2,000 undergraduate and 40 graduate students. The satellite campuses specialize in nursing/nutrition and early childhood education/regional cultures, respectively, while the main campus specializes in regional/international studies and offers language courses in English, Korean, Russian, and Chinese. The self-access center at the main campus is designed to serve that campus's students; however, the addition of online resources and appointments makes it accessible to students at other campuses. All first-year students on the main campus are required to complete teacher-appointed SALC activities at the Language Learning Support Room (LLSR) as part of their English courses, and they must use the SALC website to schedule appointments. Nevertheless, many students may be unaware of the self-access center's online resources.

In past years, the SALC staff included approachable graduate students who could assist with Russian, Korean, or Chinese. Unfortunately, the limited staffing does not currently include student employees, which are highly recommended for SALCs (Armstrong, 2016; Mach, 2015), and the sole administrator is proficient in English but not the languages above. As Thornton (2023) found in her study of self-access centers, this English-centric gap between languages offered as classes and languages supported at the self-access center is not unusual, but it is concerning. In addition, spotlighting multiple languages is a way to promote inclusion of students with non-Japanese language identities (Mynard et al., 2022). Online resources are an opportunity to fill this gap.

The website provides a home page with a photo banner, a summary of reasons to visit the SALC, the mission statement, and a Google Maps shortcut showing the SALC's location. On the menu bar, there are pages for (1) information about the current SALC administrator, (2) posts announcing upcoming events or changes (also serving as a monthly culture blog), (3) appointments scheduling, (4) links to 24 online language resource pages, and (5) a basic privacy policy. Page viewership indicated students rarely visited the online language learning resources, and some students complained of

difficulties when asked to use the site, so this study served as a preliminary step to seek students' perspectives on the website and attempt to identify barriers.

The survey was based on seven research questions:

1. Is the website welcoming (aesthetically pleasing)?

2. Can students understand the SALC website's graphical user interface (GUI) in terms of layout and language level?

3. Are the provided topics useful and relevant for students' learning experience?

4. Do students want more content on the website? What kind?

5. Are students overwhelmed by too much content for them to navigate effectively?

6. How do the students feel about the diversity of content and cultural/linguistic representation?

7. Do the students have an overall positive association with the website?

Method

A two-section online qualitative survey was created on Google Forms to gather students' opinions about the website (Appendix A). To ensure anonymity, the survey did not collect students' personal data. All instructions and questions were provided in English and Japanese to ensure accessibility. A Japanese colleague checked the Japanese translations of the questions.

The first section included three screening questions, confirming participants were students at the institution, at least 18 years old, and consensual participants. Students who answered *no* to any of these questions were redirected to the submission page. The second section included nine open-response questions (seven required, two optional), which elicited students' opinions and knowledge of the SALC website. Questions were designed to elicit multiple facets of a topic to stimulate recollections and discourage simple yes/no answers, and all were coded positively to avoid confusion.

The survey was distributed by QR code in class and through bilingual posters online and on the main campus. Nine English faculty (excluding the researcher) on the main and one satellite campus were emailed a link to the survey and were asked to distribute the survey to their students. No faculty on the other satellite campus were known to the researcher, so it is unlikely that those students were informed or participated.

Two teachers offered extra credit in their English classes if students completed a secondary survey link

with their name, class name, and teacher name. Thirty-five students replied to the secondary survey.

Results

There were 97 surveys submitted. All were students at the institution and at least 18 years old. There were 91 completed surveys; however, this count was reduced to 89 when it was discovered mid-survey that the survey's login settings had reset and students were not required to sign into Google, a measure meant to restrict the survey to one answer per participant. After this discovery, the results were checked carefully for duplicates, and two responses were eliminated.

Most students replied in Japanese, so answers were translated using machine translation (cross-verified between DeepL, Google Translate, and sometimes WordReference for individual words). Because all the questions allowed for open-ended answers, the responses were analyzed and coded into four categories: *yes/positive*, *no/negative*, *mixed*, and *don't know*. Unclear responses were sent to the Japanese colleague who had helped prepare the Japanese translation of the survey and was familiar with the questions. In cases of coding ambiguity, given Japanese cultural tendencies towards acquiescence response behavior (Tasaki & Shin, 2017), it was presumed students would hedge towards more positive answers than they truly felt, so borderline cases were coded more negatively.

Website Style/Design (Aesthetics)

The first question in the survey addressed style and design (Figure 1). Of the 89 respondents, 77 (86.5%) claimed to like the website's style and design. Positive comments included "It's colorful and very attractive" (Table 1). Eight students (9.0%) said they did not like the style and design, two students (2.2%) replied with mixed sentiments such as "you can get a fun atmosphere, but it's hard to tell where something is," and two students indicated no knowledge (2.2%). Overall, the website was considered aesthetically pleasing.

Figure 1

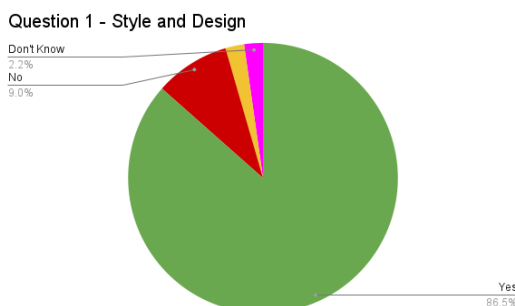*Coded answers to "do you like the style/design of the website?"*

Table 1

Themes in Responses to Survey Question 1 (Aesthetics)

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
Attractive	29		
Easy to see/understand	20		
Yes	14		
Good content	9		
I think so	7		
Colorful	5		
I like it	3		
Not attractive/appealing		3	
Useful	2		
Fun	2		
Very good	1		
Works well	1		
I don't know			1
I have never seen it			1

Comprehensibility of GUI

Research question 2 was addressed by survey questions 2 (layout) and 3 (language).

Website organization/layout

The second survey question addressed the website's organization and layout (Figure 2). In total, 67 students (75.3%) said they understood the website's organization and layout. Thirteen respondents (14.6%) claimed not to understand it. Negative comments included several complaints about the difficulty of booking appointments. Meanwhile, five participants (5.6%) gave mixed responses, such as "I understand, but it is difficult because there is a lot of information," and four participants (4.5%) said they did not know (Table 2). The responses to question 2 were less positive than to question 1, but the majority claimed to understand the layout.

Figure 2

Coded answers to "do you understand the organization/layout of the website?
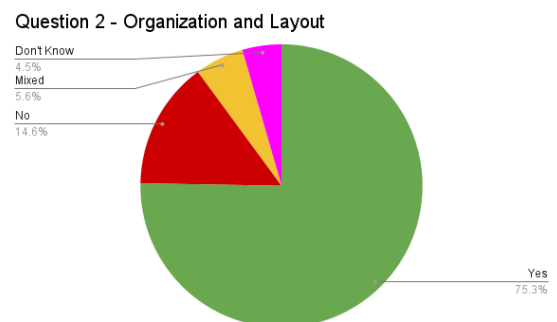
Table 2

Themes in Responses to Survey Question 2 (Website Layout)

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
I understand	43		
Yes	15		
Nothing difficult	6		
Difficulty with appointment screen		6	
Can't find content (excluding appointments)		4	
Hard to understand		4	
I don't know			3
Straightforward	2		
Nice layout	1		
Perfect	1		
I can do it	1		
Easy to see	1		
Too much information		1	
Change font		1	
Letters are too small		1	
I have never seen it			1

Linguistic accessibility

There were 74 students (83.1%) who indicated they could understand the words and phrases on the website – specifically menus, page titles, headings, and resource lists, i.e., the functional language necessary to navigate the website (Figure 3). In addition, one student claimed to mostly understand, but said the Japanese translation was strange.

Figure 3

Coded answers to "do you understand the words and phrases on the website? (menus, page titles, headings, and resource lists)?"
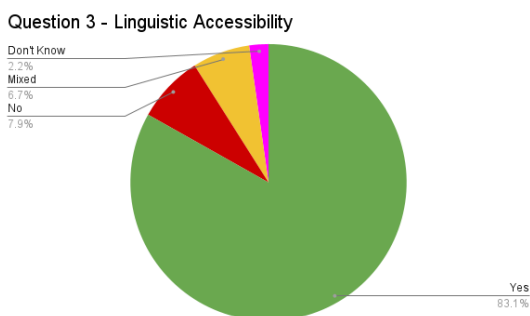
That statement indicated the student was relying on the browser's automatic translation software to understand terms rather than their English proficiency, so the response was coded as negative (Table 3). In total, seven students (7.9%) reported not understanding the language of the website, six students (6.7%) gave mixed replies such as "Almost I get it," and two students indicated their lack of knowledge (2.2%). The positive

rate here was higher than expected, given the comments for question 2, so other students may have answered affirmatively based on translation as well. Nevertheless, over three-quarters of survey respondents answered Questions 2 and 3 affirmatively, indicating most students can understand the website in terms of layout and language level.

Table 3

*Themes in Responses to Survey Question 3 (Language Comprehensibility)*

	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Don't know
I (can) understand	39			
Nothing (in particular) [is difficult]	14			
Yes	14			
Easy to understand	9 + 2 (Q6)			
Can understand a little bit/some		4		
The word are a little difficult			3	
No			2	
Use automatic translation to understand			2	
I can do it	1			
Would be better with a search field			1	
I don't know	1			1
I have never seen it				1

Useful Topics

Survey question 4 (Figure 4) provided answers to research questions 3 and 4. This section will address research question 3: Are the provided topics useful and relevant for students' learning experience? Seventy-eight responses (87.6%) indicated the topics on the website were useful to respondents.

Figure 4

Coded answers to "are the topics on the website useful to you?"
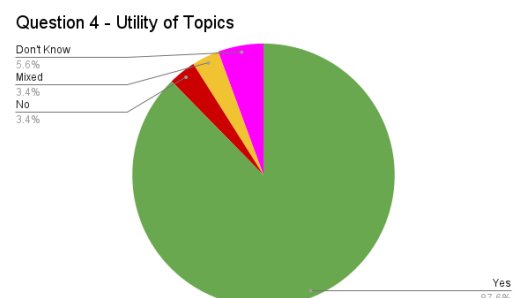
Comments mostly included "it's useful" or "there are useful activities," but several insightful comments appeared, including "You can easily learn about overseas culture, and it is easy to understand because it introduces overseas events that match the time when the post was made" (Table 4). This comment and a few others were positive reinforcement for the utility of the monthly culture posts, which have no method of formal engagement on the website.

Table 4

Themes in Responses to Survey Question 4 (Utility of Resources)

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
It is useful	40		
There are useful activities	17		
Yes	14		
Can learn ablut foreign cultures	5		
[Requests]		4	
I don't know			3
Easy to understand	2		
I use it for class	2		
I have never seen it			2
I learned and became knowledgeable	1		
Interesting/amusing (面白い)	1		
Fine/okay (大丈夫)	1		
Easy to find	1		
Rarely used		1	

Three responses (3.4%) were mixed, including "useful in class, but rarely used." Three additional responses (3.4%) included requests, addressed in the next section. Lastly, five responses (5.6%) included some iteration of *I don't know*, including "I know very few other features besides reservations" and "never seen it. Not very interested." These responses reflect the nature of most first-year students' interactions with the SALC: mandatory appointments for teacher-assigned activities. However, most students felt the topics were useful to them, answering research question 3 affirmatively.

Requests for Additional Content

Survey question 4 yielded the following requests: "overseas cultural information," available on the Anglophone Cultural Information page; "game topics," available on the Games for English Learning page; and "I would like you to post a video that shows the atmosphere of the LLSR" (Table 5). In addition, one mixed answer was positive but requested foreign news, which is available through links to foreign news sites on the reading and listening pages and references to the news in the monthly culture posts. Since the requested information was already available, this answer would have been interpreted as positive had most of the

requests not also involved an existing feature. Overall, these survey responses reflect a similar resource awareness problem as the respondents in Castellano et al.'s (2011) study.

Table 5

Themes in Responses to Survey Question 7 (Requests - OPTIONAL)

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
No/nothing/not in particular/[no answer]	83		
That's enough	1		
I want lighter colors		1	
I want a personal appointment reservation form		1	
Please simplify menu		1	
I want less text		1	
I want advertisements		1	

Because of concerns that question 4 would not be direct enough in eliciting student requests while also gathering judgment on current topics, an optional question was added (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Coded answers to "is there anything that you would like to request to have added to the website?"
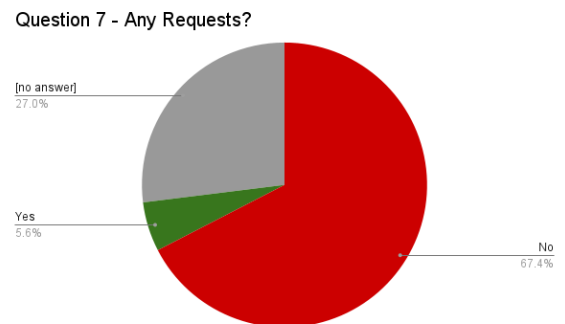
There were 65 responses (73%) to this optional question, 60 of which (67.4% of total, 92.3% of responses) provided no requests. The remaining five requests (5.6% of total, 7.7% of responses) were as follows:

1. Advertisements

2. A reservation form for personal visits (i.e., not required for class; already permitted on the regular form)

3. Simplified menu links

4. Lightened colors on the website

5. Reduced amount of text for easier reading

One of these requests came from a student who made a different request in survey question 4, so eight

students (9.0%) in total made requests, indicating that most students do not want more content.

Variety of Content

Eighty-one replies (91.0%) indicated the website had a good variety of content (Figure 6). Most respondents replied: "It's enough" or "just right." Only five students (5.6%) stated there was too much content. No one indicated there was not enough variety of content overall, notwithstanding requests in the previous and future questions.

Figure 6

Coded answers to "is there enough variety of content?"
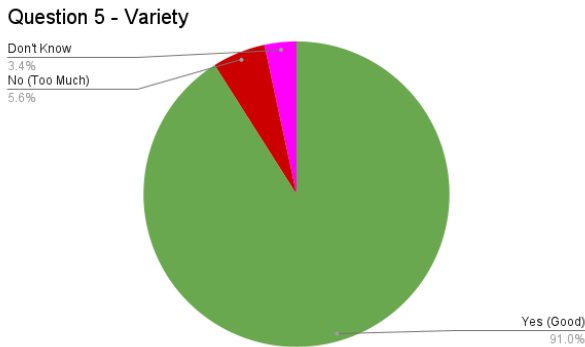
Lastly, three students said they didn't know, with one person stating: "I would like to know where I can find content" (Table 6). Unfortunately, this survey was anonymous, so assistance could not be provided in this matter. Overall, most students do not indicate being overwhelmed, but some students are.

Table 6

*Themes in Responses to Survey Question 5 (Variety of Content)*

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
It's enough	54		
Just right	11		
Yes	8		
Too many/too much		5	
I don't know			3
Appropriate	2		
Good amount	2		
Good variety	2		
Convenient	2		
Nothing in particular [to request]	2		
Better to have it	1		

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

Eighty students (89.9%) stated there was enough linguistic and cultural diversity on the website (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Coded answers to "do you think that the website shows enough linguistic and cultural diversity?"
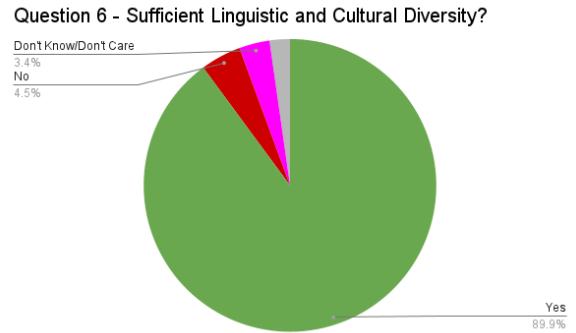
However, four students (4.5%) gave negative answers, including one who wanted a Japanese translation site, one who felt it would be easier to use if it could be translated naturally into other languages (presumably including Japanese), one who wanted to interact with more cultures, and one who said: "I think it's getting worse. I think it would be nice to have a photo of people from different countries" (Table 7).

Table 7

Themes in Responses to Survey Question 6 (Linguistic and Cultural Diversity)

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
It's enough/shows enough diversity	44		
Yes	16		
I think so	9		
It mentions various countries	5		
It has resources for various languages	4		
It has photos of people	4		
It mentions minority/indigenous/ multinational cultures	3		
It is easy for people from many countries to understand	2		
I want site translation		2	
I don't know			2
I don't understand			1
I want more cultures		1	
It's getting worse: I want photos of people from different countries		1	

Three replies (3.4%) indicated uncertainty or apathy. Lastly, two students answered a different question, so their responses to this question were merged with their responses to the corresponding questions. Research question 6 (How do the students feel about the diversity of content and cultural/linguistic representation?) can

be answered positively; most students believe the diversity on the site is good.

Other Comments or Concerns (Optional)

When asked if they had any other comments or concerns (Figure 8), 60 participants (67.4%) replied "no" or "nothing," 28 (31.4%) didn't reply, and one student replied, "I would like to continue using it in my studies." No issues were raised in regard to the other questions. Although the absence of critical feedback in response to this question indicates a general lack of time or interest, the positive comment supports an overall positive association with the website.

Figure 8

Coded answers to "do you have any other comments or concerns?"
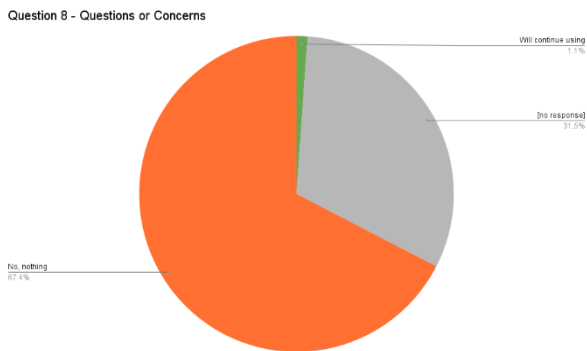
Overall Opinions

Of the 89 participants, 80 (89.9%) gave positive overall comments, including "good" (38, 42.7%), "easy to see" or "easy to use" (15, 16.9%), "useful" (13, 14.6%), and "should be shared" (2, 2.2%). Four responses (4.5%) gave negative feedback, namely "hard to see," "hard to understand," and two requests to have the main photo banner changed. Additionally, one person replied (as they had through the entire survey), "I don't know" (Table 8).

Table 8

Themes in Responses to Survey Question 9 (Overall Opinions)

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
Good/very good/nice	43		
Easy to see/read/ understand/use	16		
Useful/great tool	14		
Excellent/the best	2		
Tell more people about it	2		
Change cover photo		2	
Hard to understand		1	
Just a part of the universal data world, I'm afraid		1	
I don't know			1

Combined with the results of survey question 8, these results indicate students have an overall positive impression of the website (Figure 9).

Figure 9

Coded answers to "overall, what is your opinion of the website?"
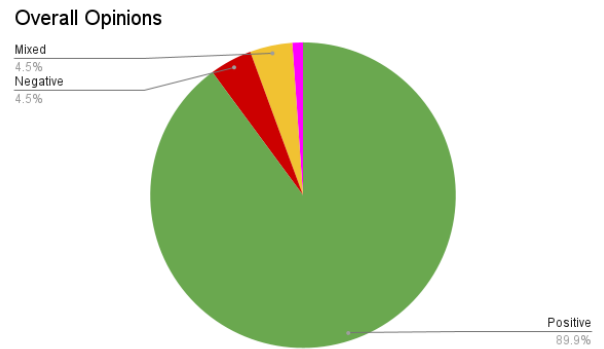
Discussion & Conclusion

The survey results indicated a positive view of the SALC website and some willingness to express negative sentiments or criticism when asked. Although this study is novel in eliciting student feedback on a SALC website, students' overall mildly positive responses aligned with other SALC student surveys about in-person SALC features (Yasuda & Bankier, 2023). Many of the criticisms and suggestions confirmed the administrator's suspicions, but some were surprising. Enough information was gathered to plan substantial improvements to the website, and all students' comments were addressed as outlined below.

Post-Survey Website Updates

Since two students mentioned in the general comments that the homepage image should be changed, replacing this image was the first change implemented after reviewing the survey results. The website now has an automatic rotation of header images.

Student responses indicated an awareness of accessible user interface (UI) design, such as high color contrasts, changeable font size and style, and adjustable backgrounds. Fortunately, Burke (2023) showed that these features can easily be added to a WordPress site using a plugin designed for students with learning disabilities. This plugin has been added to the website, with instructions for its use provided on the homepage.

Students' requests for more diversity, more photos, and less text were reflected in subsequent monthly culture posts, and a tutorial video was created and uploaded to the appointments calendar page, along with clearer language and design indicating that the calendar is also for self-interest appointments. The Online Language

Learning page (the first menu item of the 24) was updated to include links to all pages so that students on mobile devices can simply visit that page instead of scrolling through the menu. In response to students' request for lighter backgrounds and stronger color contrasts, an ongoing project involves lightening the block backgrounds of the 24 language research pages. The request for advertisements was unclear and was not acted upon.

Limitations

This study had various limitations in scope and ability. Question 5 was not clearly articulated, which posed challenges to interpreting the responses. Since the survey was distributed near final exams, students were not generally inclined to generate deep, reflective answers. Reverse coding, though initially avoided because of concerns about confusion among participants, may have prevented such cursory analysis. Additionally, many students knew the researcher personally or were the researcher's students; they may have avoided negative feedback. Finally, due to the researcher's low Japanese proficiency, machine translation was utilized, and some short answers may have been misinterpreted due to a lack of context clues.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Future studies on self-access center websites should continue investigating students' levels of comfort and familiarity with technology (especially UX), interests and needs, and barriers to access. Although independent survey questionnaires elicit direct opinions from both users and non-users within the target population, surveys focusing on users could be distributed on the SALC website itself. Potential research directions include accessibility, mobile device compatibility, content requests and recommendations, and general UX design. Including closed questions in future surveys would yield clearer data, though there is an equally clear need to continue collecting qualitative, exploratory data. For example, this study was not specifically designed to uncover accessibility concerns, but the open-ended nature of the survey allowed these concerns to surface. To allow for freer responses, SALC advisors, whose job involves forming relationships with all students on campus, might consider collaborating with SALC advisors at other institutions. Performing cross-institutional studies so that each researcher is not at the institution that they examine. Especially in self-access research, collecting exploratory data from students gives them the space to develop autonomy, which is a fundamental goal of this field.

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Appendix

Survey Questions

Section 1 - Demographics

1. Are you currently a student at the University of Shimane?
現在、島根県立大学の学生さんですか？

2. Are you at least 18 years old?
18 歳以上ですか？

3. Do you agree to participate in this research?
この研究に参加することに同意しますか？

Section 2 - Opinions

1. Do you like the style/design of the LLSR website? Why/why not?
LLSR のウェブサイトは、視覚的に魅力的だと思いますか？ 説明してください 。

2. Do you understand the organization/layout of the website? If not, what is difficult to find?
ウェブサイトの構成/レイアウトを理解していますか？ そうでない場合、見つけにくいものは何ですか？

3. Do you understand the words and phrases on the website? (menus, page titles, headings, and resource lists)? If not, what is confusing?
LLSR ウェブサイト上の単語やフレーズを理解できますか? (メニュー、ページ タイトル、見出し、資源リスト) そうでない場合、わかりにくい所はありますか？

4. Are the topics on the LLSR website useful to you? If not, what topics would you like to see?
LLSR のウェブサイトのトピックは、あなたにとって有用ですか？そうでない場合、どのようなトピックをご覧になりたいですか？

5. Is there enough variety of content? Is there too much variety? What should be different?
コンテンツの種類は十分ですか？ 種類が多すぎますか？何か別のものがあった方がいいですか？

6. Thinking about linguistic and cultural diversity, do you think that the LLSR website shows enough diversity? Please explain.
言語と文化の多様性について考えた場合、LLSR のウェブサイトは十分な多様性を示していると思いますか？ 説明してください。

7. Is there anything that you would like to request to have added to the website?
ウェブサイト何かリクエストしたいことはありますか？

8. Do you have any other comments or concerns?
他にコメントや懸念事項はありますか？

9. Overall, what is your opinion of the LLSR website?
全体として、LLSR Web サイトについてどう思いますか

The Good Life: Foreign Teachers and Retirement

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Very little has been written about retired educators, the so-called "Third Age Professionals" (Barnes, 2011; Carr & Gunderson, 2016). Babic (2022) describes their wellbeing as affected by various individual physical, psychological, and social resources. In Japan, in terms of physical resources, retired foreign teachers who worked full-time subsist on modest national and employee pension plans and their taishokukin, cash payment for years of service. Part-time teachers survive even more precariously on the national pension plan alone. Socially, and psychologically, these retirees also seek new social connections and the sense of purpose that they found in teaching. This exploratory study looks at what 26 retired or semi-retired teachers, aged 62 to 83, would advise younger teachers regarding financial planning, and how these 26 subjects now find purpose and connection and describe other aspects of their lifestyles. The study will interest foreign teachers, whether preparing for retirement or experiencing it.

定年退職後の教育者、いわゆる「サードエイジ・プロフェッショナル」について書かれた論文はほとんど存在しない（Barnes, 2011; Carr & Gunderson, 2016）。Babic (2022)は、彼らのウェルビーイングは、個人の様々な身体的、心理的、社会的資源に影響されると述べている。日本の定年後の資源は、フルタイムで働く退職外国人教師の場合、ささやかな国民年金と厚生年金、そして勤続年数に応じた退職金である、また非常勤講師は国民年金だけが支給され不安定な生活が強いられる。しかし、これらの退職者は新たな社会的、心理的つながりや、教師時代に見出した目的意識を求めている。この論文は 62 歳から 83 歳の定年退職、またはセミリタイアした 26 人の教師が述べた内容を探索的に研究したものである。この 26 人は若い教師に向けた経済的な計画のアドバイス、現在の生きがいや、社会的心理的なつながり、さらに他のライフスタイルについて述べている。この研究は、定年退職を迎えた教師だけでなく、これから定年退職を迎える外国人教師の興味を引くだろう。

The foremost challenge for retired foreign teachers in Japan in achieving "The Good Life" is subsisting on a modest pension income. Other challenges are to find new social connections and the sense of purpose that these retirees enjoyed while teaching.

Much research has been conducted on language teachers during their pre-service and early career development. Very little has been written about retired educators, the so-called "Third Age Professionals," following "The First Age," childhood; "The Second Age," work and parenting; with the Third Age covering retirement, around age 60 to ages 80 to 85 when age-related limitations become more pronounced (Barnes, 2011). For some, this period chiefly involves caring for parents or relatives, even children and grandchildren, but individuals may also possess the financial, social, and psychological resources, and physical health that enables them to pursue other goals (Barnes, 2011; Carr & Gunderson, 2016).

In one of the few studies of these individuals, Babic (2022) examined eight retired or retiring teachers (three of whom lived in Japan) to describe their "wellbeing." In contemporary use, "wellbeing" is a term from the positive psychology movement of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and others which seeks to identify the traits that improve an individual's quality of life, enhance their experiences, and support better citizenship.

Babic's use of wellbeing for Third Age Professionals refers to such attributes as an individual's sense of meaning and accomplishment, their social ties and relationships, levels of engagement as well as their physical health with higher wellbeing improving one's health, longevity, productivity and social relations. Among Babic's findings are the importance that her subjects placed on continuing to work in education, their access of social networks, and their physical, social, and psychological resources or "capital." This paper will explore the financial and social capital of retired foreign teachers in Japan.

Calculating Financial Resources

The limited income of retired teachers in Japan is their biggest challenge. Retired teachers must live on the modest pensions provided by the national pension plan, *kokumin nenkin*, and an employee pension plan, 厚生年金, or *kosei nenkin*. There is a one-time payment as well, 退職金, *taishokukin*, severance or retirement money, a cash payment based on a full-time employee's years of service. Anecdotal remarks by subjects in this study suggest that the two pensions combined, yielded only 20-25% of their fulltime university teachers' salaries.

However, calculations are complex, contingent on length of service, lump sum payments, birthdate, average monthly salary, and number of dependents. In a comparison of pension data, El-Agraa (2008) calculated that a Japanese academic would receive 28.07 percent of their pre-retirement income and pay 30 percent of their medical expenses versus a British academic (with similar years of service) receiving 57.86 percent of their salary as well as free medical benefits.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2019) notes that 60 percent of all academic positions in Japan are taught by part-time teachers. Their financial position is very precarious. Their one defined benefit consists of *kokumin nenkin*, the national pension plan.

Kokumin Nenkin or the National Pension

Sometimes referred to as the first pillar of Japanese retirement, *kokumin nenkin* is available to everyone who has paid the small monthly premiums of ¥16,520 (Japan Pension Service, 2024). Contributions are automatically withdrawn from the monthly pay of full-time faculty.

Part-time teachers must register at a JPS office, then pay their premiums at post offices or convenience stores. Legally, everyone in Japan between ages 20 and 59 is supposed to pay the premiums. These premiums which are tax-deductible not only grant a pension later, but also provide disability insurance and survivors' benefits.

According to the JPS website, a fully vested government pension, 40 years (480 months) of contributions pays ¥795,000 annually. Using the formula from the website, the 25 years (300 months) that many teachers work at their universities would bring in .625 of a full pension, or ¥496,875 each year. Since 2017, even a teacher with only 10 years of contributions (120 months), can claim .25 of a full pension or ¥198,750 annually (JPS, 2024). If a teacher leaves Japan earlier than ten years, they can recover a maximum three years of contributions.

Kosei Nenkin or the Employee Pension

The second pillar, *kosei nenkin*, the employee pension, forms the bulk of fulltime teachers' retirement funds. At private universities, the premiums are paid to the Promotion and Mutual Aid Corporation for Private Schools of Japan (PMAC). With its headquarters in Tokyo, PMAC offers information and support by telephone and email.

This pension is harder to calculate than *kokumin nenkin* because the premiums depend on one's salary and bonuses. Appendix A shows one teacher's pension contributions before retirement. This is calculated at ¥620 each month, multiplied by 12 months each year, plus ¥1,500 x 4 for two bonuses (two months' salary). When the form was issued, the teacher had contributed a total of ¥14,289,675.

The teacher lists 291 months of contributions over 24 years. Columns under 1a leave space to list the pensioner's other employers and any additional insurable earnings. This same teacher worked full-time for a single employer, so at 25 years, 300 months, the pension would be ¥1,608,000 annually or ¥134,000 monthly.

As with any pension, withdrawing it earlier, for instance, at age 60, means a smaller amount. In a blog posting about pensions, Tanaka (2023) notes that deferring a pension "until the age of 70 increases it by 42% and deferring it to 75 will increase it by 84%."

Taishokukin or Severance Money

Like full-time employees of other Japanese companies, retiring tenured university faculty are also eligible for 退職金, *taishokukin*, a cash payment for years of service. Universities calculate it from the number of years one has been tenured. They start with a base amount, adding increments each year, larger ones at 20 years, 25 years, and so forth, depending on a school's size and finances. A teacher can inquire about their *taishokukin* from their university administration.

Foreign Pensions

Financial resources for a pensioner may include pensions from other countries if the pensioner lived and worked in another place long enough to qualify. A common misconception is that Japan's international social security treaties mean that people can swap their Japanese pensions for more generous pensions from their country of origin. However, these treaties only affect eligibility. One can "borrow" a few years from one system to qualify for benefits in the country where one has made most of their pension contributions.

Investing, NISA and iDeCo

Teachers are often intimidated by the idea of making their own investments. Much information is available on the Internet and elsewhere. The website Retire Japan is an excellent resource for foreign teachers in Japan (https://www.retirejapan.com/) and Andrew Hallam's *Millionaire Teacher* (2017) serves as a good general reference on investing easily and effectively. However, as with any investment, past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Presently, the Japanese government encourages people to save more for their retirement, creating the Nippon Individual Savings Account (NISA) in 2014, and the "Tsumitate NISA," (2018). Recently, the government introduced higher limits, beginning in 2024. The maximum amount for a NISA account will be ¥1.2 million yen annually and ¥2.4 million in "growth investment" accounts for individual stocks. Investors can hold both accounts and the lifetime investment limit for a NISA account will soon be ¥18 million (Japan Times, 2023). These plans are similar to tax-free savings in other countries, notably the 401K in the U.S., but the accounts in Japan have a limit on contributions.

For younger teachers, planning to retire in Japan, there is 個人型確定拠出年金, an iDeCo account (National Pension Fund Association, 2024). It can be opened at banks and other financial institutions, and contributors can invest in Japanese mutual funds, save cash, or buy insurance. One can invest pre-tax income until age 60 and cash out tax-free (a maximum of ¥22 million after 40 years); this latter feature makes this plan superior to those in other countries.

Methods: Foreign Teachers on Retirement

Thirty-two retired or semi-retired teachers, aged 62 to 83, were contacted by email and asked what financial advice they would offer to younger teachers, and how the 32 subjects would find connection and purpose in their retirements (Appendix B). The questions were derived from the literature on ageing which describes the impact of financial preparation, physical and mental activity, and meaningful activities and relationships (e.g. Urtamo et al. 2019; Silva et al. 2022).

The group was a sample of convenience drawn from the author's professional networks. Three people declined to comment and three never replied despite follow-up. Twenty-six teachers from the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand participated, providing a response rate of 81%. Answers were summarized, then collated, and common themes were noted. Responses were also used to create a Table of Retired and Semi-retired Teacher Profiles, using pseudonyms and listing teachers from youngest to oldest, and noting domicile, previous employment status, years of teaching and current activities (Appendix C).

Financial Advice to Younger Teachers

The teachers suggested that their younger colleagues should learn as much as possible about their pensions well in advance of their retirements. These retirees warned of the difficulty of living on pension incomes, particularly during their first year of retirements with the added expenses of healthcare and long-term health insurance. Several mentioned their fear of poverty. Most were retired at the mandatory retirement ages at their universities but continued teaching, editing, and writing.

Gina, 67, a retired full-time teacher, now working part-time, cautioned younger teachers about staying in the field, given the few full-time positions available. Many of her friends had only ever held part-time positions. She observed, "They are teaching privately to supplement their pensions and feeling a lot more pressure to keep going." One of only three part-time teachers in the study, Henry, reported, that at 69, he hoped to work for another three years to avoid drawing from his savings and taking his pension too early.

Denise, 66, another retired full-time teacher, felt fortunate to find nine part-time classes. She remarked, "There might be a lot of very poor gaijin in Japan as they age. I've met a lot of people who said they have to keep working. But sometimes that's not possible for health reasons or the jobs dry up."

One teacher described the additional challenge of divorce. Depending when the divorce occurs, some or all of a teacher's pension has to be shared. Another consideration exists for pensioners living overseas, their *Kosei Nenkin* benefits are subject to a 20% Japanese withholding tax.

Most teachers emphasized saving money. Several had bought life annuities when they were younger and were benefiting from the payments now. Some mentioned the value of a good financial advisor but also described mediocre ones who received their fees regardless of the results. Uriah, 76, divided his time between his properties in Japan, New Zealand, and Thailand. He suggested, "Squirrel away savings in CDs [fixed term deposits that earn interest], shares, and property, much of it outside Japan," and recommended occasionally meeting with friends to discuss financial strategies.

Frank was forced to retire from his full-time position at 62, but stayed for two more years at a reduced salary. At 66, he moved to another city and took several part-time jobs. He advised:

> Put aside a certain amount and never touch it. If you are into investing or owning property to

rent out, all the better, although not everyone can do those things. Just keep your eyes open to opportunities down the road…in your 30s or 40s, you may not have the view of retirement of someone in their 50s or 60s, but it's still important to visualize where you see yourself in the next 10-20 years (here in Japan, teaching elsewhere, or working at another type of job).

The teachers who owned their own homes noted the security they felt with home ownership and the advantage that they avoided paying rent. Several described their efforts to pay off their mortgages quickly. They hoped to stay in their homes and "age in place." None of them proposed property ownership in Japan as a good investment except in prime urban areas.

Perry, 73, commented, "My tiny, one-person condo in downtown Yokohama, which I rent out for extra income, has increased its value and is worth more than my large 3-bedroom, 2-bath home one hour away in the suburbs, which has dramatically lost value."

Finding Connection and Purpose

Besides the financial challenge of subsisting on a pension, the retirees in this study faced the challenge of making new social connections and finding a sense of purpose. Most described some form of teaching as their main activity and reported that they still enjoyed doing it. Yvette, 79, remarked: "A teacher is always a teacher." Aside from the money from teaching (if they were paid), the respondents liked interacting with students and preparing for their classes gave them a sense of purpose, too.

Ethan was retired at 65, then "lucky enough" to be re-appointed as a 特別特任教授, *tokubetsu tokunin kyōju*, a special project professor, with the same teaching load and responsibilities as before but with a 24 percent salary cut. He still felt grateful:

> I appreciate my colleagues and administrators much more than ever before, and I have a steady admiration for my students who are filled with youthful energy, who persevere despite difficulties, who respect their teachers (rightly or wrongly), and who are open to learning.

Perry teaches two private discussion classes of adults, one online and one in person, centering on current events, intercultural topics, and personal experiences. He noted:

> I charge a modest fee, but I teach these classes primarily to keep my mind sharp and make worthwhile use of my knowledge and experience. The discussions are stimulating,

and we share a lot of practical information on all kinds of topics.

Thea, 77, enjoys the private school where she still teaches, some years after retiring. She commented, "I feel lucky there is no retirement age for these adult classes. Some in their 80s still teach there -- and some students are likewise no spring chickens. I lost one of my best students when he turned 90."

The teachers in the study also found purposeful activity in conducting academic research as well as writing poetry and fiction; the latter, interests that they had held before retiring. Vincent, 76, started his own literary press where he acts as editor and sometimes translator. Since 2013, he has produced more than 40 poetry books. He observed, "I'd always been fascinated by literature, especially poetry, so when I retired I decided to go for that 100 percent." Xavier, also 76, felt glad at leaving behind an academic environment to concentrate on his lifelong interests in writing and performing.

Notably, several respondents moved in different directions to find purposeful activities. Bea, 64, retired early to teach well-being and meditation workshops. She declared, "I am now living the life of my dreams." Liam, 70, moved to his sister's ranch. He stated, "Time for something new and different" although he still writes academic papers.

Volunteering formed a purposeful activity for some. They helped with educational associations, engaged with municipalities over local issues, staffed urban environmental campaigns to save Tokyo's greenspaces, organized women's retreats, assisted elderly neighbors, helped with teaching and tutoring, and engaged with social problems. Ted, 74, spends Saturday mornings with an outreach program for the homeless in Tokyo's Yoyogi Park. He commented:

> There are often close to 100 men and women waiting there, rain or shine. It's a really different look at life and I feel somewhat helpless. Yet it seems to have some meaning all around. "Salt of the earth" folks—both the "homeless"—or "rough sleepers"—and the folks who help out.

Developing new social networks challenged most respondents. They struggled to replace the networks of colleagues and students that they had enjoyed before retirement. Some described how playing music in a band, acting, singing in a choir, or participating in writing or research groups helped them to form new friendships. This challenge proved especially difficult for teachers who had moved to find new work, live closer to other family members, or had left Japan.

Physical Health

In addition to these challenges is another aspect of retirement which Babic (2022) observes, the resource of physical health. When exercise was noted by the subjects in the study, their principal exercise was walking. A few teachers also cycled, gardened, and one even did carpentry (renovations to a home).

Of the three who described regular, vigorous and varied workouts (which are recommended for seniors and adults of all ages), Ted works out daily and jogs four times weekly, and sometimes hikes, remarking that with "getting older, the saying, "use it or lose it," gets more and more true." Perry described how he gave up going to the gym due to medical issues, but manages "a weekly routine of low-impact aerobics, aqua walking, stretching, and muscle training," adding that whatever happens, "there is always some way to adapt."

The Impact of Domicile

Where to live turned out to be the teachers' most important choice as it impacted their finances, social networks, and sense of purpose. The majority chose Japan. With the exception of two subjects, the teachers all had a Japanese partner. That influenced their decision as did the state of their finances, the domicile of their children and extended family, their comfort with living in Japan, and their access to good, inexpensive medical care in Japan, too. Ethan, struggled to choose between three different countries. He commented:

> My home is Oregon, my wife's home is Seoul, and our two adult daughters were born and grew up in Japan. Issues such as quality and future cost of healthcare weigh heavily in the decision, as does closeness to extended family in the US (and to a lesser extent, Korea) and the majority of our friends live in Japan.

Three teachers who left Japan cited concerns for their children's education. They believed their children would get better high school or university education elsewhere. Subsequently, they experienced the convenience of living in an English-speaking culture and sometimes the benefits of extended family. However, they also noted that it proved harder to adjust than they had anticipated, and that they missed aspects of their life in Japan. Ian, 69, wrote:

> Moving back to the US disrupted my social and academic life 'big time' though I am still doing some things that I like, such as producing a magazine. Reading is better in the US because of great libraries. Socializing harder. Writing a pleasure.

The difficulty of repatriation often began with finding a place to live. Calvin, 65, returned to Australia with his Japanese wife. He observed:

> Our initial lifestyle plans (including reading, writing, socializing, volunteering, and hobbies) went up in smoke from our first month back as we have been confronted with a seemingly never-ending string of problems--house repairs, dealing with a variety of 'professionals' and the bureaucracy of various government agencies, the cost of health care, and living expenses.

The Factor of Citizenship

Another major step for some teachers was to become Japanese citizens, a decision frequently taken to avoid U.S. taxes that might affect their children's inheritances. This involved considerable effort, documentation, and Japanese ability. In addition, the teachers had to renounce any other citizenships and prove that they were financially self-sufficient. Yvette recently undertook that step and wished she had done it years earlier because it was a huge commitment of time and effort and stressful. She remarked:

> The whole procedure took more than a year, and for me was "scary"--The interviews were very tiring, individually (each separately) and as a couple. I had to write an essay in Japanese. Mine was eight pages long and a resume of my life and work in Japan.

Yvette and Zack, 83, the two oldest teachers in this group remained in Japan and expressed contentment with that choice. They take satisfaction in walks in their community, following their interests, and in interacting with their neighbours and friends as they prepare for the end of their lives. Zack urged other teachers to think ahead, to make a will, and to prepare "an ending note," the latter a widespread practice in Japan. In an ending note, a person reflects on their life and personal history; provides recollections and memories, conveys information about their assets, and expresses their funeral wishes. Commercial end note books are available with prompts for bank accounts, location of documents, internet and device IDs and passwords, and people to be notified.

Discussion

The comments and concerns of the teachers in the current study are not generalizable to a broader population, but of value in illuminating potential areas for future research. Among the current study's limitations is the construct of wellbeing in the lives of Third Age Professionals (Babic, 2022). Values such as a sense of meaning and accomplishment, social ties and relationships, and physical, social, and

psychological capital need more clarification through further research. Over time, this process has occurred in other areas of positive psychology so that there are now happiness inventories, self-rating scales for optimism, and questionnaires for quality of life. Furthermore, these instruments have been used very extensively, and now have a high degree of validity.

As noted earlier, the 26 teachers in this study comprised a sample of convenience; all were foreign teachers, native speakers, and 23 of them had worked in full-time positions. There are other foreign teachers in Japan and many more part-time ones. Future research should look at these groups, particularly in terms of pensions and their limited economic resources.

Furthermore, the participants in this study expressed a positively-skewed perspective; comfortable enough about their retirements to share their feelings and observations. In contrast, one teacher who did not reply to the author, was destitute and living on public assistance in a seniors' residence. A much larger and more representative group should be surveyed about their retirements, and the challenges that they face. This research could lead to useful generalizations about foreign teachers retiring in Japan.

Conclusion

Although more research needs to be done on foreign teachers in Japan, some challenges are clear. Financially, teachers of all ages need to better calibrate their employment choices, contribute to more robust personal savings and investments, and learn about their pensions. Educational institutions and teachers' associations like JACET and JALT should do much more to prepare full-time and part-time teachers.

In terms of social and psychological resources, teachers nearing retirement should develop new social networks, and explore interests and activities besides teaching. Self-help and social groups abound on the Internet through websites such as Meetup.com (https://www.meetup.com/). There are some excellent free online tools for self-assessment, particularly at the Authentic Happiness website (https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/) at psychologist Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania that enable users to nurture their capacity for happiness. Teachers also should prepare for such significant choices as where they will live, and the pursuits that they hope to enjoy.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pension Contributions

Appendix B: Questions for Retired and Semi-retired Teachers

Questions:

(Please indicate your age, where you live, your years of teaching, and whether full-time or part-time)

1. What financial advice would you offer to younger teachers?
2. In terms of lifestyle, what are your daily routines, paid work if any, exercise, and the social networks in your life?
3. What life choices have you made in your retirement in terms of where to live, whether or not to stay in Japan, and the pursuit of professional, academic, literary, activist, or other interests?

Appendix C: Retired and Semi-retired Teacher Profiles

With pseudonyms, from youngest to oldest, their age is noted as well as their domicile, previous employment (full-time or part-time), total years of teaching (from primary to tertiary education), and their current activities.

	NAME	AGE	DOMICILE	PREVIOUS STATUS	YEARS
1	ALBERT	62	Canada	Part-time	24
	Part-time teaching, volunteering, engagement with municipal politics				
2	BEA	64	Japan	Full-time	30
	Mindfulness/meditation teacher; gym, weightlifting several times weekly				
3	CALVIN	65	Australia	Full-time	42
	House repairs, reading, writing				
4	DENISE	66	Japan	Full-time	34
	Part-time teaching, creative writing, textbook writing and editing, proofreading, occasionally examining				
5	ETHAN	66	Japan	Full-time	36
	Semi-full-time teaching, writing				
6	FRANK	67	Japan	Full-time	25
	Part-time teaching, blogging, educational research, proof-reading				
7	GINA	67	Japan	Full-time	30
	Part-time teaching, fiction writing, some foreign travel				
8	HENRY	69	Japan	Part-time	46
	Part-time teaching, editing, photography, healthy eating; cycling daily				
9	IAN	69	USA	Full-time	45
	Producing a magazine, reading, writing				
10	JANA	70	Japan	Full-time	46
	Teaching at her own school, playing music, taking language lessons; visiting the gym several times weekly				
11	KEN	70	Canada	Full-time	41.5
	Volunteer teaching, reading, gardening, language study, travelling; seasonally; skating, cycling, swimming and canoeing				
12	LIAM	70	USA	Full-time	50
	Working on a ranch, writing and editing; mountain biking, 3 or 4 hours of farm chores daily (e.g. feeding a dozen horses, changing water pipes on hay fields in summer)				
13	MILES	70	Japan	Full-time	43
	Reading, writing, participating in academic meetings, cooking; exercising				
14	NAT	71	UK	Full-time	40
	Acting, textbook writing; walking				
15	OLIVER	73	Japan	Full-time	30
	Some part-time teaching, music lessons, singing, weaving				
16	PERRY	73	Japan	Full-time	41
	Part-time teaching, presenting, writing educational materials, language studies, dining out, cultural activities, domestic travel; aerobics, aqua walking, stretching, muscle training				
17	QUINN	73	Japan	Full-time	22
	Part-time teaching, writing textbooks, learning code writing, carpentry, gardening, guitar, photography; cycling				
18	ROB	73	Japan	Full-time	38
	Part-time teaching, presenting, writing and publishing; exercising				
19	SIMONE	74	Japan	Full-time	34
	Part-time teaching, activist in social and environmental causes, traveling, theatre; pilates weekly, yoga classes bi-monthly				
20	TED	74	Japan	Full-time	40
	Literary translating, writing, playing music, volunteering; exercising 40 minutes daily including stretching and weight training, jogging 4 days weekly; hiking				
21	URIAH	76	Japan, New Zealand, Thailand	Full-time	48
	Occasional teaching, running a media company, consulting, reading, writing, volunteering, house building and maintenance, travel; exercising				
22	VINCENT	76	Japan	Full-time	32
	Writing and editing, running a literary press; walking				
23	WYATT	76	Japan	Part-time	48
	Some part-time teaching, writing, publishing, and editing, playing music, domestic travel; walking				
24	XAVIER	76	Japan	Full-time	32
	Some lecturing, directing, translating, writing, diction coaching, acting; walking				
25	YVETTE	79	Japan	Part-time	31
	Letter-writing, reading, volunteering				
26	ZACK	83	Japan	Full-time	43
	Proof-reading, translating, reading, watching old movies; walking, making temple pilgrimages				

At Play: Drama for Language Education

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Many language educators are interested in using drama but reluctant to try it. This paper outlines four approaches that are accessible even to instructors with limited previous experience using drama. The first of these is role play through the Performed Culture Approach (PCA), a structured way to learn language by examining intercultural communication through role play. The second approach has students rehearse and perform lines from such materials as plays, TV, and film scripts. A task-based syllabus illustrates how a variety of script-based materials can be sequenced into Pre-Task, Performance, and Post-Task activities. In the next approach, students, in small groups, create plays based on current social issues. Over a term, they generate a production concept, a plot and flowchart of events, and a script which they rehearse and perform. The last approach involves bringing students to see live theatrical productions, preparing beforehand through such means as reading adaptations in class, comparing online versions, and performing their interpretations of key scenes.

多くの語学教育者は、ドラマを使うことに興味はあるが、なかなか試してみようとしない。本稿では、ドラマを使った経験の少ない指導者でも利用しやすい４つのアプローチについて概説する。その１つ目は、ロールプレイを通して異文化間のコミュニケーションを考察し、言語を学ぶ構造化された方法であるパフォームド・カルチャー・アプローチ（PCA）によるロールプレイである。もう１つは、演劇やテレビ、映画の台本などのセリフをリハーサルして演じる方法である。タスク・ベースのシラバスは、台本に基づくさまざまな教材を、プレタスク、パフォーマンス、ポストタスクのアクティビティにどのように順序立てていくかを示している。次のアプローチでは、生徒は小グループに分かれ、現在の社会問題を題材に劇を創作する。学期を通じ、生徒たちは作品のコンセプト、筋書き、出来事のフローチャート、台本を作成し、リハーサルと上演を行う。最後のアプローチでは、生徒を生の演劇作品に参加させ、クラスで翻案作品を読んだり、オンライン版を比較したり、重要なシーンの解釈を上演したりするなど、事前に準備をさせる。

Drama can provide many opportunities for language learning and for creative expression. It was first applied in the L1 context, particularly in the UK, notably with the efforts of Heathcote (cited by Wagoner, 1976) in negotiating classroom role plays with students, and Bolton (1984) advocating for the application of drama, curriculum-wide. Descriptions of its classroom use with language learners followed with Maley and Duff (1978), and Smith (1984).

More recently, educators have renewed calls for its widespread application. Charles and Kusanagi (2007), in reviewing the literature, characterized its value as making students aware of different communication modes; improving communicative behaviors; developing abilities such as pronunciation, intonation and discourse strategies; and providing a genuine context for communication. Boudreault (2010) argued that in addition to facilitating learning in a contextualized and interactional fashion, drama

improves students' confidence and relieves the tension of learning in a foreign language.

Cahnmann-Taylor and McGovernor (2021) list more than 80 different activities and games for language learners, demonstrating varied techniques and approaches. Many individual activities could serve as instructional interventions, and some of them have been researched. Kung (2013) found using jazz chants with college students improved their speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and their confidence and interest. Gorjian et al. (2010) found that university students preparing for roles in two English plays scored higher on comprehension and motivation than students pursuing traditional text-based studies. Alasmari and Alshaa'el (2020) found that role play and simulations with young learners developed their confidence, motivation, and speaking fluency. A meta-analysis of the effect of drama on language skills by Ulubey (2018) found that it positively affected learner skills, however, he noted that research participants were frequently heterogenous in age and language ability, among other factors, and the researcher was often the classroom teacher. Overall, research findings for drama interventions indicate positive effects for language learners.

Despite these arguments and the longstanding interest of many educators, teachers do not use drama often due to challenges that have been outlined by Alasmari and Alshaa'el (2020, p.63). They include classroom management issues, teacher unfamiliarity with drama techniques, the open-ended and unpredictable aspect of using it, the perception that drama is frivolous, teacher discomfort with their own English proficiency, and difficulties in assessing success. There might also be the perception that drama activities are less effective for improving students' English skills compared to other communicative activities, and some may conclude that there is a poor benefit-cost ratio. Angelianawati (2019) points out that shy students, and students with certain developmental disorders or social phobias, may find drama frustrating, while Royka (2002) contends that the fear of looking or feeling foolish is likely to be more common among adult learners who are asked to take part in drama.

This paper will outline four key approaches to using drama in language teaching. These consist of role play through the Performed Culture Approach (PCA), structured drama through script reading, playmaking in a performance studies course, and bringing plays to students.

Role play and the Performed Culture Approach

Language teachers in Japan are now putting greater emphasis on authentic language use and the social aspects of language. Role play, which Kumaran (2017) defines as "an activity centered on imagining being in a real-life situation and using language in context to communicate" (p.73) can play a significant role. Role play through the Performed Culture Approach (PCA) goes a step further in offering a structured approach to intercultural communication.

One of the authors of this paper encountered PCA during her Japanese teacher training in the U.S. and found that it increased her confidence in using role play. Her students there not only liked the interactions, but they provided a vehicle for introducing grammar and culture. She later applied it in Japan when teaching English to Japanese students. Using the approach may help other Japanese teachers overcome their reluctance to use drama.

PCA was designed to teach cultural aspects of communication to students in Chinese and Japanese language classes in North America, helping them to better interact with native speakers. PCA provides instruction in the linguistic aspects of an utterance as well as teaching about the target culture through "performing culture." As Yu et al. (2020) explain, pedagogical materials should elicit "appropriate cultural performances" from students, and help them construct a "second culture (C2) worldview as distinct from their base culture (C1) worldview" (p.156).

For example, Japanese students need to understand how to modify their language according to the occasions where they use it. Although Japanese honorifics might not exist in English, English speakers use different language to invite friends to join them in an activity than they do when inviting business clients or superiors, as these examples illustrate:

John (to classmate): Hey, Cindy, how about catching "Wonka" at the Bijou theater?

vs.

John (to his boss): Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Garcia, but I wonder if you might be able to join the sales team for lunch today. We have some ideas we would like to run by you.

Without understanding this integral part of intercultural communication, English language students might become marginalized in the target culture.

When used in class, PCA consists of two parts. First, students learn target expressions to use in dialogues based on functional, context-specific situations. Secondly, linguistic features of the dialogue, and cultural aspects of the target culture, are taught. Then students interact in a role play, incorporating their new knowledge. By employing carefully planned curricula that place learners in authentic linguistic and cultural situations, PCA enables language learners to more effectively communicate. This in turn impacts positively on students' self-esteem and self-confidence.

Role play activities with PCA can be designed around specific cultural scenarios such as asking for directions or making small talk with strangers. Variations can be gradually introduced into scenarios such as ordering in fast food versus high-end restaurants, asking people their food preferences, and interacting with different people (e.g., friends, business associates, or strangers). Similarly, role play can involve asking directions from people in authority, such as a police officer, or from shop attendants, acquaintances, or passersby. Role plays featuring small talk with strangers are important to ensure that learners make their intentions clearly understood by using appropriate utterances and gestures.

In conclusion, using PCA can help students gain the cultural knowledge required of speakers in a given language. This enables them to choose appropriate expressions and behave in culturally-appropriate ways, while gaining confidence in the process.

Structured Drama Through Script Reading

Script reading with language students offers a structured approach to using drama in the classroom. This is a form of Readers Theatre (Coger & White, 1973; Young & Rasinski, 2009) in which students rehearse lines from plays, TV, films, or scripts adapted for oral reading from essays, stories, or novels. Through script reading, students learn to speak more fluently and accurately as well as improve their language comprehension and cultural knowledge. In addition, the scripts provide a structure for teachers. The "scripts" described below are not confined to those of plays, films, or TV programs, but are conceived more broadly to include public service announcements (PSAs), broadcast news stories, and even speeches.

Highly motivating TV and movie scenes can be found for every curriculum or theme. Most students enjoy watching videos and are interested in how movies are made. Among numerous sites offering scripts is Drew's Script-o-rama (http://www.script-o-rama.com/).

Teachers can find videos for these scripts through streaming video services, DVDs, or clips from YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/). Teachers play the video sequences, providing students with a model before they rehearse, noting such features as pronunciation, prosody, even emotional registers.

A framework using Willis' (1996) task-based syllabus—employing a variety of script-based materials, from short movie trailers and commercials to news broadcasts, and scenes from TV and film—includes a sequence of Pre-Task, Performance, and Post-Task activities (see Appendix A). Task materials range from shorter, easier scripts such as those for movie trailers and commercials, to longer, more challenging readings such as speeches and TV and movie scenes that involve multiple characters and an emotional subtext. All three phases facilitate language and content learning.

The framework of Pre-Task, Task Performance, and Post-Task phases works as follows. In explaining a movie trailer to students during the Pre-Task phase, a teacher might describe such dramatic terms as character, conflict, situation, climax, and resolution of central conflict. Then the teacher could illustrate using movie trailers. News scripts and documentaries offer insights into news-gathering and journalism, while helping students identify key elements such as "who or what the story is about," "where it takes place," "when the event occurred," and "how it happened." Different parts of a news broadcast and the interviewer's role could also be introduced.

To help students understand speeches, the teacher can explain the historical/social/political context of the speech, or students can conduct their own research online. For example, Barak Obama in his farewell speech in 2017—available at American Rhetoric (https://www.americanrhetoric.com/), a website archiving presidential addresses and other speeches—described how America continues to be deeply divided by the issue of race: "After my election, there was talk of a 'post-racial America.' And such a vision, however well-intended, was never realistic. Race remains a potent and often divisive force in our society." After presenting the speech, the class can discuss Obama's goals for the speech and the techniques employed, with students in groups working collaboratively to decode key words and phrases, and draw on their pre-existing knowledge.

In the Performance Task phase, students plan their performance, possibly choose their characters, rehearse, then provide feedback to one another. During this part of the cycle, students may review the video they viewed earlier. Finally, they perform the script before the class, a performance that Willis and

Willis (1996) argue pushes learners toward greater fluency and accuracy than pair work can.

During the Post Task Phase, students react to each other's efforts, and the teacher responds with a more formal assessment. The teacher might also add activities to recycle the vocabulary and phrases. Production information on most contemporary English movies, and their trailers, can be found on The Internet Movie Database (https://www.imdb.com/).

Commercial Scripts

Commercials, easily accessed on YouTube, can provide short scripts, offer cultural insights and knowledge about advertising techniques such as false comparison, flattery, exaggeration, and pseudo-scientific claims. After students perform these scripts, the teacher might ask them to create their own products, name them, then act out these new commercials for the class.

News Announcing

Viewed on YouTube, many news broadcasts offer closed captioning which can be used as a learning aid. Sources for contemporary news that provide both transcripts and video include NHK World and CNN. Like real news announcers, students do not memorize a script to perform it, they just familiarize themselves with how to deliver it effectively, reading it smoothly, with accurate pronunciation, while trying to convey a news announcer's authority.

Famous Speeches

Speech transcripts can expose more advanced learners to rhetorical devices and, as described earlier, lessons about culture and history. Speeches, or portions of them—after rehearsal with a partner offering feedback—can be performed as monologues for the class.

Scenes from TV and Movies

Among other sites, TV and film scripts can be downloaded from Drew's Script-o-rama. Reading the script of contemporary movies could even be combined with a trip to the cinema.

Students listen to commercials, news broadcasts, and movie scenes all the time outside of class. Using scripts for reading in class is an easy and effective means of introducing drama as well as authentic materials into a variety of courses.

Playmaking in a Performance Studies Course

Brazilian theatre activist, Augusto Boal (*Theatre of the Oppressed*, 1979) promoted performance for social change. Stucky (2006) explains that "performance studies participates in an ongoing experiment in social awareness and illuminates possibilities for social change" (p. 262). In describing his syllabus for an "Empowerment Through Theatre" course, McConachie (2002) writes: "By exploring the political and theatrical ideas and techniques of Augusto Boal, students will learn ways of empowering themselves and others" (p. 247).

These approaches of Boal and McConachie have been applied by one of the authors of this paper in a Performance Studies seminar where students write and produce plays based on current social issues. Some thirty students, mostly female, some of whom have lived overseas in English-speaking countries, take the Performance Studies seminar in the English Department of a Japanese private university. Students use both English and Japanese to develop an English play for an end-of-term festival. Each step in the process described below takes several classes.

Generating a Production Concept

In small groups, students generate a production concept for their play. This is equivalent to the thesis statement of a persuasive speech, and, in the past, students have covered such issues as cell-phone addiction, child abuse, drug addiction on campus, depression, eating disorders, and sexually transmitted diseases. Each student also keeps a journal of their experience of the play-making process.

Creating a Script

Next, students discuss a plot and create a flowchart of events. Based on the flowchart, each student composes a part of the script at home and brings it to the next class. The following week, students read the script aloud in groups and combine the stories into a meaningful unit. Students bring their laptops to class and edit the story while reading aloud. They complete the script and submit it as an interim report.

Translation and Effects

After scripts have been perfected through multiple stages of redrafting and peer review, students begin work on "special effects." These consist partly of PowerPoint slides for captions, which may serve as substitutes for sets. Background music and sound effects are also prepared. Students begin doing run-throughs of their plays before the class, comment on each other's work, and revise their plays and effects.

Rehearsals, Blocking, and Adjustment

Now, students rehearse in the room or lecture hall where the festival will be held. During this part of the process, they block their movements and experiment with stage props. They finalize the timing for their PowerPoint slides and other effects including lighting. In groups, they comment on each other's acting—noting characterization, voice and movement—and revise their work accordingly. At this point, all cast members must fully memorize their lines. The teacher gives feedback on acting and directing and the students have a final dress rehearsal.

Performance at a Festival

The students' playmaking culminates in a performance before the Literary Society of the English Department, or sometimes at a performance festival sponsored by JACET's Oral Communication SIG. Student performances are also recorded for future discussion. The audience includes past seminar students, other English Department undergraduates, faculty members, alumni, and the general public. Afterward, several faculty members adjudicate the performances. Audience members are asked to write feedback on the following items: "Did you understand the theme?"; "What comes to mind while watching?"; and "Please select a scene or other point that impressed you and give detailed comments."

Critique Session

The teacher facilitates a critique session by showing a video of the adjudicators' comments and reads aloud the audience's reaction papers. This generates student discussion and they try to evaluate their performances objectively.

Term Paper Assignment

Recorded performances are put onto DVDs and left at the university's media library for the performers to view. Students submit a term paper which includes peer evaluations, self-evaluations, and a summary of the project. It also includes rehearsal logs which reference the cast members' diaries and details the process of selecting the group's theme, creating their script, and their experiments with staging possibilities. The paper also describes conflicts among cast members and how these were resolved.

In conclusion, through playmaking, students challenge themselves and expand their capacity for self-expression. Through the process, they learn how to develop their ideas cooperatively, and through performance they better understand the power of live theatre.

Bringing Students to Plays and Plays to Students

Live English theatre is hard to find outside Tokyo. But in cities such as Kobe, Kyoto, Nagoya, Okinawa, Osaka, and Sendai, some international schools that teach in English sometimes host theatre productions and open them to the general public. A trip to see a live performance at one of these schools is also an intercultural experience. English-medium theatre troupes sometimes tour Japan, or students might attend a Japanese production of a well-known English play or musical, then watch scenes from it in English on DVD, YouTube, or specialty streaming websites such as the National Theatre in the UK (https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/). Such videos are more comprehensible than ever with the availability of closed captioning.

Preparations

In Tokyo, plays performed in English by community drama groups such as the Tokyo International Players (TIP) (https://www.tokyoplayers.org), founded in 1896, can be incorporated into lesson plans. This helps make dramatic performances, even those that have not been adapted for L2 learners, both accessible and enjoyable. Students also can be prepared for excursions to see a play in English through the provision of scripts which are read in class, as described earlier in this article. This helps familiarize learners with characters, plots, and what to anticipate in key scenes. In addition, matinee performances of English plays are sometimes preceded by a "talk back." These feature the director and selected actors discussing the play, its staging, and answering the audience's questions. Alternately, a role play of a "talk back" might be arranged in class.

Other useful preparations include having students watch versions that were adapted for film, or theatrical productions available through online streaming. Graded reader adaptations of plays are available along with sites that advise teachers and learners on how to use them (e.g., *How to make Shakespeare easy for English language learners*, n.d.). Other aids include novels that have become plays (e.g., *Pride and Prejudice*), historical accounts that plays are derived from (e.g., "The Elephant Man"), or related newspaper or magazine articles.

Many universities have site licenses or contract with companies that offer exposure to extensive reading, such as Xreading (https://xreading.com/login/index.php) or extensive listening, through EnglishCentral (https://www.englishcentral.com/browse/videos). Sites/apps like these often have multiple simplified versions of novels made into plays

or brief excerpts of dramatic performances (see Appendix B).

Performances on Campus

Theater groups may also be invited to perform for assembled classes of students at universities and other institutions if the funding is available. In Tokyo, Black Stripe Theater (http://blackstripetheater.com/) has staged adaptations of such classics as Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for students at international schools and universities. Such groups have expertise in staging existing adaptations or in adapting novels into plays for language learners such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. An excerpt from the script (Appendix C) shows how accessible an adaptation can be.

Bringing students to these plays or plays to students is yet another means of introducing drama into the curriculum. Furthermore, adaptions may be a bridge to more challenging offerings for L2 learners. Black Stripe Theater company, for example, has staged 20 modern, contemporary and classic plays, including the works of Ionesco, Pinter, and Mamet.

Conclusion

In conclusion, drama in education offers highly motivating activities for the language classroom. Over the years, there have been numerous arguments made for its inclusion in a curriculum. The new approach to using role play to "perform culture" is one of many possibilities. Scripts for different types of dramatic genres such as commercials, movie trailers, speeches, and movie scenes are an exciting and structured means of introducing drama activities into a course. Students can use drama as a way of expressing their ideas and concerns, and even attend professionally produced dramatic performances.

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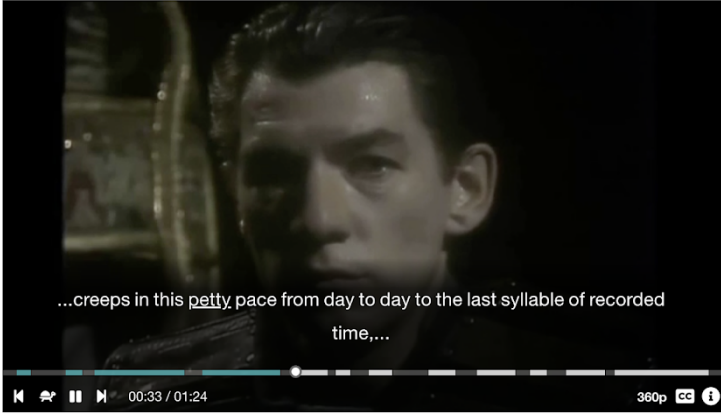
Appendices

Appendix A: A Task Framework for Script Reading (Strong, 2009; adapted from Willis,1996)

MOVIE TRAILERS & COMMERCIALS	NEWS BROADCASTS	SPEECHES	TV AND FILM
Pre-Task 1. Activating pre-task knowledge of the product, subject, or situation. 2. Identifying characters and situation. 3. Viewing and discussion of the video/DVD with the teacher			
What questions does the trailer pose? Compare several types of commercial appeals.	Listen for key facts in a broadcast and read the script to confirm them. Differentiate the types of news broadcasts.	Find key words and phrases in a speech. Determine the rhetorical devices used and the persuasive goal.	Determine the conflict, climax, and resolution.
Task Performance 1. Choice of characters or roles 2. Rehearsal with peer feedback to achieve a fluent reading 3. Additional viewings of the video/DVD 4. Teacher monitoring of group and individual progress 5. Student performance for the class			
Memorize script roles.	Try to achieve an authoritative tone of voice.	Try persuasive tones and body language.	Try to convey character.
Post-Task 1. Peer assessment 2. Teacher assessment 3. Extension activities and recycling language			
Create commercials in similar styles. Create new lines for the trailers.	Predict outcomes for the news items, then write follow-up stories.	Use the same language and rhetorical devices to make a speech from the opposing viewpoint.	Create another scene with the same characters or make a different ending to the earlier scene.

Appendix B: Dramatic content from EnglishCentral app.

Appendix C: Act 1, Scene 1 of the adaptation of The Hound of the Baskervilles, (Francis, 2017)

Actor 1,2,3,4 all walk on stage and face the audience

ACTOR 1: Ladies and gentleman! Boys and girls. Welcome to a great classic story about the worlds greatest detective. Sherlock Holmes!

ACTOR 3: What a personality!

ACTOR 4: What a mind!

ACTOR 3: And who must we thank for his fame?

ACTOR 2: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle!

ACTOR 1: Conan Doyle created a truly extraordinary character.

ACTOR 4: There are 56 short stories and 4 novels of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries.

GALE SIG Forum: Gender-friendly Practices in Language Classrooms

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'Gender' and 'gender equality' have become more commonplace topics in many societies, including Japan. As a result, discussions concerning gender and related subjects have gradually increased in frequency within the context of Japanese higher education. This article is based on the content from three speakers of GALE's 2023 PanSIG forum which centered on the theme of "gender-friendly practices in language classrooms." It discusses the imperative of incorporating conversations related to gendered identity and gender equality into university classrooms in Japan. However, the authors of this paper acknowledge that not all educators are comfortable discussing these topics or are aware of practical ways to integrate 'gender' into their classroom content. Consequently, this article provides an argument in favour of the teaching of gender in Japanese higher education, along with practical examples of how to effectively teach about these timely and significant subjects.

「ジェンダー」と「ジェンダー平等」は、日本を含む多くの社会で一般的な話題となっている。その結果、ジェンダーに関する議論や関連するテーマは、日本の高等教育の文脈において 徐々に頻度を増やしている。本論文は、GALE の 2023 年 PanSIG フォーラムの 3 人のスピーカーの発表内容に基づいている。ジェンダーのアイデンティティやジェンダー平等に関連する対話を日本の大学の教室に取り込むことの必要性について議論している。ただし、本論文の著者は、すべての教育者がこれらのテーマについて快適に議論できるわけではないと感じている。また、実際的な方法で「ジェンダー」を教室の内容に統合する知識も必ずしも持ち合わせているとは限らないことを認識している。そのため、本論文は、日本の高等教育におけるジェンダー教育の 必要性についての議論と、これらの時事的かつ重要なテーマについて効果的に教えるための実践的な例を提供している。

The goals of the Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE) SIG include researching gender and its implications for language learning, teaching, and training, improving pedagogical practices, raising awareness of workplace and human rights issues related to gender for language professionals and increasing networking opportunities among language professionals interested in teaching, researching and/or discussing issues related to gender and language education. The GALE PanSIG forum was a chance for presenters to showcase activities and resources under this year's theme of "gender-friendly practices in language classrooms." Educators shared examples of classroom practices that had already been implemented and reflected upon related to this theme.

The three speakers shared experiences and resources used in their classes to address gender-related topics.

Elisabeth Ann Williams described her experiences and reflections on teaching seminar classes that critically examined the theoretical concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' and then delved into exploring the diverse manifestations of masculinity within various communities and cultural contexts. During her presentation, she began by outlining the theoretical foundation for her approach to masculinity in her seminar. Similarly, in this paper, she establishes a broad theoretically informed argument for discussing gender within the context of Japanese higher education. Amy Toms introduced *Assembly*, a Malala Fund publication featuring articles written by young people about themes of gender equality, girls' education and activism. Amy's section will outline how *Assembly* articles were incorporated into English communication lessons to discuss gendered themes. Chelanna White shared her insights from teaching a high-level

discussion class centered around student-generated topics, during which LGBTQ+ issues, women's rights and men's rights were three topics selected for class discussions. The theoretical argument provided by Elisabeth serves as a foundational structure for understanding the pedagogical examples presented by Amy and Chelanna. We expect that this will allow the reader to imagine how gender awareness might progress within educational settings in the future, while offering some practical teaching ideas.

A case for gender awareness in the Japanese university classroom

In many Western societies, discussions about gender and gendered relations have become commonplace in politics, education, and media. Contemporary pioneering gender theorists like Connell (2021) and Butler (1999) argue that our perceptions of gender mold our daily lives, influencing societal perceptions and self-image. Moreover, the concept of gender itself is relational; it is usually understood through comparisons with others. For instance, the concept of masculinity rarely exists in isolation, often juxtaposed with femininity, and similarly, ideas of femininity are frequently intertwined with contrasting notions of masculinity (Connell, 2005). These gendered relations, deeply entwined with power dynamics, shape our societies and institutions.

Just as these concepts have found their way into the 'mainstream' Western world, Japan too has seen a surge in gender dialogues in the media and political arena. Discussions often center around the nation's low rank on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index, the declining birthrate, and growing domestic and international pressure to enhance LGBTQ+ rights. Conversations frequently draw comparisons with countries abroad or delve into the essentialist perspective of Japan's supposedly unique gendered and social hierarchies.

Likewise, not only academics and activists, but also the general Japanese populace are increasingly vocal about societal issues. For instance, courageous women like Shiori Ito and Rina Gonoi have gone public with accusations of sexual assault, despite fierce public backlash and victim blaming. The same can be said for the men who have alleged that the deceased media mogul Johnny Kitagawa committed horrific sexual abuse against them when they were minors. Moreover, while feminist movements such as the #Metoo movement have not developed the same momentum as in some other countries, there no doubt has been an increase in public discussions on sexual harassment and assault (Hasunama & Shin, 2020).

As briefly mentioned above, another recent event that brought 'gender' into the public spotlight is Japan's fall from 116 to 125 out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap's 2023 report (WEF, 2023). In the same year, Japan dropped to 21 in the ranking for countries' performance in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), losing its place among the top 20 nations (Hokugo, 2023). In regards to gender, the significance of Japan's low rank is highlighted by the dedicated goal of 'Gender Equality' in SDG 5. Moreover, the SDGs have become an integral part of the discourse surrounding educational initiatives from Japan's Ministry of Education (Fredriksson et al., 2020; Okubo et al., 2021), suggesting that the theme of gender equality is becoming increasingly prominent in Japanese education.

Another official Japanese educational initiative that reflects gender considerations is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which involves educational activities aimed at creating a sustainable society for future generations. In the Implementation Plan for ESD in Japan, prioritized action areas include focusing on the concepts of the SDGs and ESD in teacher training and mobilizing young people to express opinions and take action on global issues (MEXT, 2021). In other words, there are political and institutional efforts towards incorporating SDG-based concepts such as gender in education to foster globally-minded youth in Japan (Fredriksson et al., 2020).

Japanese scholars have not shied away from critiquing the gender bias and roles subtly instilled through the 'hidden curriculum' (kakureta karikyuramu) of schools from an early age (e.g., Kimura, 1999). The hidden curriculum forms through the everyday rituals of school life, as well as the content of students' studies. For instance, research has identified gender stereotypes prevalent in textbooks, including English language textbooks (Kimura, 2019; Lee, 2016; Otlowski, 2003), and Japanese language textbooks (Mizumoto, 2014; Nakamura & Ikeda, 2021). As a result, it is clear that creating space for dialogue around gender issues is a vital part of education, including language education. Of course, this may be easier said than done.

Since entering the teaching profession in Japan, I have frequently encountered two contrasting views on addressing gender in the classroom. One argument posits that 'outsiders' (i.e., non-Japanese teachers) should refrain from challenging Japan's social inequities, claiming criticism through a non-Japanese lens is an infringement of the country's cultural and intellectual traditions. This stance often reinforces essentialist ideas of Japan and Japanese people, not to mention denying a Japanese identity to so-called outsiders. I also believe

it links to nationalist sentiments that protect traditional power structures.

Alternatively, some teaching practices attempt to transpose contemporary Western social structures directly onto the Japanese classroom—an approach that is inherently ethnocentric. Researchers like Moosavi (2022) and Rivers (2019) contend that uncritically imposing Western academic understandings of social hierarchies and privilege onto Japanese society risks misrepresenting personal experience, marginalization, and the identities of residents in Japan. As always, nuance and context are essential in this conversation.

Reflecting on the past and present Japanese feminist movements also helps us think about teaching gender in the language classroom. Ignoring the dissatisfaction of feminist activists in Japan with the current state of gender relations overlooks their efforts to support, uplift, and demand recognition for marginalized groups. At the same time, drawing solely from dominant Western feminist concepts without considering Japanese feminist movements' priorities is reductive.

The question then arises: How should we proceed as educators? As my students show growing interest in gender and its societal and personal implications, I constantly ponder the importance of gender awareness in teaching. How should teachers broach these often uncomfortable and confusing topics? Are teachers without a background in gender studies equipped to handle these discussions? The answers vary depending on the classroom context, students, and the teachers themselves. Yet, there is something to be said about embracing teachable moments and having frank discussions in the classroom.

While the above discussion might not offer practical solutions, I hope that it lays the groundwork for understanding the theoretical concepts of gender and some of the current issues in gender and education in Japan. This understanding is crucial for us as educators working in this context. In the following sections, however, my colleagues will share their personal experiences of engaging with gender-related topics in their classrooms, and provide concrete examples of practical activities they have used in the past.

Introducing *Assembly* as a gender-friendly resource

In 2013, Malala Yousafzai and her father founded Malala Fund, which is an organization that invests in education activists around the world. Malala Fund created *Assembly*, a digital newsletter and publication, as a place for girls to share their opinions, experiences, and achievements. *Assembly* defines itself as an inclusive platform for "people who identify and/or are socialized as girls, and genderqueer and non-binary young people." It publishes articles written by young people about their experiences of leading the climate movement, challenging the barriers to girls' education, racial discrimination, or the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on their lives. The articles offer insight into the gendered challenges that exist in different countries and cultures and the action being taken to address these challenges through activism. Collectively, the articles express perspectives on current global concerns through the narratives of young people from around the world, offering a platform where people interested in advocating for equality can learn from and be inspired by one another. Therefore, the articles in *Assembly* provide valuable resources for promoting dialogue around gender issues and social activism, which are discussed by authors from a variety of different cultural and socio-political backgrounds.

I have used articles from *Assembly* to introduce topics related to gender whilst teaching speaking or summary writing skills. I will outline two lesson plans that I have used in communication lessons which feature articles about education and activism. All articles were adapted to grade the language according to the student's level by reducing the content and simplifying the language. In addition, each adapted article was voice recorded by me to provide students with listening materials for their communication class. Full references and web links were provided for each article.

Education

Four *Assembly* articles on education were used in the following lesson plan (see below). Each article argued that a certain subject was important for girls' education, in terms of teaching them valuable skills for future employment, enabling them to make informed and healthy decisions regarding their sexual health, or developing the necessary skills to moderate the effects of climate change. This lesson focused on the language function of giving opinions, and agreeing or disagreeing.

1. What girls aren't learning about personal finance in school

2. We're calling on leaders to prioritize quality climate education at COP26

3. Why every girl in Haiti should learn to code

4. I wish more girls in El Salvador learned sex ed in school

As a warm-up activity, students discussed what they would have liked to study at high school to encourage them to reflect on their previous education. The

language function was introduced and students practiced giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing with topics like homework, school uniforms and entrance examinations. Students organized themselves into four groups and each group listened to one of the audio recordings about a subject that *Assembly* writers believed should be taught in schools. Students answered questions designed to structure note-taking on the main ideas about why it was important for girls to learn that particular subject at school before giving their opinions on whether it would be beneficial to include that subject in the high school curriculum.

Groups were rearranged, so that each group had a student that listened to each of the four different audio recordings. Each student shared what they had learnt about their allocated subject and its relevance to girls at school. In this way, the group had a lot of material to consider and had many opportunities to practice the language function before their discussion. Finally, students discussed the question: What do you think students should learn at high school? Why? They were encouraged to discuss the ideas introduced in the *Assembly* articles, as well as their own views and ideas on their education. This lesson plan introduced gaps in school curriculums and how they are negatively impacting the future of young women, and students enjoyed the opportunity to express their opinions on their own education.

Activism

The following lesson plan used the *Assembly* article entitled "What is the best form of activism for you?" and focused on language to discuss advantages and disadvantages. Students began the lesson with a listening activity which oriented them to the theme of the lesson. At the Generation Equality forum in 2021, former Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin referred to women as "powerful agents of change" and described young people as the "force for change in all societies." This listening activity was followed by discussion questions exploring how young people can contribute to change in society and what they knew about well-publicized movements led by young people like Greta Thunberg or Malala Yousafzai.

Synonyms and phrases to talk about advantages and disadvantages were presented and students practiced using the language to talk about topics such as eco bags, iPhones, and club activities at university. The term activism was introduced and explained before students were divided into groups and each group was allocated one type of activism. Audio recordings were inserted into a PowerPoint to include some visual aids to facilitate students' understanding of the material. Students were asked to take notes, including a description of their allocated form of activism, examples

and any advantages and disadvantages outlined by the author. Groups were rearranged, so that new groups were composed of students that listened to different audio recordings. Next, each student verbally shared their notes from the audio recording, so that all group members were familiar with the different types of activism. The lesson ended with a group discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different types of activism, incorporating the language focus and students' own ideas. This lesson introduced students to female activists from around the world and young people's role in creating social change whilst utilizing the language function of discussing advantages and disadvantages.

When using articles from *Assembly*, instructors must consider students' existing knowledge about a topic based upon content previously taught in the English program and an awareness of the wider university curriculum. This consideration allows educators to incorporate additional definitions or contextual materials to the lesson plan to support students' comprehension of new topics. Similarly, having a clear understanding of students' proficiency in English in order to adapt the materials accordingly is crucial. For future classes, I providing a vocabulary list or using a vocabulary activity to define specific terms used in the articles beforehand to make the materials more accessible is recommended. Consequently, this would deepen students' understanding of the content and further enhance their engagement with the materials. The lesson plans outlined above were written to meet the course aims of the English program at a women's university whilst incorporating gender-related themes in the curriculum. There are many ways in which *Assembly* materials can be used in English lessons to promote dialogue around gender and social activism.

Explorations of gender in a high-level discussion class

Recently, I taught a student-generated content, discussion-based elective course, designed to give students with a high level of English proficiency the opportunity to use English extensively in class. The course is offered each semester and students may take it multiple times. In the first semester, students worked in groups of about three to lead class discussions and activities on any topic of the group's choosing. Topics included books, fashion, war, and the environment. The following semester, significantly fewer students joined the class, and instead of having some students develop discussion questions and activities on a theme for the other students, each week all students prepared discussion questions or activities on a predetermined theme. I gave them examples of topics from the previous semester, and we brainstormed potential

topics. The final selections were Food, Education, Art and Music, LGBTQ+ Issues, Robots and AI, Women's Rights, Animal Rights, Emotions, Immigration, The Environment, Men's Rights, and finally, Culture and Cultural Exchange. Of the twelve selected topics, three were explicitly related to issues of gender and identity: LGBTQ+ Issues, Women's Rights, and Men's Rights. The students were eager to discuss gender in class, and chose to do so when given the opportunity to choose any topic. This indicates that students want to talk about these topics, and as educators we should be supporting such discussions in class, not shying away from them.

The students were given the schedule of topics in advance, and each week were required to research an issue related to the topic and come up with a few discussion questions on their issue related to the main topic. For example, for the topic of Women's Rights, one student focused on women-only cars on trains and another focused on inequality in the workplace. To ensure each student chose a different sub-issue and discussion questions, students posted their questions on Google Classroom before each class. This also gave me the opportunity to give feedback before the students introduced their issues and questions in class. This preparation was worth 20% of their final grade.

In addition to the preparation for each discussion topic, students completed a reflective journal after each class for 10% of their final grade. The goal was to have students develop critical thinking skills by comparing previously-held knowledge or assumptions with what they had discovered during their own research and class discussions. I had also hoped to inspire students to continue learning about the topics on their own. Students answered the following questions:

- What did I know, or think I knew, about this topic before?

- What did I learn about this topic from preparing for class and the in-class discussions?

- What do I still want to know about this topic?

- What mark would I give myself for participation this week (out of 10)?

- How can I improve, or what do I want to try next time?

Selected examples of questions students developed for each gender topic are below.

LGBTQ+ Issues:

- Should Japan legislate same-sex marriage? How can we make it happen?

- Should we expand gender options on passports?

- Would your feelings toward a friend change if they came out as a gender minority to you?

Women's Rights:

- Should stay-at-home mothers be financially compensated by their spouses?

- What do you think about the stereotype of patient and enduring Asian women?

- What do you think about women-only trains?

Men's Rights:

- How can we change the idea that cosmetics are just for women?

- Why is it more acceptable for girls to be boyish than for boys to be girlish?

- What do you think about men taking parental leave?

In class, students took turns introducing their specific issue and posing one of their prepared questions to the class, along with sharing any material for more context such as a video or news article. As the class was small, there was no need to break into smaller groups.

Throughout the discussions, it became clear that the students cared about social issues, particularly issues relating to gender, identity, and sexuality. The majority of the class were women, and as young women about to enter the workforce, they were particularly concerned about workplace discrimination based on their gender and their safety while commuting on crowded trains. They also were concerned for transgender and non-binary people, and wanted to see their rights protected by law. While they wanted to see changes in these areas, they were unsure of what they could do to effect change in Japan. Some were skeptical that change was even possible, believing that the structures of Japanese society were too ingrained to be changed. As educators, we should be aware of what avenues are available for all students to express their civic rights – including, and especially, our non-Japanese students, who may be less aware of their rights in Japan than their classmates with Japanese citizenship.

If I am given the opportunity to teach this class again, I would push the students to think even deeper about the issues by helping them refine their discussion questions before class and challenging their responses in class. I would include an individual action project that allows students to take concrete steps toward effecting change in one area discussed in class. For example, a student could petition the school or their workplace to designate one washroom as gender-neutral. I would also weight the components differently, with 10% for preparation, 25% for reflections, 30% for the action project, and 35%

for class discussions. The grade value assigned to the reflection was originally too low, perhaps leading some students to not complete the reflection assignments. This new weighting would emphasize the importance of the reflective aspect of the course, while maintaining the focus as a discussion-based class, and give students the opportunity to take ideas generated from their research and discussions into the world outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

As demonstrated above, gender-friendly classroom practices can take various forms, offering either more structured or unconstrained approaches for students. These practices can also engage students in developing all four language skills. Yet, the classroom activities discussed in this paper do not provide explicit steps for assessing these skills but instead, focus on student growth in different ways. Amy's *Assembly* example demonstrates the advantages of using youth-created content to facilitate English learning while introducing contemporary topics related to gender activism. Conversely, Chelanna's discussion class exemplifies how empowering students to choose their own topics can lead to lively conversations that enhance the reflective learning process.

Another compelling point highlighted in this paper is the student interest in gender-related topics that we have all witnessed in our classrooms. Many of Amy and Chelanna's students were engaged and interested in discussing these topics, though the themes were sometimes challenging. We encourage language educators in Japan, regardless of their background or specialization, to familiarize themselves with social movements related to gender equality in the country. These movements advocate not only for women's equality but also address the damaging effects of gendered societal expectations on the health and personal relationships of men, and the growing recognition of the challenges and experiences of individuals with other gender identities. Moreover, understanding social activism in Japan is key to recognizing LGBTQ+ people's legal rights, challenges, and identities. These reasons, coupled with the broader educational drives behind SDGs and ESD, provide a strong argument for creating a space for discussing gender-related themes in the classroom. Through opportunities like the GALE PanSIG panel and the current paper, we may be able to increase not only gender awareness in language education but also exchange practical ideas for bringing the topic of gender into our classrooms.

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Exploiting Textbook Conversations for Pragmatic Lesson Resources

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Supplementing textbooks for additional lesson content is a common practice for teachers. Textbook conversations generally illustrate a lexical or grammatical point, and the pragmatic aspects are often sidelined. In addition, conversations may not accurately reflect actual English use. Furthermore, students may be habituated to approaching textbook conversations from a lexical and grammatical perspective and may not think about the pragmatic aspects of the conversations. This paper examines examples of conversations from commercially available English language textbooks. I will suggest some ways in which teachers can exploit textbook conversations to support teaching of pragmatic points of language use. I will refer to such items as turn-taking, repair, backchannel, self-disclosure, maintaining progressivity and speech acts among others. This will be of assistance to teachers who are looking for additional ideas to expand lesson content and help raise awareness of some of the pragmatic aspects of spoken language.

授業内容を追加するために教科書を補足することは、教師にとって一般的な習慣である。教科書の会話は一般的に語彙や文法的なポイントを説明するものであり、語用論的な側面は軽視されがちである。さらに、会話は実際の英語使用を正確に反映していないこともある。さらに、生徒は教科書の会話を語彙や文法的な観点からアプローチすることに慣れてしまい、会話の語用論的な側面について考えないこともある。本稿では、市販の英語教科書の会話例を検証する。言語使用の語用論的ポイントを教えるために、教師が教科書の会話を活用する方法をいくつか提案する。例えば、ターンテーキング、リペア、バックチャンネル、自己開示、進行性の維持、発話行為などである。授業内容を充実させ、話し言葉の語用論的側面に対する意識を高めるための新たなアイデアを探している教師にとって、参考になるはずである。

The four language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing are a fundamental organizing principle for institutional language learning. Although the four skills are often viewed as equal components of a language learning program, the skills are not equally represented in the daily language use of humans in all societies. The importance of spoken interaction for human society in general was noted by Schegloff (2006, p.70), and for language learning in particular by Wong and Waring (2020, p.1). Speaking, and more particularly, spoken interaction holds a special place in any second/foreign language learning endeavor.

Despite the identification of the importance and centrality of spoken interaction, there remains a bias in many language programs towards the written forms of the language (Linnel, 2004). Students are often encouraged to attempt to speak in grammatically perfect sentences that would match the standards of the written form of the language, even though any accurate recording of native speaker use (in any language) will reveal many examples of utterances that would not meet such rigorous standards. In the context of Japanese learners of English studying in an institutional setting, the focus on the written forms of the language and the importance of standardized written tests was noted by Green, (2016).

> University entrance tests continue to emphasize the written language. Because they control access to opportunities, entrance tests tend to dominate teaching and learning. They are widely believed to encourage traditional forms of teaching and to inhibit speaking and listening activities in the classroom. (p. 135)

The issues that Japanese learners of English have when trying to engage in spoken interaction in the target language is widely attested in the literature. The review by Ellis, (1991), although written three decades ago, is still relevant, and many of the same points were described in a more recent overview by Ducker (2020) indicating an ongoing issue with communicative language teaching in Japan. It is fair to say that there seem to be persistent and widespread speaking practices among Japanese learners of English that go beyond mere idiosyncratic epiphenomena and contribute to an interactional style that is not closely calibrated to interactional norms of the L2. Several of these practices were outlined by Campbell-Larsen (2019a, 2019b), who lists the following points:

- Discourse management carried out in L1 – especially discourse marking, repair and backchanneling.

- Reliance on 'current selects next' as the default turn transition strategy.

- Reliance on the formulaic utterance 'How about you?' as a turn transition resource.

- Reliance on a question-and-answer format for extended stretches of conversation.

- Use of minimized answers to questions.

- Delayed onset of turn, violating the 'no gap, no overlap' default for turn transition.

This list is not exhaustive but gives some sense of the pragmatic aspects of Japanese learners' speaking styles. The causes of these phenomena are probably a mixture of linguistic and cultural influences, such as (perceived or actual) insufficiency of target language grammar and vocabulary, expectations of how one should behave and interact in a classroom setting, and lack of overt instruction in pragmatic aspects of the L2 (or the L1 for that matter). It is to this point that I will now turn.

As mentioned above, the centrality of standardized written tests in Japanese language education places a heavy focus on declarative knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, often to the detriment of the interactional abilities of the learners. Robust findings into the nature of spoken interaction are available in the academic literature (See Schegloff, 2007 for a comprehensive overview of over forty years of research in the field of conversation analysis). However, many of the mechanisms for ordering spoken interaction (e.g., turn-taking systems, self- and other- repair procedures, adjacency pairs, preferred and dispreferred turns and the like) remain off the radar for many language teachers and syllabus designers. The same is also true for some of the concrete linguistic items that characterize interactional talk, such as discourse markers, (Campbell-Larsen, 2017; Schiffrin, 1987), general extenders and vague language (Evison et al., 2007; Overstreet,1999), and upgrade assessments (Campbell-Larsen, 2016; Pomerantz, 1984).

Even though a syllabus may be designated as being *communicative*, the reality may be very different. The speaking tasks may be activities such as reading aloud from a text, performing memorized pair scripts, or picture description in response to teacher questions, these activities seen as an adequate method of teaching speaking. The marginalization of speaking within the syllabus and then the tendency to teach speaking that is more performative than interactive probably contributes to the difficulties that many students face in actualizing their knowledge to engage in spontaneous spoken interaction.

Extracting Pragmatic Teachables from a Sample Text

A common feature of many language learning texts is the inclusion of sample dialogues, usually printed in the textbook and with an accompanying audio component that students can listen to, either in class or privately. Wong (2002, p. 54) noted the ways in which sample conversations differ from naturalistic language and referred to the insufficiency of native speaker intuition and the need for meticulous analysis of naturally occurring data. Wong was referring to telephone conversations but I suggest here that it is not only telephone conversations that need such principled and meticulous analysis, but every kind of mundane social interaction needs to be understood to arrive at an accurate description of how the language works in a social/interactive sense–as opposed to the proposition-based, sentence-level sense that has been the traditional basis of linguistics as a subject. Now, a caveat must be made here. Beginner or lower-level learners are not ready to deal with samples of truly authentic language, which will probably be replete with idiomatic and idiosyncratic terms, partial utterances, references to insider knowledge, as well as advanced and complex grammatical structures and instances of abstract or specialist vocabulary. Textbook dialogues must be of a simplified nature in order to make them accessible to learners, but by simplified, I mean mostly in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and etic (external observer) coherence, rather than an interaction that has emic coherence (that is, having meaning that is comprehensible to the participants but may be opaque to any outsider). Nevertheless, even such pared down conversations may contain important pragmatic points– points that may lie outside of the overt target of the textbook exercise and, indeed may have been only subconsciously included by the writer. I will examine a sample conversation for its pragmatic and socio-cultural aspects in the next section.

Sample Text Dialogue (1)

The following conversation appears in the popular, mass-market EFL textbook Touchstone 2 (McCarthy et al., 2014, p.6) The description of the unit in the "contents and learning" outcomes section focuses on making small talk, starting a conversation with someone you don't know, using "actually" to introduce new or surprising information, and using responses with "too" or "either" to show what you have in common. Here is the dialogue as presented in the text.

Eve: Oh, it's cold tonight.

Chris: Yeah, it is. But actually, I kind of like cold weather.

Eve: You do? Really?...Boy, there are a lot of people out here tonight.

Chris: Yea, it gets pretty crowded on weekends.

Eve: Do you come here a lot?

Chris: Yeah, I do actually.

Eve: So, are you a big hip-hop fan?

Chris: Yeah, I am. Are you?

Eve: Actually, no, but my brother's in the band tonight.

Chris: Oh, really? Cool….By the way, my name's Chris.

Eve: Nice to meet you. I'm Eve.

There are several points in this conversation that could be expanded on to give some insight into pragmatic and cultural points of interaction. I will outline some of the more salient ones below.

The conversation opens with a statement by Eve concerning the weather. It might be pointed out to students that this conversation does *not* open with a question. In my data of student interactions, a default practice is to open interactions with a question. Not only are openings performed by means of a question, but the Q&A sequence often extends over many, or even all, of the subsequent turns. Breaking out of the habitual question and answer adjacency pair sequence is something that students should be encouraged to do. The opening moves of this conversation are statement/response pairs, rather than question and answer sequences.

The exchange of names contains several important pragmatic aspects. Instead of initiating this important social move with a direct question, Chris engages in self-initiated self-disclosure. That is, he does not ask "What is your name?" but offers his own name as a prompt for Eve to reciprocate. The differences between expectations of self-disclosure between Japanese and Americans was noted by Iwata (2010), with Japanese generally oriented to a lower level of self-disclosure in initial meetings than Americans. Notice also that the name exchange sequence occurs after a few other moves have taken place, thus establishing a framework for the interaction, rather than starting with a name enquiry.

In addition to this aspect of name exchange sequences, it may be pointed out to students that only given names are exchanged. Sometimes Japanese students of

English engage in practices that differ from the L2 system, such as offering given and family name in casual social encounters, saying their name at a speed well above the surrounding discourse making the name hard to catch, and engaging in the establishment of naming expectations such as, *My name is Tomomi, please call me Tomo* and the like. To vary this practice, students can be taught that rather than the directive/permissive move of *you can call me X,* you could either just give the shortened version of your name or indicate that your name is a shortened version by explaining something like, "Actually, my name is Tomomi, but everyone just calls me Tomo." (Of course, "My name is Tomomi, please call me Tomomi" is a rather unusual practice, but one that is not unheard of in the author's experience.)

A further aspect of this name exchange sequence is the introduction of the names by the formulaic expression "By the way." For many Japanese students, this fixed expression is part of their English repertoire. However, it is often used to effect sudden topic transitions, indicating that the previous topic is closed and that a new topic will be forthcoming. In this case it should be noticed that the expression introduces a short sequence that can be described as mostly observing a social nicety rather than initiating a new topic that will be developed and expanded. The name exchange sequence is merely a brief aside before further talk progresses. The appreciation of the nuanced function of *by the way*, the introduction of a temporary aside, can be of benefit to learners.

The opening move by Eve and the response by Chris also yields some possibilities for teaching and learning. Eve's utterance takes the form of an assessment of the weather, specifically the temperature. In the literature of conversation analysis an assessment is seen as the first pair part of an adjacency pair (Pomerantz, 1984). In coarse terms, failure to respond with a next turn that somehow addresses the assessment is a face threatening act. More narrowly, the response move can either be preferred (i.e., an agreement), or dispreferred (i.e., a disagreement). Normative practice describes preferred turns as being quick, direct, clear and to the point, whilst dispreferred turns tend to be delayed, hedged, subject to restarts and so on. Such is the case here. Although Eve's assessment is stated in such a way as to invite agreement that it is indeed cold tonight, with the supposed inference that standing in line on a cold evening is a less than desirable situation. Chris agrees with the assessment of coldness, to which he has shared epistemic access. But crucially he does not align with Eve's inference that it is an unpleasant situation. Rather, using the discourse marker "actually" he offers a mildly disaffiliative observation that he likes cold. The function of "actually" in prefacing new or

unexpected information is dealt with on the subsequent page of the textbook. What is also noteworthy is that Chris, possibly realizing the face threatening act of his non-alignment with Eve's tacit judgment of unpleasantness, chooses first to offer what seems like an agreement ("yeah, it is") followed by disjunctive "but" and then goes on to hedge his positive view of cold weather with the hedging expression "kind of." Not only is this a vital lexical phrase for offering negative, critical or disaffiliative statements, the prosody of this item, (/kaɪnə/) is also a possible teaching point. The sequence of partial agreement, disjunctive word, and hedged counter-assessment in a disagreeing turn is an eminently teachable pragmatic point.

A final aspect of the interaction is connected to the audio component. It is likely that teachers will play the audio of the interaction in class, possibly focusing on some comprehension issue. What is also relevant is the timing of the turn-taking. It can be pointed out to students that the turns follow on from each other in a timely fashion. That is, the participants align with the universal principle, "that turn-taking in informal conversation is universally organized so as to minimize gap and overlap" (Stivers et al., 2009, p. 10591). This may be important because in many teacher-fronted question and answer sequences in the classroom, a teacher may allow some time for the student to formulate the answer. This may accustom the student to the acceptability of prolonged pauses at turn boundaries when speaking the L2. Normative turn-taking practices require rapid uptake of the turn at the transition point, as demonstrated in this conversation. Rapid turn uptake is a key interactional skill.

As noted above, textbook conversations are often simplified, and many of the features that characterize spoken interaction are absent from these conversations, perhaps out of necessity for lower-level learners, but also perhaps out of a misplaced concept of what a textbook conversation should (and by implication, should not) look like on the part of publishers and teachers. So, in addition to analyzing a textbook conversation for the pragmatic components that are present, but not overtly attended to in the textbook, teachers may wish to set students the task of re-working a text conversation to introduce some elements that are not present but could well be. Prime examples of these aspects would be things like inclusion of discourse markers, use of general extenders and vague category markers, introduction of three-part lists, inclusion of purposeful repetition and rephrasing, and asking of complex telling questions rather than direct interrogative styles of interaction.

Sample Text Dialogue (2)

The above conversation was already quite dense in pragmatic aspects. Many textbook conversations, especially for lower-level learners are much more rudimentary exchanges and tilt heavily to loading the interaction with target language. Here is an example of such a target-structure oriented conversation. (Vincent, et al., 2020, p.76)

Kumi: What do you do in your free time, Ken?

Ken: Well, I rarely have free time on weekdays. And I work part-time in a restaurant

twice a week. But I spend a lot of time online on weekends.

Kumi: Oh, yeah, what do you do online?

Ken: I often watch music video and text my friends.

The target language is frequency adverbs and adverbial expressions, although the desire to include as many target terms as possible leads to a slightly unnatural feel to the interaction. Students might be encouraged to rework this conversation to include things like discourse markers, general extenders and expanded answers to questions that do a better job of maintaining progressivity. Here is one reworked version:.

Kumi: So, what do you do in your free time, Ken? Do you have any hobbies or anything?

Ken: Well, I don't really have much free time on weekdays. Like, I work part-time in a restaurant twice a week. But I spend a lot of time online on weekends. I mean, I watch music videos and text my friends, stuff like that.

Notice that Kumi's initial topic proffering question is prefaced with the marker "so" to indicate a new topic departure. The question is then asked in a complex manner, firstly with a general "wh- question" which is followed by a binary *Y/N* question that supplies an exemplar of the kinds of things which may appear in the answer. This is appended with the general extender "or anything" indicating that the topic of hobbies is not exhaustive, and that Ken has some latitude in his answer. Ken's response is correctly initiated with the marker "well" as it indicates that the upcoming turn is not exactly aligned with the perceived intent of the prior turn and "will privilege its speaker's perspectives, interests or projects in the ensuing talk" (Heritage, 2015, p.89). Ken here prefaces his answer to the posed question with a claim of not having much free time on weekdays. The original frequency adverb "rarely" has been replaced with the more conversational phrase "don't really have much free time." Ken expands his turn

with the word "like" which has several important discourse functions such as focusing, listing and exemplifying. After introducing the topic of online activities, Ken does not finish his turn, as he did in the first instance (which was somewhat incomplete in discourse terms). Rather, he maintains progressivity by expanding on his new topic and giving concrete examples. In this case he gives his examples as two items in a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990), with the third part being a general extender "stuff like that." McCarthy (2010) described the functions of these extenders in both drawing on shared social understanding (in this case the other online activities are deemed to be understood and thus not expressed) and also the function of extenders in signaling turn closure and preparing the interlocutor to self-select to take the next turn –as opposed to the overt current selects next strategy of "How about you?" that is a default for many lower students. (See Campbell-Larsen, 2019c for more on "How about you?")

It must be stressed here that no blame is attached to the writers of the original conversation. As a pedagogic aid to teaching frequency terms, it succeeds on its own terms. The reworking of the conversation is intended to highlight some items that may aid in progression towards more developed interactional competence. Although the propositional content of the two versions is identical, the use of the new items is more in line with the emic interactional awareness of participant roles and stances that are characteristic of mundane interactions in daily life. It is vital that learners bear in mind the need to adequately fulfil participatory roles as well as produce grammatically well-formed utterances in the L2, even at the earliest stages of language learning.

Conclusion

The ability to communicate in the target language is based on so much more than knowledge of lexis and grammar. Spoken interaction relies on constant work by participants to manage turns, signal stances, achieve mutual understanding, repair trouble sources and so on. Any language program that disattends to these matters is severely lacking. In this paper I have suggested that teachers need to be aware of the nature and importance of interactional norms and constantly bring these matters to the learners' attention. Principled examination of textbook conversations can reveal aspects of interaction that may be taken for granted by teachers, but which will probably lie outside the consciousness of learners unless addressed explicitly. Whatever the overt target of such textbook conversations may be, there is always insight to be gained by examining the pragmatic aspects–even if it is

to highlight how the idealized textbook conversations depart from interactional norms.

In addition to examining the textbook conversations for extant pragmatic aspects, students can also be encouraged to apply their knowledge of interactional resources. Features such as discourse markers, general extenders, interactive question styles and so on can be included in a rewrite of the conversations. In these rewrites the propositional content is unchanged, but the conversation includes more of the interactional linguistic resources that characterize daily social talk in the target language. It must be stressed that there is no single correct way to rewrite a conversation. This demonstrates the fluidity and locally managed nature of spoken interaction and I suggest that these supplemental lesson activities, in concert with other pragmatically focused lessons and ample opportunities to engage in interaction in the L2, will help learners to move towards more naturalistic interactions.

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Students' Sense of Accomplishment in a University Business English Course

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As teachers, we want to help our students sustain their desire to learn. One way to do this is to ensure they feel like they accomplished something worthwhile in their English classes. In positive psychology, the PERMA model (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment) is often used to talk about wellbeing. When students feel like they accomplished something, it affects their overall wellbeing and positively impacts their English learning. This paper will report on the findings of a study of 1st and 2nd year students in a Japanese university taking a one-semester Business English course. Students reported on the sense of accomplishment they felt from the various activities they took part in during the course. In addition, they were asked to consider their sense of accomplishment in other courses. Results of which activities yielded the highest sense of accomplishment will be summarized as well suggestions for EFL teachers.

教師の課題の一つはどうやって学習者の学習意欲の維持を促せるかのことである。一つの方法は授業で達成感を感じてもらうことである。ポジティブ心理学では、PERMA モデル (P:ポジティブ感情、E:何かに没頭する、R:他者との関係、M：人生の意味、A:達成感)でウェルビーイングが定義づけられている。学生が達成感を感じると、ウェルビーイングに良い影響を及ぼし、英語学習にも良い影響がある。この論文は一学期のビジネス英語科目を受講する大学１，２年生の学生を対象とした調査の報告である。学期を通して様々な活動に対する達成感を報告してもらった。他に受講している科目についての達成感度も尋ねた。どの活動が一番高い達成感を感じさせたかに加え、その結果が英語科目の活動にどう影響すべきかについて述べる。

The foreign language classroom is evolving in terms of the content that is covered and how teachers can help students develop as human beings. Psychological elements of the learner, such as motivation, emotions, and communication goals are taking a more prominent role in education. Currently, among the many things we need to address as language teachers, two important areas are the content and the student. Teachers decide (with varying degrees of freedom) what content to teach and how to teach that content. The "what" and "how" can be instrumental for teachers to focus on in order to help students grow. With this in mind, my question is: "How can we help our students sustain their desire to learn English?" One possible answer is to give them the opportunity to feel a sense of accomplishment in what they do in the classroom.

This idea of accomplishment comes from the field of positive psychology. Gable and Haidt (2005) define positive psychology as an area of research which investigates the things that contribute to people and groups' flourishing and their optimal functioning. When students are functioning in an optimal manner, they learn better. This is supported by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions proposed by Fredrickson (2004). A sense of accomplishment can help students feel good about themselves and thus positively impact their English learning. This paper seeks to take a closer look at how the concept of accomplishment plays an important role in a university EFL course in Japan.

The following two research questions guided this study.

1. Do students feel a sense of accomplishment in a university business English class?

2. Which activities provide a greater sense of accomplishment for students?

Literature Review

What does positive psychology have to do with learning English? Using language is about communication, expressing our own thoughts and feelings and understanding others'. There is a lot of overlap between these two areas of study. Most teachers, regardless of subject and level, probably already use positive psychology concepts in their teaching. Positive psychology is concerned with improving wellbeing, which can mean helping relatively content people become happier and also helping miserable people become less so. In terms of motivation, if we think about it on a scale of -10 to +10, we can help our somewhat motivated students move from a +2 to a +4, or our less motivated ones from a -4 to a -2. Both instances are an

improvement. Positive psychology gives us targeted tools (theory and practical methods) for addressing students' psychological side and can thus be useful for motivating them to learn and helping them to improve their English skills.

A prominent topic in positive psychology is the concept of wellbeing. In general, higher wellbeing means a richer life. It is difficult to discuss one's wellbeing in a concrete way because it is such a subjective topic and varies greatly depending on the individual and their circumstances. Many models have been proposed for how to think about wellbeing (see Forgeard et al., 2011 for a review of this topic). Of the many models, the PERMA model proposed by Seligman (2011) gives us a concrete way to talk about wellbeing. Each letter of PERMA stands for a different domain of wellbeing: P (positive emotion), E (engagement), R (relationships), M (meaning), A (accomplishment). This working definition of wellbeing provides a tangible way of thinking about this somewhat abstract concept as researchers are able to discuss and research the specific domains. Butler and Kern (2016) created and validated a test called the PERMA-Profiler which is relatively easy to administer and is useful for learning more about the domains of wellbeing. Each domain of this model of wellbeing is distinct and yet can influence the other domains. This can make it difficult to give definitive cause-response explanations, but through interventions and studies based on the PERMA model, we can start to get a clearer picture of a person's wellbeing.

Wellbeing plays a prominent role in learning in general, and particularly in language learning. We can say that the higher our students' wellbeing, the better they learn. For example, Fredrickson's (2004) broaden and build theory of positive emotions suggests that when people are in a positive state of mind, they are more open to new ideas and growth than when they feel stressed or are worried about something. Another example is the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which states that people have three basic psychological needs for personal growth: relatedness, autonomy, and a sense of competence. As for accomplishment, when students feel like they accomplish something, they feel competent about their ability. Accomplishments are a part of the PERMA model, so we can infer that improving this can contribute to students' wellbeing and thus positively impact their learning.

Positive psychology's impact on language teaching can come in two forms – as a perspective and as a discipline. As a perspective, it takes prominent positive psychology theories that have empirical support in non-classroom (i.e. regular life) settings and applies them to the language classroom. The positive psychology perspective offers many activity ideas for English learners. For example, the "three good things" positive intervention, in which students write down good things that happened during the day in order to raise their positive emotion (Helgesen, 2016 & Seligman *et al.* 2005), is an activity that is easy to implement and can be done in all levels of English classes. Another way the perspective can be helpful for teachers is that it offers methods for how to make a positive learning environment (Fresacher, 2016).

The discipline aspect of positive psychology is based on research yielding quantitative and qualitative data. One example of this is a study conducted by Czimmermann and Piniel, (2016) which investigated how a group of Hungarian English major students experience flow in the English classroom, which is closely related to the engagement domain of PERMA. Questionnaires asking the students to rate their level of flow during English class in general and for a specific task were administered. The authors found that the majority of students experienced moderate to high levels of flow during class and that the balance of task challenge and learners' skill level played an important role in experiencing flow. This type of result stemming from quantitative data is how positive psychology as a discipline can be useful for improving the language learning experience for students.

Positive psychology as a perspective and discipline are both important in furthering our knowledge of how best to teach our students. One goal of the current study is to take an important concept from the perspective of positive psychology and gather and analyze data to make empirically-supported suggestions for teaching English learners at the university level in Japan.

The accomplishment domain of PERMA can be characterized as a person having a sense of working toward and reaching goals and feeling competent enough that they can complete tasks (Butler & Kern, 2016). Japanese university students are enrolled in several different courses during a single semester. If all goes well, they will receive university credits for completing the assignments required of them. Many students consider obtaining these credits their ultimate goal and this alone provides them with enough motivation to work hard. But what about the content of those courses? Specifically, with English, do they feel like they accomplish something besides simply earning credits for their effort? Students engage in a variety of activities and tasks in their English classes. Do some activities provide better satisfaction in terms of feeling accomplishment than others? If teachers can determine which types of activities students find worthwhile, they can use this information to tailor class planning to maximize students' sense of accomplishment.

Methods

Participants

Participants for this study (N=75) were a convenience sample of students in the author's Business English courses taught during the Fall 2022 semester at a 4-year technical university in the Hokuriku region of Japan. There is no English major at this university and all students are required to take four English courses during their first two years. The course was centered around task-based group work with two culminating presentation activities during the 15-week term. Students were encouraged to use English for group discussions. However, due to their low English level (the majority of students have the equivalent of TOEIC scores below 360), group discussions occurred mostly in Japanese while presenting opinions and findings to the entire class was done in English. There were 96 students in total enrolled in the author's courses, of which nine students stopped attending class at some point during the term. Of the remaining 87 students, 75 completed the questionnaire given on the final day of class. 12 students were absent for the final day of class.

Data Collection and Analysis

A questionnaire (see Appendix) was given to students on the final class of the 15-week term. The questionnaire and permission to gather data from students were approved by the university's internal review board. Students were instructed verbally and in writing that their responses would remain anonymous and not impact their grade in the course or their relationship with the university in any way.

The questionnaire contained discrete and free response items. The discrete items asked students to circle a number from 1 (no sense of accomplishment) to 10 (felt a sense of accomplishment) to represent their feeling about the different activities undertaken during the term. A 10-point scale was used instead of a Likert-scale with fewer choices in order for respondents to make a finer distinction between activities. For example, if they found that two different activities gave a similar sense of accomplishment, they could give one a score of "8" and another a "9" to show this difference. If a Likert-scale was used, these answers may have resulted in the same score.

Six discrete response items were about specific activities from their English class. Three additional discrete response items asked about their overall sense of accomplishment in this English course, other general required courses, and major-specific courses. Free response items asked students to give details about when they felt the most sense of accomplishment in this course and also in their overall university life (including

club or other activities). All items were written in Japanese and students gave their responses in Japanese. This was done in order for them to be able to express their thoughts more freely than having to do it in their second language.

The discrete items were tallied and analyzed using basic statistics. Mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated for each item. Free responses were read through and given general category labels such as "received credit" or "group presentation" so the data could be organized more efficiently. Both discrete and free response items were ranked to find out which activities provided the most sense of accomplishment.

Results

Results of the discrete response items are given in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

Discrete Item Responses – Activities

	M	SD
Group presentation	8.76	1.28
Elevator pitch (individual presentation)	8.63	1.45
Group activities (no grade given)	8.59	1.20
Homework (10 assignments during term)	8.11	1.47
Enjoy English (free choice assignment)	7.97	1.58
Daily reflection	7.95	1.70

Table 2

Discrete Item Responses – Overall Sense of Accomplishment

	M	SD
Business Communication English	8.48	1.28
Major-specific courses	7.96	1.49
Other required courses	7.69	1.60

For the free-response items, there were 66 responses (9 chose not to respond). The first item asked, "When did you feel the most sense of accomplishment in the course? (Give specific details about the activity and circumstances.)" Three general categories emerged from the responses: presentations (44); group activities (15); and homework (2). The remaining five responses were unrelated to any other responses. This item also asked for students to elaborate on their answers. For the presentations, responses that had similar themes had to do with working hard together as a group, relief of completing the task, and working hard individually on the preparation.

Discussion

Individual Activities

The range of the means of all six items was 7.95 to 8.76. A score of 1 is "no sense of accomplishment" while a score of 10 is "felt a sense of accomplishment." Standard deviations ranged from 1.2 to 1.7 implying that the vast majority of students gave the activities (taken in aggregate) a favorable score. This indicates that the intention of providing meaningful activities was matched by the sense of accomplishment students felt. It can sometimes be difficult to gauge how students, particularly the quiet ones, feel about class activities. These results help confirm that the activity choices were appropriate.

Group Presentation and Elevator Pitch (individual presentation) were given the highest scores, 8.76 and 8.63, respectively. These were also the two activities with the highest points attached to them for the course (30% of total grade; 15% for each) and involved the most preparation time and effort to complete. These two culmination activities gave the course direction, as all activities were meant to feed into the two presentations. They also served the purpose of giving students the highest sense of accomplishment of all activities done during the course. These presentation activities (or other culmination activities) should remain in place to act as anchors for course preparation.

Group activities (M=8.59) ranked above other point-bearing activities and almost as high as the presentation activities. This could be related to the "feeling connected" part of the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). They played an important role in terms of sense of accomplishment and should play a central role in EFL courses.

The three items with the lowest scores (Homework = 8.11; Enjoy English = 7.97; Daily reflection = 7.95) had a high degree of individuality embedded in them. Each item required students to express their opinions about something. This touches on the "individuality" portion of self-determination theory, yet they ranked the lowest. In this course, homework played the important role of helping students prepare for class, which is where the group activities took place. Students may have seen the homework assignments as stand-alone activities. It may be useful to explain to students that the homework contributes to the other cumulative activities and group work.

Free Response

There were two reasons for having these free response items on the questionnaire. The first was to find out which activity provided the most sense of accomplishment in the case that more than one item on the discrete response list had the highest score selected. The second was to gain some insight as to why students felt a sense of accomplishment.

In 44 of the 66 responses, students indicated that presentations (individual or group) provided the most sense of accomplishment. This is encouraging as this category of activity made up 30%, which is the largest part, of students' final grades. It also backs up the results of the discrete item section as the highest means (8.76 and 8.63) were for the two presentations. We can say that the weighting of assessment activities (which represents which activities the teacher feels are most important for students in order to achieve the course objectives) was matched by what students got out of the course in terms of a sense of achievement.

There were three main categories for the reasons students gave for their choice of presentations as the activity that gave them the most sense of accomplishment: 1) relief of giving and finishing the presentation; 2) satisfaction of personal effort; and 3) gratification of working as a team to prepare and give the presentation. Even though the reasons given varied, the end result of feeling a sense of accomplishment was the same for all of these students. The same way that wellbeing varies from person to person, the reason one experiences a sense of achievement also varied between people. For some it was overcoming a large obstacle and for others it was being released from a stressful situation.

Overall Sense of Accomplishment

Three items addressed overall sense of accomplishment in the current English course (M = 8.48, SD = 1.28), other required courses (M = 7.69, SD = 1.60), and major-specific courses (M = 7.96, SD = 1.49). The difference in means was statistically significant between the English course and other required courses, $t(74) = 4.84$, $p <.01$, as well as between the English course and major-specific courses, $t(74) = 3.16$, $p < .01$. Based on these results we can say that students had an overall greater sense of accomplishment in this English course compared to the other courses they were taking at that time.

Research Questions Revisited

Returning to the research questions guiding this study, the first question, "Do students feel a sense of accomplishment in a university business English class?" was supported by the survey results. The mean of student responses was 8.48 out of 10, implying that in general, they felt a sense of accomplishment. Also, comparing this to the means for accomplishment in their major-specific and other general classes, 7.96 and 7.69 respectively, we can say that compared to other

courses students are taking, that English gives higher sense of accomplishment.

The second question "Which activities provide a greater sense of accomplishment for students?" gave us a clear answer of individual and group presentations. The reasons given for choosing presentations fell into three general categories of feeling relief of being finished, satisfaction of individual work, and satisfaction of working as a group. Though the reasons varied, the end result of feeling a sense of accomplishment was the same.

Limitations and Additional Thoughts

This study was intended to try and answer some basic questions about students' sense of accomplishment. It did that and also provided new questions for further inquiry. For future studies, the following considerations could be addressed to give more useful data for analysis.

Follow-up interviews could be included to gain further insight into students' responses. It would be useful to ask specifically what it is about the English course that gives a higher sense of accomplishment than other major-specific and general courses. Interviews could provide valuable opportunities to expand upon and clarify students' answers.

This survey was conducted at the end of the term, so students had accomplished everything for the term (including receiving their final grade). Accomplishment is necessarily built into the structure of the final day's activities. It would be useful, but perhaps difficult, to gather data from students who dropped out during the term about whether they felt any sense of accomplishment before dropping out. We could hypothesize that not feeling any sense of accomplishment influenced their decision to stop coming to class.

It would also be interesting to conduct this type of survey at several points throughout the term to see if there is a difference in sense of accomplishment just after completing an activity and reflecting on it at a later time.

Another limitation of this study is that people are typically not accustomed to attaching scores to their feelings. One person's 6 out of 10 could be another person's 9 out of 10. Repeating this survey in subsequent courses could help bolster its validity. Also, students may have been inclined to give higher scores for the English course since they were experiencing the accomplishment (or relief) at that particular moment. It is possible that there would not have been as much of a difference in scores between the sense of accomplishment in the English course and other general and specialty courses if students completed the

survey outside of the classroom after all of the courses were completed. A similar case could be made if the survey was administered by a researcher who did not have these students in their class. A power imbalance or a desire to give higher scores to please the teacher may have had an impact on the results.

Positive psychology has many things to offer for English teachers in Japan as they seek to motivate English learners and help them improve their language skills. This study focused on just one aspect, sense of accomplishment, and there are many other areas to explore for how to help enrich our students' learning. It is my hope that more teachers will use the theories of positive psychology in lesson planning and also in research in order to add to our knowledge of how to better motivate our students in the university setting in Japan.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Business Communication の授業で以下の活動をしました。それぞれについてどの程度達成感を感じたかをあらわす数字に丸を付けてください：（１）達成感を感じなかった（１０）達成感を感じた。もし、リスト内の活動をしなかった場合、点数をつけないでください。

	達成感を感じなかった								達成感を感じた	
授業中のグループ活動： Group Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
課題：HW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
授業の振り返り：Activity Points	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
個人発表：Elevator Pitch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
グループ発表: Group Presentation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
課題：Enjoy English	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
全般的に Business Communication 1 の授業	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
全般的にこの大学で受講した他の必須科目	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
全般的にこの大学で受講した専門の科目	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

自由回答

Business Communication 1 の授業で一番達成感を感じたのはどんな時でしたか？（活動の内容や状況などをできるだけ具体的に教えてください。）

今学期中、学生生活の中で一番達成感を感じたのはどんな時でしたか？（活動の内容や状況などをできるだけ具体的に教えてください。）

Literary Texts and their Writers: An Examination of Gender and Representation in Secondary Textbooks in the Philippines

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Gender representation in popular culture and in educational/learning materials have been closely scrutinized since the end of the twentieth century until today. Visibility of women and the way they are represented are investigated in many studies exposing an imbalance in gender representation. As a result, popular culture and educational materials are being created now in a more mindful way. However, in school textbooks where literary texts used are a smorgasbord of written works from different times and different genres, the attention to the ratio of men and women writers has not been well explored yet. Since looking forward entails a more equitable representation of genders in the educational system, an examination of this difference would be helpful. Using the public-school Filipino textbooks for Grade 7 used in secondary schools in the Philippines as the research subject, this study will examine the difference in the number of men and women writers featured in books and how this difference might have implications in the way genders are represented.

大衆文化や教育/学習教材におけるジェンダー表現は、20世紀末から今日に至るまで綿密に精査されてきました。 女性の可視性と女性の表現方法は、ジェンダー表現の不均衡を明らかにする多くの研究で調査されています。 その結果、大衆文化や教育教材は、より意識的な方法で作成されるようになりました。 しかし、さまざまな時代やさまざまなジャンルの文学作品が混在して使用される学校の教科書では、作家の男女比についてはまだ十分に検討されていません。 将来を見据えるには、教育システムにおけるジェンダーのより公平な代表が必要となるため、この違いを検討することが役立つでしょう。 この研究は、フィリピンの中等学校で使用されている7年生のフィリピン語公立教科書を研究対象として、書籍に登場する男性作家と女性作家の数の違いと、この違いがジェンダーのあり方にどのような影響を与えるかを調査します。 が表されています。

Textbooks in many countries in the world, especially in developing nations like the Philippines, remain one of the most important sources of learning and instructional information. In this digital age when information is just within a click of a button, students from developing countries still rely on textbooks to receive information and learn different skills. Public schools, especially in the Philippines where most of the budget is coming from the government, have many budgetary restrictions and limitations due to numerous rules and practices like government policies, financial misallocations and corruption (Bantilan et al., 2023). Therefore, the resources that could be used to purchase technology that can help students and teachers are not given priority. As such, textbooks are still the unfailing tool in information acquisition in public schools. For this reason, textbooks, among all the other educational learning materials, have the biggest impact on students. They have the potential to shape and influence not just the information that students would acquire, but also to mold the learner ideologies and identities of students (Blumberg, 2015).

Much research has been done in the hope to know more about the efficacy of these learning tools and how to further improve them. Some of these studies are "*Textbook Policies in Asia*" (Smart & Jagannathan, 2018) and *Textbook Development in Low Income Countries: A Guide for Policy and Practice* (Crabbe & Nyingi,2014). These studies were funded and conducted by international organizations such as Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. In these studies, guidelines and policies are laid out to help in the production of textbooks so that they can be effective tools in education. Although these guidelines cover more than curricular aspects of the textbooks, their focus is still largely on the educational content of the texts.

However, there are also studies done on textbooks that investigate more than the efficacy and accuracy of the content or information of textbooks. These studies look

at how the information could impact students and ultimately, society, because textbooks can facilitate more than just curricular learning. One such study, conducted by Vitz (1986) in the United States, looked at elementary and secondary textbooks to investigate religion and traditional values and found that conventional family groups are rarely featured, and that religious faith has disappeared from the accounts of U.S. history after the period of the American Revolution. Another study, done in the Philippines (Tarrayo, 2014), looked at preschool English language textbooks to investigate gender stereotypes. It found that female characters in the textbooks are depicted doing more household chores like sewing, and cooking, while male characters do more active chores like gardening, fixing cars, and other outdoor activities. Textbooks directly and indirectly transmit models of social behaviours, norms and values (Brugeiles & Cromer, 2009). If these transmissions are not equal for all, then holistic development might not be achieved, both for the students and society in general.

Why Gender Representation?

Representation in any material culture is very important. However, why is it important to focus on gender representation in learning materials like textbooks? Gender representation in material culture has been a focus of discussion among educators, academics, and feminists because it has an important influence on readers as subjects (Mills, & Mustapha, 2015). Judith Butler's concept of interpellation, as coined by Althusser, is discussed by Mills and Mustapha (2015). This process is one whereby bombarded by a range of images and messages about what individuals can be, through advertising on television, in magazines, on billboards and in books. These images and messages act as a constraint on what one can feasibly be as an individual and mark the limits of one's subjectivity. This is particularly the case, argues Butler, as discussed by Mills and Mustapha (2015) in relation to the gendering of the individual, where the images in popular culture inform and to an extent determine the sort of women or men, one thinks one can be. Individuals negotiate a sense of self and identity through engagement with representations. One works out what one can achieve as women and men and what is considered appropriate.

Another reason to focus on gender representation is that gender equal education, a result than can be achieved from equal gender representation in education, is usually connected to development. This connection can be explained by a few theoretical frameworks such as the theory of Gender and Development. This approach looks at the role of gender in development and claims that unequal relations between sexes hinders development and female participation (Raju, 2019).

Gender equality in education is a means to fight underdevelopment and guarantee sustainable development. Therefore, examination of representation in textbooks and how they transmit gender equality is an important inquiry since it is tantamount to progress and sustainable development.

Several studies show that unequal representation of genders in textbooks is a problem that is nearly universal, with differences in frequency and intensity from low and high-income nations alike. One example is comparative research done on the English textbooks in Australia and Hong Kong (Lee & Collins, 2010). In this study, the researchers found out that in both countries, the textbooks used for English show a heavily biased ratio of male to female characters. This study also found out that the women characters in the textbooks continue to be stereotypical in the way that they associated with domestic roles and more passive activities. The study by Curaming and Curaming (2020) on English textbooks in the Philippines corroborates these findings. In their investigation of English textbooks used in primary schools, they found out that male characters are still favorably portrayed, in terms of visibility. Males account for 60% of the characters in the stories featured in the textbooks used. This pattern can also be seen in the illustrations used in the textbooks, too. In the study of Java and Parcon (2016), they found out that illustrations are still heavily stereotypical, associating women with reproductive roles of raising children and performing household chores.

Blumberg's (2015) background paper for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015 also supports the findings of the studies above. The paper states that gender bias in textbooks remains an almost invisible obstacle for females' equality in education and beyond. Gender inequality contained in textbooks may constrain girls from realizing their full potential. When girls cannot reach their full potential, neither can their family, communities and nations (Bertini, 2011; Sadker et al., 2009).

Kinds of Representation

There are different ways that gender representation in textbooks can be investigated and analyzed. Porreca (1984), in her article "Sexism in Current ESL Textbooks" (1984) proposes five categories in analyzing gender representation in texts: visibility, firstness, occupational roles, activities, and character traits. The first category, visibility, looks at which gender is more visible or appears more frequently than other genders. The visibility or omission of one gender in educational materials like textbooks could also signify the lack of attention, and worth given the said gender as human beings or members of the society (Flores & Arunduque, 2022). Visibility is usually associated with textbook

characters, literary or otherwise; however, Bhattacharya (2017) expanded this category to include authors and topic/theme focus. This study draws inspiration from this kind of gender representation in textbook: visibility of male and female authors in literary textbooks.

Research Questions and Methodology

This study looks at the difference in the occurrence of women and men authors of literary texts included in the Grade 7 Filipino textbook used in public schools in the Philippines. These textbook contains literary texts which are used in teaching grammar and literature.

The two questions explored are: (1) What is the difference in the number of women and men authors included in the textbook? (2) In what ways can the difference impact equal gender representation in learning materials like a textbook?

The process of finding the difference between the number of female and male authors included in the textbook was collected manually. Further, the literary works were read and analyzed to investigate if characters of the narratives are men-dominated, women-dominated, or even. After the extraction of this data from the narratives, qualitative analysis of the gender focus of the literary texts was done. Content analysis was used to determine how the men or women characters in the narratives are shown: are they playing central focus, do they have agency or are they treated as minor characters? These data were also manually collected.

Results

After manually counting the number of male and female authors included in the textbook, the result shows a massive gender difference in the number of men and women authors. As seen in Table 1, out of all the 38 literary texts included in the textbook, 31 of them have been written by men. This makes up 82% of the whole textbook. Only four of the literary texts are written by women authors and three texts are oral literature with no known authors.

Table 1

Gender of Literary Text Writers

Gender of the Author	Number of Literary Texts
Female	4
Male	31
Unknown	3
Total number of literary texts	38

Looking closely at the literary texts written by each author, three out of the four women writers used female

lead characters, while one featured a male lead character.

Table 2

Literary Texts by Female Writers

Gender of Lead Character	Number of Literary Texts
Female	3
Male	1

On the other hand, in Table 3, out of the 31 literary texts of the male writers, 17 of them featured male lead characters, while seven others featured female leads, and one had both male and female as leads. The remaining four male authors wrote texts with no characters (opinion and non-fiction pieces); and two male writers featured vague lead characters (characters whose gender can't be identified due to the gender-neutral pronouns used).

Table 3

Literary Texts by Male Writers

Gender of Lead Character	Number of Literary Texts
Female	7
Male	17
Female and Male	1
Vague	2
Texts with no characters	4

Based on the first set of data (Table 1), the number of female and male writers included in the textbook, one can clearly see that the textbook is heavily dominated by the latter. One of the reasons why this textbook has been the subject of this study is its theme concerning national and regional literature. This means, that all the literary texts included in this textbook are all written by local Filipino writers. This lessens the influence of western literature who are also dominated by male writers. However, as seen by the sheer difference between the chosen authors, it is safe to say that even in the national and local literature context, male writers also dominate over the female writers in terms of inclusion in learning materials.

Upon a closer look at the gender of the literary characters and gender focus of the narratives, the data also show that writers tend to highlight characters of their own gender. For example, for the women writers, three out of four featured female lead characters in their stories. The same is true for the 17 men writers who wrote literary texts with male lead characters. Furthermore, female writers have a stronger tendency to write about their own gender (75%: three out of four

texts) compared to male writers with only 55% (17 out of 31 texts).

What are the possible implications of these findings? One implication is that having literary textbooks with unbalanced ratio of male to female authors could send a message that the Philippine Literature is mainly dominated by male writers. Although the dominance of male writers could be perceived during the early years of Philippine literature (Bayot, 2006), contemporary writing is already seeing a rise in the number of female writers already (Chin & Daud, 2017). However, this progress is not represented well in the textbook. Therefore, students might think that the Philippine literary canon is male dominated. Unlike the more set Western literary canon, Philippine literary canon is not yet well-established (Santos, 1997). Literary textbooks can be considered the introduction to the canon, and as such, whoever is included in the textbooks are very important. Also, since the Grade 7 Filipino textbook is a compilation of critically acclaimed literary works by native writers, students perhaps may think that male writers are better than female writers.

Another thing that can emerge from the big disparity between male and female writers is students missing out on learning from the gendered lived experiences of the authors. As Janssen and Murachver (2004) claim, gender is difficult to hide from. It pervades in our behavior, conspicuously and in subtler yet influential ways. One of these ways is in creative output such as literary texts. Feminist writer, Emily Kuhn, also holds this view. In her book *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination,* she states that writers construct themselves or become textually produced, as belonging to a particular gender group or social class or generation or nationality or ethnic group (Kuhn, 2002, p. 149). The act of writing is always one of writing the self (Pullen, 2006).

The disparity between the male and female writers can also cause students to miss out on social and cultural issues that are tied with gender. Feminist writers, for example, mostly feature their own genders in their narratives to highlight the plight, cause, or experiences of their gender. As Yaeger argues in her book *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women's Writing*, discussed by Kaplan (1990), feminist writers use different writing modes to resist domination, break silence, protest, and reinvent and transform myths, traditions and forms. They do this, Yaeger reasons out as discussed by Kaplan, to escape the masculine's word authority contained in literary language. Writers like Jane Austen, Emily Bronte, Virginia Woolf, and bell hooks are some examples of feminist writers who employ literature as such. Although some male writers can also write about gender inequality, if there were only a few female writers featured in the textbook, the chances of the students' being exposed to these issues would be lesser.

The highlight of this study is the finding that the textbook used in this research has many more men writers who featured mostly male lead characters in their stories. Although I strongly pointed out that there is a strong tendency of for writers to feature their own gender in their works, it is also possible that other things might influence why writers choose to feature their own gender in their writings. Some could be personal, some could be for literary reasons, and some might not have any reason at all except for some specific effect of the gender on the story. However, as true as this might be, it is still undeniable that the gender of the writer has a strong effect on the gender of the literary characters that would be presented in the literary creations. Subsequently, it is important that the number of female, male, and other genders be more equitable, rather than heavily skewed to the advantage of male as seen in the textbook used in this study.

Conclusion

This study aims to investigate if there is a gender imbalance in the representation of writers in the Grade 7 Filipino textbook. Based on closer inspection of the literary texts included in the book, it has been found out that this textbook is heavily dominated by male writers. The majority of men writers wrote about male characters and focused on male leads in their writings. This imbalance in the representation is concerning as it can have effect on the students who read them. Continuous exposure to male dominated literary texts that are chosen to be a positive representation of Filipino national and regional literature could send an imbalanced message to students. It could make students think that male writers are more valued and capable than women writers. there are more literary texts featuring them. As textbooks have a bigger reach in developing countries like the Philippines, in terms of the number of students who read them, and length of time the learners are exposed to them, it is important to critically review their contents as these contents could reinforce and strengthen biased gender ideologies.

This is to help guide the making of the new version of the textbook. With the result of this study and in consideration of the discussions done here, it is hoped that some major revisions will be done in the making and writing of the next textbook. It is hoped that a more balanced representation of all genders, not just male and female writers, will be considered.

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JALT Special Interest Groups and the PanSIG Conference

Accessibility in Language Learning

The Accessibility in Language Learning SIG became a new forming SIG in February 2021. This SIG aims to create a community of language teachers to better understand learners with special needs to improve learners' overall learning experiences with diverse learning needs.

Bilingualism

Our group provides support to families who are bringing up children in two or more languages in Japanese contexts. Our newsletter, *Bilingual Japan*, includes practical information about bilingual parenting, as well as academic and theoretical issues. The SIG's annual forum and banquet at the national conference provide an opportunity for members to network with other bilingual families. Further information can be found at www.bsig.org.

Business Communication

The JALT Business Communication (BizCom or BC) SIG represents a group of like-minded teachers intended to develop the discipline of teaching English conducive to participation in the world business community in Japan. To facilitate this, we aim to provide instructors in this field with a means of collaboration and sharing best teaching practices.

CEFR and Language Portfolio

CEFR & LP SIG wants to discuss the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and European Language Portfolio (ELP), and other similar frameworks andtheir relevance for Japan. There is an emphasis on developing materials to support educators who would like to use these pedagogic tools; the bilingual Language Portfolio for Japanese University is available on the SIG website.

College and University Educators

Our goal is to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of educational activities, ideas and research of broad interest to college and university educators in Japan. If you are involved in tertiary education and are committed to professional development, you are CUE too.

Computer Assisted Language Learning

The CALL SIG serves the interests of language teaching professionals who are interested in bringing together knowledge and skills of technology and language learning. CALL practitioners work in a variety of educational settings: private language schools, elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities.

Critical Thinking

The Critical Thinking (CT) SIG was established for the purpose of providing a clear but ever-reforming definition of critical thinking; to provide a forum for the discussion of critical thinking and praxis; to provide research opportunities to language educators interested in promoting critical thinking; and to provide an area where language teachers can enjoy friendly, professional and engaging examination of the rationale, validity and, furthermore, the critical importance of its instruction in various environments.

Extensive Reading

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.

Gender Awareness in Language Education

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. To see our past newsletters, please visit our website at www.gale-sig.org.

Global Issues in Language Education

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. The 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.

Intercultural Communication in Language Education

This SIG aims to explore various ways language teachers could help shape their students' intercultural minds, raise their students' cultural self-awareness, and educate for intercultural understanding. It promotes discussion about various approaches to teaching intercultural communication in a language classroom, allowing educators to become better informed about language intercultural education theory. We also promote the development of resources appropriate to a foreign language teaching environment while considering the practical challenges of taking culture into account in the language classroom.

Japanese as a Second Language

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 Japanese as a Second Language (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.

Learner Development

The Learner Development SIG is an active and supportive community of individuals with a broad range of personal and professional experiences, all sharing an interest in exploring learner (and educator) development. We encourage anyone with similar interests to join us. To find out more, please visit our SIG's website, ld-sig.org.

Lifelong Language Learning

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 (**Life Long Learning**) 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.

Listening

The Listening Special Interest Group (Listening SIG) provides a forum for focused listening research and discussion in specific regard to teaching and learning. The group offers both teachers and researchers a place to connect, collaborate and share practice and research regarding how teachers teach listening and assess their learners, how learners improve their listening and use it to improve their knowledge, and finally how theoretical aspects connect to classroom practice.

Literature in Language Teaching

Hi! A hearty welcome to the Literature in Language Teaching SIG. We started up this group 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

The MW SIG was established for the purpose of helping members to 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.

教材開発研究部会 (MW) は、メンバーが日々の教育の場で得た新しいアイディアを教材にしていく助けとなることを目的に設立されました。著作権に関すること、自費出版を含めた出版に関する実践的なアドバイス、広く一般学習者または特定の授業のためにどうしたらより良い語学教材が作れるか、といったことに関するアイディアを共有しお互いを高め合える部会であることが願いです。教材開発についてもっと知りたい、自分のアイディアを形にしたいという方、入会大歓迎です。一緒に活動しませんか。

Mind, Brain, and Education

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.

Mixed, Augmented, and Virtual Realities

Mixed, Augmented and Virtual Realities (MAVR) is not a new concept or area of study, but it an area that is beginning to be implemented at a larger scale in many other fields. There are those of us working in this area connected to education here in Japan and more specifically language education in Japan. Our SIG is not just about the technology, it is also looking into what these technologies mean for how we communicate and learn as we create and augment our own reality.

Other Language Educators

Hello; dobr denj; kalimera; ni hao; guten tag; anyong hashimnikka; bonjour, buenos dias; hyvää päivää; bom dia; haisai; konnichiwa!

In a time when we can easily understand where and how other people live, there is still only one surefire way to find out what they think individually or as a culture: to learn their language. As every culture contains specific patterns of thought and mindsets which cannot always be put into English or translated easily from one language to another, learning its language opens the door to that culture and the countries using it. The purpose of the OLE SIG is to serve the special needs of such learners and teachers.

Performance in Education

The mission of the Performance in Education (PIE) 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 a newsletter and sponsoring a National Speech, Drama, and Debate Contest. Future activities may be the sponsoring of workshops and conferences, and supporting local and regional speech, drama, and debate contests or festivals.

Pragmatics

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 papers on language in use. If you do anything with language, you are using pragmatics! So, come join us!

School Owners

Language School owners have always played a significant role in JALT both at national & local levels. The SO SIG is where owners can share ideas, experiences, and solutions to the academic and commercial challenges they face which cannot be addressed through other SIGs. If you have questions or would like to learn more about what the SIG provides, please contact us at so@jalt.org or visit our website at https://jaltsosig.wixsite.com/home.

Study Abroad

The Study Abroad SIG welcomes anyone interested into its wide membership, domestically and overseas. The aim is to facilitate an active and working network of faculty, staff, and students who can share and exchange experiences, knowledge, and knowhow on how to plan, prepare, implement, and evaluate different study abroad programs/experiences. Study abroad includes all categories of inbound and outbound, one-way study abroad, exchange, internships, experience, and cultural programs. The goal for many SIG members is to network, to collect and share data and information for future collaboration, research, presentations, and papers in the area of study abroad.

Task-Based Learning

The JALT Task-Based Learning (TBL) SIG is a Special Interest Group aimed at teachers who currently use, or are interested in using, task-based approaches in the classroom. The 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

The Teacher Development SIG is a group committed to helping ourselves and our peers to become more effective language teachers in order to better serve learners. As such, our varied activities and interests include forums, conferences, and journals about professional development, practitioner research, and reflective practice. Our SIG offers opportunities for teachers from different educational settings to come together for careful and critical reflections and explorations of their practice, with a view to developing as professionals. The TD SIG is a flexible group, open to new ideas and potential collaborations.

Teachers Helping Teachers

The THT SIG began from the charity work of the late Bill Balsamo and we organize 4 overseas conferences in Laos (Feb/Mar), Vietnam (Early August), Kyrygystan and Bangladesh (Sept, date depends on Ramadan) as well as work to develop overseas volunteer opportunities. Participants pay their own way, and are asked to prepare 2-3 presentations (practical presentations are most welcome) that they may present multiple times to organize and fill out the conference schedule. For more information, please contact thtjalt@gmail.com.

Teaching Younger Learners

The TYL SIG is for teachers of younger learners. This SIG was formed by the merger of the JALT Teaching Children SIG and the Junior Senior High SIG in February 2015. The goal of the TYL SIG is to support those involved with or simply interested in the teaching of languages to learners aged 0-18. We publish a bilingual newsletter with columns by many of the leading teachers in the field.

Testing and Evaluation

The Testing and Evaluation 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. Please visit our website at www.jalt.org/test.

Vocabulary

The Vocabulary Special Interest Group (Vocab SIG) provides a forum for focused research and discussion in specific regard to vocabulary acquisition. We 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 connect to classroom practice. The Vocabulary 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.

PanSIG Journal 2023

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