

The 2010 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings

“Learner Perspectives”

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Message from the editors,

We proudly present to you the proceedings from the 2010 Pan-SIG Conference held at Osaka Gakuin University under the auspices of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT). Thousands of hours of hard work by the organizing committee, the SIGs, and of course those who presented went into preparing for this endeavor and as a result the conference was a great success. For those who chose to publish in these proceedings however, the end of the conference marked the beginning of another journey: the journey of the writing process.

We, the editors, were honored to be of assistance in this journey of reflection and sharing and are very proud of the quality of the texts produced.

For a very few of the authors, works were almost complete when they entered the editing stage. However for most, revising meant drastic changes. We know this took courage and have faith that everyone grew as a result of this process. At times it was stunning to witness. This can't be emphasized enough.

We used a two-tier feedback processes, one "read" from a peer -a fellow writer in the proceedings- and then another round or two with one of the three editors, Kim, Eric, or Matthew.

"More eyes" on each text is certainly desirable but with the record number of submissions we had this year, it was difficult to manage and meant losing time that we did not have. We apologize for any delay this caused and thank the authors for making the extra effort of taking part in the peer-review feedback.

Finally, by way of dedication, it cannot go unmentioned that this work is being published in the wake of the tragic events surrounding the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. We send our compassion to those whose lives it touched. We commend the spirit of charity and volunteerism that has spread not only throughout JALT but throughout our entire society here in Japan. We thank all those who have, will, or are taking action because they represent the best of human sentiments in all of us.

We sincerely hope you enjoy these proceedings. See you at the next Pan-SIG!

Kim Bradford-Watts

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Ebay feedback: An analysis and suggestions for classroom use

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Abstract:

This paper a) describes an analysis of a randomly selected sample of 300 E-bay buyer feedback messages, b) reports on how buyers “do things with words” via these “little texts” (Halliday, 1994), and c) suggests how such texts can be introduced into the language classroom as a basis for reading, writing, and related communicative activities. The Ebay feedback message is a genre that has developed in response to interactions occurring via the Internet that can be used effectively for instruction in the EFL context. 本稿は a) eBayの落札者によるフィードバック・コメントをランダムに300サンプル選択して、その分析を行い、b) 落札者がこれらの「リトル・テキスト」を通して、どのように言葉をつかって行動するかをレポートし、c) そのような「リトル・テキスト」を、読む・書く等の情報伝達行動のひとつの基準として、語学の授業にどのように導入できるかを提起する。本稿は、インターネットを通して起こる相互交流によって発展しつつあるひとつのジャンルと、それをEFLの文脈の中でどのように活用できるかを論じている。

Keywords:

Text analysis, “little texts,” online auctions, CALL, reading, writing
テキスト分析、「リトル・テキスト」、オンライン・オークション、CALL、
リーディング（読む）、ライティング（書く）

Many of my students love to shop, and online auctions sites offer a vast array of goods and services at what may seem to students to be cheap prices. Students in CALL classes will happily trawl through pages of description to find just the right item for themselves, even though they are not really buying anything. When teaching about using online

auction sites, it is important for students to understand a) how online auctions work, b) the advantages and disadvantages of using online auction sites, and c) the actual costs of auctions. It is also important to introduce the format of auction description pages and to direct them to read the feedback left by other shoppers regarding their experiences.

E-bay was established in 1995 and now has over 90 million users around the globe. According to its website, in 2009, 60 billion dollars worth of goods were sold via E-bay <<http://www.ebayinc.com/who>>. Moreover, a host of other auction sites are based on the E-bay model. E-bay allows sellers to list items for sale in 35 main categories. Sellers upload photographs of items and enter descriptions. They also indicate regions to which they sell as well as relevant shipping costs. Buyers can ask the seller a question, which will be answered within the E-bay environment. Buyers enter bids, and the winning bidder pays via Paypal. After receiving the item, the buyer may leave feedback for the seller, and the seller may leave feedback for the buyer.

Feedback is an important element of the Ebay shopping experience. Sellers who are slow to send an item, package items in a shoddy manner, do not describe items correctly, or do not respond to buyer questions or complaints in a timely manner may earn negative feedback, signalling to other buyers that it may be better to avoid dealing with the particular seller. Likewise, buyers who do not pay for an item in a timely manner or those who complain without good reason may earn negative feedback from sellers. Some sellers will not honour bids from buyers with only a few feedback ratings.

This paper has evolved from one unit of a CALL course taught at Kyoto Women's University and Junior College in which students are introduced to ways of using the Internet to enhance their life experiences through, for example, shopping, budgeting, investing and banking online, and working via the Internet, while also improving typing, word processing, presentation, and English language skills. The introductory units focus on shopping, since it is an area of high student interest. One of these units requires students to search E-bay for items that they would like to "buy", collect details regarding the items, present about the items to their peers, and in the following week, check if the prices that they were willing to pay were greater than the real winning bids. If so, they have "won" their items in the auctions for the purposes of the class.

In order to assist students in choosing items from a "reputable" seller, in addition to explaining the format of the page and how to find useful information on it, students are

directed to check seller feedback pages and to read comments left by previous customers. Feedback messages about transactions completed via E-bay are limited to 80 characters, and thus represent very short and understandable texts.

Halliday (1994) explains that “little texts” are those “which the context of situation determines have to be short ... and since they have to achieve quite a lot in that very limited space, they tend to have their own grammar for doing so” (p. 392), including such text types as newspaper headlines, road signs, and signboards. E-Bay feedback can also be considered as a type of “little text”.

Introducing the genre of such texts in the classroom allows students to notice important generic features of the feedback and to understand when feedback does not fit the pattern. It may also help to prepare them for encountering other kinds of “little texts” in the future.

This paper describes an analysis of a sample of 300 randomly selected E-bay buyer feedback messages, reports about how buyers “do things with words” via these little texts (Halliday, 1994), and suggests how such texts can be introduced into the language classroom as a basis for reading, writing, and related communicative activities. It is an attempt to describe the details of, and suggest the means of teaching, a new genre that has been developing in response to interactions occurring via the Internet.

A preliminary survey of characteristics of E-bay feedback

A sample of 300 randomly selected feedback comments in English was collected for 20 sellers across the 35 categories of listings. These were analysed according to role of message, focus of message (what is important to buyers), and other features including length of feedback, use of symbols, tone of feedback (positive/negative/ neutral), and features of style and grammar).

Characteristics of Ebay feedback

Role of feedback

E-bay feedback is written for 2 different audiences: the seller and other buyers. Table 1 shows the types of feedback that occurred in this sample and examples. Most people use E-bay feedback to summarize their shopping experiences to other buyers. Approximately 60% of feedback in the sample was of this type. Other people use E-Bay

feedback as confirmation of delivery of their items and to offer thanks to the seller. In this sample, approximately 10% of feedback was of this type. However, some people choose to mix their messages, addressing both seller and other buyers. In this sample, approximately 30% of feedback was of this type.

Table 1. Different feedback types

Type of feedback	Percent of sample	Audience	Examples
Summarizing shopping experience	60%	Other E-bay buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delivery is always really quick bought from this person a few times now ● Excellent eBayer, excellent Service, Great Communications ● Initial problem with shipping but after an email it was sorted very quickly
Confirmation of delivery of order	10%	E-bay seller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thanks for these cartridges ● Thank you for quick delivery considering christmas. Excellent! ● Items received. Thanks.
Both summary of shopping experience and confirmation of delivery	30%	Both other E-bay buyers and the E-bay seller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No problems, good transaction & reasonably priced. Thanks! ● no problem-first class service-thank you ● Item arrived as described and in good time!

Focus of message

Messages convey information about a range of factors. Table 2 shows these factors and the percent of messages in which they were mentioned. Some messages referred to more than one factor.

Factor	Percent of sample	Examples
Item quality	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excellent product ● Item as described ● Brand new item
Price	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reasonably priced ● Very good value ● Fantastic value
Packaging	1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Well packaged ● Good packing
Delivery time	28%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quick ● Very fast ● A tad slow
Communications with seller	4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A+ communication ● Great comms
Seller quality	33%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Super service ● Trustworthy seller ● Honest ● Great seller

All of these factors appeared in messages directed towards other E-bay buyers, but only the first four appeared in messages directed specifically towards the seller. It is apparent that item quality and delivery times are important to those who buy goods on E-bay. That only 33% percent of the feedback in this sample referred directly to seller quality, such as honesty or efficiency, suggests that buyers communicate about seller quality indirectly by indicating instead information regarding item quality, price, packaging, and delivery time.

Other features

Analysis of the texts revealed that:

1. Approximately 75% of feedback messages in this sample consisted of text only. Of

the 25% which included symbols, the vast majority used only the “*” or “+” symbols. These symbols were used in approximately equal proportion, but tended to appear more often in messages confirming delivery of the item(s).

2. Slightly over half of feedback messages were five words or less.
3. Although all feedback messages were represented on the site as being positive, three (1%) were actually negative. This is perhaps due to the difficulty of posting a negative feedback on E-bay without a great deal of negotiating with the seller. In addition, three other messages (1%) mentioned problems that had been resolved, while 17 (6%) referred to some issue of concern that occurred with the sale (mostly length of delivery time). Thus 8% of the sample was actually negative or neutral in tone.
4. None of the negative or neutral comments used symbols.
5. In terms of style, it was found that feedback messages may be written as all lower case, all upper case, sentence caps, or an irregular mix of both cases. Additionally, there may be no punctuation used at all.
6. “A+”, or a five-star rating system (“*****”) is common to indicate happiness with the transaction.
7. Emoticons are occasionally used to indicate satisfaction with the transaction.
8. The subject is generally understood from the context, while the verb is often understood to be the “be” form.
9. Occasionally words, such as “probs” and “rcd,” are abbreviated within feedback messages due to constraints on message length.

Using Ebay feedback in the classroom for communicative activities

The following is a suggested unit plan for using Ebay feedback in the classroom. Using E-bay in the classroom introduces real-world English and situations to students. Explaining the location of important information on the page prior to student searching allows students to skim web pages for important information in order to complete the task within class time. Introducing seller feedback using a genre approach allows students to read the feedback quickly to ensure that it is, in fact, positive, and may assist them in justifying their choice of one item over another.

Day 1

Step 1: Introduce the students to E-bay. Show categories and a few sample items. Explain important parts of the page, including item description, item location, shipping costs, bidding history, and seller feedback.

Step 2: Explain that students will choose two items they would like to “buy,” record the URLs and their closing bids & shipping costs, make a poster, and tell their group about their choices.

Step 3: Assist where necessary.

Step 4: Students print their posters and explain about the items they have chosen, why they have chosen them, and the closing price that they would offer for each of the items.

Step 5: Collect the posters and save until the next class.

Day 2

Step 1: Return the posters and ask students to check the closing prices of the auctions. For the purposes of the class, if the closing bid is lower than the offer that the student would have made for the item, the student is deemed to have won the item.

Step 2: Teacher “delivers” items to students via one positive and one negative note, for example “Congratulations! You won the auction. Your item was delivered this morning. You are very happy with it” and “You won the auction. Your item was delivered this morning, but it is broken.”

Step 3: Students write feedback for items with which they are satisfied and letters of complaint for those with which they have experienced a problem.

Step 4: Students swap their messages with a partner either via email or by printing out the typed letter. The partner responds to both the positive seller feedback and to the letter of complaint.

Step 5: Collect the feedback/letters of complaint and responses from each pair for evaluation.

Conclusion

Students enjoy looking for items on Ebay and learning about how they may use online auctions in the future. This unit not only prepares them to use real life auction sites, but also encourages skimming web pages for information in English, the reading of little texts for understanding, and the composition of both little and longer texts. The analysis

of the sample of little texts described in this paper indicates features of the texts that can be easily explained to students using a genre approach to make the text more accessible to them.

Biodata

Kim Bradford-Watts has been living and teaching in the Kansai region for more than 20 years. She has authored or co-authored three textbooks and an extensive list of articles, held a range of offices within JALT, and presents at JALT and other conferences regularly. Her research interests include pragmatics, pedagogy, and CALL.
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Using online student data to assess graded readers: Preliminary results

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Reference data:

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Abstract

The Extensive Reading System (ERS) has been collecting information on graded readers read by thousands of students in a university Extensive Reading programme since 2007. As well as reactions to how interesting and how easy each book was, whether students completed the whole book and how long it took to read, students have been able to write reviews or comments. This paper discusses how comments were categorised and how comments relate to student ratings, and lists the highest ranked books, based on this data.

オンラインシステム ERS により、2007 年から、何千人もの学生を対象として行われている多読プログラムに関する情報が集められてきた。ERS において学生は、その本のどんなところが興味深かったか、難易度はどの程度であったか、最後まで読み通せたかどうか、読むのにどのくらいの時間がかかったか等の質問に回答し、更に自由に感想を述べられる仕組みになっている。感想のカテゴリー化や感想と評判の関係について述べ、そして集められたデータから、最も評判の良い本を挙げている。

Keywords: Extensive Reading, assessing graded readers, curriculum development, libraries, categorization of student comments

The importance of books in an Extensive Reading programme is obvious, highlighted, for example, by Krashen's call for a super library (2004). Practitioners and participants in ER programmes are acutely aware of the quality of graded readers. This paper investigates data gathered on an online system from April 2008 to January 2010 and explores how this can shed light on students' reactions to books.

More information on students' reactions to books should be useful for curriculum developers and librarians when stocking libraries for students' extensive reading, since they indicate which books require multiple copies or which should be left off the shelf. ER practitioners may also find which books can be recommended to students in general, for example if we wish to choose a class reader that will be widely popular, or to suggest a book to a student who has read very little. The data may also be useful for recommending specific books to particular students. It is hoped this research may improve ER practice, and inform publishers and writers as they produce new volumes and series of reading materials.

Ratings of graded readers have been published, for example by EPER (the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading; see appendix in Day & Bamford, 1998) and in Japan by SSS (Start with Simple Stories; Furukawa, Kanda, Komatsu, Hatanaka & Nishizawa, 2010). By their nature, book ratings are subjective; nobody can objectively decide how good a book is (Whittaker, 1982). We can hope to gain some objectivity by collecting a large number of subjective ratings, and hope for some relevance as we are collecting ratings from Japanese university students, and we wish to use the ratings for the same group.

Both EPER and SSS have scales to indicate the level of difficulty of books. The EPER scale uses letters, where A is closest to native-targeted texts, and H is the lowest level, while SSS uses YL (Yomiyasusa level), a numerical scale from zero to 10, where 10 is a difficult native-targeted text. Each publisher uses its own levels and grades, and a comparison between these, EPER levels, YLs and also the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) scales can be seen in appendix 1.

This paper begins by looking at the educational context of this study, next we investigate the nature of student ratings, and then we show how we analysed student reviews. Next, trends among the data are presented and finally there is a brief discussion and conclusion. The highest rated books, at various levels, are shown in Appendix 2.

Background

The context of this research is a Japanese national university where an ER programme has been in place since 2005, becoming part of a standardised curriculum in 2006 and involving over 1000 students for their first- and second-year compulsory English classes. Students are not English majors. Performance on the EPER test indicates most

students can read no higher than EPER levels D or E (corresponding roughly to Oxford stages 1 or 2).

For the first four years, books were taken to and from class on book trucks. In April 2010, most books were moved to the library, except for a few hundred low-level books for in-class reading.

In 2007, an online system, ERS (for Extensive Reading System), was developed to help students and their teachers keep track of what was being read (see Brierley, Wakasugi & Sato, 2009). The system holds the following data on each book:

- Title
- Publisher
- Level
- YL
- Word count
- Genre

A photograph of the cover is automatically harvested from the internet, and displayed within the online system.

The system records the date students register that they have started reading each book, and records the date and the following student-input data when students indicate they have finished reading a book:

- How much did you read? (one page, a few pages, the whole book)
- How long did it take? (5, 10, 20, 30, 45 minutes; 1, 1.5, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more hours)
- How good was it? (1: very boring to 5: very good. Referred to hereafter as “Rating”.)
- How easy was it? (1: very difficult to 5: very easy. Referred to hereafter as “Ease”.)
- Review (an optional space for students to respond to a book)

The data considered in this paper consist of 14,770 reviews, collected between April, 2008 and February, 2010. Over the same period, ERS recorded around 30,000 student responses to books, although we have only considered those where they opted to write a review. There are many doubts over the validity of this data, one of which is the possibility that students are clicking at random to get through the page. We make the assumption that students who have written something in the review field are more likely to have given meaningful responses in the other fields. The data set was further reduced

by ignoring any students who had commented on fewer than 5 books, and then ignoring any books that had fewer than 5 reviews. This left 12,575 reviews, from 937 students on 624 books. As well as considering the reviews, this paper takes particular notice of students' ratings.

What is a good book?

Before rushing to judgements about which is the best or the worst book, we must consider exactly what those terms mean. The commercial world of books has both bestsellers, based on the number of books sold, and book awards such as the Booker prize, based on the opinions of panels of experts. Individuals may have their own favourite books that are neither bestsellers, nor recipients of book awards or critical acclaim.

In Brierley and Ruzicka (2006) four different criteria were used to assess the best books. In Table 1 (below) we show the correlations between each of these for the top 40 books in the study.

- number of students who read the book (“reports”)
- average student rating of the book
- number of orders placed for the book at the beginning of the second semester (the book trucks were stocked by student purchases so various efforts were made to ensure a range of books were purchased)
- number of students who said that book was the best book in a questionnaire at the end of the year.

Table 1. Correlations between criteria for best book (From data in Brierley & Ruzicka, 2006)

	Reports	Orders (Oct 05)	Average rating	Best book
Best book	60%	49%	-13%	100%
Ratings	-44%	-16%	100%	
Orders	43%	100%		
Reports	100%			

There is a strong correlation (60%) between the number of times a book was read and the number of students who thought that it was the best book; however, the more a book is read, the more chances it has of being somebody's best book. The average ratings students gave to the books correlate negatively with the other three criteria. There is a high correlation between the number of orders and number of times a book was read (49%) although the direction of causality is unclear; rather than concluding that students are ordering the best books, it is likely that they are reading the books that are most abundant on the book trucks. According to borrowing data for ER books from the university library for April to June, 2010, there is a 93% correlation between the number of copies of a particular book that the library holds, and the number of times that book is borrowed. In other words, the number of people who read a book is largely a function of the number of books available, either in libraries or on book trucks.

We can already see that much of the data is contradictory and ambiguous. It does seem clear that student will often chose a book simply because it is there, so if we can draw any conclusions about which books are best, it is essential for us to make such books prominent or abundant in our libraries. Practitioners should also invest time engaging with students about their book choices. Brierley and Ruzicka (2006) inquired into student motivation for choosing books, finding that students most often chose on the basis of recommendations, the cover or having seen the movie or read the story in Japanese.

Student ratings

We consider student ratings on books as our best estimate of how good each book is, with several reservations:

- The sample size may be too small to give a reliable average. We have considered only books with at least five ratings. The choice of five books is somewhat arbitrary: a larger sample would give a more accurate average; however, this would also exclude several books that were highly rated and should probably be better represented in the library.
- An average rating may give us the least bad books, and ignore books that some people feel are really good and others feel are really bad. This could be called the Napoleon Dynamite effect after the 2004 movie, which splits viewers into those that love it and those that hate it (Thompson, 2008).
- Students may not have rated the book seriously. We have already mitigated this problem by choosing only reports where a review has been written.
- There are harsh and lenient raters. One person's "very good" maybe another person's "average".

The last problem can be illustrated by three students who had each read 30 books, shown in figure 1. For student A, the best out of all the books scores 4, while almost all get a 3. Student C, on the other hand, gave a 5 to over half of the books and 4 is a relatively poor score.

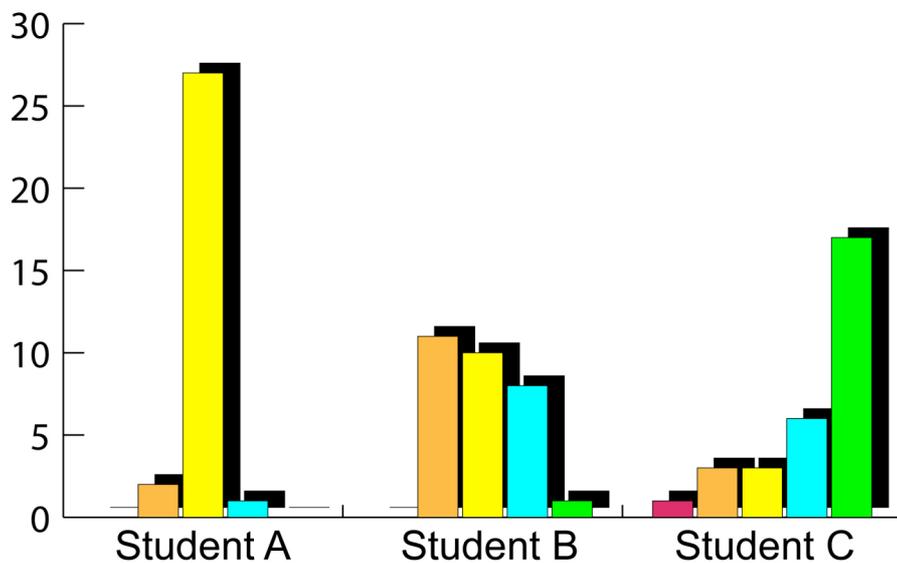


Figure 1. Three students with different rating tendencies

To compensate for this difference, an average rating was calculated for each student, this was then subtracted from the rating for each book, and 3 added to give a normalized rating. Considering the data for books, there was an 88% correlation between average ratings of books and average normalised ratings, and a 77% correlation between ease of reading and normalised ease of reading, calculated in a similar way. Figure 2 shows the sum of student ratings for three books, both original raw ratings, and those normalised as described above. The normalised ratings are clearly more precise, and we hope they are also more accurate.

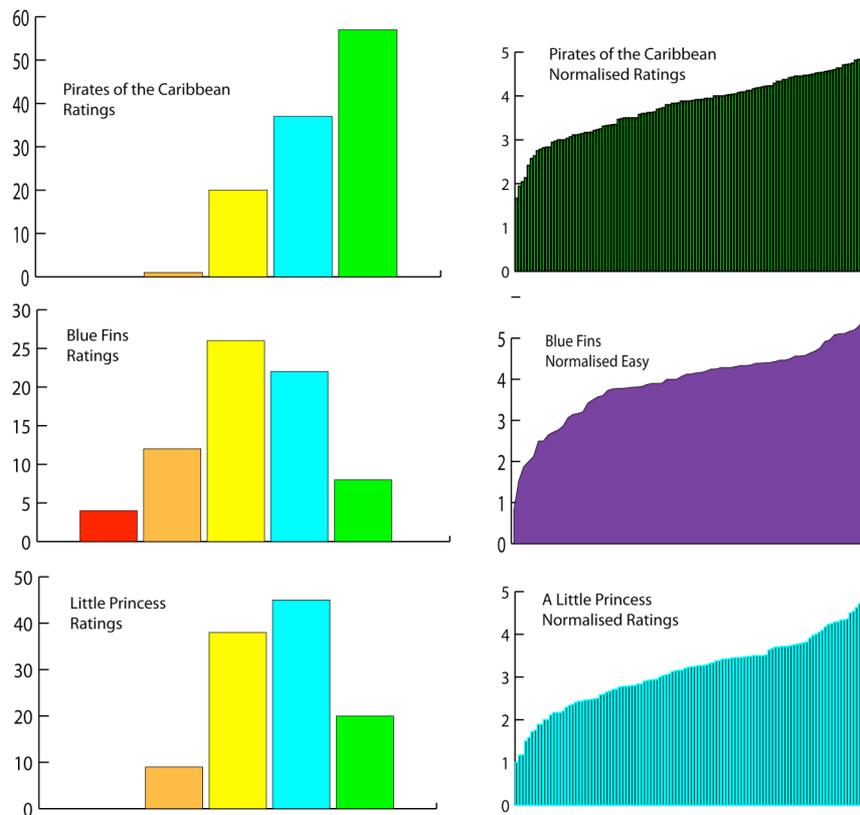


Figure 2. Raw and normalised ratings for three books

Reviews

Having completed numerical analysis, we were faced with the challenge of analysing several thousand student comments. This entailed reading each comment and considering whether it could be categorised together with previously read comments. Where a comment did not fit any previous category, a new category was made. This procedure was informed by the experience of categorising student comments on ER (Brierley, Ruzicka, Sato & Wakasugi, 2010) and by Martin and White's work on appraisal (2005).

This study considered reviews of seven books that were widely read, at EPER levels D to F.

- Pirates of the Caribbean (Penguin level 2)
- Men in Black (Penguin level 2)
- A Little Princess (Oxford stage 1)
- Taxi of Terror (Oxford starter)
- Blue Fins (Macmillan starters)

- The Magic Barber (Macmillan starters)
- The Umbrella (Macmillan starters)

For these 7 books, 523 reviews were analysed with 1,037 categorisations.

We must also consider a philosophical question: Why did the students write the reviews? We can postulate that they did so because the teacher told them to, because they really liked the book or because they always write a review on every book. Among teachers there is a variety of policies: students must write a review on every book; students must write a review on one or two books per semester; or students may write reviews or not entirely at their discretion. We found absolutely no correlation (0%) between the ratio of the number of reviews each book received and the number of times it was read in total, with how highly students rated the books. Therefore, there is no evidence that these reviews were only written for books the students liked.

ERS allows students to write reviews either in English or Japanese, and while a few teachers insisted students write in English, many left this to the students' discretion. Even so, 60% of all reviews were written in English, and 47% of reviewers wrote all their reviews in English. Eighteen percent of reviewers wrote only in Japanese leaving about one third writing in both languages, usually switching from Japanese to English. The language of reviews had no significant correlation with ratings, ease, length of review or YL.

Analysis of reviews

Reviews can be categorised in a cognitive dimension or an affective dimension. In addition, we can surmise whether comments were negative or positive (Martin & White, 2005). We can also distinguish comments by their depth, whether superficial, for example commenting on the pictures and the length of the book, or commenting on the language, story, characters or themes. Examples of comments, with students' original spelling and grammar, and a discussion of their categorisation are shown below.

1a. "It has many pictures."

1b. "It's pictures are colorful."

1c. "I like the pictures in this book!"

1d. "It's very interesting and easy because there are some pictures."

Examples 1a-1d all comment on pictures in the book. The first simply tells us about their existence, superficially telling us no more than that the student has indeed looked

at the book and observed that it contains pictures, and giving us no evidence that the student read any of the words the book. We may of course read a lot more into this comment, as we would if it came from a native speaker, and surmise that nothing else in the book was of note, and the story, characters, themes and writing style were lacking. The next three comments indicate a positive reaction to the pictures, although in 1b it is implicit rather than explicit and in 1d the student has identified the role the pictures play in the work as a whole, and the effect the work had on him or her.

2a. "This book is very exciting. I want to read again."

2b. "I found the book very moving and well-written and I think Tim Vicary is a really great. I would certainly recommend it to anyone who likes moving stories."

2c. "I like this story."

2d. "This book is very interesting. But a little suspense. I am afraid of America."

2e. "It was not so interesting."

2f. "I hate duck umbrella."

2g. "I like K! He is so cool. Especialy, it is his gestures and action. But, he leave J and forget his memory in the last. It is very sad.I think that K and J very got along perfectly. I hope that they meet again. Finally, cockroach's alien is unpleasant."

Examples 2a to 2g all indicate emotional responses of various strength. Comments 2a to 2d, and 2g are positive, and we may consider 2a and 2b to be more strongly positive than 2c. Further investigation of the same student's responses to other books shows that 2b is a stock phrase and the student has simply substituted the name of the author into the last line of each of his reviews (including the missing noun or spurious article in "is a really great"). Whether this is a good thing, indicating skill in cutting and pasting and synthesising language, or a bad thing, indicating some kind of plagiarism, is better discussed elsewhere. Fear is expressed in 2d along with a positive response to the book. A negative emotional response to the book appears in 2e, and a strong negative response to a character in the book appears in 2f. While the response in 2e suggests a bad book or bad book choice, we may welcome a negative response such as 2f, as the book has clearly had an effect on the student, and the student has engaged with the book. There is another comment on a character, this time strongly positive, in 2g.

3. 「結末を簡単に予想できたのであまり面白くはなかった。」(The ending was easy to predict, so it was not very interesting.)

The comment in 3 is also referring to the story and shows some analysis.

4. “I had the image that pirates are wicked person, but this book changed my bad image. they regard friendship or affection as important. they are so kind person. I watched this movie too, but this book is more interesting than the movie. I am looking forward to read the next book.”

The comment in 4 suggests the book has led to a change in the way the student thinks.

- 5a. “This book is very useful when you start business.”
- 5b. “This book expressed social structure for facility”
- 5c. “I thought that if alien really exists, very serious problems would happen.”

Comments 5a to 5c all indicate that the student felt the book had some relevance to the real world, again showing a high level of engagement with the book. Not all comments are clear:

- 6a. “I saw this story in a movie, enjoyed it even more this movie.”
- 6b. 「二回読みました。」(I read it twice)

Presumably 6a is missing “than” and the student found the book better than the movie. The simple comment in 6b does not tell us whether the student read the book twice because it was really good, because it was difficult to understand, or because he could not be bothered to go and get another book. These underline the ambiguity in the data that we have already mentioned.

7. “Especially, there was not a big word and either it was able to be read as [rasura]. A lot of pictures can be read colorfully and happily. I thought that it was a book on [naiyou] for no substantial child ..not difficult... The person who doesn't exist in English thinks that it wants you to read by all means.”

Comment 7 is clearly machine-translated, evidenced by the nonsensical syntax and fragments of un-translated Japanese that the software has left in square brackets. In addition to machine translation, there were a handful of cases of plagiarism, where reviews were copied from internet sites such as amazon.com. As with machine translation, many teachers can instantly recognise plagiarism, though for its fluency and accuracy rather than its awkwardness and incomprehensibility. Such comments were mercifully few.

Results

The numerical data suggested some connections:

- There was a mild correlation (19%) between ease and rating, suggesting a slight trend for students to find easier books better.
- The correlation between YL and word counts was strong (84%). Those familiar with graded readers will not be surprised that shorter books are easier, although we would like to see longer lower level books and see no reason why books must be shortened as well as simplified when adapted.
- There was a strong negative correlation (-78%) between ease and YL. At first sight this may also be unsurprising: students find more difficult books more difficult. However, it indicates that students are either not aware of their own reading level, or of the level of the books, and are consistently choosing and reviewing books that are too difficult for them (see Brierley, 2006).

Appendix 2 lists the books that received the highest ratings, at or below various YLs.

For each review comment, we observed whether the book had been among the 25% highest normalised ratings, or among the 25% lowest ratings to ascertain whether particular categorisations corresponded to books that had high or low ratings. For each comment, we also looked at the number of absolute ratings of 5, and the number absolute ratings of 3 or below, which showed similar trends to the upper and lower quartiles. We should note that comments were only fully analysed for seven books and in no way represent a full picture of students' attitudes towards all books.

- 76% of these 523 reviews were in the affective domain, 90% of these positive. Books with positive emotional responses had two to three times more ratings in the top quartile than the bottom quartile. This trend is predictable; we must, however, note that comments appearing to be positive did not always correspond to students rating the books highly.
- 63% of all reviews were about the story and 30% about characters. Negative responses were more likely to be about the story (89%).
- Almost eight times more negative responses were found in reviews of books rated in the lowest quartile than in the highest quartile. In other words, students are clearer in rating books they do not like, or we are better at interpreting their comments on books they do not like.

- 36% referred to students' own experience and two to three times as many of these were in the top quartile as in the bottom quartile. Cause and effect is unclear so we do not know whether students liked books that they could relate to themselves or related books to themselves because they liked them.
- 35% were analytical.
- 27% referred to the level of difficulty and almost three times as many of these were in the bottom quartile.
- 9% were summaries or descriptions.
- 9% were superficial, commenting on pictures or the length of the book. Three times as many of these were in the bottom quartile as the top quartile.

Discussion and conclusion

In this paper we have discussed how data from an online system can be used. The appendix presents the highest ranked books, although we should note that these rankings are inherently unreliable as books with high numerical ratings do not always have positive reviews. Nonetheless this data may help inform ER practitioners about books with wide appeal than may be chosen as class readers, or recommended to students as they begin ER programmes.

Deeper analysis of reviews for seven books broadly validates students ratings, although the connection between positive reviews and high ratings is less than crystal clear. Analysis also suggests that if students like a book, they are more likely to respond in emotional terms to characters, and to relate the book to their own lives. If they do not like a book, they are more likely to comment on superficial features like the pictures, the lexical difficulty or the length.

There is a lot of work ahead in the processing of this data. Further work can be done from a theoretical perspective to validate the criteria we used to categorise reviews, and the techniques and strategies for categorisation can be optimised, perhaps even leading to automatic evaluation of students' reviews. This paper has mainly considered student ratings of how good the books are. Further research is underway on how easy students find each book, and what this tells us about the level of difficulty of books and any changes in reading proficiency of students over time. Another exciting possibility is the use of this data to recommend specific books to specific students, so the ERS may fulfil that vital role of a librarian in guiding students through the maze of books to the

right one.

Biodata

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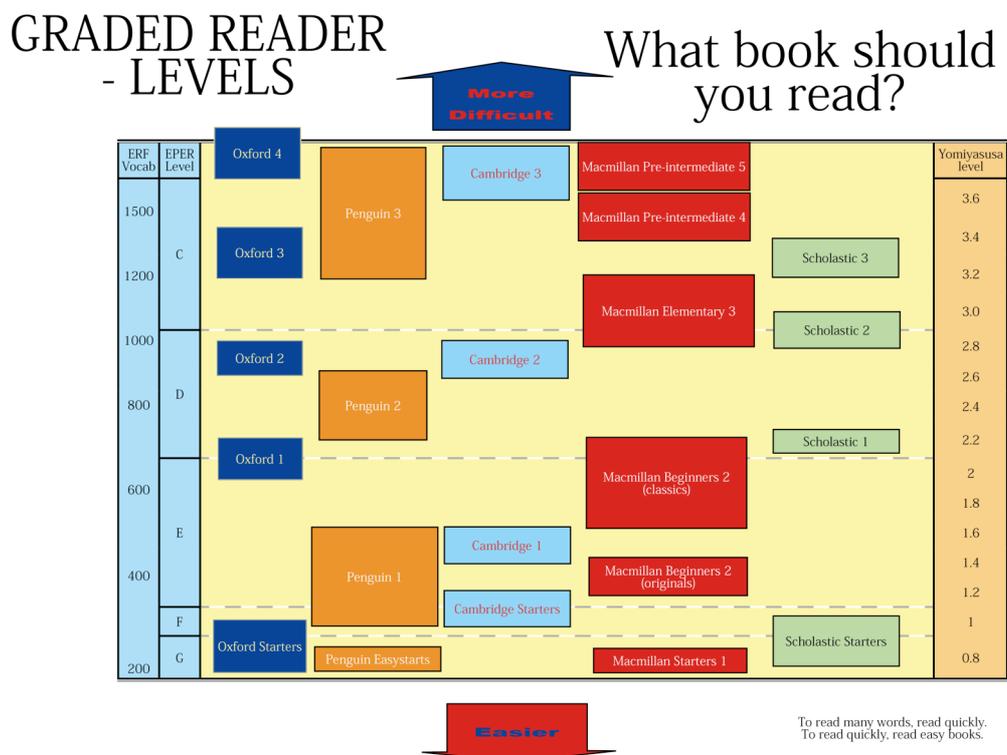
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Appendix 1. Comparison between YL, EPER level and publisher levels



Appendix 2. Book ratings from ERS data with five or more reviewers

Best books

Rank	Title	YL	Reviews	Readings
1	Pirates of the Caribbean at World's End (Penguin Readers Level 3)	3.2	10	35
2	Pirates of the Caribbean, Book 2 (Penguin Readers Level 3)	3.2	38	37
3	The Wizard of Oz (Macmillan Readers Pre-intermediate)	3.4	44	20
4	Mr. Bean (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.2	5	68
5	Pirates of the Caribbean Curse of the black pearl	2.4	13	232

	(Penguin Readers)			
6	Gladiator (Penguin Readers Level 4)	4	19	12
7	Information Technology (Oxford Bookworms Factfiles Stage 3)	3.2	19	12
8	Michael Jordan (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	14	91
9	X-Men 1 (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.2	14	15
10	Around the World in 80 Days (Macmillan Readers Beginner)	0.8	19	13
11	Sporting Heroes (Thomas Nelson Australia)	2	34	21
12	Spiderman 2 (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.8	6	38
13	The Devil Wears Prada (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.8	13	28
14	A Morbid Taste for Bones (Cadfael Chronicles)	3.8	6	6
15	Spiderman 3 (Scholastic ELT Readers)	3.2	8	16
16	Little Women (Macmillan Readers)	1.6	8	42
17	Mr Bean in Town (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.2	15	80
18	Romeo and Juliet (Macmillan Readers Pre-intermediate)	3.4	51	32
19	Spiderman 1 (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.2	9	51
20	Touching the Void (Scholastic ELT Readers)	3.2	52	17
21	Muhammad Ali, Level 1 (Penguin Reader Level 1)	1.0	33	14
22	Tinker's Farm (Penguin Readers)	0.8	72	13
23	Matilda (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	3.2	51	40
24	The Canterville Ghost and Other Stories (Macmillan Readers)	2.8	115	25
25	The Return of Sherlock Holmes (Penguin Readers Level 3)	3.4	77	28
26	The Wizard of Oz (Oxford Bookworms)	2	13	85
27	Pele (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	19	12
28	The Princess Diaries 3 (Macmillan Readers Pre-intermediate)	3.4	58	16
29	Mr Bean's Holiday (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.2	11	45
30	Babe - the Sheep Pig (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	5	137

Best books YL 2.5 or under

Rank	Title	YL	Reviews	Readings
1	Mr. Bean (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.2	5	68
2	Pirates of the Caribbean Curse of the black pearl (Penguin Readers)	2.4	13	232
3	Michael Jordan (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	14	91
4	X-Men 1 (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.2	14	15
5	Around the World in 80 Days (Macmillan Readers Beginner)	0.8	19	13
6	Sporting Heroes (Thomas Nelson Australia)	2	34	21
7	Little Women (Macmillan Readers)	1.6	8	42
8	Mr Bean in Town (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.2	15	80
9	Spiderman 1 (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.2	9	51
10	Muhammad Ali, Level 1 (Penguin Reader Level 1)	1.0	33	14
11	Tinker's Farm (Penguin Readers)	0.8	72	13
12	The Wizard of Oz (Oxford Bookworms)	2	13	85
13	Pele (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	19	12
14	Mr Bean's Holiday (Scholastic ELT Readers)	2.2	11	45
15	Babe - the Sheep Pig (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	5	137
16	Five Famous Fairy Tales (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	39	52
17	Men in Black (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	14	230
18	Babe - a Pig in the City (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	13	176
19	Jumanji (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	15	92
20	Animals in Danger (Oxford Bookworms Factfiles)	1.8	7	64
21	Fly Away Home (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	30	52
22	David Beckham (Penguin Readers)	1	5	106
23	Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp (Oxford Bookworms Stage 1)	2.0	9	8
24	Marcel Goes to Hollywood (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	10	11
25	Heidi (Penguin Readers Level 2)	2.4	6	58

Best books YL 2 or under

Rank	Title	YL	Reviews	Readings
1	Michael Jordan (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	14	91
2	Around the World in 80 Days (Macmillan Readers Beginner)	0.8	19	13
3	Sporting Heroes (Thomas Nelson Australia)	2	34	21
4	Little Women (Macmillan Readers)	1.6	8	42
5	Muhammad Ali, Level 1 (Penguin Reader Level 1)	1.0	33	14
6	Tinker's Farm (Penguin Readers)	0.8	72	13
7	The Wizard of Oz (Oxford Bookworms)	2	13	85
8	Pele (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	19	12
9	Mr Bean's Holiday (Scholastic ELT Readers)	1.8	11	45
10	Animals in Danger (Oxford Bookworms Factfiles)	1.8	7	64
11	David Beckham (Penguin Readers)	1	5	106
12	Marcel Goes to Hollywood (Penguin Readers Level 1)	1	10	11
13	Red Roses (Oxford Bookworms Starters)	1	7	27
14	A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (Oxford Bookworms Starter)	0.8	18	30
15	Simon and the Spy (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	0.8	5	34
16	Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp (Oxford Bookworms Stage 1)	2	7	223
17	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Macmillan Readers)	1.6	11	74
18	Give Us the Money (Oxford Bookworms)	0.8	16	16
19	The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Macmillan Readers)	1.6	18	50
20	Girl on a Motorcycle (Oxford Bookworms Starters)	0.9	8	89
21	Tom Cruise (Penguin Readers, Easystarts)	0.8	12	39
22	Vampire Killer (Oxford Bookworms Starters)	0.8	9	40
23	King Arthur (Oxford Bookworms Starters)	0.9	8	63
24	Marcel and the Mona Lisa (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	0.8	22	33
25	Marcel and the Shakespeare Letters (Penguin Readers)	1	13	64

Best book YL 0.8 or under

Rank	Title	YL	Reviews	Readings
1	Around the World in 80 Days (Macmillan Readers Beginner)	0.8	19	13
2	Tinker's Farm (Penguin Readers)	0.8	72	13
3	A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (Oxford Bookworms Starter)	0.8	18	30
4	Simon and the Spy (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	0.8	5	34
5	Give Us the Money (Oxford Bookworms)	0.8	16	16
6	Tom Cruise (Penguin Readers, Easystarts)	0.8	12	39
7	Vampire Killer (Oxford Bookworms Starters)	0.8	9	40
8	Marcel and the Mona Lisa (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	0.8	22	33
9	Shooting Stars (Macmillan Readers)	0.8	33	47
10	The Long Road (Penguin Young Reader Easystarts)	0.8	7	35
11	Dino's Day in London (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	0.8	25	26
12	L.A. Detective (Macmillan Readers)	0.8	9	39
13	The Well (Macmillan Readers)	0.8	56	50
14	The Song (Easystart Penguin Reader Level 2)	0.8	5	36
15	Sara Says No! (Macmillan Readers)	0.8	30	64
16	The Leopard and the Lighthouse (Penguin Readers)	0.8	29	26
17	Robin Hood (Oxford Reading Tree)	0.6	5	15
18	Billy and the Queen (Penguin Joint Venture Readers)	0.8	9	40

University library book borrowing by English majors: Problem, causes, consequences, and possible remedy

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Abstract

Traditionally, English majors read books. However, statistics collected by a women's college in the Kansai region of Japan, and subsequent data from a follow-up study by the writer show that a disconcertingly low number of library books are being borrowed by the college's English majors. Interviews with senior professors in conjunction with a questionnaire administered to English majors at the college indicate that appropriate action could be beneficial. To help remedy the situation, this paper argues that the English department should consider refocusing its curriculum on the reading and teaching of English literature books themselves.

Keywords: English majors, English literature, English departments, low library usage, library books borrowing, intrinsic value

伝統的に、英語英文学専攻の大学生は、本をよく読む。しかし、関西のある女子大学の学内資料と本研究からのデータによると、英語英文学専攻学生の図書館での本の貸出率は、愕然とさせられるほど低いことが分かる。当該大学で長年教鞭をとる教授たちとの面接、および同大学英語英文学専攻学生へのアンケートを同時期に行い、これに対しての改善策が有用であると示された。現状打破の一助として、本論は、英語英文学科はそのカリキュラムにおいて、英文学作品そのものの購読およびその教授に焦点を再び合わせるべきである、と主張する。

キーワード：英語英文学専攻大学生、英文学、英語英文学科、図書館利用頻度の低さ、図書貸出率、本来の価値

The initial motivation for this study stemmed from statistical data presented at a teachers' meeting at a women's university in the Kansai region that showed a very low

usage of the library by the university's English majors. At the time, several questions arose concerning the data, including:

1. Is this a cause for concern?
2. What might be the reasons for this?
3. Could it affect the perceived decline of the English level of students?
4. What action is being taken to address the issue?

To answer these questions, interviews were carried out with three senior professors of the college. A questionnaire was also administered to a sample of the English major students to collect more information. The aforementioned statistics, the interview results with the senior lecturers, and the data from the questionnaires will be presented and discussed in this paper.

To the writer's knowledge, hitherto, no other study has been conducted in Japan, although data on library use (Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts Library, 2010), research on library use among Japanese college students and learning outcomes (Nagata et. al., 2007), and ways to integrate library instruction into college English classes (Nagano, 1999) have been reported.

Low library usage by English majors

The English Department at this college conducts an annual survey of all students to obtain general information on various aspects of their college life. These questions range from the level of students' satisfaction regarding their courses to part time jobs that students may have. The questionnaire is written in Japanese. One of the questions asks the students, *Do you go to the library?* The data (Wakamoto, 2009) from this question shows that, for freshmen, almost a quarter (23%) of the students do not go to the library at all, 37% visit once or twice a month, while 28% visit once a week. The remaining 12% go to the library 2 to 3 times a week. The situation for sophomores and juniors improves somewhat with 18% and 24% visiting the library 2 to 3 times a week respectively. However, the number of sophomores and juniors not going to the library at all or going once or twice a month remains significantly high at 21% and 34%, and 18% and 31% respectively.

Taking the average for the three years (freshmen, sophomores and juniors), 21% of the students do not visit the library at all, 34% visit 1 to 2 times a month, 27% once a week, and 19% visit 1 to 2 times a week (Table 1).

Table 1. Library usage of English majors

Do not visit library	1 – 2 times a month	Once a week	1 – 2 times a week
21%	34%	27%	19%

The data shows a rather low library usage rate by the English majors. However, from the data alone, we cannot draw the conclusion that the students are not borrowing books, as the question asked was, *How often do you go to the library?* not, *How often do you borrow books?* Nonetheless, the fact that the students visit the library so infrequently does indicate that this may be the case, since borrowing books can only be done by visiting the library in person.

In order to ascertain the students' book borrowing habits, it would be necessary to ask the students directly, rather than rely only on the data from this single question. But before doing so, it was deemed advantageous to first solicit the views of other professors, preferably senior members of the faculty. After all, if the situation is not considered to be a problem or serious enough to warrant attention, then perhaps it would be unwise to proceed further.

Interviews with senior professors

Would the above data be a cause for concern? What would be the reaction of English professors at the college? If it is considered to be a problem, should something be done to address the situation? To answer these and other pertinent questions, three senior English professors were interviewed individually on separate occasions to elicit their reactions to the data. The professors who took part in the interviews had all been teaching at the college for over ten years. The investigator had approached the professors with a summary of the above figures and asked them whether they would be willing to express their opinions on them in a private interview. These senior professors were asked because of their long experience of teaching at the college, their familiarity with the students and their knowledge of the courses. Two of the professors were in the English Department, while the third professor (Professor C) was teaching in the Department of International Studies at the time of interview. Separate interviews were arranged and conducted with each professor. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted approximately forty minutes. During the interviews, after first briefly

reviewing the background and purpose of the study, the same questions were asked to the three professors. Their responses were noted down in writing by the investigator. A summary of the main points expressed by the three professors is given below.

What is your reaction to the data?

To this question, the professors expressed disappointment as they thought that the college libraries had a good collection of books and journals. “The library is a place for serendipity and discovery, which we can’t experience unless we go there!” exclaimed Professor C. On the other hand, none of the professors were overly surprised by the low usage as they commented that the majority of courses do not require the reading of books. According to Professor C, the students are not required to consult journals even for writing graduation essays. Although the professors thought that there was a possibility that the students could be reading books or journals outside the library via the internet, they were not inclined to believe that this was the case.

Do you think the data shows cause for concern?

The overwhelming reply to this question was “Yes.” Their consensus was that the students should read more because they are English majors, but acknowledged that they were not reading much. They believed that “established literature is the basis for literature and linguistics study” (Professor A), so reading is essential for English majors. Moreover, Professor C commented that even though many abstracts and books could be viewed remotely via the internet, many complete articles and books were still only available in print form from the library.

What do you think may be the reasons for this?

When asked this question, a number of reasons were offered by the three professors. The first reason was that if the courses did not require reading, it could be expected that the students would not read, unless they were intrinsically motivated to do so (Professor B). Another reason suggested was that in some cases the students are not required to complete a final year thesis or that it is optional, so the students do not have the incentive to read. According to Professors B and C, the traditional method of teaching in Japan is the lecture – exam approach, rather than reading books or articles and writing essays or reports on them. In addition, Professors B and C said that students

have to take too many courses, which allows little time for reading. Professor C added that although officially classified as a *literature* department, the students actually have to take many skills based courses. Professor A commented that, “generational differences and society changes” were other factors – young people today do not have the same habits as their peers from the past, who were brought up reading more and watching visual media less, as it is only relatively recently that possession of mobile phones and personal computers, and the use of the internet have been widespread.

Is anything being done?

When asked, *Is anything being done to address this problem?* the answer from all three professors was “No.” Professor C added that the situation was probably the same at other universities in Japan.

Should action be taken? If so, what?

All the professors felt that something should be done to address the problem. Professor A quoted St. Francis of Assisi, “God ... grant me the courage to change the things I can.” Perhaps this professor realized such a change would be a challenge that would require courage. Professor C suggested that the subject professors could require students to read, for example, by giving assignments that involve research and reading, but this would require major considerations and the revamping of curricula. The professors also suggested that the number of courses could be reduced so that more time could be given to reading.

Questionnaire on book borrowing habits by English majors

After conducting the interviews with the three professors, a questionnaire was designed to collect data from the English majors’ on their book borrowing and reading habits. This was done to gather additional as well as more precise information from the students, so that a more detailed picture of the situation could be obtained.

The questionnaire

The main aims of the questionnaire were to find out how frequently the students borrowed books from the library, what kind of books they borrowed, and their reasons for doing so. The questionnaire was in English and consisted of eight questions with

multiple choice answers, which included an open-ended option where appropriate. The questionnaire was phrased in clear, simple English, which would pose no difficulties for the English major students. The questionnaires were administered with the kind arrangement of Professor A in May 2010 at the college campus. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

The respondents

A total of 32 English major students completed the questionnaire. Eighteen were juniors and 14 were seniors. Because of the time elapsed between the date that the general questionnaire was administered by the English Department (in November 2008) and the questionnaire used in this study, only junior and senior students were asked to take part in this survey, to ensure that the sample group in this study would be part of the original group of students who had completed the general questionnaire.

Results of questionnaire

How often do the students borrow books? (Q1) The data from this first question shows that 16 % of the students almost never borrow books, while 12 % borrow one book in a year. Forty four percent borrow one book in a semester, 16% borrow one book a month, and 9% one a week. In other words, the vast majority (72%) borrow one book or less per semester.

What is the students' purpose for borrowing books? (Q2) The answer to this question shows that the majority of the students (73%) borrow books for the purpose of completing an assignment or that it was a course requirement, while the remaining (23%) borrow for their own enjoyment.

What kind of books do the students borrow? (Q3) Thirty eight percent borrow English literature books (in English), 32% borrow linguistics related books (roughly half in Japanese and half in English), while the remaining 30% borrow books that are unrelated to both of the aforementioned categories (21% in Japanese, 9% in English).

Do the students borrow more or less through their college years? (Q4) Nearly one third borrow the same number (32%), 26% borrow more than in previous years, while 42% borrow less than in previous years.

Why do the students not borrow more books? (Q5) Sixty two percent cite time as the reason, that is, they have no time and that they only read what is required. Twenty

nine percent say the library did not have the books they like, while 9% say they have no interest.

Would the students like to read more books if they had more time? (Q6) The overwhelming majority (94%) answered, 'Yes' to this question.

What kind of books would they like to read, if the students had more time? (Q7) Fifty eight percent would like to read famous English literature, 14% prefer history, while another 14% prefer linguistics.

Do the students prefer to read in English or Japanese? (Q8) An overwhelming 81% prefer to read in Japanese while the remaining 19% prefer to read in English.

Comments and Suggestions

The above questionnaire results support the data from the general questionnaire conducted earlier by the college's English Department. Both results indicate a disconcertingly low rate of books are being borrowed by English majors. The main reason for this is that the respondents do not have time to read, and they borrow from the library only what is required for their studies. However, 29% of the students did respond by saying that the library does not have the books they like as another reason for not borrowing. As the two libraries at this college carry a large combined collection of books, it would be interesting to find out what types of books the students prefer to read.

If they had more time, most of the respondents (58%) say that they would like to borrow books on famous English literature from the library. The college library collection of English literature in the original English is a very fine one with hundreds of titles ranging from the complete works of William Shakespeare to more modern works in their original or abridged forms as simplified readers, but it is also one that is not well used by students. Although it is encouraging to see that these English major students indicate they would like to read more English literature if they had more time, question 8 does show that 81% of the respondents prefer to read in Japanese. It would seem, then, the students are interested in their major subject of English literature, but they would rather read in Japanese. Perhaps it is because of the generally high level of English required for the reading of English literature that most find it much easier to read the Japanese translations of the same. Many of the well-known English classics have already been translated into Japanese and are readily available in libraries and

bookstores, so having access to these is normally not a problem. Unless faculty professors and courses incorporate these works as required reading and allocate appropriate time for private reading and classroom teaching, it would not be realistic to expect the English level of the students to rise sufficiently enough to the challenge of handling them. Rather, the students need to be gradually nurtured and encouraged to read English literature in their original language so that they may be able to find their own feet in due course.

All three professors who were interviewed acknowledged that the situation was a problem. They also all agreed that something should be done to address the problem. It is unlikely that the data would be a cause for concern if the students were majors of other disciplines, but for those whose *trade* is to do with reading it should be part and parcel of their studies at college. The professors' suggestions of making books required reading and reducing the number of courses to allow more time for intensive reading may go some way in alleviating the situation, but would this be enough as it would seem that only the symptoms would be treated rather than the disease?

Chace (2009) writing on the decline of English departments across the United States over the past four decades, argues that,

... at the root (of the decline of English departments) is the failure of departments of English across the country to champion, with passion, the books they teach and to make a strong case to undergraduates that the knowledge of those books and the tradition in which they exist is a human good in and of itself. (p. 33)

It is the writer's opinion, that similarly in Japan, it would require English departments to believe that there is intrinsic value in the books of English literature and that their students should read them. If the English professors themselves show a stronger conviction, love and a commanding knowledge for the books, then we can expect a corresponding rise in the enthusiasm of their students. Classroom teaching of these books should be given greater priority in Japan, and interaction with students be such that they would be captivated by the content of the books themselves. Private reading for pleasure should also be encouraged. Not only is there intrinsic value in these books themselves, but much can also be gained in their study. In-depth reading would encourage the students to grapple with the writers' thoughts in English, to interact with the words, sentences, and ideas expressed by those masterful writers. Regular exposure

to the original texts, the great books of English literature, with guidance from professors, would also help the students to think in and write better English. Such improvements in general English proficiency would not only be much welcomed and a source of pride for the English departments, but also be very useful for schools and respected by employers who prize graduates with a high competency in English (Chace, 2009).

It may require strong conviction by those who believe that reform is necessary to persuade their colleagues and to get the respective administrative machinery moving in the right direction, but in the long term the future of the English Departments may be at stake. Again, Chace (2009) in his assessment of the decline of English departments in the US, believes that it is probably irreversible, but on the other hand he says that something can and must be done, for the sake of the books themselves, for the future of the English departments, and for the literary tradition that still has much to offer to English majors today. If the overwhelming number of respondents in this study (94%) who say that they would like to read more (mostly English literature) is a ray of hope, then we must try to accommodate it.

One strategy for a remedy would be to attack the problem on two fronts. It would be necessary to work at the tertiary level to revamp and realign the existing curriculum, to make the reading of English literature exciting, enjoyable, and useful. This would allow the graduates to leave college with a kinder, stronger appreciation and love for the materials of their art, and may stir them to influence others in the future. A solid reading program could also be introduced from the early years, preferably at the elementary level, by the introduction of story based materials, including classic children's stories. Such a reading program is not new. Attractively illustrated, story based textbooks used in government schools across the nation have been part of the national language (Japanese) curriculum for many years.

It would be profitable to know the parallel statistics of the number of English majors in Japan over the past four decades or so, to compare with that of the US, where English major undergraduates have dropped by about half (Chace, 2009). If this is happening in Japan also, then English departments may need to investigate the situation and, if necessary, take appropriate remedial action.

English departments must return to their roots, to the rich texts themselves, to what they should be good at doing, and not be sidetracked by an "array of secondary considerations (identity studies, abstruse theory, sexuality, film and popular culture)"

(Chace, 2009, p. 33). The views of the three senior professors interviewed in this investigation are clear: there is a problem and something should be done about it. The voice from the English majors who took part in this study is also clear: they would like to read more, and most would like to read English literature. But the task would certainly be a challenging one. Perhaps the professor who quoted St. Francis of Assisi is right – a kind of supernatural effort may be required to affect the change needed. But it is within the power of the professors and departments to act. Can they afford not to?

Bio data

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Appendix

Questionnaire for English majors on library book borrowing

1. How often do you borrow books from the library? (*Please circle one*):
 - a. Once a week
 - b. Once a month
 - c. Once a semester
 - d. Once a year
 - e. Almost never
 - e. Other (please write it) _____

2. When you borrow books, it is usually because: (*Please circle one*)
 - a. You need to read it as part of the course requirement.
 - b. You need it for an assignment (for example a report or project or dissertation).
 - c. You want to read it for your own enjoyment.
 - d. Other (please write it) _____

3. What kind of books do you usually borrow? (*Please circle one or more*)
 - a. Linguistics related books in Japanese
 - b. Linguistics related books in English
 - c. Literature books in English
 - d. Books in Japanese not related to your major studies
 - e. Books in English not related to your major studies
 - f. Other (please write it) _____

4. During your time of studying at Doshisha Womens' College, would you say: (*Please circle one*)
 - a. You are borrowing *more* books now than in your freshmen or sophomore years.
 - b. You are borrowing *less* books now than in your freshmen or sophomore years.
 - c. You are borrowing *the same* number of books as in your freshmen or sophomore years.

5. What are the reasons for you not borrowing more books from the library? (*Please circle one or more*)

- a. I have no time to read.
- b. I am not interested in reading.
- c. The library does not have the books I like.
- e. I only read what is required by the course and don't have time for anything else.
- d. Other (please write it) _____

6. If you have more time, would you like to read more books? (*Please circle one*)

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. If your answer is 'Yes,' to the above, what kind of books would you like to read?

(*Please circle one or more*)

- a. Famous English literature of various kinds
- b. Linguistics books
- c. History books
- d. Others (please write it) _____

8. Do you prefer to read books in English or Japanese? (*Please circle one*)

- a. English
- b. Japanese

Thank you for your help!

Learning English through international volunteer work in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Warren Decker

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Reference data:

Decker, W. (2010). Learning English through international volunteer work in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. . In K. Bradford-Watts, E. M. Skier & M. Walsh (Eds), *Pan-SIG 2010 Conference Proceedings*. Kyoto: JALT..

Abstract

In February 2010, I went to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia to participate in an international volunteer work-camp as the leader of five Japanese university students. For two weeks we shared an apartment with other volunteers from Taiwan and Mongolia, working together to teach English at a child-care facility. I conducted interviews with the Japanese students about their use of English at the work-camp and found that their experiences were varied but consistently positive. I was able to confirm that international volunteer work can be an excellent opportunity for learning and practicing English.

Keywords: international communication, Mongolia, practical applications of English, world and non-standard Englishes, volunteer work, university education

2010年2月に、5人の日本人大学生の引率者として、モンゴルのウランバートルでの国際ボランティア・ワークキャンプに参加した。二週間の間、日本人、台湾人、モンゴル人のボランティアと一緒にアパートで暮らし、養護施設で子供たちに英語を教えた。滞在中、日本の大学生に、ワークキャンプでの英語実践について尋ねた。それぞれ5人の経験の違いが見受けられたが、国際ボランティア活動が素晴らしい英語勉強の機会となる可能性を確認した。

キーワード: 国際コミュニケーション、モンゴル、英語実践、ボランティア活動、国際・非標準英語、大学教育

English Language at an International Volunteer Work-camp

In February of 2010 I went to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia to participate in an international volunteer work program as the leader of five Japanese university students. For two weeks we shared a two room apartment with volunteers from Taiwan and Mongolia and taught English and culture at the Child Care Center of Mongolia. This volunteer work-camp was organized by three different non-profit organizations, NICE (Never-Ending International Work-camp Exchange) in Japan, VYA (Vision Youth Action) in Taiwan, and MCE (Mongolian Work-camp Exchange) based in Ulaanbaatar Mongolia.

In terms of English language practice, one of the best things about the volunteer work-camp was that we never ran out of topics to discuss. We talked about the smell of lamb and the coal fumes which permeated the air of Ulaanbaatar. We talked about how it was so cold that after a short walk to the store, our scarves, hats, eyelashes, and eyebrows would be covered with a delicate layer of ice crystals. We talked about Mongolian hip-hop videos, Buddhist temples, snarling traffic jams, and sacred rock piles on desolate mountains covered in blue flags. With volunteers from Mongolia, Taiwan, and Japan, English was the only language we could all use to communicate about all that we were experiencing.

Volunteers were also motivated to communicate for very concrete and specific purposes. When the cooking group was a three person team with one member from each country, cultural cooking styles and tastes had to be navigated in English. Specific questions needed to be answered: How much rice do we need for 12 people? What's the fastest way to thaw out this enormous block of lamb in the freezer? Should we make miso soup tonight? Do you want to try this Mongolian fermented horse milk?

While three people were cooking, the other nine were usually discussing the lesson plan for the following day. Of course English was the language of the discussion, and furthermore English language was also the subject of the discussion. Using English, we needed to set our objectives for the lessons at the child-care center. What English should we teach? What activities should we use? Who wants to be the lead teacher? Do we have enough Taiwanese candies to give to every student? What can we do when Anhkibileg and Jiguur start throwing markers at the girls?

The Japanese Volunteers

The Japanese students and I were almost always together through the duration of the work-camp, and I was able to closely observe what actually happened externally with their English skills, confidence, and motivation. By conducting periodic interviews with them in Japanese and English, I was also able to learn their internal thoughts about their experiences of using English as international volunteers. The results were varied, but invariably positive.

During the work-camp I recorded several hours of interviews with them on the subject of English language learning. At the start of the work-camp, I asked some specific questions about their feelings and motivation and had them express their answers in percentages or ratios.

<p>Before coming to Mongolia how did you feel about speaking English as an international volunteer?</p> <p><i>Answers expressed as a ratio of positive excitement to negative nervousness</i></p> <p>White = excitement Black = nervousness</p>				
Hiroaki	Haruka	Naoko	Rieko	Atsushi
				
“I wasn’t nervous at all. I was completely excited.”	“...I was 90% nervous and 10% excited...”	Before coming I was 90% nervous and 10% excited.	“I was 30% nervous and 70% excited. I was really excited!”	“Before coming I was 70% excited and 30% nervous.”

<p>How important of an objective was English language learning when you decided to participate in this international volunteer work?</p> <p><i>English language learning expressed as a percentage of total objectives</i></p> <p>White = English language learning Black = other objectives</p>				
Hiroaki	Haruka	Naoko	Rieko	Atsushi

				
I want to speak English with a friend that I made in France...so I felt like I had to study. I'd say English learning is 70% of my motivation, the other 30% is education.	Maybe about 30% I guess.	I studied English so that I could participate in this NICE international volunteer work-camp...I didn't come here to study English.	80%	20%

Atsushi

Atsushi joined the work-camp to learn about Mongolia and international non-profit volunteer organizations. He was fairly comfortable speaking English, and English learning was not a large motivating factor in his decision to join the program.

Nevertheless, as he told me during an interview, he learned that with grammatically imprecise English, he was able to understand others, and make himself understood.

During one of the meetings a Taiwanese volunteer said “Yesterday we teach colors.” Atsushi recognized that this sentence was not grammatically precise, but also saw that the speaker of the sentence had the confidence to use English, even if imprecise, and make herself understood.

By the end of the volunteer work-camp, Atsushi had heightened motivation to study a variety of world Englishes, non-native Englishes, and non-standard English forms.

Haruka

Haruka hadn't come to Mongolia with a specific intent to study English, and yet she increased her English communicative ability. Like Atsushi, she gained confidence in negotiating non-standard English grammar and pronunciation. One of the Mongolian volunteers named Amra, often said “I t'ink so,” when answering a yes or no question noncommittally. Haruka picked up on this and began using the same phrase with the same pronunciation. By the end of the two weeks, all of us were all also saying “I t'ink so,” and we all understood the meaning clearly.

It is an invaluable lesson to genuinely recognize that non-standard English pronunciation and usage can still be used to communicate effectively. While in Mongolia, Haruka was able to grasp this idea through direct first-hand experience.

Hiroaki

At the time of his departure from Japan, Hiroaki was very confident about using English, but our first meeting upon his arrival in Mongolia was a shock for him. We all sat in a circle on the floor of the apartment, and our Mongolian leader Baatar introduced me: “This is Warren. He’s an American, but he’s had some trouble with the FBI and CIA in the United States, so he’s hiding out in Mongolia.”

As an American raised on ironic humor I continued glibly, “Well, first I went to Japan, but they started to catch up on me so I had to make a break for Mongolia.” None of Hiroaki’s English classes had prepared him for this style of ironic English usage, and he took our jokes to be the simple truth.

All of us, myself included, had trouble knowing when Bataar was serious. For Hiroaki and the others it was an important test of their English ability to be able to extract the factual statements from the barrage of Baatar’s relentless jokes. By the end of the program, everyone had made progress in their ability to discern facts from irony.

The subject of humor was especially important for Hiroaki, because he loved telling jokes in Japanese. Unfortunately, he was having a hard time translating his humor into English. He said he could not find the right words, context or timing. Hiroaki confided in me that while on cooking duty with a Taiwanese volunteer, he found his mind racing, trying to think of how he could employ his English to make her laugh. With this excellent source of motivation, he worked to develop his English humor techniques.

By the end of the two weeks Hiroaki knew when Bataar was joking, but still wasn’t happy with his own comic abilities in English. Hiroaki came away from the program feeling reasonably confident in his English ability, but also with renewed determination to study more and to study more effectively after returning to Japan.

Naoko

Naoko did not come to Mongolia to study English. She studied English so she could come to Mongolia. She had just finished her fourth year of university and would begin

work as a full-time teacher in April. She didn't expect to need to use English very much, and participating in this work-camp was a grand-finale for her English language learning career. I tried to encourage her to see the experience as a huge step forward in a road that would continue indefinitely, but she was adamant on this point.

Even though she thought it was to be the culminating experience of her life as a student of English, it didn't seem that she had done any specific preparations for speaking English in the specific context of this work-camp. She was a trained educator with lots of ideas about teaching, but she didn't seem comfortable articulating these ideas in English during our planning meetings. It also seemed that she hadn't exposed herself to any variations of English pronunciation other than standard North-American.

Initially she was frustrated because she often couldn't understand the English of the Taiwanese volunteers. She had studied abroad in America and felt that she was able to understand much of what she heard and also make herself understood at that time. The setting of the work-camp in Mongolia was much more challenging. Fortunately, after an initial loss in confidence, by the end of two weeks her confidence had returned, and as with Atsushi and Haruka, her experience raised her awareness of the need to study non-standard English pronunciation.

Rieko

Rieko only participated for one week of the program, (volunteers could join for one or two weeks) and yet she experienced the most dramatic improvement in English by far. She arrived earlier than any of the other volunteers, and for the first day she, Amra (a volunteer from Mongolia), and I were the only ones in the apartment. While Amra, was intently watching Korean dramas dubbed in Mongolian on the small TV, , Rieko and I spoke with each other entirely in English. I told her that I had lived in Japan for ten years and could speak Japanese, but she was not interested in speaking in any language other than English. Clearly, English was a very important factor in her decision to participate in the program, and she was determined to seize the opportunity to use it as much as possible.

In speaking with her I could see a familiar type of student that many teachers have probably encountered. It was obvious that she enjoyed English for its own sake, and as a result she had been able to find the motivation within herself to spend lots of time with books and tests and engaging enthusiastically in classes to build her

knowledge and skills. With her pauses to formulate correct sentences with precise words, I could also clearly see that she had not had many chances to put her English into practical meaningful use outside of her classrooms. Now she was in Mongolia and ready to make the most of it.

Because of her strong foundation in English and her intense motivation, her experience was nothing short of a transformation. She went from a shy cautious English student to a confident, accomplished English speaker, all in a matter of days. She was contributing her ideas at meetings, sharing stories with the Taiwanese volunteers and even making sarcastic comments to Baatar.

At the child-care center Rieko took on the challenge to be the lead teacher for the second lesson of our teaching program. Even in Mongolian, Baatar had difficulties keeping the attention of the twenty or so Mongolian children, yet Rieko managed to use English, not only to teach English, but to manage the class. Hesitant soft-spoken English would not help her in this situation, and she quickly adjusted for the demands that she was faced with. A very different speaker of English emerged as she stood in front of the students and other teachers. She was determined, confident, and very effective.

Conclusion

The five Japanese volunteers had very different, but uniformly positive experiences of English language learning in Mongolia. For Japanese students of English, an international volunteer work-camp abroad will be an incredible experience for language learning and much more. For students of both Japanese and English, an international work-camp in Japan is an excellent opportunity. Organizations such as *NICE* have numerous work-camps each year. There might be a great opportunity for you or your students.

Bio data

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Links to the non-profit organizations

NICE: <www.nice1.gr.jp/>.

VYA: <www.vya.org.tw/>.

Please refer to the NICE homepage for more information about MCE.

Notes:

1. Some of the material in this article appeared in *The Language Teachers' Newsletter* at Momoyama Gakuin University in June 2010 and the *Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter* in October 2010.
2. The volunteers' names have been changed out of respect for their privacy.

Increasing Multicultural Awareness through Understanding Japan's Diverse Populations

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Reference data:

Kim, M., & Deguchi, M. (2010). Increasing Multicultural Awareness through Understanding Japan's Diverse Populations. . In K. Bradford-Watts, E. M. Skier & M. Walsh (Eds), *Pan-SIG 2010 Conference Proceedings*. Kyoto: JALT.

Abstract

It is easy for Japanese people to remain ignorant of the experiences of diverse populations in Japan's homogenous society, but it is imperative that we increase multicultural awareness and competency among Japanese university students so that they are prepared to deal with people with diverse cultural backgrounds. Using a Japanese educational manga textbook based on the experiences of prejudice and discrimination of diverse residents, we devised a group project that incorporated a group skit and PowerPoint presentation in English. A survey of the students indicated that they broadened their awareness, learned about different ethnic groups, and found the project both enjoyable and useful.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, diversity, prejudice, discrimination, foreign residents in Japan, college student project (lesson plan)

日本人は国内ではマジョリティ集団に属している為、マイノリティ体験をする機会が限られている。国内外を問わず多様化する社会の中で、日本の大学生がより多様な人種・エスニシティを持った人と接し、コミュニケーションができることが求められている。異なったバックグラウンドを持った相手に対して理解とエンパシー（共感）をもって接するようになるためにはまず自分自身の特権やマイノリティに属しているコミュニティの歴史的背景や差別・偏見の体験について知っておく必要がある。当論文では「クラスメイトは外国人：多文化共生20の物語」（2009）という教育用マンガ本を教材に、2大学の英語コミュニケーションの講義で使用したレッスンプランを紹介する。クラスを小グループにわけ、各グループは日本における外国人コミュニティについて調べ、英語による短い劇（スキット）を演じ、英語によるパワーポイント・プレゼンテーションを行うことがとめられた。学生のアンケート回答によると、「日本に住んでいる自分が身近なコミュニティのことを知らないことに気付かされた」「最近、幼馴染みが在日韓国人であることを打ち明けられたので、大変参考になった」など、このプロジェクトが学生にとって有意義なものであることが伺えた。

キーワード：多文化共生、多様性、偏見、差別、在日外国人

As educators, we often notice the lack of awareness of our students of the history and backgrounds of non-Japanese residents in Japan. Are they unaware that diverse communities exist in Japan, or do they choose not to know about the people in close

proximity to them? The answer to these questions is that it is probably both. In a homogeneous country such as Japan, the Japanese are part of the dominant group, and members of dominant groups often lack awareness that they belong to a group that is awarded invisible privileges and unearned advantages (McIntosh, 1989). People from privileged groups also lack awareness that they are privileged, think of themselves as “the norm” which then leads to a mentality in which they consider themselves superior (Goodman, 2002). In addition, those who are most powerful in society are strongly motivated not to know a lot about the people they dominate and not to develop a sensitive understanding of the structures that preserve their power (Harstock, 1983).

There are, of course, other reasons for the lack of awareness which includes the Japanese educational system that emphasizes similarities rather than differences, discomfort on the part of adults to teach about Japan’s history of colonization in Asia, and the cultural tendency to put a lid on “unpleasant” subjects such as prejudice and discrimination. Those who are of a different ethnic/multiracial background often choose to hide their true identity by assimilation (i.e. carrying Japanese names or not revealing their background) to avoid the effects of discrimination.

Stereotypes are beliefs and opinions about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of various groups (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). Individuals and groups are sometimes defined by others in terms of stereotypes, which can be both positive and negative, but are more often than not, negative. Stereotypes may have originally contained some small grain of truth, but that element has since been exaggerated, distorted, or some way taken out of context. When stereotyping occurs, people tend to overlook all characteristics of the group. Sometimes people use stereotypes to justify the actions taken against members of that group (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 1988).

We felt that to teach about diversity is to expose students to readings about stereotypes and the negative consequences of those stereotypes. Stereotypes lead to prejudice, and when prejudiced feelings or beliefs move into the realm of behavior, the result is discrimination, which denies individuals or groups of people equality of treatment (Whitley & Kite, 2006). This project was thus introduced as a means to raise awareness among our university students about the prejudice and discrimination faced by residents of diverse racial heritage in Japan.

Method

Purpose

The purpose of this class group project is to increase student awareness and empathy about diverse populations that live in Japan (i.e., *zainichi* Koreans or permanent ethnic Korean residents in Japan, people with multiracial backgrounds, etc.), and to learn the various groups’ history and experiences of prejudice and discrimination, while learning to conduct research and present their findings in English.

Participants

Participants were 40 female university students from Doshisha Women’s College and Kobe College, both private women’s colleges in the Kansai area of Japan. The students from Doshisha Women’s College (n=16) were first-year Contemporary Social Studies majors enrolled in a year-long general English course called English Communication. Kobe College students were English majors (n=24) and were also first-year students

enrolled in a year-long Global Communications course.

Procedure

The group project was implemented as the final assignment for the course and spanned four to five weeks. Students were divided into groups of four or five members and were given instructions for the project (see Appendix I). Each group was given one or two chapters (6-10 pages) from a Japanese educational manga textbook called *Kurasumeito wa Gaikokujin: Tabunkakyosei 20 no Monogatari* [My Classmate is a Foreigner: 20 Stories of Multicultural Co-existence] (Akashi Shoten, 2009). Each of these chapters had stories of non-Japanese students' experience of prejudice and discrimination in Japan. At the end of each chapter was a section called "*Motto Shirou*" ("Learn More"), which provides statistics as well as historical and factual information to supplement the reading, served as the foundational information piece for the project. The sections chosen were Sunja's Story (fingerprinting due to Korean heritage); Miri's Story (a girl chooses to use her real Korean name); Alex's Story (a boy with a foreign name faces employment discrimination); Ali's Story (foreign crime and racial profiling); Yu-hei's Story (history of *zainichi* Koreans in Japan); Brian's Story (growing up Filipino), Ricardo's Story (South American Japanese immigrant to Japan), and Phon's Story (a Vietnamese refugee family).

There were two requirements for this project. The first was that each group had to perform a 5-10 minute skit in English that introduces the issues. Before the skit, each group was instructed to ask three questions to the audience so that the audience could focus their attention on the issues while watching the skits (example of questions included "What happened in the skit?" "How is this issue related to you?" "Have you witnessed or experienced something similar before?"). After the skit, a brief class discussion followed.

The second requirement for the project was for each group to do a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation in English. The presentation had to contain a minimum of 10 slides, and the students were to use the Learn More section of the manga chapter as the main resource, but were encouraged to look outside of the assigned chapter for further information. For example, students were required to discuss the history of their assigned ethnic group, describe the stereotypes and prejudice that exists for that group, and explain how these prejudices hurt them. For both requirements, it was made explicit that all students had to participate actively and equally, and that students will receive a group grade (not individual grades) for this project.

After the presentations, we left time for questions and answers from the audience. The students were given points for participating actively during this time period as an incentive for them to voice their opinions.

Students had four weeks, including class-time, to complete the project. At least one class was held in the computer room so that students could conduct online research as well as work on their PowerPoint slides. A deadline for the slides was given before their presentation so the instructor could help edit and go over the slides with each group. To ensure good presentation skills, 3x5 index cards were given to each student for use during their presentation, and the importance of eye contact was emphasized.

The teacher's grading criteria to assess each group's work included categories such as: preparation; content/message effective; understandable speech; nonverbal skills; creativity; PowerPoint presentation; equal and active participation of team

members; evidence of rehearsal (see Appendix II).

Results

On the day of the assignment, students presented their skit and PowerPoint presentation. Each group was given 15 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for Q&A. At the end of class, students were asked to fill out a survey that included 16 questions in English about the group project (See Appendix III). We went over each question together in class to ensure that students understood what the questions were asking. Questions included items with Likert scale responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) as well as several open-ended items. Students (n=40) in general reported very positive experiences from doing this project (see Table 1). For example, the average score for “1. I enjoyed doing this project” was 3.86 (out of a possible 5). The average score for “2. I learned a lot about my assigned ethnic group topic” and “5. The manga material given to us was a good introduction to begin our project” were both 4.2 (out of a possible 5). We were also pleased to find that the majority of students went beyond the assigned chapter to do further research on their own; approximately 75 percent of students reported using the Internet in addition to the manga resource. We were also encouraged that for the item “I would recommend that you use this assignment again for your future classes,” the average score was 3.93 (out of a possible 5), suggesting that it was a worthwhile project for them that they would wish other students would experience in the future.

Table 1.

	Questionnaire Item	Average (out of 5)
1.	I enjoyed doing this project.	3.86
2.	I learned a lot about my assigned ethnic group topic.	4.2
3.	This project took a lot of time to prepare.	3.7
4.	I felt that I was fully prepared for the final presentation.	3.37
5.	The <i>manga</i> material given to us was a good introduction to begin our project.	4.2
6.	I did research in addition to the <i>manga</i> material for the project. Majority response (75%): Internet Other responses: Library books, textbooks, newspaper and journal	3.79
8.	I felt that my group worked well together.	3.76

9.	How many times did you meet outside of the class to prepare for the project?	1.96
10.	I would recommend that you use this assignment again for your future classes.	3.93

We felt that this project was an effective way to introduce social issues because it gave students the opportunity to teach about their designated ethnic group. Some of the students' original comments in the open-ended part of the survey included: "I learned about Filipino overseas workers. By learning them, I could know a lot of facts I didn't know fully. And I could face the problem that Japan will have in future." "I could learn about 'boat people.' They are not accepted peoples to live in Japan or other countries." "I now know Korean in Japan well, for example, fingerprints. Fingerprints registration is unjust system. And we have to think this problem." "In Japan, the foreign people treat terrible." "[I learned] how to relate with foreigner."

Some students talked about what they learned during class discussions. One student said, "After learning about the zainichi Koreans in Japan, I decided to volunteer at a Korean school in Japan." Other student comments during class included "I wanted the audience to realize that there are many zainichi Koreans who hide their true identity by using Japanese names," "I understood more about the feelings of people of foreign backgrounds and the hardships they faced," "I learned for the first time, how Japanese have treated foreign people, even though I am Japanese myself and should have known this," and "I learned that many foreigners are restricted from certain occupations in Japan." The student's comments appeared to indicate concern, empathy, and a stance towards social justice.

For our first-year English Communication classes, this project was the students' first content-based lesson outside of their textbook and so we were particularly concerned as to how this lesson would work out. As for knowledge acquisition, the topics introduced to them appeared to have increased their awareness of and empathy on issues in their own country much of which were unfamiliar to them. Furthermore, it forced them to question their history as well as think critically about the status quo. In terms of skill acquisition, students learned how to give a presentation in English, incorporating nonverbal, verbal, and visual aid skills. By using PowerPoint as a visual aid, they focused on presenting in a clear and understandable way to the class. Moreover, they learned to read and recreate graphs for their PowerPoint slides. The students were able to actively research information for their topic on the Internet.

Conclusion

We realize that there is always room for improvement, especially in lesson plans that were tried for the first time. The following are some of our reflections on how we might do things differently next time.

We felt we should have given more preparation time inside and outside of the class as the preparations appeared somewhat rushed and also because the project coincided with the students' busiest time of the year as the presentations took place during the last weeks of class. We should have placed more emphasis on their

presentation skills and emphasized rehearsing. A lot of groups based their skits entirely on the *manga* and so we felt that the skits could have been more creative and done in a way that was easier to understand to the audience. Next time, we may suggest students to come up with original skits, instead of letting them base their skit entirely on the *manga* script. We also should have required the students to introduce more preliminary information about the skit to the audience. A suggestion that would add a great deal to the student experience would be to invite speakers from different ethnic groups who can share their first-hand experiences with the class.

There are pros and cons of using a Japanese text in an English communications course. Some may feel that the text itself should also be in English. An argument can be made, however, that the important thing is that the students first have a deeper understanding of the issues precisely because the information is given to them in their native language. The students are still expected to translate the information into English, and present the material using English, and therefore, we feel that it still serves as an English communication class. Sometimes when materials are first given in English, students may just copy the English into their presentation without truly understanding the full meaning.

In hindsight, we wished we had implemented some kind of preliminary questionnaire to assess their basic knowledge and understanding of diverse populations in Japan as well as measure their attitudes, so that we could possibly have recorded a change. Especially because this was a one-year course, such pre- and post-attitudinal surveys may serve to at least have one type of measure to assess student learning and growth.

Alternative project ideas:

Other ways to further develop the project would be to use it as a writing assignment. The students would write an essay about one of the topics in the *manga* material. This could be an argumentative essay that gives their opinion in a direct way. Another idea would be for this to be a translation project. The students would read the *manga* material and translate one of the stories from Japanese to English.

Bio data

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Appendix I

Name _____

English Communication

Final Project Fall 2009

Understanding the Experiences of Diverse Residents in Japan

Overview and Objectives:

The goal of this assignment is to research and present on the experiences of diverse populations that live in Japan.

Requirements

Each group will be handed a 10-page manga in Japanese from 「クラスメイトは外国人:多文化共生 20 の物語」. Read this manga carefully. Try to understand the topic and do additional research as necessary.

* this will be the only thing in Japanese that will be used during this project.

Skit

Each group must do a skit (five minutes) to introduce the topic to the audience in an easy to understand manner. First do an introduction of the topic. It has to be in English. Every member must participate equally in the skit. You will receive a group grade.

Question & Discussion

Before the skit, present THREE questions on the board for the audience to think about while watching the skit. (Examples: Q. What happened in the skit? Q. How is this issue related to you? Q. Have you witnessed or experienced something similar before?)

Visual presentation

Each group must do a PowerPoint presentation using at least 10 Slides.

The presentation must be done entirely in English. The length of the presentation must be between 10 and 15 minutes. All presenters must speak for equal number of minutes.

I advise each group to **practice** the presentation at least several times before presenting

in class.

PowerPoint slides must be emailed to Margaret by January XX, 2010

Content on the Slides

1) Content should cover information in the 「もっと知ろう」 section of reading.

Discuss the characteristics and history of your topic.

For example, what kind of discriminatory history does each topic have?

2) Describe the various stereotypes that exist for your group.

Explain each stereotype in detail. For each stereotype, answer the question, “Where did the stereotype come from? What is the origin?”

3) Describe how the stereotypes hurt the group targeted by the stereotype. What negative impact do these stereotypes have on the group? Be specific in your examples.

Assignment Expectations

- Organize so that all members of the team are participating equally.

Appendix II

Understanding the Experiences of Diverse Residents in Japan

Final Project: Fall 2009-10

TEACHER'S EVALUATION OF EACH GROUP

Presentation Topic _____

Name of Group Members _____

Group Grade _____

1. The presentation was well prepared and organized

1 2 3 4 5

2. The content/message sent to audience was effective

1 2 3 4 5

3. Understandable: vocabulary, loud enough, intonation stress, comprehensible, spoke at moderate speed

1 2 3 4 5

4. Nonverbal skills: eye contact/gestures/posture

1 2 3 4 5

5. Creativity: original idea, interesting

1 2 3 4 5

6. PowerPoint presentation was understandable and clear

1 2 3 4 5

7. Members of group participated actively and equally

1 2 3 4 5

8. PowerPoint files meets 10 slide minimum

1 2 3 4 5

9. PowerPoint slides contains stats or tables/graphs

1 2 3 4 5

10. Content of PowerPoint

1 2 3 4 5

11. Content of the skit

1 2 3 4 5

12. The way the skit was performed

1 2 3 4 5

13. Evidence of rehearsal

1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

Appendix III

Student Survey on Diversity Project

Instructions: Please circle the best answer.

1. I enjoyed doing this project.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I learned a lot about my assigned ethnic group topic.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. This project took a lot of time to prepare.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. I felt that I was fully prepared for the final presentation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. The *manga* material given to us was a good introduction to begin our project.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. I did research in addition to the *manga* material for the project.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. If you answered yes to Q. 6, what additional sources did you use? (circle one or more).

1. Internet
2. Library books
3. Textbooks
4. Newspaper/Journal
5. Other _____

8. I felt that my group worked well together.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. How many times did you meet outside of the class to prepare for the project?

1. Once
2. Twice
3. Three times
4. Four times
5. Five or more

10. I would recommend that you use this assignment again for your future classes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. What message did you want to give to your audience?

12. What useful information did you learn about your topic? What did you learn that you did not know before? Be specific.

13. If you had to do your project again, what would you do differently?
(e.g. practice more, meet more often with my group, start preparing earlier, etc.)

14. Rank how you did on your project:

1=poorly, 5=excellent

Creativity	1	2	3	4	5
Effort	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Clear and effective message	1	2	3	4	5
Group work	1	2	3	4	5
Speech	1	2	3	4	5
Eye contact	1	2	3	4	5
PowerPoint slides	1	2	3	4	5

15. How could this project be improved for future classes? Be specific.

16. Comments:

Thank you! 😊

An examination of the EFL textbooks at one Japanese university from a World Englishes perspective

Hadija Drummond and Myles Grogan, Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku

Reference data:

Drummond, H. & Grogan, M. (2010) An examination of the EFL textbooks at one Japanese university from a World Englishes perspective. In K. Bradford-Watts, E. M. Skier & M. Walsh (Eds), *Pan-SIG 2010 Conference Proceedings*. Kyoto: JALT.

Abstract

Matsuda (2002) and Yamanaka (2006) have both published findings showing that the Ministry of Japanese Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)-approved textbooks tend to focus on inner circle speakers of English or Japanese speakers. This study looks at the three most commonly used EFL texts in 143 compulsory classes taught by Native English Teachers at a private Japanese university. Conversations and communication acts from the audio in each textbook were analyzed in terms of inner, outer, or expanding circle participants. The results were used to try to create a snapshot of the characters in some of the textbooks used at our institution with a view to portrayal of who uses English, where it is used, and what kind of interactions are shown in terms of inner, outer, or expanding circle speakers.

Keywords: EFL textbooks, textbook analysis, world Englishes, internationalism, university foreign language education, English use, English as an International Language

松田（2002年）と山中（2006年）の両名が発表した研究によると、文部科学省の認可した教科書は、英語のインナーサークル話者と日本語話者に焦点をおく傾向が見られる、との事であった。この研究では、日本の私立大学で

ネイティブ英語話者の教員が担当する143の必修英語クラスのうち、最も利用されている3冊のEFLテキストに着目した。教科書中の会話とコミュニケーションが、インナー、アウター、エキスパンディングの各サークルのどの話者達が行っているのか、の観点から分析した。「誰が英語を使っているのか」「どこで英語が使われているのか」「どのようなインターアクションが行われているのか」を探し出し、分析の結果は、我々の大学で利用されている教科書中の登場人物達のイメージを作成する試みに使われた。

キーワード：教科書、テキスト分析、世界英語、国際的、大学外国語教育、英語使用、国際語としての英語

The expanding role of English in the world is an important topic for language educators. English is the most widely used and studied language in the world, with more than two billion people routinely exposed to English (Crystal, 2003) and more than 1.5 billion people learning English (Graddol, 2007).

As English has spread throughout the world it has been adapted and mixed with local languages and cultures to create new varieties of English. One way of looking at these World Englishes within the field is to categorize these varieties into three concentric circles. The inner-circle varieties include countries such as the UK and the USA, where English is the first and primary language. The outer-circle varieties are made up of countries such as India and Nigeria, where English has a history of official use, such as educational or governmental. Finally, expanding-circle varieties are comprised of countries such as Japan or France, which recognize the importance of English and teach it widely, but rarely use it (Kachru, 1985).

As English use has increased, the most common international interactions in English have come to take place between ‘non-native’ speakers, rather than between speakers of varieties of English such as American or British. It is beneficial, therefore, for students to gain exposure to the different varieties of English, including users of English as a second language. However, in Japan, despite wide promotion of the English language for international communication (Kubota, 1998; Matsuda, 2002; Nunan, 2003), the native inner-circle speaker (usually of American English) has been used as the target language model in most MEXT-approved textbooks.

To illustrate, the great majority of job advertisements for short-term contract English teachers in universities in Japan state “Native English speaker” as a qualification. Additionally, the Japan Exchange and Teaching program primarily recruits young native speakers for nation-wide jobs in public schools, probably shaping students’ pre-university experience (Official Homepage of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, 2008). Any resulting lack of awareness of the many varieties of English used around the world and in Japan may lead not only to difficulties in understanding the varieties, but also to dismissive attitudes toward them. A growing number of educators and researchers in Japan therefore advocate that English language classes in Japan prepare students for interaction with users of non-standard varieties (Hanamoto, 2009; Honna & Takeshita, 1998; Kubota, 1998; Morrow, 2004). As such, while American or British varieties might be chosen as a target for language teaching, students should know that these are only a few of many varieties which they may encounter in the future.

English language teaching material can play a large role in introducing students to English language varieties. However, previous research suggests that language materials in use in Japan are not adequately preparing students for the reality of English use in the present global climate. Matsuda (2002), for example, examined the representation of users of English in Japanese public school textbooks. The selected texts were approved by the former Ministry of Education for the first year of junior high school and were in use from 1997 to 2002. Matsuda examined both the nationalities of the characters and the types of English included in those textbooks. She found that Japanese and inner-circle characters were the most represented, with only 7 out of 74 characters from outer- or expanding-circle countries. She also found that the overwhelming majority of exchanges showing “international English” use took place between Japanese speakers and inner-circle speakers (66/75), for example a Japanese student talking to native speakers when visiting the United States. Matsuda argues that these textbooks can give learners the false impression that Japanese and other EFL learners study English to speak with those from the inner circle.

In a more recent study, Yamanaka (2006) analyzed the MEXT-approved secondary school EFL textbooks from the viewpoint of culture teaching, examining the frequency of cultural items and references. She found a strong emphasis on inner circle cultural elements (primarily the U.S.), particularly at the junior high school level (inner

38% / expanding 20% / outer 6%). Importantly, she found a significant increase in the coverage of expanding circle cultural items in senior high school. In fact, they exceeded inner circle cultural references.

Cottle (2009) looked at how English users were represented in two EFL textbook series (*English Firsthand* and *Touchstone*) used at a Japanese university in terms of character background, ethnicity, and accent. Similar to Matsuda, Cottle's analysis revealed a dominance of characters from inner-circle countries in all selected textbooks. Of the 203 characters in both textbook series, none were deemed to be from outer-circle countries, and only 8 were from expanding-circle countries. Cottle concludes that these textbook series have the potential to reinforce the notion that English belongs to inner-circle countries.

These studies are valuable, but have important limitations. Firstly, Matsuda's study focused on junior high school texts, which tend to be less complex than university texts. Secondly, the textbooks used by Matsuda were published more than a decade ago. They therefore do not reflect the changing views toward international English use that have taken place since then. Horibe (2008) suggests the focus of language teaching in Japan has changed, with less of a tendency to connect English language learning with Americans or Britons. He writes:

high school textbooks today include many different societies and cultures in the world along with Japanese society and culture . . . university-level textbooks, which used to center around British and American literature, now covers [*sic*] diverse cultural topics and contents including global issues and current affairs around the world. (p. 246)

It is necessary therefore to examine textbooks currently in use. Cottle's 2008 study, which is up to date, looks at only textbook series without detailing how these textbooks were determined to be "commonly used in English classes at universities throughout Japan" (p. 4). It is unclear to us whether the textbooks he examined were used at our institution.

Therefore, the overall aim of the project is to investigate how English users are represented in verbal exchanges in textbooks at our university. Specifically, we focus on the three texts used for the largest number of compulsory courses for non-English majors. For each textbook, we will examine the following research questions:

- 1) Who is portrayed as an English user?

2) Where is English use depicted?

3) What interactions are shown?

Examining these questions will provide a better idea of how English users and uses are being portrayed in the classroom materials selected by teachers for compulsory credits at our institution.

Methodology

Textbook Selection

To identify the most commonly used textbooks at our institution, we examined the textbook selections of compulsory credit-bearing English communication courses offered in the 2010 spring semester. **These courses are all single credit courses for non-English majors, and the text list was obtained from the school administration.** We examined a total of 143 individual classes from the course catalog, taught by 30 teachers. We judged three textbooks to be most popular by looking at the number of credits the text was used for, as displayed in Table 1. As we were studying spoken language models, only texts with audio were suitable, and thus graded readers and texts with no audio (such as *Let's Talk About It*, or *Scraps*) were eliminated from the study.

EFL Textbooks Used in 5 or More Courses in 2010 at one Japanese University

<i>Text</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Series credits</i>
<i>English Here and Now at Momoyama Book I</i>	12	
<i>Graded Readers</i>	7	7
<i>No textbook</i>	27	
<i>Scraps</i>	6	6
<i>Interchange Third Edition Intro Student's Book</i>	5	
<i>Interchange Third Edition Student's Book 1</i>	2	

<i>Interchange Third Edition Student's Book 2</i>	1	8
<i>Talk a Lot - Book One</i>	8	10
<i>Let's Talk About It</i>	7	7
<i>Smart Choice 1</i>	4	
<i>Smart Choice 2</i>	7	
<i>Smart Choice 3</i>	2	13

For the purposes of this study, we have treated different levels of the same textbook as separate textbooks, (although we have included series data in Table 1 for the sake of completeness). This differs from the approach used by Cottle (2009). As most students would not use more than one text in a series, this approach better suited the purpose of our inquiry. The varieties of English may vary from level to level within a series, but we focused on the Englishes experienced through each individual class text.

We selected *Smart Choice 2*, *Interchange Intro*, and *Talk A Lot*. *Smart Choice 2* is a 12-unit text, with an additional classroom English-style unit and four review units. Each unit contains a conversation recording and a listening section, the latter usually broken into sections. Each unit in *Talk A Lot* revolves round a series of questions. *Interchange Intro* has 16 units with additional Progress Check sections. Units have two conversations, a main listening activity and a self-study listening activity.

Data Analysis

Using an alternative textbook, we analyzed conversations and listenings to clarify categories and identification criteria, and check that our ability to rate constructs was similar. Both audio files and scripts were used to identify these features. Because each item analyzed was regarded as a communicative act, vocabulary, recordings of reading sections, or isolated pronunciation models were excluded from the selection.

Based on this initial analysis, we finalized a list of 10 categories for the textbook analysis. These included: apparent dialect, speaker's nationality or region of nationality, circle that each speaker belonged to, ethnicity (if known), location or region of use, and circle of use. The circle the speaker belonged to and the location of the exchanges were determined using a combination of textual clues, accent, and pictures. Any context notes helpful to the study were recorded.

In addition, we also noted place-marking data (page and CD track), details such as gender and name of characters portrayed (the latter allowing tracking of input over several instances in some instances), and performed a word count. In the absence of electronic copies of the tape script, this count was done by hand. Although some errors will have occurred as a result, the data gathered should still give a good picture of the differences in contribution between categories.

It may have been possible to discuss the ethnicity of characters within the books as a significant part of the study, but the sparse information in the texts made this difficult. Although undoubtedly an important issue, it was decided that this was beyond the scope of the study.

Results and discussion

Let us now discuss the results in terms of each of the three research questions.

1) Who is portrayed as an English user?

As shown in Table 2, the speakers of English in all books belong mostly to the inner circle, with all speakers belonging to the inner circle in *Talk A Lot*. In *Smart Choice 2*, the word total is 7% greater than the number of speakers for inner circle speakers, showing a dominant role for those speakers in most exchanges. While the opposite is true for *Interchange Intro*, the percentage of expanding circle speakers is much lower (5% of speakers and 6% of words uttered). The number of words per speaker in both cases for expanding-circle speakers is just over 50 words.

Evidence of outer circle speakers was missing from every text, although these characters may be difficult to identify given the information available for analysis. As a consequence, however, students may be unaware of these English speakers as stakeholders in the English language. This is disappointing from the perspective of promoting English as an international medium.

Finally, in *Smart Choice 2* all identifiable Asian characters were female.

Table 2. The Varieties of English used in the Dialogs and Listening Sections of Three EFL University Texts

	<i>Smart Choice 2</i>				<i>Interchange Intro</i>				<i>Talk a Lot</i>			
Speakers	# of speakers*	As % of total	# of words	% of total	# of speakers	As % of total	# of words	% of total	# of speakers	As % of total	# of words	% of total
IC	67	79.1	4677	86.1	156	95	4028	94	37	100	5659	100
OC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EC	14	20.9	755	13.9	8	5	252	6	0	0	0	0

** After discussion, one character, speaking 116 words, was excluded from the data for Smart Choice 2, as being too complex to categorize from text. All other characters were placed.*

2) Where is English use depicted?

There is an absence of discrete information on specific and concrete location in all texts. The texts are artful in their lack of identifying features, allowing a generic North-American feel to almost all interactions. Again, the analysis reveals an apparent near absence of non-inner-circle settings. It is have to imagine how learners living in Japan could perceive such settings as a part of their own life, and may even be outside the realm of reality for learners. A summary of the data is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Locations of Communicative Exchanges Depicted in 3 EFL Texts

	<i>Smart Choice 2</i>		<i>Interchange Intro</i>		<i>Talk a Lot</i>	
Location	Exchanges	% of total	Exchanges	% of total	Exchanges	% of total
IC	48	100	83	94	18	100
OC	0	0	0	0	0	0
EC	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	4	5	0	0
Other (International Phone Call)	0	0	1	1	0	0
Total	48	100	88	100	18	100

3) *What interactions are shown?*

The textbooks overwhelmingly show IC-IC interactions. To a large extent, many of the EC agents are “stars” (such as athletes), or are reduced to some kind of cultural informant for IC speakers. Other EC characters are "cameo" characters, with only 4 or 5 words. These latter generally serve to facilitate an IC speaker's role (e.g. a TV host). A summary is shown in Table 4.

The five EC-EC interactions in *Smart Choice 2* all took place within "Unit 0", which demonstrated classroom English. No other EC-EC interactions were seen.

Table 4. Types of Communicative Exchanges Depicted in 3 EFL Texts

	<i>Smart Choice 2</i>			<i>Interchange Intro</i>		<i>Talk a Lot</i>	
Type of Exchange	# of exchanges	% of total	# of exchanges	% of total	# of exchanges	% of total	
IC-IC	33	68.75	67	88	18	100	
EC-EC	5	10.4	2	4	0	0	
OC-OC	0	0	0	0	0	0	
IC-EC	9	18.75	7	9	0	0	
IC-OC	0	0	0	0	0	0	
EC-OC	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	47	97.9	76	101	18	100	

Limitations

It is important to note the limitations of this study. Firstly, the three textbooks analyzed made up only a small sample (less than 14%?) of the main texts used in our programs. Within the 143 credits this survey covered, this study has covered the audio component of 19 credits. This is less than one seventh of all credits. Twenty seven credits used no textbook, and we are unable to say what - if any - listening materials were provided in classes with no textbook, nor can we perform the same analysis we have done here. Furthermore, books such as *Let's Talk About It* have no audio component and were excluded from the study. Finally, even where teachers are using a commercial text with audio, it is not known whether or how teachers are supplementing those class textbooks with additional materials.

This was a small-scale study, which looked at only three books, to provide an indication of how English use is represented in them. More comprehensive analyses would provide valuable information required to inform program choices.

Conclusion

The results show a marked preference for General American English (GAE) in the selected textbooks. Though exposure to a diversity of American accents would arguably be preferable, GAE may represent a reasonable choice as a language model for students studying in, or intending to study in America. However, when used as the sole model for EFL students preparing for international language use in a variety of potential settings, GAE is insufficient and unrealistic. Standardized tests, such as TOEIC[®] and IELTS[™] also now include, at a minimum, a range of native-speaker accents (Powers, 2008; IELTS, 2007). Perhaps GAE should be a key component of English classes, but it is highly unlikely that this is the only form of English needed in students' lives. Kirkpatrick (2007) comments, "the specific teaching and learning contexts and the specific needs of the learners in those contexts should determine the variety to be taught" (p.2).

The above does not necessarily mean that these textbooks are a poor choice for Japanese university classrooms. While representation of English use is an important factor to consider in selecting textbooks, we recognize that this is one of several factors that need to be considered. As these textbooks are popular selections at our institution

and perhaps across Japan, they clearly have been judged positively by teachers on other regards. However, upon evaluating their students' language needs, teachers may choose to make up for the lack of linguistic and cultural diversity in their coursebooks, using strategies such as re-recording passages or bringing in supplemental texts (both authentic and constructed). Teachers may also choose to revise their selections to include a textbook from the growing list that provide more accurate representations of English use. There are many advantages to doing so, including raising students' awareness of the diversity of English language varieties in use in the world and preparing students for the reality of global communication. Most importantly, bringing different kinds of English to life in the classroom can add interest and excitement to the EFL classroom.

Biodata

Hailing from the UK, Myles Grogan did his MA in the United States, where he first developed an interest in World Englishes. Besides Japan, he has taught in China, Italy, and Costa Rica. Other research interests include Extensive Reading, the use of technology in the classroom, and pronunciation.

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Empowering teachers' professional development: Video supported reflections

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Abstract

This paper highlights the preliminary findings from an ongoing teacher development project that promotes professional growth via critical reflective teaching. The project required the participants to videotape their university English classes before engaging in critical self-reflection, peer viewing and collegial consultation. The paper describes five positive elements that emerged from videotaping the teachers' lessons. Finally, the paper attempts to alleviate some of the discomfort and apprehension that educators have with utilising a video camera as a professional development tool.

Keywords: videotape, video record, professional development, teacher development, self-reflection, peer collaboration.

本論は、ビデオ使用を英語授業の指導改善に役立てる実践事例報告である。勤務校では、教育開発プロジェクトの一環として、英語教員同士による授業参観を実施しているが、アンケート調査から、教室へのビデオ撮影の導入は、授業担当者自身に批評的視点を提供するばかりでなく、反省会での該当授業の検討に役立つことが判明した。本論は、先行研究を踏まえ、ビデオ撮影に関する5つの要点を、各種アンケート調査と照らし合わせて指摘する。さらに、教室へのビデオ持ち込みに伴う問題に対して、解決策を例示している。

キーワード：ビデオ撮影、教育開発、授業改善、自己省察、協同態勢

Spectators at sporting events are usually amazed at the high level of proficiency, power, and grace that professional athletes bring to the playing field. We have come to expect that learning to perform at an elite level in the world of sports is an extremely difficult

and time consuming endeavour. A case in point concerns professional baseball players who, in addition to hitting thousands of balls in a batting cage, typically dedicate themselves to hours upon hours in the gym working on their strength, flexibility, and speed. In addition to such physical conditioning, elite baseball players will spend a significant amount of time in front of a television screen carefully examining videotape of their swing in order to observe any flaws and look for areas that need to be improved. In fact, the majority of Major League Baseball sluggers would appear to view videotaping as not only an extremely valuable part of their professional development but indeed an essential one.

This sentiment stands in sharp contrast to the feelings about videotaping that exist in the EFL/ESL educational arena. Most English teachers will find themselves in a discomforting ‘fight or flight’ mode when the words “videotape” and “your lesson” are mentioned in the same sentence. In all probability, this negative feeling stems from the fact that video recording is often used as an evaluative tool, especially during the preservice teaching practicum, and not as an effective professional improvement resource. Over the last four decades, numerous researchers (e.g., Kong et al., 2009; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richardson, 2007; Wu et al., 2008) have provided accounts whereby educators have utilised a video camera in their EFL classrooms under the auspices of teacher development. However, Bailey et al. (2001) astutely note that videotaping has been predominately used to train new teachers and is rarely deployed in “self-initiated professional development contexts” (pp.117-118).

This paper will argue that video recording one’s EFL/ESL classes in a “self-initiated” framework is an extremely powerful professional development (henceforth PD) approach, especially if it is used in conjunction with critical self-reflection and peer feedback. The paper will draw on the preliminary findings from a synergised teacher improvement project that promotes professional growth via critical reflective teaching. The research undertaking required the participants to videotape two of their university English classes at predetermined points throughout the school term. Once the lessons were recorded, the instructors analysed their own classroom performance and then exposed themselves to the critical scrutiny of their colleagues. In essence, this teacher development project is constructed on a foundation that consists of the following six pillars: (a) self reflection (immediate & intuitive), (b) self reflection (video-aided), (c) peer feedback (video-aided), (d) student feedback (questionnaire), (e)

collegial feedback (video-aided) and (f) collaborative consultation.

The boundaries of teacher development

Before examining the aforementioned teacher development project in greater depth, it is necessary to pause for a moment in order to discuss the parameters of EFL/ESL professional development. L2 teacher development has traditionally been perceived to be ‘front loaded’ and ‘top-down’ in nature. According to Freeman (1994), “front loading” is a dominant force in the world of EFL/ESL PD. Freeman, as noted by Gebhard (1998), defines “front loading” as the knowledge that educators acquire during the early part of their careers and this information is thought to be enough to sustain them over the course of their professional journey (p.501). Items that fall under the umbrella of “front loading” include theories about learning taught in university education programs, practicum experience, as well as the coaching and mentoring of new teachers (p.501).

The second traditional approach to teacher development is described by Johnson (2006) as the “top-down professional development model” (p.243). In essence, this model can be described as one whereby the administrative overseers of a program impose initiatives and innovations in classrooms without much input from front-line educators (p.243). In a similar vein, So et al. (2009) remind us that pre-packaged training courses and seminars, which are usually quite popular with school administrators, are often developed and conducted by external organizations. Furthermore, this traditional PD instrument assumes that the knowledge that teachers gather from short-term instructional courses is relevant and can be directly applied in their classrooms (p.441). However, Borko (2004) argues that such workshops and seminars are not an effective tool for professional growth as they are often superficial and fragmented (So et al., 2009, p.441). Similarly, Tienken and Stonaker (2007) claim that educators best learn outside the confines of large group workshops and conferences (Zepeda, 2008, p.3). To paraphrase Tienken and Stonaker, teachers are likely to experience greater professional growth by participating in small in-house groups that facilitate communication.

Even though the traditional sites of teacher development such as seminars, workshops, and conferences can be problematic, they remain highly popular. A case in point is highlighted in the responses to a teacher development survey conducted in the

current project. The survey consisted of a questionnaire responded to by 45 university instructors teaching in the Osaka area (see Figure 1). Of the respondents, 91% (n=41) reported that they had attended EFL workshops and conferences within the previous twelve months. Of even greater significance, 78 % (n=35) of these individuals claimed that EFL conferences and workshops were a useful way to enhance their teaching abilities. Ultimately, these numbers are not surprising, especially when one considers the fact that the previously mentioned professional growth activities fit neatly into most teachers' comfort zones.

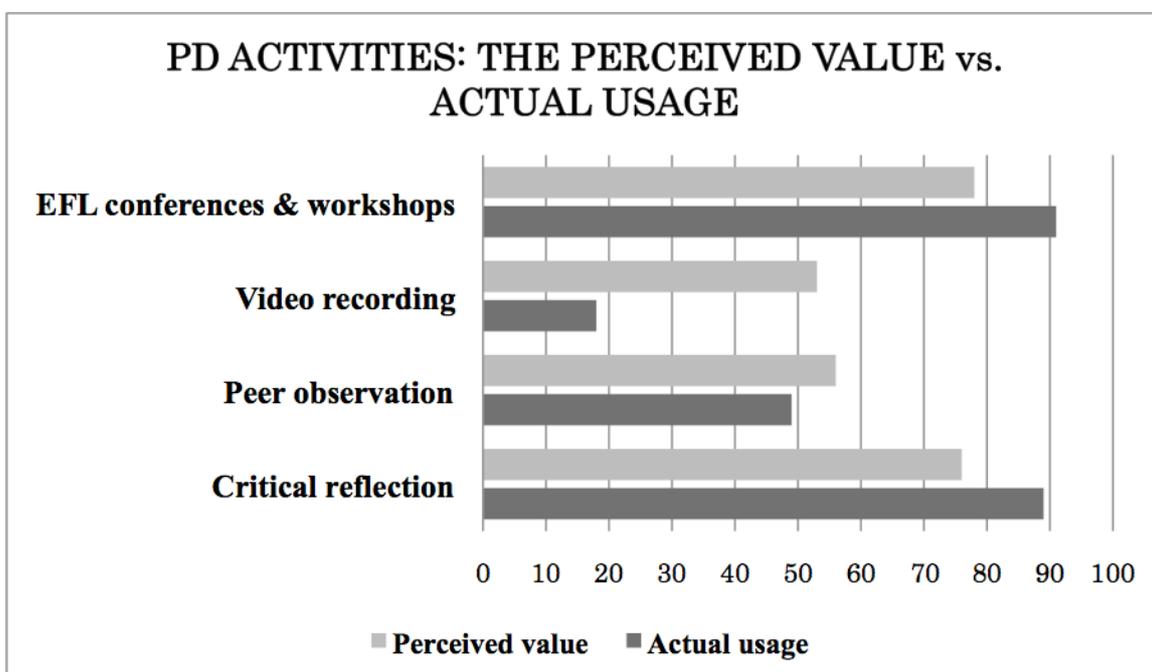


Figure 1. Perceived value vs. actual usage of PD activities

Johnson (2006) challenges educators to expand their personal boundaries beyond the typical sites of teacher development and seek out “alternative professional development models” (p.243). Johnson argues that the alternative paradigm must allow educators to engage in “self-directed, collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers’ classroom lives” (p.243). Furthermore, she encourages educators to explore their teaching practices in a manner that is in-depth, reflective, and on-going throughout their journey along the road of PD (p.244).

Alternative professional development activities

Fortunately, there are numerous PD opportunities that provide teachers with a means to examine their classroom practices in a reflective and analytical manner. Richards and Farrell (2005) highlight several individual and group activities that will help educators enhance their professional skills. These include self-monitoring, journal writing, critical incident reports, action research, peer coaching, peer observation, team teaching, critical friendships, case studies, and teacher support groups (p.14). This paper will argue that one of the most powerful as well as effective ways that teachers can explore their classroom performance is to step in front of a camera and record their lessons. So how do educators feel about videotaping their English classes? The survey questionnaire conducted in this project posed this question and discovered that 53% (n=24) of the university instructors believed that video recording their lessons would be a useful PD endeavour. However, only 18% (n=8) of the respondents had utilised this technique within the preceding year. Clearly, these results indicate that even though videotaping one's English classes is considered by many teachers to be a worthwhile undertaking, it is an under-utilised PD tool.

Why don't more EFL/ESL instructors bring a video camera into their classrooms? The answer to this question is more complicated than it might initially appear. Undoubtedly, it is possible that some individuals might feel constricted by consensual concerns, technical considerations, time constraints, and bureaucratic static from school administrators. In addition to these logistical concerns, a number of English teachers may avoid recording their lessons because they would feel self-conscious and embarrassed watching their actions on a video monitor. Without question, the participants in the current teacher development project concur with Bailey et al. (2001) that watching a videotape of their classroom performance was a humbling and slightly uncomfortable experience. However, once educators are able to circumvent the pitfalls of self-consciousness and embarrassment they are more likely to appreciate the fact that videotaping their lessons is a powerful means to cultivate their professional abilities. As reiterated throughout this paper, the current PD literature highlights numerous benefits associated with the use of video technology in an educational context. This teacher development project discovered five significant benefits that emerged from videotaping the participants' lessons.

“Lights, camera, action” – The value of video

The first positive element relates to the teacher’s awareness of his or her oral and physical propensities. Both the participants in our project reported that watching themselves on a video monitor fostered an enhanced self awareness. As one teacher in the current project reflected;

“The first time I watched myself in front of a camera, it became painfully clear that I was overly fond of words such as: ‘good,’ ‘ok,’ and ‘that’s right.’ In addition to overusing these words, I noticed that my whiteboard usage was an area that needed to be drastically improved. Simply put, my writing was atrocious and it was difficult for the students to read. On top of this alarming reality, the board was a rainbow of colors from different markers and many words were poorly spaced.”

These comments are found in larger studies as well. For example, Richards and Farrell (2005) tell us that teachers are often shocked by their irritating speech mannerisms and the overreliance on certain words (p.36). On a similar note, Rosenstein (2002) reminds us that videotape also captures nonverbal items such as body language (e.g. self-grooming, clothing adjustments) and the physical movements of people within the range of the camera (p.4).

The second advantage that surfaced from the current teacher development project was that it created time for the participants to adequately respond to their teaching performance. When educators are deeply engaged in the lesson, it is impossible for them to observe the actions of every student, especially when they write something on a whiteboard. Sherin (2000) reminds us that a myriad of things occur simultaneously during a typical lesson and a teacher must be constantly attentive to his/her next classroom manoeuvre (p.36). The value of a videotape, as Sherin notes, is that it negates the real time reality and provides educators with the opportunity to closely examine a specific aspect of their class an infinite number of times. In addition, Sherin states that “...you don’t have to be attentive to a hundred things; you can focus on two or three. It’s a rare luxury” (p.37). On a similar wavelength, Batey & Westgate (1994) report that their “critical faculties seemed to have been sharpened” from watching their own videotapes as well as the recorded classroom performances of their colleagues (p.40). The instructors in the current teacher development project strongly agree with the sentiments of the aforementioned researchers. The third valuable insight

that emerged was that the repeated viewings cultivated the teachers' analytical competencies. By utilizing the stop and rewind buttons on their remote control devices, the participants could carefully dissect specific facets of their lessons (e.g. student participation levels, ratio of teacher to student talk, speech complexity, task-based learning techniques, nonverbal behaviours and teacher performance). Whereas the previously discussed advantages are individualistic in nature, the fourth benefit relates to peer collaboration.

The collaborative components of this project, namely peer viewing and collegial feedback, enabled the instructors to make more of an in-depth analysis of the classroom videos. Is it worthwhile to have a colleague watch and critique your EFL lesson? The project teacher development survey investigated this question and discovered that 56% (n=25) of the respondents believe that peer observation can improve an instructor's classroom performance. However, only 49% (n=22) of the teachers reported that they had engaged in peer observation within the previous twelve months. Jim Stigler, a UCLA psychology professor, highlights the importance of peer viewing in the following manner: "Even after you start looking at yourself, you can still have blind spots if you don't have colleagues sitting there with you while you're viewing the videotape and critiquing your teaching" (Richardson, 2007, p.2). Batey and Westgate (1994) believe that collegial trust is an essential ingredient before teachers can effectively analyze the classroom performance of their peers (p.38). In the current project, both of the participants reported that they also had an increased feeling of trust and collegial support. Without question, these are highly important features, especially when one considers the individualistic nature of traditional EFL teaching. Lortie (1975), as highlighted by Bailey et al. (1998), described teaching as the "egg carton profession" (p.554). In essence, this analogy highlights the fact that educators working in the same school are often segregated from each other in their individual classrooms. On a similar note, Bowman et al. (2000) describe teacher isolation in the following words: "In a profession that is often as isolating as it is public, turning to colleagues to share teaching challenges and rewards provides fertile ground for professional development and support" (p.18). Clearly, isolation and 'burnout' are problematic barriers that educators must overcome. According to Sherin (2000), teachers must discover new ways that will keep them inspired and "intellectually engaged" (p.36). Sherin contends that collegial video viewing is an exciting technique to improve an educator's professional abilities

and one that will keep the motivational fires burning brightly (p.38).

In addition to generating excitement in the workplace, watching a colleague's classroom performance is an excellent vehicle to spark a teacher's self-reflections. The fifth and final element that was noticeable in the teacher development project was that the participants' critical reflective competencies were enhanced by the video recordings. Before venturing on, it is probably wise to ask the following two questions: 'what is self-reflection?' and 'why is it a valuable PD device?' The answer to these questions can be found in the words of Richards and Farrell (2005). This research duo describes reflection as the "process of critical examination of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's teaching practices and routines" (p.7). Generally speaking, many people perceive self-reflection to be a practical and useful practice in their personal as well as professional lives. The project questionnaire examined this issue and discovered that 76% (n=34) of the respondents reported that they considered critical self-reflection to be a worthwhile PD undertaking.

It would be erroneous to assume that self-reflection alone will automatically improve an individual's teaching abilities. In an earlier study, Hunt et al. (1994) warn us that "... reflective practices undertaken at individual basis may merely reinforce habits and prejudices" (Kaliban, 2007, p.685). Kaliban (2007) believes that educators can circumvent this potential hazard by sharing their reflections in an environment that is positive and socially supportive, as discussed in the fourth positive element (p.684). Furthermore, Kaliban claims that reflective dialogues create space whereby teachers can examine "...new lines of thought, creating possibilities for constructing new knowledge and reconstructing existing knowledge" (p.685). The participants in the teacher development project certainly concur with these words. Throughout the project, the videos inspired the teachers' self-reflections and these ideas resurfaced during subsequent collegial reflective conversations. Ultimately, they were able to walk away from the peer feedback sessions with new and unique insights into their teaching practices.

In essence, the videos enabled the teachers to self-reflect and adequately critique their trusted peers because they had visual evidence that could support their claims. Schratz (1992) contends that video recordings are "powerful instruments in the development of a lecturer's self-reflective competence" as they confront an individual with a "mirror-like objective view of what goes on in class" (Richards & Lochart, 1996,

p.11). On a similar note, Bailey et al. (2001) believe that videos are a valuable self-reflective device because they are objective and the recording process removes teachers from their classrooms thereby allowing them to watch their performance through dispassionate eyes (p.118). Clearly, the objective nature of video recordings can make them highly beneficial tools in a wide array of research undertakings. In the teacher development project, videotapes were utilised in conjunction with self-reflection, peer feedback, collegial consultation, and student questionnaires. In essence, this multi-dimensional approach was taken in order to ‘triangulate’ the project. In brief, the triangulation technique uses two or more sources of information in a study to validate the data and make it more credible (Rosenstein, 2002, & Farrell, 2006). Bailey et al. (1996) tell us that using videotapes with field notes and peer observation allowed their research team an opportunity to “establish a highly collaborative form of triangulation” (p.552).

Videotaping: logistics

Thus far, this paper has highlighted the reasons for using a video camera in a classroom and the five positive elements that materialised from the teacher development project. Before an educator can bring a camera into his/her lesson, there are a number of items that need to be carefully considered. After all the consensual issues have been addressed, a teacher must decide how the video recording will proceed. It is important, as Bailey et al. (2001) point out, to be conscious of the “tunnel-vision effect” that is associated with most video cameras (p.126). Therefore, the position of the camera is important so that the recording can capture the teacher’s activity zones, the whiteboard, and a sample of the students. Although deploying a “cameraman” (read: fellow colleague or student) will greatly reduce the “tunnel-vision effect” it can create a number of other problems (p.127). The instructors in the teacher development project believe that it is vital for a video camera to be as unobtrusive as possible so that the everyday environment of the class remains unchanged. In addition to camera position, educators must also take into account the classroom’s facilities, layout, and lighting (DuFon, 2002). The teacher development project educators taught their lessons in classrooms with totally different designs. Even so, they were able to strategically position two video cameras in inconspicuous locations without upsetting the normal everyday atmosphere of their lessons. The project participants elected to use an auxiliary or back-up camera to

capture more students and act as a safeguard in the event that the primary camera failed to operate. On another technical wavelength, Bailey et al. (2001) tell us that the most frequent complaint they hear about watching teaching videos is the horrendous sound quality. The project instructors were conscious of this reality and thus carried an IC recorder in their shirt pocket as a means to overcome this potential problem. As it turned out, the devices were not needed as the sound quality was a non-issue.

Perhaps the greatest concern that teachers have with using a video camera in a classroom is that it could change the natural behaviours of their students. Accordingly, upon completion of each lesson in the current project, each participating student responded to a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The findings of the questionnaire report that 89% (n=46) of the learners “were not nervous” in the presence of two video cameras at the beginning of the lesson. By the middle of the lesson, this increased to 100%.

Without question, a video camera, if properly utilised can be an extremely valuable device in a teacher’s PD toolkit. However, it is crucial that educators carefully consider a number of issues (e.g. logistical, technological, consensual) before they erect a camera tripod in their classrooms. Even though recording one’s English class can be a challenging and an uncomfortable undertaking, the experience of the project participants confirms the fact that the tremendous benefits that can be reaped by far outweigh any negative elements. Educators must challenge themselves to go beyond the typical sites of PD knowledge and find new spaces to learn and grow. In conclusion, videotaping one’s English lessons in conjunction with critical self-reflection and peer feedback is an extremely powerful PD approach. Finally, we will leave the reader with the following inspirational thought: “Professional development is never the end but rather the beginning of the journey toward learning” (Zepeda, 2008, p.61).

Bio data

Sean H. Toland is an EFL instructor at Osaka Shoin Women’s University. He has spent 7 years teaching English in Japan and Korea at every level from elementary to university. In addition to his EFL experience, Sean taught for three years at an Inuit high school in Canada’s far north. He is presently interested in professional development, reflective practice, and critical pedagogy.

B. Greg Dunne began his teaching career as a high school English teacher in Australia

and has been teaching in Japanese universities over the past 12 years. Currently, he is a tenured instructor at Osaka Shoin Women's University where he is an associate coordinator of the EFL program. His research interests include teacher development, CALL, task-based learning and world Englishes.

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Appendix 1

アンケート – What's Cooking lesson (4月26日) Greg

このアンケート用紙に名前は記入しないでください。これはテストではありません！

1. 「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンを受けてみて、どの程度マッシュルームリゾットの作り方を説明できるようになりましたか？
(日本語で説明した場合) 全くできない ほんの少し ある程度できる よくできる 大変よくできる
(英語で説明した場合) 全くできない ほんの少し ある程度できる よくできる 大変よくできる
2. 普段のグレッグの授業と比べて、「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンは難しかったですか？
 普段よりもずっと簡単 普段より少し簡単 普段と同じくらい 普段より少し難しい 普段よりもずっと難しい
3. 普段のグレッグの授業と比べて、「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンは楽しかったですか？
 普段に比べて全く楽しくなかった 普段より余り楽しくなかった 普段と同じくら

い 普段より少し楽しかった 普段よりもずっと楽しかった

4. 「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスン中、下の各項目においてどの程度の機会(時間)をもてましたか？

* 会話(スピーキング) 全くなかった 十分ではなかった ある程度もてた たくさんもてた 十分すぎる程もてた

* 聴きとり(リスニング) 全くなかった 十分ではなかった ある程度もてた たくさんもてた 十分すぎる程もてた

* 読解(リーディング) 全くなかった 十分ではなかった ある程度もてた たくさんもてた 十分すぎる程もてた

* 書き取り(ライティング) 全くなかった 十分ではなかった ある程度もてた たくさんもてた 十分すぎる程もてた

* 文法習得 全くなかった 十分ではなかった ある程度もてた たくさんもてた 十分すぎる程もてた

5. 「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンの中で一番楽しかったところはどこですか？

6. 「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンの中で一番楽しくなかったところはどこですか？

7. 今回のグレッグの「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンの中で、変更・改善したほうが良いと思われるところがあれば書いてください。

8. 今回のグレッグの「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンで使った単語で覚えているものはありますか？あれば下記に書いてください。

料理の動詞 (cooking verbs): e.g. cook, make, ...

食材 (ingredients): e.g. rice, ...

料理の設備 (cooking utensils): e.g. spoon, sauce pan...

9. 今回の「マッシュルームリゾット」のレッスンはビデオカメラで撮影されました。教室にカメラがあり、撮影されていることに対して授業開始直後はどう思いましたか？

とても緊張した 少し緊張した 全く緊張しなかった

10. 撮影されていることに対して授業が始まってしばらく経ってからはどのように

思いましたか？

とても緊張した 少し緊張した 全く緊張しなかった

アンケートにご理解・ご協力いただき、ありがとうございました。

Adding Content and Language Targets to Web 2.0 Projects

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Reference data:

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Abstract

Web 2.0 software can be used to create and store animated movies, multimedia slide shows, and comic strips online. A teacher planning to do web 2.0 projects in the computer classroom has many decisions to make, and much to be aware of when planning lessons. A description of how we used VoiceThread, Pixton and Xtranormal will be covered in this report. This software will be described and discussed in terms of teacher and student perceived advantages and disadvantages. Detailed lesson plans and resources are also presented.

Keywords: Web 2.0, VoiceThread, Pixton, Xtranormal, Reflective Thinking, Multimedia Projects

ウェブ 2.0 ソフトウェアを活用すると、アニメーションを使った映画やマルチメディアのスライドショー、コマ割り漫画などをオンライン上で作成したり、保存することができます。ウェブ 2.0 を授業に取り入れるにあたっては、多くの決定が伴うほか、教員は多くのことを知っておく必要があります。このレポートは、私たちがどのようにボイススレッドやピクストン、エクストラノーマルを使用したかについて記述しています。また、私たちが使用したソフトウェアの説明や、教員及び生徒/学生が感じた長所・短所に関する考察や詳細な授業計画、資料についても記述しています。

キーワード

ウェブ 2.0、ボイススレッド、ピクストン、エクストラノーマル、反省的思考、マルチメディア プロジェクト

In this teaching application report we will briefly discuss web 2.0 per se, and then discuss three online web 2.0 applications used in language classes from both teacher and student perspectives. We will share our lesson plans for VoiceThread, Pixton, and Xtranormal that were used with returnee 3rd year junior high school students, and university 2nd year English major, lower intermediate and intermediate students in Japan. After an introduction to the software, and a discussion of their perceived advantages and disadvantages, we will offer appendices with detailed lesson plans as well as web resources we found to be useful.

Web 2.0 has enabled end user interactions and collaborations with features such as "interactive information sharing, interoperability, user centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web" (Kennedy, 2007). Development from web 1.0 to web 2.0 has enabled software to load directly into a computer browser and has resulted in a boom of Internet related teaching activities and websites devoted to educational activities (Mollman, 2009). EFL classroom activities with web 2.0 have included creating personalized web pages to upload and share information and interests; making and uploading digital audio files; amending Wikipedia entries; and using Skype to text chat, telephone, or videoconference anywhere on the World Wide Web. Software applications such as VoiceThread, Pixton, and Xtranormal have been used in classrooms to create and share digital slideshows, animations, and comics (Kaechele, 2009).

VoiceThread, Pixton, and Xtranormal

VoiceThread

VoiceThread is a software tool that allows students to create multimedia slideshows. In our classes the goal was to have students share a life experience such as a vacation abroad, a hobby, or a best friend, with other students. Students initially upload images to their computers. They then loaded images into the VoiceThread software. Images came from their SD cards on their cell phones. Students then created narratives by adding text or voice to the images. Students were encouraged to make thoughtful

comments on each other's VoiceThread pages. The ultimate goal was to encourage students think reflectively.

Pixton

Pixton Comics illustrator allows students to illustrate comic panels by choosing from a fixed set of characters. Students can then change the characters' body positions, clothing, and facial features such as hair and eye color. They can crop the scenes by zooming in on any aspect of the panel. They can create dialogues and develop stories through multiple illustrated panels. Students ultimately convey a message to one another through their panel illustration and storytelling ability. Students' favorite Japanese manga are a rich source of content for discussions about character, storyline, and comic themes. Story telling technique such as choice of word, choice of movement, choice of frame, or choice of scene are other aspects for students to think about and can be introduced through "Making Comics" by Scott McCloud (2006).

Xtranormal

Xtranormal is a text-to-image, animation, movie-making software application¹. While using free Xtranormal software students can select two avatars and place them into preset scenes. Students can then type text for the characters to speak. The students can make the characters interact by choosing facial expressions, gestures, accents, and intonations. They can also add sound and music to affect their scenes. University students studied a brief unit on culture, and then portrayed critical incidents with clear conflicts and conflict resolutions. Junior high students imagined how things would be different in the year 2020 and made animated movies depicting what they perceived the future to be.

Interoperability

Interoperability refers to end users being allowed to make changes to "interact and function with other systems without limitations" (Wikipedia, 2010). Thus, whereas web 1.0 users "were passive receivers of information", Web 2.0 "allows users to change the

¹ All three applications covered in this report are browser loading software. For the purpose of this article we use the terms "software" and "application" interchangeably to describe them.

content of a website" (Wikipedia, 2010). To illustrate, if the teacher has created a slideshow with VoiceThread *on the teacher's computer* to show the students, then the students will be able to comment directly on the teacher's slideshow web pages *with their computers*. In other words, students can be linked to each other through a class website, for example VoiceThread, and share a web page holding all class titles. Then students can embark on a journey to visit any page of any slideshow and leave comments for the slideshow creator, and also make remarks about other students' comments. With proper instruction students can then analyze the quality of their classmates work in terms of perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Advantages and disadvantages of web 2.0 software

In our experience we found that web 2.0 software can be both advantageous and disadvantageous for teachers and students. This section is a discussion of what we found the advantages and disadvantages to be. Advantages will be discussed first, and arranged as advantages concerning online resource, the noticing triggering function, classroom community and reflective thinking, and advantages from student perceptions. Disadvantages will be discussed in terms of teacher burdens, and student perceptions of learning disadvantages.

Advantages of web 2.0

Resources

A major advantage for teachers planning a web 2.0 project is the easily accessible plans found online. There are a number of website featuring plans for web 2.0 projects. These plans comprise instructions, target language goals, assessment criteria, and graphic organizers, etc. Two examples of very good examples of online resource access are *Digitally Speaking VoiceThread* and *Blog of Proximal Development* (Glogowski, 2008). These websites portray the reflective thinking process, and ways of fostering a classroom community with web 2.0 software. Other websites, such as *e-moderation station* cover and archive a gamut of web uses such as podcasts, wikis, blogs, poster making, animated cartoon making, etc. Ways of using VoiceThread to teach classes in English/Language arts, information technology, foreign language, mathematics, professional development, etc. are all archived in the VoiceThread library (VoiceThread

Library, 2010). Similarly, from Pixton's project bank archive you can import projects that have been used in world languages, art & design, business & economics, science, social studies, etc. (Pixton, 2008-2010:1).

Noticing triggering functions

Describing known things with known language was a part of many of our web 2.0 classes. Allowing students to use what was already familiar may have operated as a powerful learning tool. While speaking and writing from their own personal experiences, or while listening to or reading easily comprehensible experiences of others, students likely gained knowledge of gaps in their own English ability. This was because the tasks intrinsically were of a low cognitive load. Working primarily in the realm of the known may have enable students to notice gaps in their understanding of language features they hadn't previously noticed (Nation, 2009). According to Nation, the noticing triggering function is activated when students have low cognitive loads. Furthermore, students tend to try to solve the problems they have encountered once they become aware of them through the noticing triggering function. Strategies employed by students to understand gaps in their knowledge could be as simple as consulting classmates, the dictionary, or the instructor.

Reflective thinking and classroom communities

Sharing web 2.0 files contributed to a sense of classroom community in our classes. Students were able to share their work with one another simply by exchanging files within the web 2.0 mediums. With coaching students were able to make thoughtful comments, and advise one another how to improve their work. As students became aware of how other students perceived their work, they also seemed to take more pride in their own work. Students engaged in giving advice or encouragement, while assessing the overall impact of their own, and classmates' contributions to the learning, seemed to help them understand the importance and maintenance of a classroom community. The concept and importance of a classroom community is explained at *The Web of Proximal Development* website (Glogowski, 2008).

Student perceived advantages

According to students there using web 2.0 software offered several advantages. Students

commented that they appreciated the opportunities to engage their creativity, and to use their latent English knowledge to produce new language constructions. Students often commented on the value of making their own original sentences, using conversational phrases, and creating original stories. Students appreciated the storage and retrieval functions that the web 2.0 software provided. They commented on the utility of replaying or repeated viewings of classmates work. Students said software that enabled repeated listening to words or phrases was helpful in comprehending difficult content. Students also said that having opportunities to recycle new language in concurrent web projects was useful.

Disadvantages of web 2.0

Teacher burdens

There are costs that need to be weighed against benefits when doing a web 2.0 project. Setting up web 2.0 projects can be burdensome for teachers inexperienced with software applications. Once a teacher understands how to use the software, they must also find or prepare web 2.0 examples for the students. Teachers must then consider the ways of using the software to teach content and language features. Teachers must plan additional interactive tasks that support student comprehension and use of language targets. Teachers must also prepare assessment criteria, and endeavor to direct students towards these criteria throughout all stages of a web 2.0 project.

Student perceived disadvantages

There were student perceived disadvantages to web 2.0 projects. The time to complete web 2.0 projects may require much of the class time, as many students do not have computers at home. Thus, the production of web 2.0 projects can require many class periods. Students might not comprehend the benefits of doing web 2.0 software projects when the improvements to their language ability happen subtly over time. Students may also want class time for direct face-to-face interaction with classmates, as this seems to be something they value.

Placating students' needs for face-to-face interactions will further slow down the production time for projects. It may also be critical to allow time for the students to think reflectively to uncover their language progress in a web 2.0 learning environment.

Conclusion

Web 2.0 software is readily accessible and provides a medium for students to produce target language output, and to be exposed to many inputs. It also seems to be a way to allow students to channel their creativity. Thus, the software may be intrinsically interesting to use. However, teachers considering implementing web 2.0 software in their language classrooms should consider the classroom advantages and disadvantages of the software. Advantages of web 2.0 software include the number of readily accessible web 2.0 resources, a likely activation of a students noticing triggering function, a heightened sense of classroom community via the ease of sharing student work, group reflective thinking, and other student perceived advantages such as using language creatively. Disadvantages of web 2.0 were teacher preparation burdens, the amount of time given over to production of web 2.0 files, and student desires for more face-to-face time. Students may not immediately understand the value of web 2.0 projects in relation to their English development, as their improvements are subtle, and students may be required to think reflectively about what they have learnt once a project is finished to uncover their own progress.

In our experiences the advantages outweighed the disadvantages in engaging students, unlocking their creativity and facilitating a community that shared, discussed and reflected on their learning.

Bio data

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Appendix

In the following three appendices we list how VoiceThread, Pixton, and Xtranormal can be used in the classroom, what the technical requirements are, example projects, with teacher preparation and tasks. Finally, there is a resource list for each application.

Appendix 1: Using VoiceThread in the classroom

It is a good idea for an entire class to use one account for VoiceThread. Each class member can create a slideshow with text or voiced comments. Other class members can then navigate pages, and leave comments, while receiving comments on their own VoiceThread pages.

Table 2. Requirements for using VoiceThread (VoiceThread FAQ, 2010)

Computers	Normal internet connection access and speed is sufficient but a minimum of flash player 7.0 is required to use the VoiceThread software.
Student e-mail	Not required: However, it is important to sign up as an educator. Free educator accounts are sufficient for the project described. Go the 'about' link at the bottom of the VoiceThread homepage. Click on K-12 under solutions/Purchase Options/Single K-12 Educator/and Apply (under VT Educator) to get started. Optionally, if you have a budget, a one-year class subscription costs \$60 and will have a domain to manage 100 students.
Tech difficulty	It is easy to set up VoiceThread projects. The microphones can be tricky and the software sometimes freezes. These problems can be overcome with some easy fixes, such as turning of the main projector. Experiment with the microphone/speaker settings and/or check with your institution's computer support department.
Teacher prep	A minimum of 3-5 hours.

Ways of using VoiceThread in classroom projects:

There are many different ways to do various VoiceThread projects. A good idea when getting started is to go to the VoiceThread resources link at the end of the VoiceThread appendix to research the various ways VoiceThread has been used by educators.

Student tasks in VoiceThread projects

It is common for a teacher to ask students to prepare a report on an area of self-interest such as a memorable experience, a routine such as a club activity, or a topic of interest. Students are also tasked with gathering digital images from their digital cameras, their Facebook or Mixi accounts, or to gather images from the Internet. Students are then asked to transfer their images into a folder created on their computers. Once images are on their computers they must upload the images into a VoiceThread and begin a commenting process.

Teacher preparation

1. Create an email account.
2. Set up you own Educator's account (up to 50 VoiceThreads free).
3. Download and install the latest flash player if needed (a minimum of flash player 7.0).
4. Learn to set up the microphone, learn the controls, learn how to manage glitches, freezes, bad microphones, etc.
5. Develop a context, themes, and teaching plans.
6. Create a folder for images that you upload or download onto your computer.
7. Create a VoiceThread by uploading your pictures onto the web page, write the text to accompany your slide show, and finally add this text or voiced text to your VoiceThread.

Student tasks (Digitally Speaking VoiceThread, 2009)

1. Small group discussions are used to derive themes such as a desired area of inquiry, an interesting routine activity, an exciting life-changing experience such as a home stay abroad.
2. Develop an experiential narrative or area of interest theme.

3. Gather images from digital cameras or the Internet and put these into an 'Image Folder' on their desktops.
4. Type and proof all text written to support the pictures in MS Word or equivalent.
5. Upload images into the VoiceThread software, add a title to each image and give the whole VoiceThread a title and description.
6. Add text and/or voice to the VoiceThread images.
7. Have students view class mates' VoiceThreads.
8. Use 'Sentence Starter' target language when commenting on classmates' VoiceThreads (see resources).
9. Use 'agreeing and disagreeing' target language when agreeing or disagreeing with others (see resources).
10. Use a set of criteria to evaluate the utility of classmates' comments on a range from 'not useful' to 'inspiring' or 'thought provoking'.
11. Use critical thinking when applying these criteria to 'score' classmates' comments.

Desired outcomes for our students

Our learning outcome and experiences were developed in accordance with the eVALUate survey that was developed for quality control assurance at Curtin University. The construct learning outcomes are used to refer to what students are expected to know, understand, or be able to do. Learning experiences refer to what helped the students achieve the learning outcomes. These may refer to face-to-face lectures, tutorials, laboratories, clinical practicums, etc. (Oliver & Tucker & Gupta & Yeo, 2008). These terms will be used throughout the appendix to describe our desired outcome and experiences.

- To be able to use the VoiceThread online software to make a picture essay with text and voice
- To be able to use the various kinds of target language for making comments
- To be able to evaluate comments as good or bad according to a set of criteria
- To be able to have an intelligent digital discussion

Learning Experiences for our students

- Downloading pictures

- Uploading pictures
- Making a VoiceThread
- Making text comments
- Making microphone comments
- Making comments about comments
- Evaluating comments

VoiceThread resources

Our Web 2.0 site with links and extra information

<<https://sites.google.com/site/web20presentation2010/>>.

VoiceThread Wiki: Join the conversation

<<https://jointheconversation.wikispaces.com/file/view/VThandout.pdf>>.

VoiceThread examples in education

<slideshare.net/suziea/Voicethread-examples-in-education-presentation?from=share_email>.

VoiceThread library

<ed.VoiceThread.com/library/>.

Digitally Speaking (commenting etc)

<digitallyspeaking.pbworks.com/Voicethread>.

Appendix 2: Using Pixton in the classroom

Pixton is an online comic creator that was started in 2008. It is a great way to capture students' attention, use their imagination and use as a pathway to literacy (Baird, 2009).

Membership

You can either join Pixton for Fun (public and free), Pixton for Schools (about US \$1/per month/student) or Pixton for Business. The Pixton for Schools account gives you access to a large range of projects and tools for managing your class but you can do projects having students use individual accounts (Pixton, 2008-2010:1).

Table 3. Requirements for using Pixton:

Computers	Normal internet connection access and speed is sufficient but a minimum of flash player 7.0 is required to use the Pixton software.
Student e-mail	On an educators account students don't need their own email account but they do for the normal free version.
Tech difficulty	It is completely "click and drag" with good "How to videos". Projects can be imported from the project bank (for School accounts only) and edited for your circumstance and goals.
Teacher prep	A minimum of 2-4 hours, more if you create elaborate comics.
Cost	For a Pixton for Schools account, you pay per student, per month. 30 students cost 2,657 yen per month, less for longer periods. You can try an account with 30 students for 14 days free of charge (Pixton 2008-2010:2).

The educator account has help with setting up student list and projects but free accounts can still be used. Here are some recommended steps for doing your own student project.

Teacher preparation

- 1) Set up your own free account (you can upgrade to an educator account later if you wish).
- 2) Watch all "How to videos".
- 3) Do a few comics, start with "Quickies".
- 4) Browse for other tutorial comics and inspirational material.
- 5) Decide on theme/topic/goal for student project.

Optional

- 1) Show students some normal comics to set the scene.
- 2) Teach about choice of word, choice of movement, choice of frame, choice of scene etc (McCloud, 2006).

Student tasks

1) Create an account.

Can be part of teacher's educator account or own free account.

2) Create an avatar/Picture.

This helps in learn in the controls in a structured setting and personalizes their work.

3) Remix a set comic or do a Quickie comic.

Specific tasks can be set for what the students should do. It is easier to set up with an educator account but can be done without it. Help students with control problems and ask quicker students to help their friends.

Once all students have created/remixed one comic, teach the students how to comment on each other's comics. The comments are an essential part of learning from each other and can bring in more language learning in the project. Set a criterion for what and how you want them to comment (Digitally Speaking VoiceThread, 2009).

4) Have students email 3-5 class mates + the teacher their comic.

On an educators account there are other options for sharing the comics within the class and settings for how the commenting can be done but emailing works well.

5) Comment on about 3-5 classmates comics.

The initial comments will be mostly unhelpful ones like "I really liked your comic", "LOL".

6) Evaluate the comments received; which ones were most helpful to you?

By evaluating the comments they received from their classmates they can learn about how to improve their own commenting for the next round.

7) Do a "Super Long Comic" on a set theme/topic.

It helps the students get started and you evaluating them if you have a theme for the longer comic. It can be topic- or task-based.

8) Share your comic and comment on about 3-5 classmates' comics.

Emphasize that the comments should be more specific, highlighting good parts and parts that could be improved, or any criteria you set for you class.

9) Respond to the comments received and edit your comic if necessary.

Before the final vote/evaluation give students a chance to edit spelling mistakes and/or comprehension problems.

10) Vote on the comics, for example "Most creative", "Best looking", "Funniest", "Best dialog".

Students want to see all their friends' comics so either print them (requires credits or,

for example, ‘screen shots’ that are then edited for size and put together), email to all or display on the screens and do a walk around in the classroom.

Desired skills/outcomes for our students

- To be able to create a Pixton account
- To know how to create and edit Pixton comics
- To know how to publish Pixton comics
- To send comics to classmates, friends, and teacher for assessment or comments
- To be able to express humor or seriousness within a fixed 3-panel comic and free-sized comic
- To develop your creativity for characters, themes, narratives, storytelling, and dialogues etc.
- To use: choice of word, choice of movement, choice of frame, choice of scene, etc. to create feeling within your comics
- To be able comment on classmates’ comics
- To be able to evaluate comments as helpful

Student examples: Pixton

Disappointing Valentine by Fuyumi

<pixton.com/from/comic/swtgxlj9>.

HW by Yuta

<pixton.com/from/comic/v6o93ux7>.

Time slip by Momoka

<pixton.com/from/comic/qtmy6g8p>.

Sunset in the fish world by Tsuyoushi

<pixton.com/comic/7i9wc4k1>.

Merry Christmas by Yuko

<pixton.com/from/comic/vg1tslek>.

The traveling umbrella by Aya

<pixton.com/jp/from/comic/i3o1kcwo>.

Lonely Xmas by Aya

<pixton.com/jp/comic/1k9yk4m6>.

The boy & the giant man by Ryousuke

<pixton.com/from/comic/1j7h1r2l>.

Kumi Zero by Mike (teacher)

<pixton.com/from/comic/6ve4t4hx>.

First day with Pixton by Bjorn (teacher)

<pixton.com/uk/comic/h1r2arno>.

Appendix 3: Using Xtranormal in the classroom

Xtranormal is an online movie creator that converts text to movies. It can be run online (recommended) or in a down-loadable version. Currently it is in beta format. The free version is limited to 1 or 2 actors and fewer backgrounds but, “Showpacks” can be purchased and premium accounts are forthcoming (Jorgensen).

Table 3. Requirements for using Xtranormal:

Computers	Fast internet access and computer speed is necessary as well as a minimum of flash player 7.0 to use the Xtranormal software. Please check that your school server supports updating several videos simultaneously. If not, don't attempt this project with larger classes. Having students work in pairs can help the situation.
Student e-mail	Students need their own email account.
Tech difficulty	It is very simple to use with simple typing or click and drag. There are very good “How to” slides available on-line.
Teacher prep	A minimum of 1-2 hours, more if you created elaborate videos.
Age	Users need to be at least 13 years of age (Xtranormal 2006-2010:1).

Why use Xtranormal in EFL teaching?

1. Motivation

Great for motivation. Students of various ages get excited by the prospect of actually producing something they could show or send to family and friends.

2. Flexible

Xtranormal can be incorporated in any part of your lesson plan. It can be used with individual students or with groups.

3. Grammar & spelling

Good review of spelling, sentence construction, question word order, reported speech and reported questions, natural conversational language, i.e., phrasal verbs and idioms, turn taking, dialogue development, etc.

4. Functional language

Practice functional language for presentations, testimonials, giving the news, giving a promotional plug for products or services (1 actor).

Introductions, interviews, meetings, hosting a talk show, a sitcom (2 actors).

5. Body language

Helps students become aware of the role body language and sounds play in our conversations. The students need to choose appropriate ambient noise, background music, expressions for their actors and camera movements or angles to match the dialogue (O'Neill, 2010).

Teacher preparation

1) Watch two very good presentations about Xtranormal.

How to use Xtranormal (the basics)

<slideshare.net/digitalmaverick/how-to-use-xtranormal>.

A Tutorial for Xtranormal, (very detailed)

<slideshare.net/Andreatej/xtranormal-tutorial>.

2) Set up your own free account.

3) Do a test video or remix an existing video.

4) Browse for other tutorial videos and inspirational material.

5) Decide on theme/topic/goal for student project.

Student tasks

1) Set the theme/topic for the project.

2) Explain limitations in backgrounds, number of actors and props (unless using purchased show-packs).

3) Create a dialog/monolog in a word document (in pairs, if possible).

4) Create an account.

5) Enter text, play and edit for mispronunciations.

6) Add camera angles, voice, music, body moments, facial expressions, etc.

7) Share with classmates and comment.

- 8) Respond to comments and edit.
- 9) Vote on the movie, for example like your own Oscar awards.

Desired skills/outcomes for our students

- To be able to create a Xtranormal account
- To know how to create Xtranormal video
- To know how to add facial expressions, gestures, accents, and intonations
- To know how to add music and sounds to the scenes
- To be able to portray the studied theme in the video
- To develop your creativity for themes, narratives, storytelling, and dialogues etc.
- To know how to publish Xtranormal video
- To be able to send video to classmates, friends, and teacher for assessment or comments
- To be able comment on classmates' videos
- To be able to evaluate comments as helpful

Xtranormal resources

Our Web 2.0 site with links and extra information

[<https://sites.google.com/site/web20presentation2010/>](https://sites.google.com/site/web20presentation2010/).

How to use Xtranormal (the basics)

[<slideshare.net/digitalmaverick/how-to-use-xtranormal>](http://slideshare.net/digitalmaverick/how-to-use-xtranormal).

A step-by-step guide to how to use Xtranormal (very detailed)

[<slideshare.net/Andreatej/xtranormal-tutorial>](http://slideshare.net/Andreatej/xtranormal-tutorial).

Testimonial of a Language Teacher. It's not just for English learners.

[<boxoftricks.net/?p=1381>](http://boxoftricks.net/?p=1381).

Tips for making the sound better and what project to use Xtranormal for

[<isteconnects.org/2010/01/04/it's-xtranormal-to-blabberize-goanimate-part-3/>](http://isteconnects.org/2010/01/04/it's-xtranormal-to-blabberize-goanimate-part-3/).

Student examples: Xtranormal

Welcome to Manhattan by Miyabi & Rio

[<xtranormal.com/watch/6141509/>](http://xtranormal.com/watch/6141509/).

Life in 2020 by Miwa & Rina

[<xtranormal.com/watch/6141413/>](http://xtranormal.com/watch/6141413/).

2020 Global Warming by Yui & Sayuri

<xtranormal.com/watch/6141367/>.

The Hamburger by Kengo & Tatsuya

<xtranormal.com/watch/6141513/>.

Windows I ® Professional – copyright Windows Inc 2020 by Yamato & Yuta

<xtranormal.com/watch/6141347/>.

Cars in 2020 by Natsuki, Yu & Ken

<xtranormal.com/watch/6141389/>.

2020 by Nozomi & Yurika

<xtranormal.com/watch/6179665/>.

Evolution of Science at 2020 by Utako & Yurina

<xtranormal.com/watch/6141387/>.

Monday Haircut Blues by Yoshie

<xtranormal.com/watch/6130453/>.

In the movies (remixed by Bjorn (teacher))

<xtranormal.com/watch/6621321/>.

Analysis of an essay writing placement test for a study-abroad preparatory writing course

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Reference data:

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Abstract

This paper outlines the design and implementation of a writing placement test to replace TOEFL Institutional Testing Program (TOEFL-ITP) scores as a means of placing students into appropriate levels for a writing course that serves a preparatory component for a study abroad program. The course aims to prepare students for the rigors of academic writing in North America. Formerly, students were streamed by TOEFL-ITP scores; however, in 2007 instructors chose to implement a short, timed essay as a new placement method to better sort students by writing ability and to reflect overall program aims. Key challenges that cropped up during the first process were choosing the topic and training the raters for consistency. As a result, revisions were made to the test in 2009. The new test was administered to the 2010 cohort and the results were analyzed here. The scores between raters were quite reliable, and there was little correlation between TOEFL-ITP and writing test scores. The low correlation between the tests indicated that two-thirds of students would have been placed differently by using a writing-based assessment. Finally, discussion of overall satisfaction with placement and suggestions for future improvements or research are discussed.

Keywords: placement testing, writing tests, rater reliability, TOEFL-ITP, study abroad

本論文は、海外留学プログラムの一環として実施されている TOEFL-ITP (TOEFL 学内テスト) のスコアに代わるものとして、学生のライティング能力のレベル

分けを目的とするライティング・プレースメントテストの概要と実施方法について論じる。ライティングコースは、北米のアカデミックライティングの厳しさに学生が耐えうるような指導を目指している。これまで、学力のレベル分けは、TOEFL-ITP のスコアによって行われてきたが、2007 年に TOEFL のインストラクターが、ライティング能力によるより有効なレベル分けを行うために、そしてプログラム全体の目標を強化するためにも、制限時間内にエッセーを書かせる新しいプレースメントテストを採り入れることにした。しかし、このプロセスの初期段階で、トピックの選択と評価の一貫性の問題が生じた。そのため、2009 年に改訂が行われ、新しいテストが 2010 年度の学生を対象に実施された。その結果の分析についても考察する。ライティングテストの採点スコアは、かなり信頼性が高く、このテストと TOEFL-ITP のスコアには、相関関係はほとんど認められなかった。このことは、ライティングによる評価であれば、学生の 3 分の 2 は恐らく違ったレベルのクラスに配置されていたであろうことを示している。最後に、このライティング・プレースメントテストの全般的な満足度や改善点、および今後の研究についても論じる。

キーワード: プレースメントテスト、ライティングテスト、採点の信頼性、TOEFL-ITP、海外留学

This paper will outline the rationale for implementing a writing placement test instead of TOEFL Institutional Testing Program (TOEFL-ITP) scores for placing students into appropriate levels for the preparatory writing course component of the Ritsumeikan University-University of British Columbia Joint Programme (UBC-JP). First, a brief history of the UBC-JP will be outlined, followed by the rationale for petitioning administration to change the placement testing method. Finally an explanation of the new test design, grader reliability and an analysis of the results of the test will take place, along with comments on future possibilities for refinement and research.

Design and implementation of writing placement test

Overview of the Programme

The UBC-JP is a one calendar year programme at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. It has two components, a one semester class which meets three hours per week course in Japan as a preparation (April-July) and an academic year course

(August-May) at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Each year up to 100 students from Ritsumeikan University's two main campuses are accepted into the programme. Participants of the programme are second-year students enrolled in various majors, and are generally highly motivated to study English. In the December before the program begins, they undergo a rigorous application process which includes an examination of their academic performance, an essay in English explaining their reasons for joining the programme, and a minimum score of 450 on the TOEFL-ITP. The TOEFL-ITP is a limited version of the test, based on the old paper-based test, focusing on listening, reading and grammar (no productive skills are tested). The test is used routinely at Ritsumeikan University for placement in regular courses as well as until recently, the UBC-JP preparatory academic writing course. Typically, there are 100 students on the programme: 70% of are from the Kinugasa campus and 30% from the Biwako-Kusatsu Campus (BKC). There are five course instructors, four at the Kinugasa campus and one at the BKC campus, who are in charge of streaming the Kinugasa students into four classes for the preparatory academic writing course. Due to their small number, it is not deemed practical to stream the BKC students.

Rationale for the changing placement method

Although first-year students at Ritsumeikan University have ostensibly received at least six years of English language instruction and satisfactorily passed the English portion of the general university entrance exam including reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary, and optional writing sections. Nevertheless there is a wide range of English abilities among the students. The use of the TOEFL-ITP score to stream students is a common practice for regular English courses across most faculties in the university. Its use is supposed to compensate for these differences. Similarly, when second-year students apply to join the UBC-JP programme, they come from different faculties which have different English study requirements, so UBC-JP students' English ability, particularly in writing, varies widely depending on their particular faculties and majors, so the TOEFL-ITP was seen as a convenient way of quantifying students' overall English ability, including writing. However, in the classroom there was a mismatch between the students' purported abilities and their actual abilities and needs which led to frustration on the part of both the faculty and students in the programme. Often the expectations for the highest group led to choosing a textbook and reading materials that were too

difficult in practice. Furthermore, some good communicators relegated to low-level classes by poor test scores were not challenged enough. Based on student course evaluations and informal feedback from staff members, the instructors felt the programme needed a more effective way to stream the students in order to better suit their needs and increase student and instructor satisfaction with the preparatory course and the study abroad programme.

As an established programme of over 20 years, the UBC-JP was quite regimented; it even had its own custom-made textbook. By 2005, teachers had become frustrated with using ungraded, pre-prepared materials, so they petitioned the administration to use mass-market textbooks, graded to the various TOEFL-ITP-determined levels. While this solved some of the problems, it was discovered that the underlying problem was that there were still disparities in writing abilities within classes. In other words, the TOEFL-ITP test was not discriminating good writers, just good test takers.

First attempt at writing placement test

In 2007, instructors petitioned to design a placement test suited to the goals of the class and the programme. Since the goals of the preparatory course are focused on preparing the students for the rigors of academic reading and writing at a North American university, a timed writing sample was thought to provide the best means of assessment for categorizing students. (Use of the application essay was rejected because students may have received outside help in preparation.). Crusan (2002) also shares this view of appropriate testing, and recommends that an institution's placement tests be aligned with the course content, and that writing assignments be linked with the curricula. Students should be tested according to what they will do in the course, and for a writing course the means of placement should therefore include writing. She also mentions that a number of researchers have argued that teachers should be involved in testing (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Hamp-Lyons, 1996). Kroll and Ried (1994) contend that test developers should be those who teach the students who will be tested, since these teachers would be better equipped to know what their students can do, how well they can do it, and what they need; and therefore can better assess their students' writing.

The first attempt at implementing a writing test, in 2007, for the 2008 UBC-JP cohort, was loosely based on previously published prompts from the TOEFL Test of

Written English (TWE). Responses were assessed with a rubric for evaluation very loosely based on a combination of the standards for the TWE and writing proficiency guidelines published by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which employ holistic approaches to grading. For the first year, the evaluation procedure was fairly loose in that the raters assigned a score of 1-4 (highest to lowest) to the essays. Explanatory guidelines and ideals for determining the levels were discussed for about 30 minutes and included only a few specifics (using line-by-line writing is a sign of a 4; use of cohesive discourse markers, a sign of a 1). Each essay was blindly graded twice. If the scores were consistent, then the evaluation was accepted. If the scores differed, then the sample was graded by a third rater. This resulted in about 30% of papers being easily divided into clearly high (1) or clearly low (4) groups, while the rest needed to be re-graded. Even after the ratings had been consolidated, there was little consensus on the middle two groups, so they were re-graded ad hoc – simply higher or lower. During the second year of this system of grading (2008), things went a little smoother, but there were still some inconsistencies and problems with ratings, e.g. one student had to be moved from the lowest to the highest class. While the placement test was an improvement over just using the TOEFL-ITP test, a more systematized, consistent, repeatable and manageable system was clearly needed – particularly considering the turn-over in instructors (due to contract limitations and variations in class schedules from year to year) which resulted in a limited institutional memory – hence the re-design of the placement test presented here.

Re-designing the writing placement test

In 2009, the authors, in consultation with colleagues currently or previously involved with teaching the preparatory writing course, worked on revising and testing the writing placement test, first introduced in 2007 and 2008 to replace the TOEFL-ITP test as a means for placement. It was agreed that the new test would follow the format of the previous years' writing placement tests, consisting of one argumentative essay question prompt, designed to measure writing ability and elicit an opinion that drew on the students' experiences.

Choosing appropriate prompts

Miyazaki (2008) emphasizes that test prompts should be carefully designed to give

learners a starting point and direction for writing and the chance to generate ideas. However, some topics penalize students without specific knowledge or experiences, so the issue of making prompts as bias-free as possible is very important to ensure that the test is accurate and reliable (Alderson, Clapham & Wall, 1995; Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). Therefore, in considering prompts for the UBC placement, we tried to minimize bias in order to ensure the test was construct-relevant by choosing topics that did not require specific cultural content, e.g. familiarity with Anglo-British norms, and were within the realm of experience of an average Japanese 19-year-old. In addition, it was important to make the context and purpose of the prompt clear and easy to follow, with no ambiguous instructions, to avoid potential confusion over the language the candidates were expected to produce.

This year the administration and some of the faculty voiced objections to the previous year's topic as being "non-academic."² So, it was necessary to develop a prompt that would satisfy all stakeholders. As mentioned, the prompt had to be familiar to students and free from bias, to allow students to produce, within the allotted 30-minute timeframe, meaningful samples of their writing and give them a chance to display their actual writing ability rather than knowledge of a particular topic. A further reason the topic had to be broadly familiar to the students was to eliminate the time bias, which as Leki (1991) points out, puts non-native speakers at a disadvantage because they tend to write more slowly than native speakers and produce fewer words over a longer period of time. After much deliberation the final prompt that was agreed upon was:

Write an essay (Introduction, Body, Conclusion) on the following topic:
Japanese students study English to prepare for university entrance examinations; however some universities don't require it. Should English be used for entrance examinations? Use specific examples for support.

Piloting the writing placement test

2 The prompts for the academic year 2007-8 and 2008-9 tests were based upon the prompt from Miyazaki (2008, p. 7) which read: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'People behave differently when they wear different clothes.' Do you agree that different clothes influence the way people behave? Use specific examples to support your opinion." This just goes to show how difficult it really is to construct a prompt that will satisfy all stakeholders.

Alderson, et al. (2005) outline two methods of piloting an examination before administering it. The first is to test the items on a few friends or colleagues. The second is to give a revised test to a group of students who are familiar in background level to those who will take the final examination. In the case of the UBC-JP writing placement test, due to time limitations (we have just finished the teaching semester here and had examination marking and end-of-term tests) the authors decided that while far from ideal there would only be time to employ the former method when devising the topic, paying particular attention to making sure the instructions were clear, the language of the items were acceptable and the answer key accurate (following the key points outlined in McNamara, 2000). To accomplish this, a two-hour meeting was held to go over the language of the prompt and to eliminate, where possible, the various biases that could influence the results of the test. As mentioned above, due to time constraints we did not pre-test the test, although in the future this is strongly recommended in order to give the test greater validity.

Developing the grading rubric

Once the format of the test was decided, particular attention was paid to the development of the grading rubric since this was a bone of contention in the previous two years. We would need a clear and logical rubric that was easy to follow and would establish clear marking guidelines. After much deliberation, a multiple trait scoring system was decided upon, based on the principal of scoring an essay on more than one facet or trait exhibited by the text, as can be seen in our grading rubric (Figure 1). The advantages of the multi-trait scale³ developed by Hamp-Lyons over a holistic scoring approach are that it measures salience (the writing qualities are appropriate in the context in which the assessment is taking place); and it makes compromise among raters easier (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Hamp-Lyons, 1991). The main disadvantage of this system is that it takes longer to score a test than holistic scoring (Weigle, 2002). The rubric itself was developed from ACTFL guidelines for grading written tests, which are more holistic in their grading approach. First, the ACTFL guidelines were used as a

3 Some commentators such as Weigle (2002) do not distinguish between an analytic scale and a multiple-trait scale, saying that characteristics ascribed to multiple-trait scales have more to do with the procedures for developing and using the scales rather than with the description of the scales. Regardless of the debate, for the purpose of this paper, multiple-trait scales will include the term analytic scales.

base to draw up a framework of what an ideal essay would be for each of the four levels. Then the graders discussed these guidelines with discussion carried out among the graders, before giving each of the samples a grade according to the grading rubric.

	Paragraph structure, topic sentences & support /5	
Grammar and syntax /5	Overall score /20	Argument organisation topic or thesis statement /5
	Fluency/clarity /5	

Figure 1. Grading Rubric (Adapted from Hamp-Lyons (1991))

Four criteria were used for evaluation: grammar and syntax, paragraph structure, argument organization (including existence of a topic/thesis statement), and fluency/clarity. Each category was assigned a score on a scale of 1-5, with the sum of the four scores (a maximum of 20) written in the middle square. This method of scoring follows the recommendation of Weir (2005) that it is important to provide a detailed scoring key that clearly anticipates the responses the candidates will make while reducing as much as possible the subjective judgment on the part of markers. Finally, all scores were worth equal marks for ease of grading and to minimize errors in scoring as recommended by Hamp-Lyons (1991).

Testing procedure

Administration of the placement test

The writing test for the 2010 UBC-JP cohort was conducted at the end of January 2010. The students were given the following prompt printed at the top of an otherwise blank sheet of A4 paper:

*Write an essay (Introduction, Body, Conclusion) on the following topic:
Japanese students study English to prepare for university entrance examinations; however some universities don't require it. Should English be used for entrance examinations? Use specific examples for support.*

Students were then given 30 minutes to write their essay (handwritten), they were not allowed to use dictionaries, and were under strict examination conditions with two invigilators keeping a watchful eye. None of the students were late, and so this did not influence the amount of writing time for any of the responses.

Calibration of raters

According to Weir (2005), to increase test validity, scorers should be trained, and agree upon acceptable responses at the outset of scoring. Thus, before marking the tests, our five graders (the UBC-JP instructors) were trained (calibrated) by giving each of them a sample response to the identical prompt from actual students for each of the four levels (A-D) as agreed upon the authors. To eliminate bias, the responses used were from the pool of 35 papers by the BKC students who were not being streamed, so none of the sample papers used for calibration were taken from the 65 papers that were to be graded. Graders graded each of the four sample papers and a discussion was held in which each grader justified his marks. The graders all agreed that the calibration process was clear and fruitful. There were no disagreements among raters regarding the overall grades (A-D) for any of the four sample papers and the raw scores awarded in the rubric differed by not more than three points. Thus it was decided that when marking the final papers, if a paper differed in score by more than three points it would be re-graded. This was also reasonable, since a differential score of three points was 15%. It was agreed that a difference greater than this would compromise

the reliability of the test.

Grading the placement test

The tests were marked on Feb 1st, 2010, by five graders, over about four hours in a controlled reading⁴ after 30 minutes of calibration (as outlined above). Papers were marked blindly, with each rater giving a paper a score out of 20 based on the grading rubric. Papers did not have names written on them, but were indentified and sorted by student number. Once a paper was marked it was returned to the pile (the first mark was obscured), and another grader re-graded that paper. After each paper was read twice, the two scores were compared. There were 21 of the 65 papers with a difference of more than three points, so they were graded a third time (also blindly graded). At the end of the process, the average of the two closest scores was awarded as the final score.

Results

Inter-reliability of Graders

To test the reliability of the raters, a reliability coefficient, which expresses inter-rater reliability was employed, which allows us to study the impact of rater training, to improve rater reliability and identify individual raters whose ratings are not consistent with those of others (McNamara, 2000).

Among our five raters there were extremes in the correlation between certain markers, and they ranged from a low of 0.103 to a high of 1.000. However, whilst a 0.103 might seem rather low (in this case, Graders 1 and 5 graded 13 papers, and of these, two papers had score differences of six, and eight respectively, which highly distorted the correlation), it must also be noted that inter-rater correlations for evaluating writing tends to be poor as compared to reading or listening (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1994). In their study, they found the correlation scores were 0.60 between two markers. The reason for this might be that writing tests tend to be graded

4 White (2004) outlines several procedures that are important for maintaining high reliability in assessments. Apart from the rubric, he also mentions how each script should be graded independently for at least two raters, scoring should be done in a controlled setting, which we did. However, due to the scale of the test, checking on reading in progress by group leaders and evaluation of reliable readers were not thought to be practical and were not implemented.

more holistically and arbitrarily (even after calibration of graders). Even though the rubric we chose tried to eliminate this, results indicate that if the raters were not sufficiently calibrated, their scores might differ by a large margin. Another factor that may have influenced the results was that graders did not mark an equal number of papers – instead working at their own pace, so it might be prudent to consider introducing a more regimented system next year where each marker marks a very similar number of papers. Finally, regarding the structure of the grading rubric (based upon the multiple-trait scale), as Weigle (2002) pointed out, since the scores on the different scales have to be combined to make a final composite score, some of the information provided by the scale is lost, and thus raters who are used to rating using a holistic approach might subconsciously target their ratings on what they expect the final score to be, and revise their analytic scores for each category accordingly (Weigle, 2002). This helps explain discrepancies in the correlations between certain scorers such as between Graders 1 and 5. The extent of and reasons for these differences is a subject worth investigating further.

Table 1. Correlation between Individual Graders

<i>Grader</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1</i>	X	0.72	0.8873	0.2758	0.103
<i>2</i>	0.72	X	0.7444	0.7369	0.4394
<i>3</i>	0.8873	0.7444	X	1	0.909
<i>4</i>	0.2758	0.7369	1	X	0.859
<i>5</i>	0.103	.4394	0.909	0.859	X

Writing placement test compared to placement by TOEFL-ITP scores

We were very surprised that the results of the placement test and the TOEFL-ITP scores were so different (Figure 2). There was no correlation between the TOEFL-ITP scores or the writing scores at all, which shows that the students' TOEFL-ITP scores were not effective in predicting the writing ability of this group of students. This reflects the UBC-JP instructors' intuition that the TOEFL-ITP test streaming used in the past was not working for our students.

The correlation between the class levels to which students were assigned according to their TOEFL-ITP scores and their writing placement scores was .387,

which demonstrates that while results between the two placement tests had some overlap, the ranking of the students was significantly different. Specifically, under the new system, 24 students (37%) remained in the same level under both methods of placement, 26 (40%) changed one level (up or down); 13 (20%) changed two levels, and interestingly, two students (3%) changed three levels, both of them moving from the lowest to the highest class. These results demonstrate that having an in-house writing placement test for the UBC-JP was more effective than just using TOEFL-ITP scores, as TOEFL-ITP has been shown here to be a poor proxy for measuring writing ability for this group of students. An extreme case that illustrates the point is that the student with the lowest TOEFL-ITP score (450), when assessed using the writing placement test, was placed in the highest class.

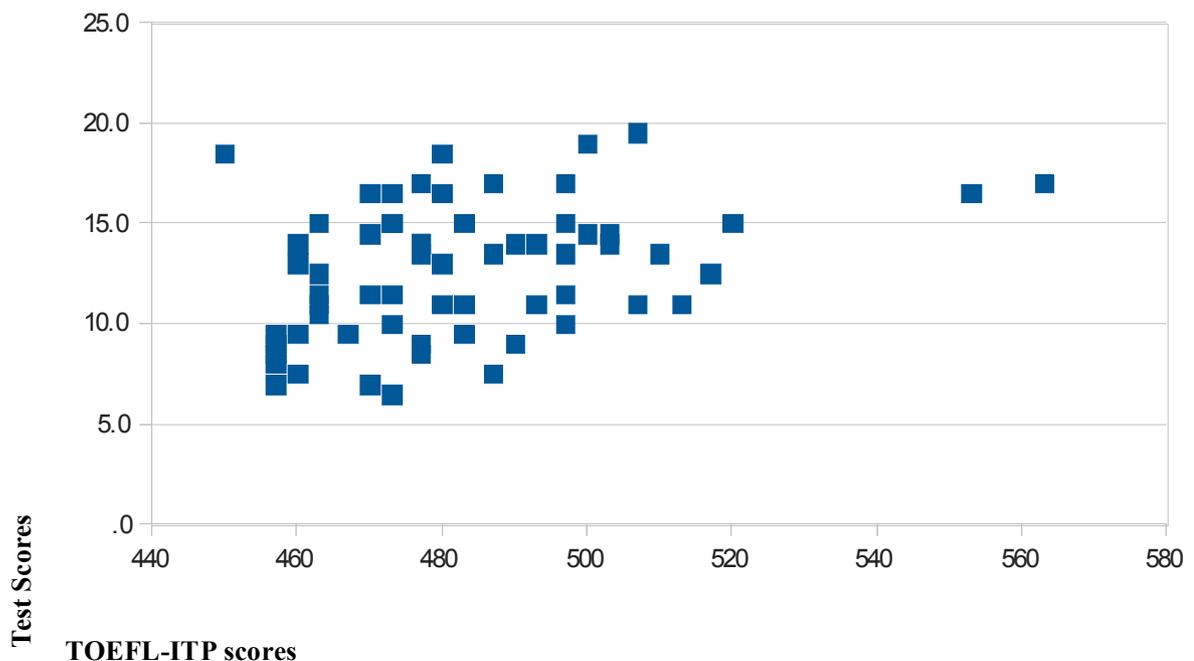


Figure 2. Correlation of UBC-JP Placement test scores to TOEFL-ITP scores

Conclusion and Limitations

The instructors of the Ritsumeikan University-University of British Columbia Joint Programme (UBC-JP) sought to create a placement test to reliably place students into a preparatory writing class according to their writing ability, due to the result of instructor and student dissatisfaction with placement based on TOEFL-IBT scores in previous years. A new writing test was implemented in 2008 and revised in 2009 and the

improved writing placement test was administered to the 2010 UBC-JP cohort. The results were analyzed and the scores between raters were found to be quite reliable. There was no correlation found between TOEFL-ITP and writing test scores, which indicates that the two tests likely measure different skills. In terms of placement, the low correlation between the tests indicated that two-thirds of students would have been placed differently by using TOEFL-ITP instead of the writing-based assessment.

Key challenges found during the first process were choosing the topic and training the raters for consistency while some improvements were made to the test in 2009, inter-rater reliability still remains a concern for reliability. It would be desirable to improve grader reliability by ensuring that instructors are fully calibrated and that all raters grade the same or a similar number of papers to grade to ensure that scoring is consistent. In order to keep the prompt as bias free as possible, it should be pre-tested by students similar to the UBC-JP applicants. In future research, it would helpful to survey student and teacher satisfaction with the actual placement results. Furthermore, seeking instructor and administration input regarding the entire process would also be of value.

Bio data

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Appendix 1

Framework for Evaluation of UBC Placement Test Writing Essay, 2010

Class UA: Advanced

- Quite fluent with ease of expression; although style is sometimes foreign, but easily understood by native speakers.

- Ideas and opinions are clearly stated and well supported.
- A variety of vocabulary used appropriately.
- Few, if any, grammatical errors; errors not systematic.
- A good variety of transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
- Many complex sentences.
- Displays good knowledge of workings of essay writing, including a clear thesis statement

Class UB: Intermediate-High

- Some parts of essay flow well, others are stilted
- Style is foreign, yet easily understood by native speakers; however some parts are unclear.
- Ideas are clearly, but simply, stated, But not all opinions are fully supported
- Uses a limited number of difficult vocabulary words; Sometimes vocabulary misused.
- Uses simple transitions between paragraphs (e.g., first, second,...)
- Uses a few complex sentences.
- Familiar with the format of essay writing, although often lacking clear thesis statement

Class UC: Intermediate-Mid

- Some limited precision is displayed, but accuracy is limited
- A few ideas are expressed clearly, although most are simple statements lacking deep support
- Very limited use of sophisticated vocabulary or complex sentences.
- Consistent forms, although often inaccurate
- Quite unfamiliar with essay writing, no thesis statement, introduction/conclusion flawed.

Class UD: Intermediate-Low

- Quite unclear, difficult to follow, little control.
- Tends to be loose collection of sentences and fragments, choppy and uneven.
- Writing more often than not has quality of being translated literally
- Ideas expressed, but not necessarily supported
- Extremely limited or no use of transitions

- None or very few complex sentences
- Vocabulary is basic, lots of spelling mistakes/ *katakana* English

(Source: Based on ACTEFL Proficiency Guidelines in Teaching Language in Context (revised, 2001))

Information Literacy: A Skill for Lifelong Learning

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Gilfert, S. (2010). Information literacy: A skill for lifelong learning. In K. Bradford-Watts, E. M. Skier & M. Walsh (Eds), *Pan-SIG 2010 Conference Proceedings*. Kyoto: JALT.

Abstract

This paper discusses the importance of teaching EFL students how to find and evaluate information for use in academic writing. Such information literacy is an increasingly valuable skill in a world where unreliable or biased sources are found all too easily on the Internet. This paper further describes an assignment for EFL writing students designed to raise their ability to find reliable sources and to evaluate them critically before incorporating them into an academic paper.

Keywords: library skills, researching, university students, internet, resource evaluation

本稿では、検索方法、学術的な書法で使用する情報の評価を EFL の学生に教える事の

重要性について説明します。余りにも簡単にインターネット上で見られる信頼出来な

い偏った情報の世界では、このような情報知識能力は益々重要なスキルなのです。

本稿ではさらに、学術論文を具体化する前に確実な情報源の発見やそれらを注意深く

評価する能力の向上をめざす生徒たちの為に研究課題を記述しています。

キーワード: ライブラリのスキル, 調査, 大学生, インターネット, 資源評価

Students today have a staggering number of sources for information. Books, television, radio, interviews with experts, webpages, audiofiles and other sources move in and out of their attention span. How can students determine which sources are useful, reliable, and academically sound? Critical thinking skills are needed by all students. College and university students of all ages seek to select, gather and use information in the pursuit of their studies—not just for getting the credit for the immediate class, but also for the future. Thus, building lifelong information literacy strategies and skills should be one

focus for a university professor.

What is information literacy?

An academic librarian's definition of information literacy is: "Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to 'recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information' "

(Association of College and Reference Libraries (ACRL), 2000, p. 2). ACRL further notes that it is incumbent upon universities to develop lifelong learners through the use of high instructional standards. Native speakers often benefit from information literacy training, becoming more effective and efficient information consumers. Knowing how to search for and evaluate information becomes a tool for university assignments, and later, for all other information needs.

I use a librarian's definition here because my philosophical approach to information literacy is from the perspective of library science. Another definition of information literacy incorporates knowledge of computer operations and usage, e.g. "a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact." (Shapiro and Hughes, 1996, 13th para.). Any information literacy training prepares the learner to access and use the enormous amount of information available to her or him.

If native speakers benefit from information literacy training, how much greater a benefit would accrue to non-native speakers of English? How can students who are studying in a foreign language determine the veracity and reliability of information, when they do not have the assurance and experience of the native speaker? ESL students have as strong a need to master information literacy as any native speaker.

My experience leads me to believe that ESL students tend to accept too much of what they see in English on the computer screen. Asking students to reflect on whether they would believe this information if it were in their native language occasionally helps ESL students to realize that not all information from the Internet is reliable or useful. In ESL classes, students are taught language skills, not necessarily research skills. Where or from whom can ESL students learn how to research?

Information literacy and ESL

Information, as noted previously, comes from a variety of sources. The computer and the Internet are huge boons to researchers and students everywhere. Most students today consider themselves skilled in using a computer, and in finding information on the Internet. How is this skill demonstrated?

At Ohio University in the U.S., Bagnole and Miller (2003) report on a course taught specifically for ESL students, which is modeled on a course taught to native speakers at Ohio University. Bagnole and Miller's course is separate from the native speakers' course; Bagnole and Miller use an ESL classroom to teach research skills. The course is specifically structured with ESL students learning about both print and electronic sources; how to search effectively in databases; and how to create and effectively use a bibliography, among other research skills.

Lesson plan

Elements of Bagnole and Miller's course were folded into the author's course of Advanced English B, a writing course for high-level students in the Intensive English Program of the Language Center at Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU). This Writing course met twice a week in a computer lab. Many of the students in the class are returnees, who have spent several years overseas in an English-immersion environment. Over half of the class of first- and second-year students graduated from high schools in the US or Australia. These students have near-native command of English, and the class was taught as to native English-speaking high-school students.

In the first month (or first 8-9 classes), students are assigned "personal" writing: personal essays or reflective essays based on reading a newspaper or magazine article. In the next month (or next 7-8 classes), students are given more objective writing assignments: interviews, journalistic writing (both hard news and feature writing), curriculum vitae, business letters and a white paper (a research article for business purposes). The assignment of a research paper was the final module of the course, covering the next ten classes. The timing for writing each assignment is over the weekend (usually 3-4 days) for the first draft and before the next class (usually 2-3 days) for the revised draft. The first draft is not graded; the revised draft is graded against the first draft.

Class 1: Lecture notes: Finding Sources

I queried students on where they get information. Their answers included:

- Personal knowledge
- Internet (including email, social networking sites, websites, and weblogs)
- Books and printed material
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Gossip

Students at KGU are given a basic information literacy course in a first-year orientation, learning how to use the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) to find books. Therefore, I determined from previous classroom work that these students were able to find books from the library, and could find information of varying reliability on the Internet. But they did not seem to know about using library databases. The library at KGU includes databases from major subscription providers, such as ProQuest and EBSCO. These databases provide articles in electronic format which were either originally printed in reliable journals or were born digitally but in reliable and verifiable e-journals. In my Advanced B class, an additional library orientation was devoted to exploiting library databases, particularly for journal articles. This library orientation can be done either in this class or in the next class [Class 2].

Class 2: Evaluating information

Most students are unfamiliar with research writing. Providing students with examples of research writing is a necessary step. As a class, we read a short research paper together to get a better idea of the final product. Students should be advised of concepts such as objective tone (no “I” or “we”) and complete citation of sources, both in-text and in a reference list or bibliography at the end of the paper. Non-verifiable sources from Google, and Wikipedia, are *not* permitted as cited sources. If the student cannot identify an author, the source is not allowed for the research paper assignment.

Because students often get their information from the Internet, it is important to show that websites can have bias, and equally important to show students how to evaluate websites. We looked at hate websites such as

- <martinlutherking.org/>.
- <creativitymovement.net/index1.html>.

- <stormfront.org/forum/>.
- <godhatesfags.com/>.
- <aryannations.org/>.

to discuss the bias. An interesting homework assignment [which was not done in this class for lack of time] might be to ask students to find biased websites in Japanese also. Further ideas are available from many academic libraries' websites; the Purdue University Libraries' website is particularly useful for its large number of examples. (See References for the URL.)

Classes 3 to 10: Writing the research paper

After learning about library databases and reading through example research papers, the students chose research topics and wrote research papers. Each section of the paper (introduction, literature review, application, conclusion) was submitted twice (first-draft and final-draft). While students were using class time to find information sources and/or compose the paper, I consulted individually with each student as to how he or she was feeling about his/her progress in the research process. The reference list was a work in progress; as students wrote their papers, they found new information every week, which was cyclically folded into the research paper. Students were required to have at least three sources from the library databases, and no references to Wikipedia, Google or any other general search engine.

What did students choose to write about? Remember that most of these students are returnees. Some of them had recently graduated from foreign high schools. These foreign high schools ranged from urban to rural settings in various English-speaking countries. Other returnee students had just returned from a summer abroad. Students' research topics were mostly social issues: teenage pregnancy, global warming, climate crisis, refugees' plight in Japan, Japanese ageing society, child soldiers, and poverty in Brazil, among others. A couple of students took topics from the news: deflation in Japan and the Japan Air Lines fiscal crisis. One student loves her job at Starbucks, and wrote of the spectacular rise and market presence of that corporation. Another student is intensely interested in social entrepreneurship, and wrote a research paper on his internship experience in China with such an enterprise.

Conclusion

The results of folding information literacy into my writing course have been satisfactory. My high-level ESL students wrote reasonably coherent papers, using sources which were mostly well documented. I feel that the practice obtained in this classroom experience will serve the students well as they go forward in their academic career.

As further ESL research, it would be interesting to see what happens with this assignment with a lower-level class; a class whose English skills are not as high as these students'. Furthermore, the research paper assignment for this class was unrelated to any other class that these students were taking in this semester. It would be interesting to have a Research Writing course with students who are preparing to write their own graduating theses (undergraduate or graduate level).

From a librarian's perspective, it would be interesting to conduct a survey on how students were finding their information. Were they using Google primarily? Or did the requirement of having at least 3 digital or print sources influence the students to explore the database more? Google will find freely available articles, but nothing from inside a proprietary database. There have been such studies using native speakers but none using ESL students that I am aware of at this moment.

Bio Data

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Is autonomy an effective theory for all levels of students?

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Abstract

A recent study suggested that those who study a language because they must are not as autonomy-conscious as those who do it of their own free will (Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 2002). This indicates a gap in the research of autonomy, suggesting that only students who have initial interests in English can become autonomous learners. This gives rise to the question; can traditionally unmotivated students become autonomous learners with the correct support and guidance? Rather than focusing on the attributes that autonomy has on the motivated learner, this paper will attempt to prove autonomy is a valid theory in students of all abilities.

Keywords: Learner autonomy, motivated vs. unmotivated learners, self-assessment, project-based learning, teacher as facilitator

現在の言語学論では、必修科目としての言語学習を、自らの意思とはいえず自主的な学習とは言えないと提唱している(Noels, Clement and Pelletier, 2002)。このことは自主的学習論における研究で相違が指摘されている。初期段階での興味を持った学習者のみが自主的学習者になりうるということである。問題点が挙げられる。学習意欲にかかわらず、正確な指導とサポートで自主的学習者にすることは可能か？自主的学習者は意欲のある学習者であるという特性に焦点を充てるのではなく、自主的学習は様々なレベルの学習者において効果的な学理であるということを証明しようとしたものである。

キーワード: 自主的な学習、効果的な学理、自己評価、プロジェクト学問 (PBL) オートノミー

People learn and are taught in many different ways. Innovations in how we learn and

how we are taught are paramount to provide for the ever-changing world around us. There is a continuous search in the English as a foreign language (EFL) trade to find the best way to learn. Traditionally, it is the teacher's responsibility to initiate interest in their students to learn, but research is now suggesting that there must be a shift in traditions in order to compensate for the increased levels of unmotivated students in recent years (Little, 1995).

For many years, the teacher, particularly in the Asian context, has been the centre of the class and the director of knowledge who educates students with facts he or she, and the curriculum planners, deem fit. No matter how disguised, traditional teaching is based essentially on "the mug and jug theory", (Rogers, 1983, in Benson, 2001) where the flow of knowledge is one-way, from the teacher as the jug to the student as the mug. Autonomy does not adopt this strategy and instead suggests that the teacher should act as a facilitator of learning. Knowledge should not flow from one source to another for authentic learning to take place and knowledge cannot be taught, but must be constructed by the learner (Candy, 1991). The facilitator must create a psychological climate by making the learner curious, creating enthusiasm, encouraging where possible, and producing the correct environment in which to learn (Benson, 2001).

Once the correct environment has been demonstrated, and the transition of teacher roles established, the question is not how teachers can motivate learners but how teachers can help learners to motivate themselves, (Ushioda, 1996). A prerequisite of creating autonomous students in the foreign language classroom requires students first to be motivated.

This study aims to measure levels of motivation before and after a project-based syllabus, with the intention of promoting learner autonomy in two contrastive classes. A project-based syllabus was designed and adapted from the author's previous experience in the field and used in an English major writing class and in a business major communication class at Matsuyama University, Ehime prefecture. Levels of motivation and interest in English will be obtained through a detailed questionnaire before and after the commencement of two projects.

The objective of this study is to reduce the anxiety, to increase motivation and performance in students of all levels after the introduction of authentic materials. After the successful completion of an identical project-based syllabus used in two sets of

classes, this study showed that autonomous behaviour towards learning a foreign language was evident in all level of learners.

Literature Review

People live to learn. We learn through necessity. The necessity to learn comes from our motivation and our attitude to learn. Without motivation and a suitable attitude, meaningful learning will not take place. Consciously or subconsciously, as people, we are continuously and effortlessly learning every moment of our lives, whether it is learning to dislike something or that we lack the ability or aptitude to learn something (Smith, 1998).

The official and classic theories of learning

Smith (1998) illustrates that there are two theories of learning, the official theory and the classical theory. The official theory is the more universally understood concept that we learn in educational institutions from kindergarten to university in environments that promote “learning” where effort is the key. We have to learn something first in such an environment before it can be understood. The classical theory alternatively is the view that we are constantly and effortlessly learning from the people around us with whom we identify, “*We learn from the company we keep, we can’t help learning from them and we learn without knowing that we are learning.*” (Smith, 1998, p.35). This view was classic in the sense that it was the way in which lords would teach their apprentices, fathers their sons and the elderly the young in the days before schools, tests, and teachers existed.

Smith (1998) declares that each theory is contradictory to the other in that the official theory is learning that leads to forgetting whereas the classical theory is learning that is never forgotten. Smith continues by declaring that if we have to make sense of something before we can learn from it, then the official learning theory is bogus and most of what we learn in the traditional sense of learning in a classroom under appropriate circumstances will most certainly be forgotten. Remarks such as these are compelling as Smith (1998) suggests that the majority of learning as we know it is meaningless.

Holt (1985) suggests that we should abolish the school altogether, as children don’t need to be coerced into learning; they would do so naturally if given the freedom

to follow their own interests (Holt 1985a, 1985b). Holt was fundamental in introducing the principles of “home-schooling” in the 1970’s and 80’s. Dörnyei (2001a, 2001b) believes that motivation is a key element in learning and without it all learning is meaningless. Ushioda (2008), Wenden (1991), and Cotterall (1995, 1999) amongst others, believe that learning comes from the powers within, that all goals must be set by the learner themselves with the teacher taking the role of facilitator, guide, or tutor. Meanwhile, Gladwell (2002) acknowledges that people do not learn if they are confused, and that comprehension is key. Most of the authors here run on the philosophy that the three key elements to learning are comprehension, motivation, and confidence (Smith, 1998).

Motivation

Motivation is an essential ingredient in the success of anything we do. Without motivation for what we do, effort will be low, and without effort success will be minimal. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (Dörnyei, 2001a). Teachers must be motivated to teach while learners must be motivated to learn. Simply put, even individuals with remarkable ability may not accomplish long-term goals without sufficient motivation. With motivation being such an imperative factor in learning new languages, it is no wonder there is a long list of authors who base their research around the topic.

Another vital element to learning is confidence. Without confidence in your learning ability you cannot progress, Smith (1998) points out that, “*Lack of confidence raises anxiety, induces inappropriate approaches to learning and makes confusing what we might otherwise understand*” (Smith, 1998, p.35).

Gaining trust and respect from the students is one way to ease the process of learning for them. Holt (1995ab), a pioneer in the field of education, wrote two very successful books, *How Children Learn* and *How Children Fail*, both of which were first published in 1963. Holt is explicit in viewing his opinions on the way people learn, stating:

The most important thing any teacher has to learn, not to be learned in any school of education I ever heard of, can be expressed in seven words: Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners. (Holt, 1995, p.125).

Many researchers assert that second language development is governed primarily by the student's internal mechanisms and cannot be controlled by teaching (Hato, 2005). Both Holt (1995) and Hato (2005) suggest that learning must originate from within the student if it is to be meaningful. This can be done by letting the students work at their own pace, or in other words, to give students responsibility for their learning, the basics of learner autonomy.

Autonomy

Autonomous learning is increasingly becoming a modern approach to English language education in which many teachers, usually of European or North American origin, strive to develop in their learners. Learner autonomy gives more responsibility to the student and their own learning, and if successful, has the potential to aid learners in their future learning careers.

Defining autonomy can be a difficult task as meanings may be interpreted in different ways by different people. Autonomy in learning is about people taking more control over their learning in and out of their classrooms. Autonomy in language learning conversely is the notion of people taking more control over the purposes for which they learn languages and the ways in which they learn them (Benson, 2006). One important component behind "learner autonomy" is that "*language learning is a lifelong endeavour*" (Lee, 1998, p.282) and that students learn more outside of class than they do in class. The process however, of making students "autonomous" is a lengthy and complicated one. In order to promote the idea that more learning is done outside the classroom in student's own time than during classes, students must be directed in how to learn by themselves.

The control that each student has over their learning differs, and the methods each person uses to learn are unique. Benson (2001) explains that autonomy is a multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals. The autonomous learner is recognised by specific behaviour, but this behaviour can take many different forms depending on the student's age, their progress so far and what they perceive learning to be (Little, 1991). One thing is clear, that the autonomous learner must be interested and motivated in what they are doing enabling them to become responsible for their own learning. It is the teacher's job to initiate the initial step to learning independence.

Constructs of motivating the unmotivated

By obtaining information on learner beliefs, O'Donnell (2003) found that the problems with methodology lie within instructor-student relationships and a gap between goals and needs. The relationship between the teacher and the student is an important issue and cannot be overlooked. O'Donnell suggests that if a teacher is skilled in the language, attuned to student's feelings, and offers an interesting and informative methodology they can help bring about positive attitudes in the student (O'Donnell, 2003).

Knowledge of what students expect can help form trust and respect between the teacher and student. When the time comes to establish a new approach, teachers can make the transition smoother by acknowledging their student's beliefs.

The role of any teacher in education should be to motivate their students and to influence them in a way that creates enthusiasm in the subject they are trying to teach. This can be difficult in language education, particularly in Japan where collectively, all students are required to learn English for six years up to high school and a further two years or more in tertiary education. English education in high schools in Japan is primarily taught in preparation for rigorous university entrances examinations, and has an emphasis on grammar and translation. The situation that this paper focuses on involves combating this predicament by creating enthusiasm towards English, by encouraging students in every way and by introducing comprehensible and meaningful materials that promote self-motivation in all levels of learners.

Applying autonomy to language learning

The justifications for the application of autonomy in language learning and general education are plentiful. Dickinson provides evidence that "*autonomous learners become more highly motivated and that autonomy leads to better, more effective work*" (Dickinson, 1995, p.165). People who take the initiative in learning, whether learning languages or just learning in general, learn more effectively than do people who sit at the feet of teachers, passively waiting to be taught. If motivation is the output of autonomy, then autonomous learners will keep learning, aiding them in their future endeavours to further successes. There is an important link between autonomy and motivation. Dickinson (1995) investigated just that link, to prove the claim that "autonomous learners become more motivated learners".

Every teacher in a classroom has the opportunity to positively influence the minds of many young individuals. It is the job of a teacher to unleash the potential from within every student and encourage them in every way. Students in Japan have the reputation of being passive, dependent, and lacking in initiative. This makes the process necessary to succeed in autonomy more difficult. However, if the teacher is willing to alter his or her teaching style to fit the culture of his/her students, the innovation of change may become clearer (Sarwar, 2001). In order to promote learning autonomy to a group where it may be a foreign idea, the teacher must first acquire relevant background knowledge of their students and the institution they will be working for.

Implications for teaching

The research in second language acquisition (SLA), learner motivation, and pedagogy shows there is a cyclic process of motivation affecting effort, which in turn affects ability, which motivates more. This motivation must come internally. Internal motivation comes from competence, relatedness, and most importantly autonomy. Students must be allowed to explicitly do what they want, when they want with regards to their learning, and not only limit their learning to the confinements of a classroom. Students must be trained and guided before they are told to just “learn by themselves”. A student cannot just become autonomous without any guidance, they must be taught how to learn, and this initial step requires a lot of encouragement and guidance from the teacher.

There are a huge variety of ways that people learn, several of which have been mentioned here. This study states that learner beliefs must be respected in order for students to learn autonomously. This study applies the use of two projects which allow students to learn at a pace and way that suits them.

Research Methods

The study

The aim of this study is to compare the autonomy levels of two sets of students, a group of English major students and a group of non-English major students using two identical projects to determine if learner autonomy is enhanced. The objectives are to increase student motivation, lower anxiety, and improve student attitude towards English through the introduction of a project-based syllabus in both groups and prove

that learner autonomy is a valid theory for all types of learners.

Participants

Permission to conduct research on learner autonomy was granted by the participants of two classes for this study. The first group were first-year undergraduate students while the other were second-year full time students at Matsuyama University. The first-year group were non-English major students, with an average age of 18, while the second-year group were English major students, with an average age of 19. For practical reasons, the English major students are referred to as “Group A” and the non-English majors as “Group B”. Group A comprised of 23 students while Group B comprised of 27, meaning a total of 50 students participated in the study.

The major difference between the two groups of students was that Group A had chosen to study English out of choice while Group B had not. The study was carried out from April 2008 to January 2009. Before starting the study it was predicted that motivation levels would be high with Group A and low with Group B.

Table 1. Major differences between the two groups

Group A	Group B
English majors (23)	Business/economics majors (25)
2 nd year students	1 st year students
19-20 year olds	18-19 year olds
7 years of study	6 years of study
405-700 TOEIC (PBT)	195-635 TOEIC (PBT)
3 hours a week	3 hours a week
MOTIVATION – HIGH	MOTIVATION – LOW

Materials

The majority of data was gathered through the use of questionnaires given before and after the completion of a project-based syllabus. Questionnaires were first developed in English but translated into the native language of the students by the author with peer help. There were two projects that made up a part of the syllabus, the first of which is a project which was developed solely by the author, and has been used and improved

upon in other classes for the past three years called “*The Picture Book Project*”. The other project was used in conjunction with the text “*Travel Abroad Project*” published by Nan’un-do and written by Richard McMahon (2005). Both projects are evaluated through self- and peer- assessment, with testing absent from the curriculum to enable students to become intrinsically motivated.

The Picture Book Project

The picture book project involves a picture story book with characters, a scenario, a suitable ending and a message. The goal for this project is to produce a picture book from scratch using individual effort, original ideas and initiative, and then present their book to groups in class. Evaluation for the books comes from peer-assessment, self-assessment and comments from their instructor. Students were guided and advised through a series of scaffolding procedures over an 8-10 week period before they had to construct their own picture books and present them to the class in the final class of term.

Travel Project

This project is based on the text “Travel Abroad Project”, written by Richard McMahon (2005) and published by Nan’un-do. The main objective of the Travel Project is to present a travel itinerary to a country of your choice in class. Prior to this, each student in the Travel Project must research on different topics such as art, history, wildlife, and culture then present their findings in class. The project incorporates reading, writing, listening and presenting skills as students collate data by themselves outside of class, and then presenting their findings. The project culminates with all students presenting a two week travel itinerary to their class using Power Point.

The reason these projects are being utilized is to introduce the concept of learner autonomy to the subjects. Both projects give almost complete responsibility to the student, with class time alone kept solely for teacher-student guidance, facilitation and lessons in how to obtain the information from the resources available. With the Picture Book project students are provided with an outline, or ideas for their story but ultimately the length, detail, and message of their story is completely up to them. Projects provide ample opportunity to increase self-confidence, to sustain curiosity, to encourage students to set their own goals to introduce tasks students may never have done before, (Dörnyei, 2001a) and most of all to increase motivation. All are elements

crucial to the process of becoming an autonomous learner.

Results

Results in this section were obtained from two identical questionnaires given to all students before and after the completion of both projects in the two classes (*Appendix 1*). Results were collated and graphed using Microsoft Excel and percentage of improvements were stated from each section. A total of four constructs will be analysed in this paper, they state the overall attitude towards English, anxiety, the satisfaction of learning and motivation towards learning English in both groups. Although the questionnaire was available to the students in both languages, the English version only will be used herein.

Attitude

When asked to comment on the construct, “*I am interested in learning English,*” the results were as follows.

Table 2. Attitude towards English

Before		<i>After</i>		Change	
A	B	A	B	A	B
3.43	3.08	3.38	3.38	-0.06	0.30
1 = strongly disagree 4 = strongly agree				1.75% ↓	9.7% ↑

These results confirm the previous expectations of each group. The English major students showed a positive attitude both before and after the course, indicated by minimal changes after the course, contrast to group B. Group B showed a positive shift towards learning English when comparing their attitude results before and after the course.

Anxiety

When asked to comment on the construct, “*I’m not confident when speaking English,*” responses were as follow.

Table 3. Anxiety

Before		After		Change	
A	B	A	B	A	B
2.81	2.81	3.19	2.58	+0.38	-0.23
1 = strongly disagree 4 = strongly agree				13% ↓	8.2% ↑

Group A, the English majors, the higher motivated group showed an increase in anxiety towards English from this study. Group B, the less motivated group however showed the opposite. Possible reasons for this could be that the A group showed elements of anxiety and confusion to an alternative style to teaching than the regular teacher-centred approach they may have been used to. See graph 1 for overall percentage of change.

Satisfaction

Table 4 shows responses when students were asked to comment on the construct, “*I feel my English skills have improved.*”

Table 4. Satisfaction

Before		After		Change	
A	B	A	B	A	B
3.15	2.52	3.67	3.25	+0.52	+0.73
1 = strongly disagree 4 = strongly agree				16.5% ↑	29% ↑

These results suggest the most significant results of this research. These figures indicate that students have not only enjoyed completing the courses but have also felt an improvement in their English ability.

Motivation

Table 5 shows responses when students were asked to comment on the construct, “*I’m studying English because it will make me successful.*”

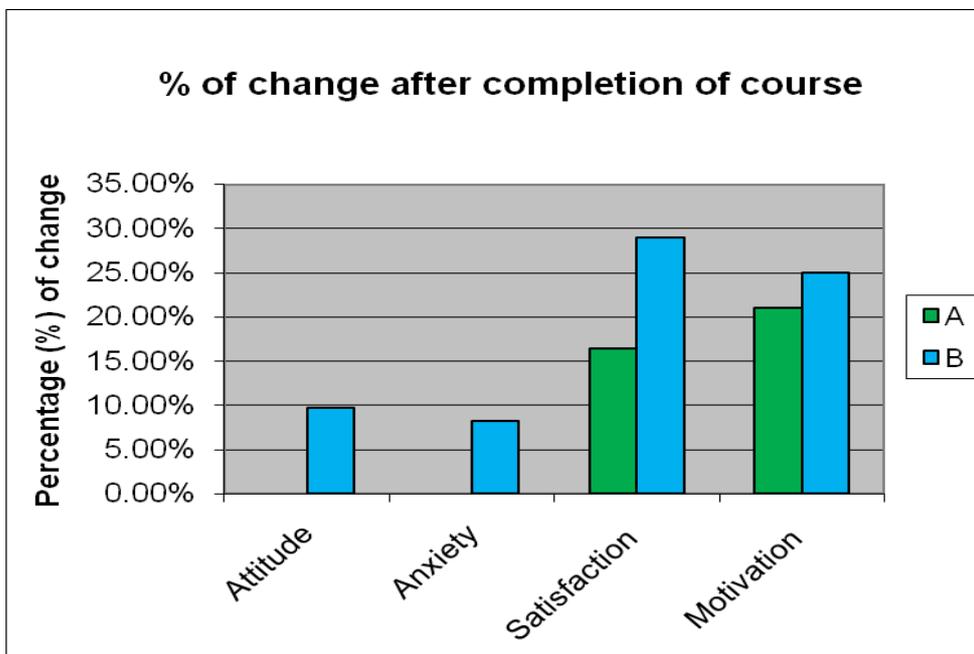
Table 5. Motivation

Before		After		Change	
A	B	A	B	A	B
2.71	2.12	3.27	2.65	+0.56	+0.53
1 = strongly disagree 4 = strongly agree				21% ↑	25% ↑

Results here show a similar trend to those in table 4. Vast increases of 21% in group A and 25% in Group B represent convincing data to suggest that projects of this manner can help to motivate all levels of learners.

Overall improvements

This graph below shows the overall improvements of the four constructs in both groups of students after the completion of a project-based syllabus designed to create autonomy in all levels of learners. Group A is represented by the green bar (left side) and group B is represented by the blue bar (right side).



Graph 1.

The absence of any positive percentage of change for group A in the attitude and anxiety section suggests two outcomes. Attitude towards learning English in group A

was already high therefore no improvements were recorded, while the same group of students actually showed a slight negative shift in anxiety, hence no sign of a positive change in group A. See table 3 above for details.

Conclusions

Results of this type signify the value that a project-based syllabus, like the one used here, has for all levels of English learners. If the goals of educational institutions are to foster the autonomous individual, a project-based syllabus like this one, is recommended. Teachers, instructors, and educators should trust their students by adopting an autonomy-centred methodology. If project work like this is utilised, it can motivate the students, confidence will rise, and perceived gains in ability will follow.

Teachers need to accept the heterogeneity of learners and worry less about their capabilities., When Smith (1998) is asked how to cope with students who are unmotivated and uninterested in subjects they are forced to take at school, replies:

It may be better to regard your job not as the instructor who organizes the learning, that students are supposed to do but as the guide who makes what we would like students to learn interesting, comprehensible and accessible. (Smith, 1998, p. 80).

If instructors of English can develop authentic materials that enhance the concept of autonomy by building rapport with their students, creating a positive atmosphere to learn in, and by providing constant support where possible, motivation levels should increase.

Some students may not be used to the changes they encounter in an autonomy-centred class, and some may even react negatively to it. To avoid confusion and aid in the transition to becoming a complete autonomous learner, students should be given time to adjust to the new learning strategies involved. Autonomy should start in larger groups, then lead to smaller groups and eventually individuals. The transition is from interdependence to independence. Autonomy is not teacher independence, but teacher-learner interdependence (Iida, 2009; Little, 1995). As teachers we have to facilitate and motivate our students in a way so that our students become autonomous someday, not just say, “OK, starting today you are autonomous.” With time and

guidance from teachers, students should gradually learn the benefits of autonomy and the potential for the future endeavours that it can offer.

This research shows that a wide range of learner ability types can be motivated and show signs of becoming autonomous learners if suitable procedures are applied. Teachers and institutions have the optimal opportunity to aid their students for life and let authentic learning take place in this way. This leads to the question, how will becoming autonomous help the world? Business and the workforce, today, are looking for creative thinkers that can adapt to their status quo, possessing skills that require the foundations of motivation, curiosity and the capability to learn in our rapidly changing information society. Supporting the learner with project-work of this stature, as shown in this study, will not only help them to improve their English by becoming autonomous, but will also give them a valuable skill for later life ventures.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire on Learning English (learning styles and learner beliefs)

(英語学習に関するアンケート)

This is a questionnaire to measure how you feel about the English language and your present feeling towards learning it. Please answer as truthfully as possible.

(このアンケートは皆さんが英語学習に対してどのような考えを持っているのかを調査することをねらいとしたものです。以下の質問に正直に答えて下さい。)

Circle one of the following:

(次の問いの答えに丸をつけて下さい。)

1. What is your major? (専攻)

science and technology major / language and arts major

(理系) (文系)

2 What is you gender? male / female

(性別) (男性) (女性)

3. How did you enter this university? (本学への入学方法は次のどちらですか)

Recommendation / Regular entrance examination

(推薦入試) (一般入試)

4. When did you start studying English? (いつ頃から英語を勉強していましたか。)

before elementary / early elementary / middle elementary / late elementary / jr. high

(小学校前) (小学校低学年) (小学校中学年) (小学校高学年) (中学校)

The following questions are to measure how much you feel about each item. Read each sentence and indicate how much it is like you by circling the number that best describes you. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember to circle a number for each sentence.

(以下の項目では、提示された内容についてどう考えるかを判断してもらいます。自分の気持ちに一番近いものに丸で囲んで下さい。答えに関して正解・不正解はございません。必ずすべての問いに答えて下さい。)

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Agree 4-Strongly Agree

(全くそうは思わない) (そう思わない) (そう思う) (大いにそう思う)

Attitude towards English

1. I like learning English. (英語を学ぶのが好きである。)
1-----2-----3-----4
2. I am interested in learning English. (英語に興味がある。)
1-----2-----3-----4
3. I have the willingness to learn English. (英語を勉強するやる気がある。)
1-----2-----3-----4
4. I have the right attitude for learning English (英語を勉強する態度や姿勢はある。)
1-----2-----3-----4

Anxiety when using English

5. I am not confident to speak in English. (英語で話す自信がない。)
1-----2-----3-----4
6. I don't perform well on English tests and examinations. (英語の試験で点数が取れない。)
1-----2-----3-----4
7. I will never be able to do well in English. (英語の勉強はかどれない。)
1-----2-----3-----4
8. I feel ashamed when I can't use English correctly. (正しい英語を使えないとき恥ずかしくなる。)
1-----2-----3-----4

Achievement in English classes up to now

9. I feel my English skills have improved in my senior high school classes. (高校で英語力がついたと思う。)
1-----2-----3-----4
10. I feel more confident in using English now. (高校の授業で英語を使うことに自信がついたと思う。)
1-----2-----3-----4
11. I remember most of what I have learned in my classes. (高校で学んだことはほとんど覚えている。)
1-----2-----3-----4

12. I feel I can accomplish any task given to me in English. (英語の授業でどんな英語活動もやりこなせる自信がついた。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Satisfaction of Lessons

13. I got out of the class as much effort as I put in. (高校の授業は努力した分戻ってきたと思う。)

1-----2-----3-----4

14. The class was useful for my future goals. (高校の授業は将来のために役に立ったと思う。)

1-----2-----3-----4

15. The class has met my expectations of being fun. (高校の授業は期待通りに面白かったと思う。)

1-----2-----3-----4

16. The classes met my expectations of being informative. (高校の授業は多くの知識を与えてくれたと思う。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Instrumental Motivation

17. I want to learn English because it is useful when traveling in many countries. (旅行のために便利だから、英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

18. I am studying English to gain knowledge for advancement in society. (立身出世のために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

19. I am studying English to make friends with people from other countries. (外国人と交流するために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

20. I am studying English to gain respect from other in the public. (他人に尊敬されるために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Performance Goal Orientations

21. I am studying English to get respect from my teachers and classmates.

(先生や級友に尊敬されるために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

22. I am studying English only to get good grades. (よい成績を取るために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

23. I am studying English because it will make me superior to others around me.

(他人より優秀になるために勉強をしている。)

1-----2-----3-----4

24. I am learning English because English is a must for Japanese in the global society.

(国際化のために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Extrinsic motivation

25. I am learning English because everybody in Japan should be able to understand English nowadays.

(今日、すべての日本人が英語を勉強すべきであると思う。)

1-----2-----3-----4

26. I am studying English to get a special license. (資格のために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

27. I am studying English to please my teachers or parents.

(先生や親を喜ばせるために英語を勉強している)

1-----2-----3-----4

28. I am studying English to get a good job. (良い仕事に就くために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Japanese Imperative

29. The main reason I need to learn English is to pass examinations to get a job in Japan.

(就職試験のために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

30. The main reason I need to learn English is to pass examinations to further my studies.

(進学のために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

31. I am studying English only because English is a compulsory subject.

(英語が必修科目だから勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

32. I am studying English because it is expected of me from society.

(社会で期待されているから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Integrative motivation

33. I am studying English to broaden my views. (視野を広げるために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

34. I am studying English because I like the challenge. (物事に挑戦するのが好きだから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

35. I am studying English to touch upon the cultures of other countries. (外国の文化に触れられるから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

36. I am studying English because I am interested in other cultures. (外国の文化に興味を持っているから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Master Goal Orientation

37. I am studying English because it will make me a better individual.

(よりよい人間になれるから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

38. I am studying English because it will make me successful. (将来成功できるように

英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

39. I am studying English I want to be bilingual. (2ヶ国語を話せるようになりたいから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

40. I am studying English because I like studying. (勉強するのが好きだから英語も勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Intrinsic Orientations

41. I feel satisfaction when I am learning English. (英語を学ぶことにはやりがいがある。)

1-----2-----3-----4

42. I want to continue studying English for the rest of my life. (できれば一生英語を勉強して続けたい。)

1-----2-----3-----4

43. I am studying English to be a more knowledgeable person
(知性のある人になりたいから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

44. I am studying English because it will make me smarter. (頭がよくなるから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

Personal Orientations

45. I am studying English to keep up with information in English. (情報収集のために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

46. I am studying English to get information from the Internet. (インターネットのために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

47. I am studying English because I like to listen to English songs. (英語の歌が好きであるから英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

48. I am studying English because I like to watch English movies. (英語の映画を見るために英語を勉強している。)

1-----2-----3-----4

How global issues can make even reluctant learners keen

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Reference data:

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Abstract

This paper discusses a series of global issues themed resources developed by a teacher of French and German for students undertaking compulsory secondary language education in the UK. It shows how these resources became popular, increased motivation, and overall learning, in addition to increasing students' awareness of the world around them.

Current issues in language teaching and learning in the UK and Japan are discussed with reference to government reports and initiatives. The paper suggests that these resources could improve language learning and motivation in schools and fit in with government guidelines and aspirations.

Keywords: UK education, Japan education, global issues, language curricula

本稿では、フランス語とドイツ語の教師が、イギリスの言語義務教育における学習者のために、地球規模の問題をテーマとして開発された一連の教材について述べている。これらの教材がどのようにして、学習者の学習意欲を高め、自分たちの周りの世界への意識を高めていくのに貢献したかを表わしている。イギリスと日本の言語教育における現在の課題は、政府の報告書やイニシアティブに基づいて議論されている。本稿では、どのようにこれらの教材が学校における言語学習の向上に貢献し、政府の規制や目標に沿ったものになりえたかを示すように努める。

キーワード：英国の教育、日本の教育、地球規模でかかえている問題、言語カリキュラム

This paper discusses a series of resources developed by a teacher of languages in an English comprehensive (non-selective ages 11-16) school for French and German in 2007/8. It proposes that these resources increased motivation and overall learning in addition to increasing students' awareness of global issues. It will suggest that this kind of resource could be applicable in the Japanese context and will interest educators at all levels interested in broadening curriculum appeal and learner motivation as well as those who support a more global outlook in language education.

The state of language learning in the UK

In 2004 the English and Welsh National Curriculum, which had long specified a modern foreign language as a central part of secondary education (to age 16), dropped that stipulation. Language tuition became statutory to age 14 only, but was to be expanded in primary schools from 2010 to compensate. Many felt that this was a backward move in the field of language teaching and learning.

In 2006 the UK Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published the findings of a report by Lord Dearing called *the Languages Review Consultation Report*. *The Review* had been commissioned to investigate how to reverse the decline of language learning in English and Welsh schools. Languages normally offered in UK schools include one or two from French, Spanish and German, and many students also have the option of Japanese, Russian, and increasingly Mandarin Chinese.

Lord Dearing's conclusions were damning, cutting to the very foundations of language learning in English and Welsh schools. The Review found that the curriculum was lacking in age appropriateness, relation to real life, cognitive challenge for higher achievers, and any draw for less-motivated learners. The pace of the curriculum was also considered too slow for more motivated learners. *The Review* recommended that to "improve the experience of learning a language for pupils, to increase the motivation to learn, and to enhance pedagogy", schools should offer not only "more varied languages ... with a range of appropriate [assessments]", but also seek "to recognise and celebrate achievement in small steps and engaging curricular content (including links with the real world in which the language is spoken)" (DfES, 2006, p. 11).

The state of language learning in Japan

In common with the UK, Japan's foreign language (mainly English) curricula have been "been routinely criticized since the turn of the [19th/20th] century" (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009, p. 173). One of the main problems is often seen to be a lack of communication opportunities in the classroom coupled with an overly heavy reliance on the traditional *yakudoku* (grammar/translation) methodology (Lamie, 1998). The Japanese ministry of education (now part of a ministerial portfolio called MEXT) has made two changes to the *Course of Study Guidelines* (the government guidelines followed by Japanese schools) for English over the last 20 years, in 1989 and 2003. These both sought to improve teaching and learning in general and specifically introduce more communicative and student-centred teaching methods.

Recognizing that the first attempt had not yielded the desired results, partly due to a lack of teacher training and funds (Lamie, 1998; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004), the second initiative also included concrete steps to realisation and a substantial budget to support its aims. These included more study abroad placements for staff, compulsory inservice training for all 60000 language teachers, and the foundation of 100 *Super English High Schools* (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009). Aspinall (2006) points out that the fact MEXT was able to obtain funding at a time of general financial belt-tightening shows the importance accorded English language education in Japan.

The main objectives of the 2003 *Course of Study Guidelines* modifications were the development of "practical communication abilities" and "fostering a positive attitude towards communication through foreign languages" (MEXT, 2003, p. 7). Similarly to the *Languages Review Consultation Report* it stated that teachers should use "material that gives sufficient consideration to actual language-use" and cover topics that relate to students' "interests and concerns" and enhance their ability to "make impartial judgments" (MEXT, 2003, p. 14). It goes on to say that innovative teaching methods should be used "incorporating team-teaching, pair work, group work, [...] utilizing audio visual teaching materials, [language labs], computers, communication networks etc".

Comparing the issues in England and Wales and Japan

Aspinall (2006) writes that "among the vast majority of academics, policy-makers, teachers, parents and business groups [in Japan] it is hard to find anything other that

wholehearted approval of efforts to improve international education in general and English language education in particular” (p.257). However in England and Wales, if a student wants to pursue an academic route through school, they will often decide against subjects which are perceived as having less practical application. Language education commonly falls into this category as many students can see little practical application outside the classroom. This is partly due to the pervasiveness of English as the ‘international language’, but also due to the lack of motivation given for learning languages in schools (DfES, 2006).

Both England and Wales and Japan have major exams in the mid-late teenage years which play a key role in deciding an individual’s future. At the age of 16, English and Welsh students take the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Japan has both the high school and university entrance exams which are taken at 15 and 18 respectively. In both countries these exams are perceived to be a negative influence on language curricula (DfES, 2006; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004), resulting in teachers teaching for exam success rather than practical language skills.

Neither Japan nor the UK generally enacts selective education in the early teenage years, though there are exceptions to this in both countries. UK students have a little more say in what subjects they study after 14 and post-16 education is characterized by learner choice and in comparison with many other countries including Japan. British students follow a very specialised (some would say limited) post-16 curriculum, normally between two and four subjects. Japanese schools follow a more rigid but wide ranging curriculum, later in the teenage years students have more say in what they study, often being allowed to choose what type of senior high school they aspire to and what course they take within that school. Whether students can actually follow their desired outcomes in both countries is dependent on performance in the exams at 15 in Japan and 16 in the UK.

The implications of this slightly larger freedom of choice in the UK is that if a student is not academically inclined, they will normally try to take more practical subjects, not languages, which are commonly perceived as more difficult than other subjects (DfES, 2006). In Japan, students are obliged to study English to age 18 in all schools including vocational senior high schools.

Both Japanese and British schools are free to choose their own text books from those approved and, if they so desire, to make up their own course of study within

government guidelines. Informal surveys of student opinion, conducted before the preparation of the resources this paper treats, revealed almost all students considered the text books as childish, boring, uninspiring, and disconnected from their daily lives.

These text books are often full of cartoons, which attract eleven year olds, but by the age of thirteen seem very childish. As Tomlinson (2003) points out, “a textbook selected mainly because of its attractive appearance could turn out to be very boring for the learners to use” (p. 22). Japan also experiences difficulties with text books, which traditionally have concentrated on grammar/translation, and have been seen as uninspiring by students (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).

The system in many English and Welsh schools follows this pattern: Vocabulary and grammar are taught by topic/text book chapter, and vocabulary is often not thoroughly re-enforced in subsequent units. The students have often forgotten it by the time they do a similar topic again the next year. Grammar is often taught in an explicit way rather than being embedded, and is sometimes shied away from altogether by individual teachers. The emphasis is often on vocabulary and single words, rather than on building understanding and fluency throughout the course. There is a general failure to give any extrinsic motivation (DfES, 2006).

There are some positive signs of change in Japan. While researchers in the late 1990's found that there was little attempt to develop activities to suit learner interests and needs, more recent studies (Lockley, 2011; Nishino, 2008) have found that around half of all teachers and schools are now engaging with more student centred methodology. Up to 38% of students surveyed experienced at least one teacher who taught entirely in English without any recourse to Japanese and over 50% had dedicated oral communication classes (Lockley, 2011). Aspinall (2006) praised the *Super English High School Programme*. He believed that this teacher led action research is a way to prove to other schools and the public in general that communicative methods can work in Japan. Yamada (2005), in her study of the post-2003 compulsorily inservice training found a positive change in teacher attitudes towards the new 2003 *Course of Study Guidelines*.

Wedell, in his book *Planning for Educational Change* (2009), writes that it normally takes between five to 10 years for any major reforms to take root and be fully realised. This would mean that no real assessment of the success or otherwise of the 2003 reforms could be enacted until 10 years after the end of the re-training of all

English teachers which started in 2003 and finished in 2008. Following this model, it is entirely appropriate that research shows that progress is being made, but not universal as yet. It is to be hoped that any progressive changes brought in by a UK government will start to follow similar, though no-doubt equally slow and windy paths.

How the global issues resources were developed

These alternative language teaching resources, developed in a Yorkshire secondary school, were inspired by two initiatives: the work of the Leeds Development Education Centre (an educational charity promoting global citizenship) and the storyline approach to language teaching where stories rather than unconnected topics form the basis of curricula.

The resources involve stories (in the L2) based on characters in various countries around the world talking about issues in their everyday lives. They are issues that the reader can relate to and in areas where students can use, expand on, and re-enforce the necessary vocabulary demanded by the normal curriculum. They pertain to deal with ‘real’ characters and try to empathise with some of the aspirations held by the readers. When they do not, they have particular socio-economic reasons for not being able to, such as lack of access to education, or poverty. The characters are made more “real” in that photos are used and maps detail where they live. Colourful, culturally interesting photos expand on and support the text. Where possible age appropriate cultural insights are included, like the eating of guinea pig for Christmas in South America; these stories prove particularly popular among students.

Each story (see Table 1) is linked to a chapter from a conventional text book. The chapter on house and home changes focus to talk about poor housing and lack of material possessions in Paraguay; the chapter about animals and family becomes the story of a girl called Isabella living on a farm in Chile; food connects to Japan and Nigeria; transport connects to China and India; body parts connect to the civil war in Sierra Leone where thousands of victims had limbs cut off by rebel militia during the 1990’s. It is important to note that the countries involved are a mixture of developed and developing, so as to give the students a balanced view of the world outside.

Table 1. Characters, countries, and issues.

Character	Country	Global Issue treated
1 Isabella	Chile	Families, animals
2 Shalini	India	Cultural differences
3 Shivute	Namibia	School, clothing
4 Juan	Paraguay	Child labour
5 Yu Lan	China	Property, old age
6 Moussa	Senegal	School, clothing
7 Wole	Nigeria/France	Food, immigration
8 -	Sierra Leone	Child soldiers
9 Hendrika	Namibia	Race in Africa
10 Jose	Mexico	Income differences
11 Lucille	Canada	Sports, diversity
12 Miyuki	Japan	Food, schooling

The story continues over the course of several lessons and resources normally include elements of reading comprehension, sometimes in English, and sometimes in the target language. Extension work often comprises a “find the in the text” exercise which picks out conjugation of verbs and parts of speech. As far as possible the resources cater to different learning styles and promote thinking skills. Some questions ask students to draw pictures illustrating what they have read; others allow students to choose their own activities based on the text. Finally, for high achievers or quick workers there is a translation challenge which they can complete while the teacher concentrates on weaker students.

The new words introduced in the resources are calculated so as not to appear too onerous, and to use the maximum amount of cognates. The vocabulary level therefore appears to be higher and more sophisticated than words students are used to studying. Most of the new words are included in a glossary on the page, but not all, especially the cognates which students are encouraged to work out for themselves; if necessary they use a dictionary. At all stages students are encouraged to work things out for themselves or by discussing with another student, thereby increasing autonomy, teamwork, motivation, and confidence in the language studied.

The results of this study

These resources were not developed with the aim of carrying out an academic study. Their value has yet to be fully assessed using a conventional academic methodology or survey group. Furthermore, if these resources were to be introduced in to a different educational context, for example Japan, a pilot study would need to be held and assessed properly before they could be distributed more widely.

However, in existing practice, from limited class-room surveys, and such alternative evidence as the comparative grades recorded in the teacher's mark book, the appeal and success of these resources in the UK comprehensive context is strongly suggested (at the time of writing, they had been downloaded 4000 times from the *Times Educational Supplement* website and attracted positive reviews from fellow teachers as well). These showed students taking part in lessons based on the global issues resources performed consistently well in the normal tests, often the majority of the class obtaining the higher levels attainable at their stage. Teachers found that the same classes also seemed to demonstrate better motivation and an improved atmosphere than when not using the resources.

The surveys indicated that the storylines drew the students in, and their mentally-challenging nature (for example; remembering previous vocabulary, finding new words, and working out the conjugation of a verb to answer a question correctly) maintained interest. In the area of verb conjugation, students appeared to show a marked improvement in their overall performance and understanding of its use and importance. Vocabulary retention also appeared to improve as the resources were designed to utilise words learnt in previous months and years as well as the target vocabulary for that particular text book chapter.

The highest and the lowest achievers in particular displayed significant improvements in their motivation when using the resources. When questioned, the higher achievers found more difficult activities, in particular the translation, very satisfying. They responded by showing a real sense of achievement at the amount of output writing (as much as two or three pages in an exercise book when a normal language lesson might comprise less than a page), this increased "academic" feeling appeared to give the lessons a new seriousness.

Lower achievers indicated that they liked the self-differentiating and multiple learning style aspects, being able to choose the level and type of exercise they wanted to carry out; because the teacher encouraged discussion, they could also work with and

share opinions with colleagues. The potential problem of copying and cheating rarely appeared, it appeared that students were interested enough in the stories to want to find out for themselves, and they thought the learning more useful.

The resources were not universally popular. Initially almost all students were very interested, but some classes and students lost interest after doing two or more stories, what might be termed “poverty fatigue.” This manifested itself in comments like “not another one of these”, and “I don’t want to learn about poor people anymore”. How to deal with these issues is unclear, although it suggests that should a curriculum be entirely composed of such resources, it may have a negative effect on student empathy and be counter productive. Clearly these resources should be fitted in to a balanced curriculum which also includes themes other than global issues.

Despite this minority of negative responses, the global issues aspects of these resources in general proved the most popular. Students felt that to learn about the world in a foreign language lesson was appropriate and the fact that they were studying German, for instance, didn’t necessarily mean they had to study about a German-speaking country. The issues raised gave the students food for thought, which was dealt with in a plenary at the end of the lesson (normally in L1), where students shared their reaction to and opinions of the topics covered. They often made connections with what they had learned in other subjects in the curriculum, especially geography, citizenship, history, and science.

In conversation with colleagues the author has often found a common perception in both Japan and the UK, that communicative language teaching requires lots of energy and input from the teacher. The author contests this and suggests that it is often younger teachers who are keenest to introduce communicative methodology and, without wishing to sound ageist, they often have more reserves of energy than more senior members of staff; of course those same senior staff make the connection that communicative equals energetic and lots of teacher input. What the author believes is that there is a strong need for students to be motivated and willing to use their intelligence and initiative autonomously, and for the language studied to “give sufficient consideration to actual language-use situations” (MEXT, 2003, p. 14). There is no absolute need for jokey antics at the front of the class unless the teacher concerned is willing and chooses to undertake them. Evidence suggests (Lockley, 2011) that in actual fact what Japanese students find most inspiring is Japanese teachers who teach in

English, whatever methods they use.

The author believes that these resources could, in the right circumstances and after the enactment of a successful pilot study, help towards the fulfilment of a more communicative and student-centred language learning experience for Japanese students. It is suggested that these types of resources could fit relatively easily into existing Japanese curricula without classroom presence, and practice needing to change radically. They meet the MEXT course of study aspirations to increase “understanding of the ways of life and cultures of Japan and the rest of the world” (MEXT, 2003, p. 14). They also encourage students to have “a positive attitude toward understanding and using a foreign language on their own” (MEXT, 2003, p. 14).

Furthermore, long term observers of the Japanese educational scene believe that EFL text books, especially at the junior high school level, have become progressively more globally focused over the last 30 years (Cates, personal communication). There are already several global issues themed text books specifically aimed at the Japanese market that the author is aware of, including *Global Issues* by Tim Grose and *You, Me and the World: A Course in English for Global Citizenship* by David Peaty. The stories and exercises that these global issues resources use would not look wildly out of place in the Japanese context.

Conclusion

For the author of this paper, these materials concentrating on global issues made the job of teaching compulsory languages to often unwilling students more interesting, more fulfilling, and much easier. The lessons became more involved, autonomous, and compelling for the majority of students and the available evidence points to attainment levels for the students involved improving. As students were more motivated and involved in the learning, less time and energy had to be given to behaviour management, thereby allowing the teacher more time to work with individual students.

Given Dearing’s findings in *The Languages Review Consultation Report* and the attempts made by MEXT to improve English language education in Japan, this approach to language teaching and learning could prove crucial to the future of language education in both countries. At the very least it deserves deeper scrutiny as one possible way to revive the flagging fortunes of language education in English and Welsh and Japanese schools.

A similar themed, but significantly different, paper was originally published in the JALT Materials Writers SIG newsletter, Between the Keys.

If you would like to view, use or translate these resources for use in your classes, please follow the web addresses in Table 2. I would be grateful to receive copies of any translations made and hear any comments.

Table 2. Where to find the worksheets.
Type http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/ and follow it with the specific link below:
<i>Global-schools-interactive-worksheets-transport-6042269/</i>
<i>Global-schools-interactive-school-personalities-6042267/</i>
<i>Global-schools-interactive-school-clothes-6042265/</i>
<i>Global-schools-interactive-food-illnesses-6042268/</i>
<i>Global-Schools-Interactive-Colourful-Worksheets-6023275/</i>
<i>Global-Schools-Interactive-Colourful-Worksheets-6023277/</i>
<i>Global-Schools-Interactive-Colourful-Worksheets-6023276/</i>

Bio data

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Manageable Multimedia Projects: Voicethread and Xtranormal

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Abstract

This article will explain the benefits and drawbacks of two online projects: Xtranormal and Voicethread. Seventy-two second year students completed these assignments over a six-week period in the fall of 2009. Upon completion, a survey was given to assess the successes and drawbacks of the short multimedia program, and how the learners felt about using English in such a unique way.

この論文はエクストラノーマルとボイススレッドというオンラインプロジェクトの利点と欠点を説明しています。2009年の秋に72人の2年生の生徒達が、6週間以上かけてこれらのプロジェクトを終えました。終了の際、短期間のマルチメディアプログラムで成功した点と失敗した点、また生徒達がこのようなユニークな方法で英語を使うことをどう感じたかを評価するために調査をしました。

Keywords: multimedia, Voicethread, Xtranormal, learner's voice, online projects, slideshow, avatar.

The concept of using technology in the language classroom is far from new, dating back all the way to WWII and the audio-lingual method used by the U.S. Army (Brown, 2007). Since then, the understanding of both second language acquisition theory and computer technology has grown rapidly. In the modern educational environment, cyberspace affords us a plethora of educational opportunities in all the subjects of humankind.

This paper will be focusing on the use of technology in the language classroom, specifically two online programs which are both free and manageable from

an instructor's point of view. But first, let's take a look at what others have to say about education and technology. And in doing so, we must understand the concept of "digital natives".

This term refers to the younger generation (born in the 1990's) who have grown up with modern technology, such as DVD players, computers, cell phones, iPods, the Internet, and video cameras. Today, many young adults have spent about 10,000 hours playing video games, another 10,000 hours on cell phones, download millions of ring tones and songs every year, and exchange countless e-mail messages (Prensky, 2006). Our learners today have nearly instant access to volumes of information in their pocket, can communicate with another digital native around the world, all while multitasking. Even children in the developing world are increasingly becoming familiar with wireless technology, cell phones, and computers (Wilkins, 2010). These are the learners of the 21st century.

The teachers, however, are "digital immigrants", who might still be printing out our e-mails, doing editing on paper, and reading manuals for programs rather than using the program itself to teach us (Prensky, 2006). Teachers must decide whether to be swept away by the rapid pace of technology, or embrace it and use it as a tool to assist with instruction.

Technology use in language classrooms is slowly making headway into the public junior and high schools of Japan. The Yawata Board of Education (Kitazawa, 2007) has posted noteworthy gains in vocabulary acquisition by a Nintendo DS-equipped class of middle school English students. A similar program launched last year (Dillow, 2009) saw the Wi-Fi game console used in class in a wide spectrum of subjects, allowing students multiple opportunities for quizzing, practice, and drills in an engaging way.

Of course, on the Internet there are several educational sites, providing a virtual treasure trove of materials for teachers of all subjects. In my case, I have found two simple sites to use in my language classroom, despite the fact that these are not specifically language-learning programs. The language of instruction was English, as well as the programs themselves. Further examination of some other essential elements in this program becomes necessary at this point.

The learners, school, and facilities

The following multimedia programs were initiated at an academically-oriented private Catholic school in Osaka. The learners were second-year high school students in the international (*kokusai*) course, meaning that during the summer of their second year, they spend one month in Vancouver, Canada. There, students experienced life abroad, study English at a sister school, and take part in the regular summer activities of their host family. More specifically, there were two classes of learners ($N=72$), aged fifteen or sixteen.

There were a very small handful of students (four) who did not have access to the Internet at home, and thus had to make good use of the time allotted in class. Otherwise, they were encouraged to use the computer lab after school or at a friend's house. In the case where students were late completing assignments on time, deadlines were extended to allow every opportunity to finish.

This was the first time any multimedia approach has been applied to the English program at our school. It was necessary to procure simple headsets (earphone and microphone) from an electronics store. Budget was made available to purchase one headset for every two students, which did not prove to be problematic.

However, the neglected state of the school computer lab did create problems. The computer web browsers at the time were over six years out-of-date, creating long delays for processing and saving multimedia projects. This created a lot of visible frustration, as students experienced difficulty saving work done in class. This may have affected the survey results afterwards. However, students who completed their project on their home computer reported that they were much more successful saving their work and by avoiding using the school system.

Project 1: Xtranormal

The first project assigned to students was essentially an avatar-style program that allowed users to type in an English dialog. The script was prepared beforehand (as homework) by students, and checked for errors by the teacher. Also, a handout (appendix 1) was carefully prepared for the students, explaining the purpose of this project and the procedure outlined below.

In addition, autonomy was a big part of this project, which attempted to access learner creativity and tie it in with language usage. Although many students were

unfamiliar with such an approach, they quickly caught on and appreciated the opportunity for free expression in English. Xtranormal is a free online program, which works as follows:

1. Students sign up (and not *sign in*) for their new account at the website <xtranormal.com/>. First-time users are encouraged to browse sample videos to get an idea of what is possible to create with this program.
2. Upon selecting the option *make movies*, the learner has the freedom to choose one or two actor scripts, scene selection, and avatar characters. It is worth noting that since the author was first introduced to Xtranormal, the range of choice has increased considerably.
3. Students next typed their dialog into the script boxes for each avatar. The layout is very easy to understand, and despite the absence of L1 instructions, students got started with relative ease. The instructor guidelines demanded only that dialogs be at least one minute long, on a topic entirely of the student's choosing.
4. Advanced functions were quickly discovered and used by many learners. These include camera angles, sound effects, avatar expressions, and body gestures. The icons located under *direct the action* were simply dragged to the desired point in the script.
5. When class time ran out, students were able to save their project by clicking the *take five* button. The next class, upon logging in, the project could be continued from the point of saving.
6. Likewise, it was often necessary to preview the script for any errors or unusual timing of special effects. The *action* button did this, although the processing and loading of each story took up to four minutes. Students were encouraged to save their progress often.
7. When satisfied with the final version (a one-minute story), students needed to click the *it's a wrap* button to save the final version of their project to the system.
8. Finally, students were asked to e-mail their completed project to the teacher for grading, which accounted for 30% of their semester mid-term. I simply opened their mail, clicked on their project, and watched the fruit of their labor. Grading was based on effort, creativity, and language use. The vast majority produced exceptional work that was a pleasure to watch.

Project 2: Voicethread

Students were next tasked with their second multimedia project, Voicethread. This is another free online program, which is essentially a photo slideshow. However, the advantages are that students can narrate their own personal slideshow (in English), as well as comment on other student's projects. This assignment did a good job of matching the theme of the PAN-SIG 2010 conference, learner perspectives.

Again, there were a number of tasks that needed to be completed prior to accessing the school computer lab. As you will recall, these learners have spent a month in Vancouver as part of a study abroad program. Approximately 10 - 20 digital photographs from their trip were required to be used as part of their Voicethread assignment. Only in one case were print photographs the only option. However, simply scanning each photo (and burning all of them onto a CD-R for downloading) solved this problem.

Next, students were asked to prepare a two or three sentence English narration for each picture in their project. The guidelines asked them to use pictures from their Vancouver trip to create a two-minute long presentation. Each assignment was graded privately by two instructors, and an average score was given.

Again, a handout was carefully prepared to walk the learners through the steps for this project. The teacher also guided them as a class through the following steps:

1. Students brought to the computer lab their narration script, and their photographs in digital form. Usually, they used their SD chip (used to store digital pictures in the camera) and a multi-card reader. A few students brought in their camera to connect directly to the school computer. And only one or two students used a CD-R containing photos.
2. Students accessed the free online program <voicethread.com/> and created an account for their project. By browsing through other posted Voicethreads, the students saw several examples of Voicethread, and could get a better understanding of what to expect in the classes ahead.
3. When ready to proceed, students clicked on the *create* button to begin their project. They were then prompted to upload the photos they wished to use. Sources for uploading included my computer, media sources, URL, or my webcam.
4. Next, their selected photos were dragged around the Voicethread desktop to arrange them in any order. More photos could be added in the future, or removed from the

so-called thread as desired by the student.

5. By selecting a specific photo and clicking on comment, students were able to add their English narration for each photo. At this stage, they needed to use the recently acquired headsets purchased specifically for this project.

6. Students then read and recorded their narrated script for each slide, using the microphone headsets. Of course, multiple attempts were permitted for speaking, and mistakes were quickly deleted. After replaying the comment as often as necessary, a satisfied learner saved their Voicethread and moved onto the next slide from their trip.

7. Completed projects were shared with the instructor by e-mail. Again, simply clicking on the student's link took me directly to their project for viewing and grading.

Survey Results

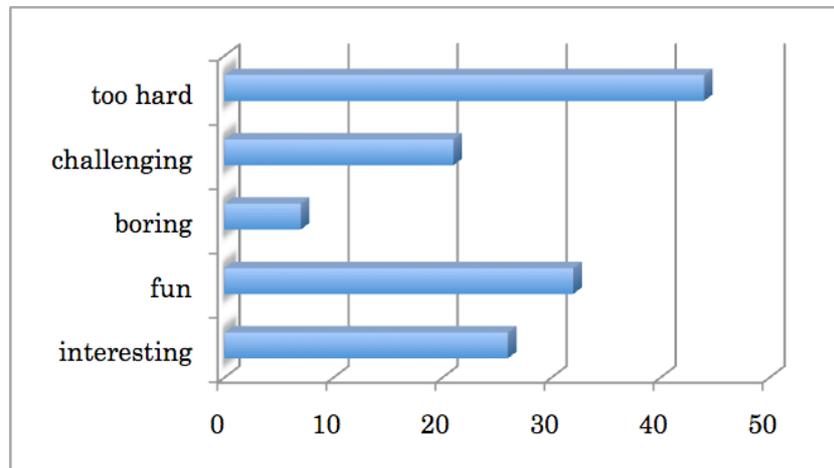
With the intent of improving this short multimedia program for use in the future, a survey was created (online) in order to gather ideas, opinions, and qualitative data from the learners. In general, I wanted to know if they liked using English for this kind of class project. More specifically, I was interested in learning ways to improve the course for future use.

Fifty-six students (or 80%) of the 72 students completed the anonymous online survey, which asked the following questions in both English and Japanese. The survey was bilingual in order to ensure a thorough understanding of the questions asked, and also to ensure a high rate of completed survey items. The questions were as follows:

1. How did you feel about these online assignments?
2. Did the teacher explain these projects well?
3. These projects were online. Did you enjoy this kind of English use?
4. Would you like to do this kind of multimedia course again next year?
5. Which project did you enjoy making, Xtranormal or Voicethread?
6. We had problems with the school computers. Did you think that it was big trouble?
7. Please comment on what you liked or didn't like about this program.

Question one allowed students more than one response. They found the assignment both difficult and fun, as you can see from the chart below. It is quite likely that the novelty factor accounted for the interest level, and I suspect the technical problems caused many students to feel the assignment was too hard.

Figure 1. Student feelings about online assignments

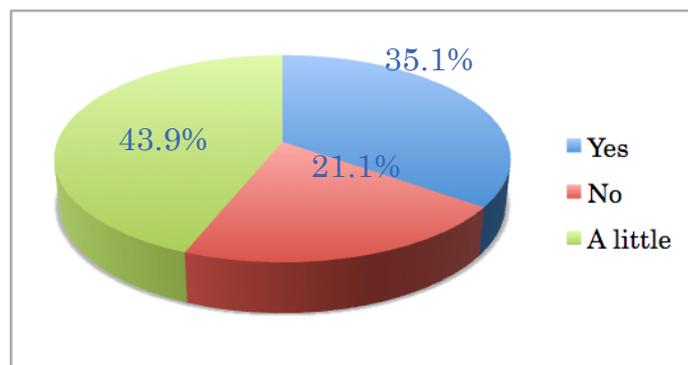


Question two served as feedback on my instruction, asking whether the instructions were clear. 59.6% agreed, while 29.8% thought the instructions were a little clear. Only 10.5% of respondents thought the instructions were not explained very well.

Question three was designed to determine the appeal of online English homework. 79% enjoyed this type of assignment to some extent, as opposed to about 21% who did not.

In the student comments section below, various reasons are provided for either liking or disliking the assignments.

Figure 2. Did you enjoy this kind of English homework?



Question four asked the students if they would like to do multimedia assignments in the next school year. Only 52.6% were interested (47.4% not), creating a topic for discussion.

The majority of the seventy-two students (63%) preferred the Voicethread

project, according to survey question five. Also, there were fewer problems using the dated school web browsers and saving work at various stages. However, the students were quite shy about having their English Voicethread shown to the class, regardless of their project quality and their considerable efforts.

Question six addressed the technical problems we had using the schools' outdated web browser, and the degree to which it bothered the students. When asked "Do you think these problems were big trouble?", 54.4% replied that it was a little trouble, but they didn't mind. 22.8% responded that they had no problems, and an equal number reported big problems.

Question seven sought qualitative data about what the students liked and didn't like about the multimedia assignments. Listed below is a small sample of thirty-nine direct student perspectives (quotes) on the multimedia program. Some of the learner comments can be seen below:

- "It was difficult for me to make project 1. But I enjoyed making it. Thank you!"
- "We must always present programs before taking a test. Please give us an extension".
- "I don't want to show an audience my programs".
- "It was a fun program, and I enjoyed attempting to make a Voicethread, even if I didn't complete it".
- "パソコンのトラブルが少し面倒でも自分で文章を考えたりするのが勉強になるし楽しい" (The PC problems were troublesome, but it's fun to think of sentences by myself).
- "英語を話したり聞き取ることで楽しむことができた" (I enjoyed speaking and listening to English).
- "I don't like computer so I don't want to do such a English class".
- "日本語じゃないぶん難しいこともあったけどよかった" (It was difficult to do in English, but it was fun).
- "I could enjoy studying English. So I want to study English with computers".
- "自分で物語を作ったりするのがすごく楽しかった" (Making a story by myself was very fun).
- "少し大変だったけれどたまにはこんな授業もいいなあと思いました" (It was a little hard, but it is nice to have this kind of class once in a while).

- “It was little difficult for me, but it was nice”.
- “パソコンが壊れていたりセーブができなかったり結構困りました。でも最終的には成功出来てよかったです” (It was hard saving the projects on the computers, but it was good that I finally did it).

Discussion

This survey was intended to elicit both practical feedback as well as uncover the feelings of my learners about doing these assignments. Of course, technical problems with the dated school web browsers led to a lot of wasted time and frayed nerves, and that was to be expected. However, it appears that despite such shortcomings, the projects were well received. It was my intention to give the students a break from the regular course book and introduce them to something new, interesting, and hopefully attractive in their English lives. With any luck, some of them went back to the Xtranormal and Voicethread websites to experiment and create their own private projects, operating in English all the while.

These two assignments were my first attempt to introduce website technology into a large classroom environment, and as with many first attempts, success was limited. More preparation on my part might have eliminated or reduced the outdated web browser issue, which was probably the number one headache for students.

Also, the learners should have been made more aware of the purpose of such assignments, as part in parcel of the Ministry of Education’s goal of creating more multimedia savvy students in the future (Kaihara, 1996). Some did regard the work as fun, which in itself is not a bad thing. Many found the work quite challenging, as they needed to overcome both a language and a technical barrier. However, with plenty of support and extra time, all projects were completed to the satisfaction of the instructors.

Conclusion

Was this multimedia project a success? Was it manageable for both the teacher and the learners? Could more have been done to make the process smoother? The answer to all three questions is yes. The students generally enjoyed the break from the textbook and the format of the multimedia projects, despite the technical difficulties and the unavoidable student distain of homework. The time involved was much greater than preparing for regular classes, but the result was all the more rewarding.

The intent was to make this project a trail run for future opportunities to use multimedia in the language classroom, a chance for the students as well as the teacher to learn about the ups and downs, challenges and rewards of using internet technology to facilitate learning. In that regard, it was a success, as this instructor will be repeating the above two projects with future classes, using the experience and knowledge gained to introduce even more multimedia projects to English language students in the years to come.

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Appendix 1

国際 2 年生へ Sharing (E メール)your Xtranormal Project 1 Homework

Because of the problems with the school computers, we could not see your hard work in class. However, Mr. Hagan and I will still see your project by E-mail. Do not use a Momoyama school computer. Please follow the steps below. If you have any problems, you must tell/ask me today. 5F EP の職員室

Step 1. SIGN IN to Xtranormal as usual. Xtranormal.com

2. Click on **My Movies**. Select the project that you made.
3. Watch your movie again. Is it more that one minute?
4. Under the play button you will see Share. Click on **Share**.
5. In the Share window, click on **Email this Movie**.
6. Your PC E-mail program should open and begin. Please E-mail your project to me dougmeyer32@hotmail.com before 11 pm, Tuesday, September 29th.
7. In the E-mail Subject window, tell me your full name, class, student number and project title.

例: Subject: Ichitaro Tanaka 2-14-34. At the Restaurant.

Note:

If these steps do not work, let's try this way too. (もし上記の方法でうまくいかない場合は下記の方法をしてみてください)

1. Sign in to Xtranormal. Click My Movies. Watch your movie.
2. Copy the web link. The web link will look like this:
<http://www.xtranormal.com/watch?e=2009092...>
3. Open your E-mail (Yahoo, Google, etc.).
4. Paste the web link (その WEB アドレスを添付して下さい) on your message. Include your full name, class, number, and project title.
5. E-mail this web link to me dougmeyer32@hotmail.com and I will be able to see your project.

The use of computer mediated communication to reduce anxiety and increase willingness to communicate

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Reference data:

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Abstract

The proposed case study, which will attempt to examine the long term effects of computer mediated communication (CMC) in relation to affective factors, will be conducted over a 15-week period with an intact class of Japanese university students. Students will alternate between task-based conversation activities in both face-to-face (f2f) and CMC environments. Data collection pertaining to foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate will be collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) as well as coding discussions for length of utterance and turns taken. CMC activities will be conducted using the Language Education Chat System developed by Kanto Gakuin University.

Keywords: computer mediated communication (CMC), face-to-face (f2f), foreign language anxiety, willingness to communicate, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), socio-cultural factors

このケーススタディーでは、長期にわたる電子コミュニケーション「Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)」が情意要因が関わる環境の中でどのような効果をもたらすかを調査する。調査は日本の大学生を対象に実際の大学の授業で15週間、対面「face-to-face (f2f)」と電子コミュニケーション環境を交互に行ったタスクに基づく会話アクティビティーによって行う。データは、外国語不安については「外国語教室不安尺度 (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)」、コミュニケーション意欲については発言の長さ、発言回数によって収集する。CMCアクティビティーは、関東学院大学で開発された Language Education Chat System を使用する。

キーワード：電子コミュニケーション、対面対話、外国語不安、コミュニケーション意欲、外国語教室不安尺度、社会・文化的要因

Despite being the leading spender on English language education in the world (Dolan, 2001), the goal of establishing English as a national second language seems to have eluded the Japanese. In one measure of English language competence, the TOEFL iBT, Japan placed third lowest among Asian countries (ETS, 2008). In fact, the only countries that placed lower were Laos and Cambodia—some of the poorest nations in Asia. The inability of the Japanese to acquire adequate English communication abilities, despite years of formal schooling in the subject, has been blamed on a number of factors. Linguistic distance between Japanese and English language as well as the shortcomings of the Japanese education system seem to play important roles (Takanashi, 2001), but

Japanese cultural factors might also have an effect. In particular, cultural traits such as power distance (the degree to which of a society accepts inequality among individuals), uncertainty avoidance and fear of making mistakes due to loss of face may have an effect on anxiety associated with language learning and a student's willingness to communicate (WTC) in the target language (TL).

In recent years, research in the field of computer assisted language learning has shown that computer mediated communication can be used to increase students' WTC (Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006) and decrease foreign language anxiety (Arnold, 2007). Yet, little research has been conducted on how these positive results to language learning transfer when students are returned to f2f conversation environments. The following paper will attempt to examine current research in support of the following research question:

Will a reduction in state anxiety observed in first-year, intermediate level, Japanese university students due to the replacement of face-to-face conversation with computer mediated synchronous chat during task-based discussion activities, lead to an overall reduction in English language anxiety and an increase in their willingness to communicate in face-to-face discussion over the course of a scholastic semester?

Literature Review

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Horowitz, Horowitz, and Cope (1986) were the first to study anxiety specifically as it relates to foreign language learning. They differentiated FLA from general anxiety with the following definition, "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). They also hypothesized that FLA is related to performance anxiety in three areas: communicative apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and text anxiety (in Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). For the purpose of this critical review, communicative apprehension, especially as it relates to WTC, and fear of evaluation, exasperated by Japanese socio-cultural aspects of collectivist culture, are of a particular interest.

Communicative apprehension has been shown to manifest in the following ways: 1) difficulties speaking with a partner or in a group, 2) stage fright 3) receiver anxiety—fear of understanding what is being said (Horowitz, Horowitz, & Cope, 1986). The presence of communication apprehension may result in learners simply avoiding high-anxiety activities. Unfortunately, by avoiding communication one also avoids the positive effects associated with output in language learning (Swain, 1995).

Fear of evaluation also seems to play a significant part in increasing anxiety in FL students. This might be especially important in students that come from collectivist cultures where individual performance also reflects on the various in-groups of which the person is a member (Gudykhunst & Kim, 2003). The affects of this aspect of culture on language learning might be detrimental. Murphey (1998), quoting Beebe and Selinger in his commentary on teaching English in Japan, states, "When students hesitate to speak for fear of making mistakes, they interact less with others, and thus have fewer opportunities for learning." (p. 21). One aspect of collectivist culture that can increase fear of evaluation is the concept of face, which is particularly important in Asian cultures (Gudykhunst & Kim, 2003). Lebra states that Japanese protect face by avoiding behavior that might cause shame (in Gudykhunst & Kim, 2003). This could be

demonstrated in Japanese students' reluctance to participate in L2 communication activities or in answering questions in the L2 class when the certainty of a correct response is not assured.

Measuring Foreign Language Anxiety

In 1986, Horwitz stated that “research on the relationship of anxiety to achievement in a second language has been hampered by the absence of a validated measure of anxiety specific to language learning” (p. 559). Furthermore, she theorized that it was lack of a reliable measure of anxiety in the context of foreign language learning that prevented researchers from making definitive claims despite colloquial evidence of the relationship. In response to this need, Horwitz developed the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale. The assessment, which is self-reported, uses a 33 question forced choice format and attempts to measure FLA through the observation of avoidance behaviors and physical actions and symptoms (Horwitz, 1986). In addition, self-effacement and self-criticism, hostility, and monosyllabic responses are also monitored (Arnold, 1999). A follow-up study by Horwitz (in Horwitz & Young, 1991) validated the test by showing a negative correlation between foreign language class grades and anxiety. These results were then verified by MacIntyre and Gardner showing that as anxiety increases, foreign language performance decreases (in Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). Now, armed with a seemingly accurate, scientific method to measure FLA, teachers and researchers are better able to identify anxiety in the FL classroom and help students get past this debilitating issue.

Willingness to Communicate

The question as to why some students with high linguistic competence decide not to communicate in an L2 while other students, frequently with lower linguistic competence, utilize every opportunity to use their L2 knowledge has probably confounded teachers of foreign language since the advent of formal instruction. MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Conrod have defined WTC as “an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communication given the choice” (in Brown 2007, p. 157). Like anxiety, the possible causes of WTC seem to be dependent on a complex interconnection of factors. In an effort to conceptualize the factors that influence WTC, MacIntyre et al. constructed this Heuristic model:

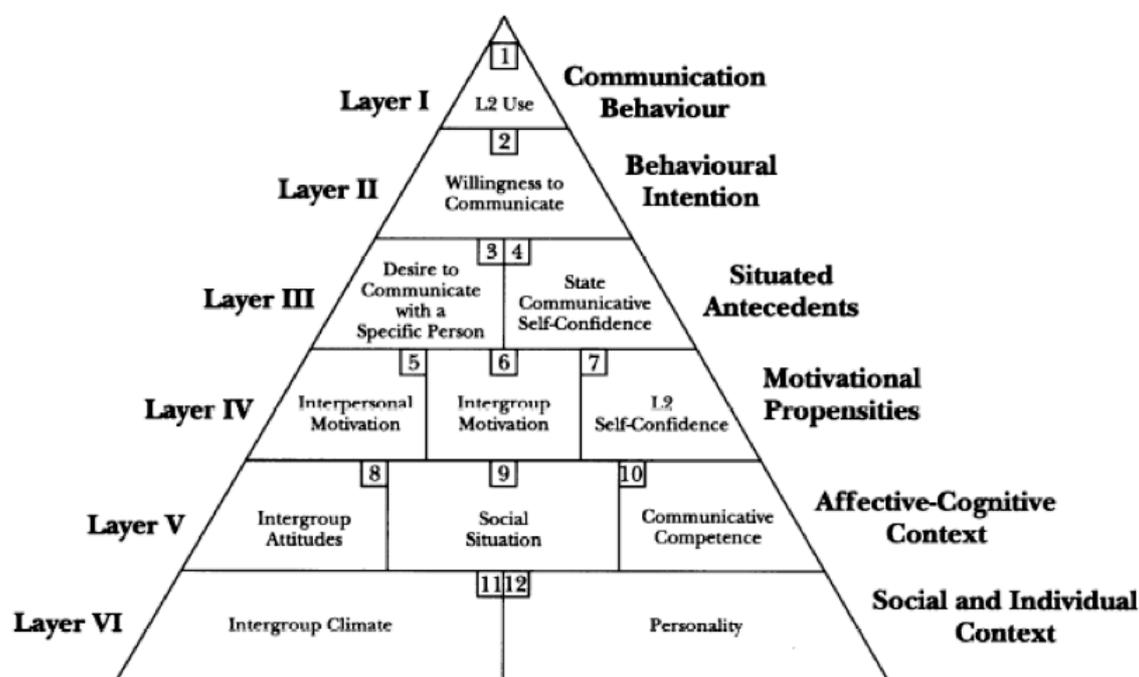


Figure 1. Heuristic Model of Factors Affecting WTC

(MacIntyre et al., 1998, p 547)

MacIntyre et al. (1998) state that the factors seen in Layers I-III in the diagram are situational factors which are constantly in-flux. Alternatively, Layers IV-VI represents enduring influences that are not readily changed by the situation. Commenting on two of the enduring factors found in the diagram, MacIntyre has said *intergroup climate and personality, exist even before the individual is born because they capture enduring intergroup and genetic influences handed down from one generation to the next. The individual has little influence over these factors, and generally he or she plays a somewhat indirect role in language behavior* (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 567).

Considering the affect these factors might have on the individual learner, it might be important to understand the various cultures that produce them. For example, a study of Chinese ESL learners by Wen and Clement (2003) showed that low WTC in this group was heavily influenced by Chinese cultural views of learning; many of which are deeply rooted in Confucian philosophy.

In contrast, situational factors seem to be related to the psychological concept of volition. According to MacIntyre (2007), “The concept of volition has the potential to organize multiple, competing motivational, cognitive, and affective influences on specific observable actions by the learner” (p. 569). In regards to the changing nature of situational factors, one qualitative study conducted by Kang (2004) showed that WTC

can fluctuate dramatically even during a single conversational situation. These fluctuations were influenced by the psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility and security and were further influenced by situation variables such as topic, interlocutors and conversational context.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Wen and Clement (2003) have stated that socio-cultural factors are an important determiner of levels of WTC especially in Asian students. In addition, factors such as collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and loss of face and the relationship of these factors to Asian culture might also play a role in explaining high levels of FLA. This seems to be especially true of Japanese students because of the meticulously structured and rule-oriented society from which they come. Commenting on Japanese society before the Second World War and the lasting effects of this cultural heritage, De Mente (1997) stated the following:

One of the best ways to imagine what life was like in Japan's upper classes before the introduction of democracy into the country by American-led Occupation forces in 1945/46 is to think what it would be like to live on a stage that covered your whole world, playing a role in which everything you said and did was precisely scripted. If you did not follow your script exactly, in behavior as well as dialogue, you would be criticized for even the smallest lapse and punished for more conspicuous departures from your role. Keep in mind also that you could not walk off the stage or change roles (De Mente, 1997, p.106).

Considering the above it may become easier to understand the profound effect that culture might have on the individual language learner and, the importance of understanding these cultural factors in dealing with affect in the foreign language classroom.

Computer Mediated Communication

CMC has been seen by many researchers to be the cause of a paradigm shift in foreign language learning and teaching (Salaberry, 2000). Though Salaberry asserts that there is a lot of research that needs to be conducted and questions that must be answered before this statement can be proven he does agree that CMC has many benefits to both learners and teachers. The proposed benefits of CMC over more traditional communication is an increased access to information through online databases, increased opportunities for communicative exchange with native and near-native speakers and increased functional demands on language exchange. Jamieson and Chapelle (2008) add to this list, including the fact that CMC takes place predominantly in text, which has some additional advantages in regards to language learning. Also, because of the ubiquitous nature of CMC found in most students' personal lives—e-mail, text messaging, blogs—it is easy to convince students that practicing English through electronic communication is important to the development of practical English skills (Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008).

The benefits of using text-based chat over oral CMC over f2f interaction may be found in the fact that written conversations allow students to process language at a slower pace with more time for reflection and revision (Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008). In addition, text-based communication provides learners and teachers with a record of conversations that can be used for further evaluation of a student's linguistic ability.

Several studies cited by Chapelle and Jamieson reinforce the benefits of written chat over other forms of CMC or f2f communication. For example, De la Fuente, who compared oral f2f communication with written synchronous CMC, found that students using written communication were better able to learn the vocabulary associated with their learning tasks (in Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008). In addition, one surprising study by Skykes (in Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008) showed that students who participated in written synchronous chat as opposed to oral CMC or f2f communication increased oral communication ability to a greater degree.

By far, it seems the greatest benefit achieved through CMC is in reduced anxiety and increased WTC. Freiermuth and Jarrell (2006) have said that CMC “gave students an opportunity to express themselves without being inhibited by the teacher, other students or a plethora of other elements that might minimize the effect of the experience” (p. 191). In their study, they found that students overwhelmingly preferred computer mediated synchronous chat as opposed to f2f communication for accomplishing task-based discussion activities. The majority of the students seemed to prefer this mode of communication because of the seeming distance between interlocutors and decreased feelings of immediacy in communication. Freiermuth and Jarrell hypothesized that this form of communication was particularly helpful for Japanese students in that it reduced anxiety and increased WTC due to reducing the effects of certain socio-cultural factors unique to Japanese learners that seem to hinder language learning.

In support of Freiermuth and Jarrell’s (2006) finding, several researchers (Arnold 2007; Roeds, 2003; Warschauer, 1996) have found that both synchronous and asynchronous CMC produces a low stress learning environment. Arnold has proposed that CMC is perceived by students as a low-stress learning environment for two reasons. The first reason can be found in the anonymous nature the environment. Secondly, learners are able to participate in the conversation with less urgency. In fact, the urgency to which students are exposed can easily be manipulated in a CMC environment by using synchronous (more urgent) or asynchronous (less urgent) communication. In addition, CMC technologies allow for communication using text or voice or even a combination of the two as well as the ability to augment voice or text communication with visual support such as video or pictures. Visual support might be helpful in that it provides paralinguistic—body language, facial expressions, intonation and pausing—and extralinguistic—cues of setting and number of participants—information that can be lacking in voice or text only communication (Mandelson & Ur, in Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008). All of these factors demonstrate the ability of CMC to provide students with a means of affective and instructional scaffolding (Roeds, 2003) that can easily be implemented by teachers with the varied technologies that have become available.

The “Carry-Over Effect”

Arnold’s (2007) study was the first to look at what he termed the “carry-over effect”—will a reduction in state anxiety that is usually observed in CMC “carry-over” to f2f communication activities? His study showed that repeated exposure to communication both in f2f or using CMC would not only reduce temporary anxiety levels but would have the desired carry-over effect of reducing “students’ general predisposition to anxiety in oral communication situations” (2007, p.482).

Unfortunately, Arnold's study seems to be limited in that it only studied individuals with low to moderate anxiety levels. In addition, findings of this study are difficult to extrapolate to the study proposed in this critical review of literature because the participants for Arnold's research were US students in a German language class. Considering, the unique socio-cultural factors present in Japanese university students and linguistic and social distance factors between Japanese and English and the culture of English speaking countries, it seems possible that different conclusions might be reached.

Methodology of Proposed Research Study

Participants

First-year, intermediate level, native Japanese speaking university students.
Approximate size of sample is n=30.

Design

Case Study - Qualitative & Statistical Analysis

Duration

15 weeks - the length of a typical university semester

Materials

Access to computer lab with an Internet connection

Methodology

The semester will be divided into three sessions for the purpose of this study. During the initial four weeks of the semester, students will take part in f2f task-based discussion activities. The second session, which will be seven weeks in length, will allow students to participate in similar discussion activities using the Language Education Chat System (L.E.C.S.). During the final four weeks of the semester students will return to discussion activities using f2f communication.

Data Collection

At the beginning of the term, students will be administered the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) - excluding questions irrelevant to this study concerning test anxiety - to determine students baseline FLA. The test will be re-administered following each session - weeks 4, 11 and 15—in order to assess the effects of the communication medium on anxiety and, in week 15 to observe whether these affects carry-over when students return to f2f discussions. WTC will be assessed by recording the discussion sessions between students in both the f2f and CMC environment while coding for length of utterance and turns taken (this information is automatically done for the CMC sessions using L.E.C.S.). Finally, an open-ended questionnaire will be completed by students, in Japanese, to gauge experience with the mediums of f2f and CMC during the course of this academic term. Survey information will be used by the researcher for qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis

The Likert-scale used by the FLCAS will be used to give an overall anxiety score.

Using these scores, mean and mode will be calculated in order to provide an accurate picture of the participants in relation to FLA. Most importantly, gain will be calculated to show how FLA is affected during the course of the study. Information concerning length of utterance and numbers of turns taken will also be assessed using statistical analysis in relation to the mode of communication. Once again, gain will be important in analyzing if the communication environment will affect WTC during the term and in assessing the validity of the carry-over effect. Finally, answers to the open-ended survey will give additional information and validation to the statistical data. This might be seen, for example, in a positive experience associated with a particular medium, which Freiermuth and Jarrell (2006) contended enhanced WTC in that particular environment during their qualitative survey analysis.

Conclusion

The above proposal for research will attempt to shed some light on little researched yet important aspect of the relationship between computer mediated communication in Japan. Still, it is important to understand that this research proposal is a case study, and it is not expected to be extrapolated to Japanese EFL students as a whole, but rather to provide preliminary data about the use of CMC in reducing FLA, and increasing WTC and the carry-over of these factors to the f2f environment. The hope would be that these data would serve as a starting point for further studies on this subject and contribute in a small way to the teaching of English as a foreign language in Japan.

Biodata

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How to transform second language learners into interactive corrective feedback providers

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Abstract

This paper reports on classroom activities designed for an experimental study in which the effectiveness of peer interaction and corrective feedback was investigated. In the study, Japanese university-level learners of English ($N = 87$, in two required classes) were taught how to provide corrective feedback to each other during meaning-focused dyadic activities in an effort to help them develop accurate and fluent speaking skills. In addition to describing the lesson plans, we report on how we managed the classes in the way that allowed students to engage in communicative interaction.

Keywords: foreign language learning, Second Language Acquisition, peer interaction, corrective feedback, fluency development, classroom management

本稿は第二言語学習者に修正フィードバックの出し方を教えるという実験的研究に用いられたタスクの詳細をレポートする。実験においては、大学生の英語学習者 87 人（2 クラス）が参加した。学習者はコミュニケーション重視の二者間で行うアクティビティを与えられると同時に、お互いの文法的誤りを指摘し合う方法を教えられた。事前事後テスト比較の結果、発話における流暢さ・正確さ共に発達が見られた。本稿はこれらのアクティビティが実際どのように行われたかに加え、我々が 40 人以上の典型的なスピーキングのクラスを、どのようにコミュニカティブな環境に設定したかを報告する。

キーワード：外国語学習、第二言語習得、生徒間インタラクション、修正フィードバック、流暢さの発達、クラスルーム・マネージメント

Over the past four decades, many foreign language classes have started to implement Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, in many classrooms, teachers and students still focus predominantly on developing grammatical or translation skills following the grammar-translation methods. Although CLT entails some problems (e.g., exclusive focus on communication and thus abandonment of grammatical development in the case of extreme CLT), it is certain that communicative classes are necessary given that input, interaction, and output are required elements to acquire communicative competence that is required in the real world context outside the classroom. In the present study we used activities among students, as opposed to teacher-student interaction, as an alternative communicative context. Peer interaction has potential both theoretically and pedagogically: Psycholinguistic, psychological, and sociocultural research has shown its effectiveness for second language (L2) development. Considering that there are more than 40 students in many foreign language classes, peer interaction has the potential for students to facilitate speaking practice. However, peer interaction should be appropriately guided by the teacher because it has certain weaknesses, one of which is lack of focus on form. That is, unless learners are taught how to interact with each other, they may lose important learning opportunities.

This study was motivated to reconcile the above weaknesses of peer interaction in foreign language classrooms; the classroom intervention was designed to (a) help learners focus on communication primarily, but also, (b) encourage them to shift their attention to linguistic forms at the same time. This was done by giving them fluency-focused communicative activities and by explicitly teaching them how to provide corrective feedback to each other. In this project, various outcomes of such intervention were examined including (a) pre- and posttests to measure accuracy (overall accuracy) and fluency (unpruned and pruned speech rates) development, (b) pre-, midpoint, and posttests to examine learners' changes in their interactional patterns, (c) pre- and post questionnaires to investigate their perceptions about communicative classes and peer interaction, and (d) selected interviews to conduct in-depth analyses on their attitudinal changes over one semester. In this paper, instead of reporting the results from these measurements, we focus on the classroom activities we designed to

transform learners into corrective feedback providers to give practitioners a detailed guide to replicate the activities.

Review of literature

Communicative language teaching and foreign language learning

The cardinal problem in many foreign language classrooms is the difficulty to make classrooms communicative. In the 1970s, L2 teaching practice experienced a dramatic shift when the idea of CLT first emerged (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 1991; Stern, 1992), and today, CLT with an exclusive focus on communication is still believed by many to be the ideal teaching method (Chowdhury & Ha, 2008). However, CLT and its implementation have encountered many problems related to sociopolitical environments entailing the idealization of Anglo-centric language and culture (Miyagi, Sato, & Crump, 2009), educational cultures (Nolasco & Arthur, 1990), and teachers' inability to conduct communicative classes (Butler, 2004).

Students also face problems with CLT. In a culture where teachers and students have clear hierarchical relationships, students often prefer to sit passively listening to what the teacher says. For those students, classrooms are expected to be teacher-centered, and they think their active participation in class is inappropriate or not valued (Li, 1998). Related to this is high foreign language learning anxiety which hinders communicative interaction between students and the teacher (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Korst, 1997). In these contexts, therefore, teachers and learners have to make the best use of whatever they have around them to create a meaningful practice environment.

Research on peer interaction

Since the late 1980s, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have investigated how L2 learners interact with each other. In this line of research, many studies have found that peer interaction has certain advantages. For instance, learners feel more comfortable in peer interaction, and in their comfort zone they tend to engage in communication and work on communication breakdowns more (i.e., negotiation for meaning). Varonis and Gass (1985) attributed this result to learners' perception of "shared incompetence." Sato and Lyster (2007) confirmed that learners' comfort level is a key deciding factor in their psycholinguistic interactional moves. By conducting in-depth interviews after dyadic activities, they found that, on the one hand, learners

were under pressure when interacting with native speakers (NSs) because they believed that their English was “broken” English and NSs’ English was “perfect” English. On the other hand, while working with their peers, they thought they had more time to decide what to say and felt much more comfortable to test their linguistic hypotheses (see Swain, 1985).

Learners can be good feedback providers, too; that is, they can signal when they do not understand something that their partner said. In Sato and Lyster’s (2007) study, learners provided a better type of feedback significantly more often than NSs did. It was also found that a modification of the initial erroneous utterance (i.e., modified output) occurred significantly more often in peer interaction than in learner-NS interaction. Soler’s (2002) comparison between learner-learner and learner-teacher interaction revealed that learners employed more requesting strategies with each other than when they interacted with the teacher. Hence, it can be said that if production practice is viewed as essential for language acquisition, peer interaction indeed has strength providing vast learning opportunities.

Finally, it has been reported that learners sometimes self-correct their erroneous utterances without being given any feedback, and research has found that this move can lead to L2 development. Kormos (2006) argued that self-corrections represent noticing of the gap between what a learner wants to say and what he or she actually can say, a process which contributes to L2 development (Schmidt, 1994). Also, producing self-corrections is equivalent to producing comprehensible output which facilitates interlanguage development further (Swain, 1985). Shehadeh (2001) found that 93% of self-initiation led to modified output; that is, learners frequently noticed errors in their utterances on their own and also corrected many of them. Considering that this move can be observed more in peer interaction than in learner-NS (Sato, 2007) or learner-teacher interactions (Buckwalter, 2001), learners tend to monitor their own speech more when interacting with each other. It can be said, therefore, that self-initiated modified output is an interactional move made frequently by learners in classrooms, and peer interaction accelerates this beneficial move.

Peer interaction does have weaknesses. For example, learners are usually not comparable to NSs in terms of the provision of input quantitatively and qualitatively; moreover, these learners can provide incorrect input to each other. That is, there is a possibility that peer interaction can facilitate fossilization, meaning that they could learn

inaccurate grammatical knowledge from each other. However, research to date has not supported this concern. Bruton and Samuda (1980) observed that the directionality of learners' error treatment sequences during peer interaction was from incorrect to correct, but not vice-versa. Another belief regarding peer interaction is the limited flow of communication: non-native interaction is generally thought to be slow with frequent pauses. However, research has shown an imbalanced number of utterances when learners interact with NSs in contrast to collaborative interaction in peer interaction. That is, during interaction with NSs, NSs may speak dominantly, initiate negotiation sequences by asking questions, and answer their own questions before learners do. Sato (under review) revealed that L2 learners' utterances contained greater density (i.e., longer Mean Length of Utterances and more verb types) and more grammatical complexity when interacting with each other than when interacting with NSs.

A somewhat more convincing argument regarding the weaknesses of peer interaction is the learners' attention to form. While learners are able to engage in negotiation for meaning and to provide interactional feedback to each other, the extent to which they deliberately point out each others' grammatical errors seems to be low. That is, without a teacher's assistance or "push," learners tend to focus on completing a given task using any kind of communication strategy, including simplified language only with words and body language which then can be followed by simple acknowledgements such as "yes" or "no" (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Foster's (1998) classroom observation data also revealed that to save face, many students were unwilling to indicate language problems as it would make them feel or look incompetent. She claimed that "uncoached negotiation for meaning is not 'alive and well' in the classroom" (p. 19).

The quality of peer feedback may be viewed as another weakness. Notwithstanding the finding that learners actually can provide constructive feedback, their feedback tends to be simple segmentation of erroneous utterances. That is, when they encounter a communication problem, they simply repeat part of the problematic sentence to show that they did not understand (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996). This type of feedback is less effective than teachers' feedback because it does not provide information regarding what the feedback is for and thus lacks the force to push learners to correct a particular linguistic form (Toth, 2008). Where the goal is successful communication, learners tend to direct their attention toward meaning rather

than form.

Finally, learners' perception of their classmates or peer interaction itself can be detrimental to the effective interaction needed for L2 development. Nunan (1989) discussed the impact of students' orientations on L2 learning (e.g., their attention and effort), in what he called a "hidden" agenda as opposed to "official" agendas of the language program or teacher. For instance, for peer interaction activities to work, those which teachers hoped would generate productive and cooperative interaction between learners, the hidden agenda needs to correspond to the official agenda. Unfortunately, studies indicate that learners often do not consider peer activities to be useful because they do not believe in their partners' linguistic abilities (Anderson, 1993). Therefore, even if peer feedback is effective for language development, it is unlikely that learners will autonomously employ the technique.

In sum, perhaps the most prominent disadvantage of peer interaction is the frequency and quality of feedback. If learners become capable of providing feedback indicating not only a comprehensibility problem (negotiation for meaning), but also a grammatical problem (negotiation of form), peer interaction could provide a more constructive context for language development. Although some studies have identified negotiation for form in peer interaction (Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Ohta, 2001; Sato & Lyster, 2007), the claim that students can autonomously work on linguistic problems is unwarranted by the results because of the low frequencies of such instances. In the present study, students were taught how to provide corrective feedback to each other to overcome these weaknesses and the effectiveness and feasibility of the intervention in the classroom context were examined.

Present study

Context

The current research focuses on the Japanese university foreign language learning context. English is a compulsory subject through junior-high and high school (Grade 5 and 6 students will be required to study English from 2011), and traditional grammar-translation methods are still mainstream in the schools. However, university-level English education can help students learn to develop spontaneous production skills using this existing grammatical knowledge. The present study focuses on students who have already acquired adequate grammatical knowledge for two

reasons: first, these students are fairly representative of foreign language learners in Japan, and second, these students are most suitable for testing skill acquisition theories which explain the gradual shift of knowledge types from declarative to procedural. That is, they are ideal for investigating the effects of peer interaction and corrective feedback on the development of spontaneous production skills requiring automatized knowledge (Anderson, 2005; DeKeyser, 2007).

Two classes, each of which with more than 40 students, were involved in the study. Throughout one academic semester (13 weeks), the classes were taught by two instructors (the authors) and were conducted strictly in English. Each class was 1.5 hours in length, held once a week with approximately 50 minutes devoted to the activities described in the following sections.

Corrective feedback

In this study, learners were taught a strategy to bring their attention to form during communicative activities, namely, how to provide corrective feedback (CF) to each other. CF is a teacher's interactional move that follows inaccurate production by learners. This technique falls into the framework of form-focused instruction. It was originally developed to support Canadian immersion students to help them develop accuracy in their L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Lyster, 2004). CF has been shown to be effective, and currently there is agreement that it is a powerful teaching technique (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Spada & Tomita, 2010). CF can take various forms, but it is basically categorized into two types: (a) providing the correct form by reformulating the error (i.e., recasts) and (b) withholding correct forms while offering learners an opportunity to self-correct (i.e., prompts). The two types of CF are illustrated below.

Example 1 – Recasts

Student: Well. Cinderella was such an, such a simply girl that she never knew
what is waiting for her.

Teacher: What was waiting for her. Next picture.

(from Yang & Lyster, 2010)

Example 2 – Prompts

Student: She goed to the arena but the game was over.

Teacher: She goed to the arena?
(from Lightbown & Spada, 2006)

The students in the two classes in the present study were taught, practiced, and used either recasts or prompts. More specifically, students in one class were instructed to give the correct forms whenever their partner made a grammatical error, while students in the other class were trained to ask for clarification (e.g., *Pardon?*) or to give metalinguistic feedback (e.g., *You need past tense.*) when they heard errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Instruction

No studies, to our knowledge, have examined whether it is possible and effective for language acquisition to transform learners into CF providers. As giving CF to other learners is new and possibly psychologically difficult for learners, it was important to follow a well-established sequence in order to successfully transform them into CF providers. This study adapted a framework from the strategy training literature to teach CF as a learning strategy. Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, and Robbins (1999) proposed the CALLA Instructional Framework consisting of Preparation, Presentation, Practice, Evaluation, and Expansion which we have operationalized as Modelling, Practice, and Use-in-Context. Peer interaction instruction serves as the “preparation” stage.

Peer interaction instruction

This activity was conducted at the beginning of the semester to provide a foundation for the subsequent activities. The goal of this phase was to raise students’ awareness of peer interaction and to help them understand its potential for language development. First, students were given a Learning Styles Checklist (adapted from Brown, 2001, see Appendix 1) in which they described their own learning styles. Each question presents a learning behaviour: The behaviours are linked to psychological and psycholinguistic theories that explain active participation in communication that helps develop spontaneous production skills. These behaviours include taking a risk when speaking, becoming more confident in L2 skills, and having a positive attitude toward others.

After students individually completed the checklist, they formed small groups and discussed the feelings underlying their responses. In our classes, the learners were

divided into groups of four. During the discussion time, we let them speak in Japanese to ensure that they could express their feelings accurately. After sharing their feelings in groups, we elicited some sample responses from the students.

Finally, the instructor explained why certain behaviours (i.e., A or B categories in the list) are beneficial for developing speaking skills. Examples of good learners for each category were presented so the learners could understand why engaging in practice leads to L2 development. It was important to draw their attention to the final item (i.e., When my classmate makes an error, I feel like helping him/her.) in the list related to CF behaviour, that is, providing CF to each other in order to collaboratively improve speaking skills.

Corrective feedback instruction

The CF instruction was divided into three phases: Modelling, Practice, and Use-in-Context. In our classes, modelling was done for the first three weeks. Practice and use-in-context activities were done every week during the semester.

Modelling

In the first phase, students learned what CF is and how to provide it. In our classes, modelling was done through teacher role plays. We explained that CF is effective for improving language skills. More importantly, we stressed the collaborative nature of CF in tandem with the other positive learning behaviours; that is, they should take risks and be confident when they speak without worrying about grammatical errors because their classmates will help them. Some important notes here are (a) the acting should be done slowly to let students follow the content, and (b) the role-play should be stopped after CF is provided to review the CF and to have them understand its purpose.

The role-play was the same as the one that the students did in the following activity (i.e., Practice: see Appendix 2). Therefore, it served as a model for both CF and the following activity. After the role-play, the teachers made errors in front of the class and asked them to provide CF. This activity took less than 10 minutes and was done until students grasped the idea and were able to provide CF to each other.

Practice

In the Practice stage, students were given opportunities to exclusively practice CF. The

class was divided into groups of three students, and they engaged in a role-play. They were given a scenario and a list of errors (see Appendix 2 for a sample scenario). Each scenario focused on one linguistic feature (e.g., past tense, future, modals, subject-verb agreement, and pronouns). Ten scenarios and error lists were prepared for the semester. First, students were given a few minutes of individual planning time to create their original stories that incorporated the given error sentences.

Each member was either (a) Speaker, (b) Feedback Provider, or (c) Observer. According to the scenario, the Speaker and Feedback Provider were to speak while the Observer monitored to give a report to the group on the errors detected and missed after the role-play was completed. We emphasized in the class that they needed to make their stories original by adding grammatically correct sentences, and that they should not stop and wait for CF after an error sentence so that the Feedback Provider would not know when to give CF. Ideally, at the end of each lesson, students reflected on and discussed both how the Speaker could improve (e.g., details of content, speed of speech) and how the Feedback Provider could improve (e.g., timing of feedback, accuracy of feedback).

Use-in-Context

The final segment of the CF instruction is called Use-in-Context in which students provided CF during a dyadic information exchange activity. While the Practice segment was rather decontextualized and focused on practice, often shifting attention exclusively to linguistic forms, this segment provided more authentic and communicative contexts to utilize CF. That is, their attention was focused primarily on meaning by providing them with authentic visual materials and by embedding an information-exchange element. This activity was designed to promote fluency development in which students were encouraged to provide as much CF as possible. The important elements for this activity were (a) using materials that could be divided into three segments; (b) dividing the class into three groups, each of which is in charge of one of the three segments; and (c) working in pairs.

In this activity, students worked in pairs and changed their partners multiple times. What was important in the activity was that when they talked to new partners they needed to tell them what their previous partners had said, all in the same amount of time. This meant that although the delivery time did not change, the amount of information they needed to communicate to their partners kept increasing. Therefore,

they had to first understand what their partner said to prepare for the next interaction with a new partner, and second, they needed to speak faster as the activity developed to include all of this information. The classroom was set up as shown in the diagram below.

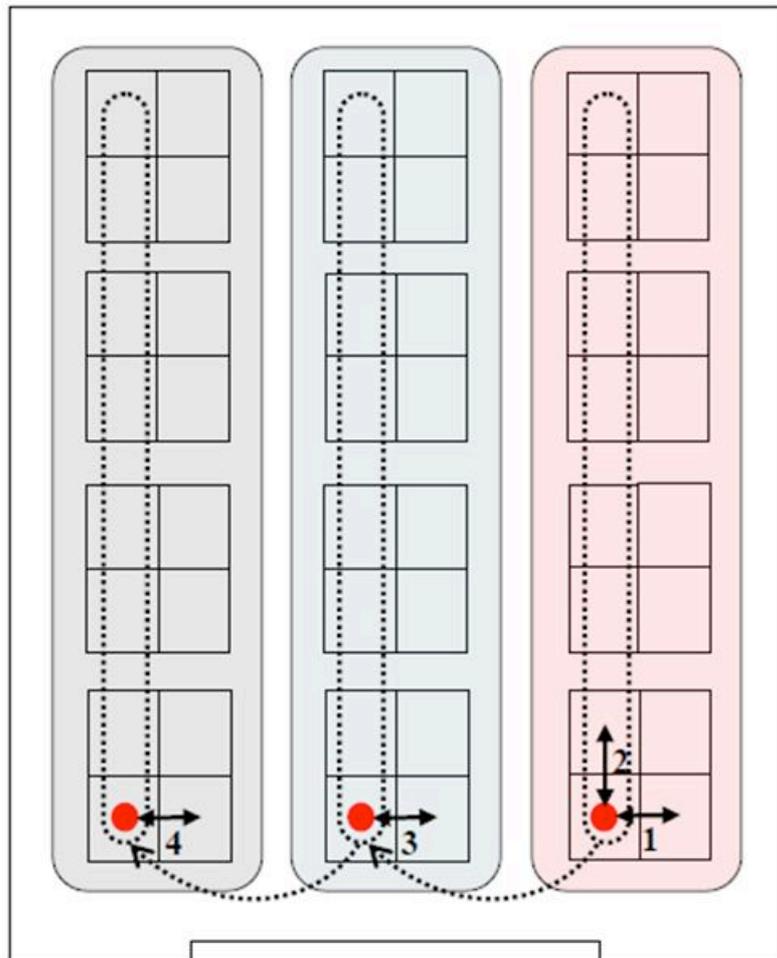


Figure 1. Classroom format

We will illustrate how this classroom format was used for the Use-in-Context stage (a movie unit). A 6-minute scene from a movie was divided into three parts (approximately 2 minutes for each part). For the first two 3-minute rounds, students practiced retelling what they had seen with students who were responsible for the same part. For the third and fourth rounds, students in the left rows of each group moved two rows to the left. In the third round, they exchanged information with students whose

parts were different from theirs. At this point, they had exchanged the ideas of eight people. Therefore, by the end of the final round, they had talked about all three parts of the scene with different descriptions done by 12 people. In this activity, (a) learners focused on meaning rather than form because they had different partners each time and had to convey the message first; (b) learners developed confidence as they repeated the same talk multiple times by adding new information each round; and finally, (c) learners engaged in repetitions which facilitated an automatization process (see DeKeyser, 2001; Nation, 1989). The students' attention was brought to linguistic form during this meaning-oriented activity on their own, rather than by the teacher. We observed a clear increase in the volume of speech each time they changed their partners and also saw them deepen their understanding of the materials. In addition, the frequency of CF increased as the students improved the skill throughout the semester (see Sato & Ballinger, under review).

Conclusion

This research was motivated by the consistently low speaking proficiency of Japanese learners of English. Bax (2003) has argued that language instruction in the world tends to follow what North American countries have chosen: Currently, CLT is the dominant pedagogy. Focusing on the Japanese context, Miyagi, Sato, and Crump (2009) have discussed the importance of considering context when importing pedagogy from a different setting. Holliday (1994) also has called for pedagogy that meets the needs of learners in a given context. In other words, there is no single instructional strategy that works for all contexts. All of these claims lead to a call for radical changes in foreign language programs, including re-designing curricula and developing more effective teachers who are attuned to each context. As a viable alternative to these long-term radical changes in education, we have endeavoured to maximize the potential of peer interaction to make the classroom more communicative. The results are clearly positive: students improved both accuracy and fluency in their oral production (see Sato & Lyster, under review). Teaching learners strategies that have been shown to contribute to language development in tandem with teachers' systematic guidance seems to be a reliable alternative while we await the major systemic changes that would provide foreign language learners with authentic communicative learning contexts in classrooms.

Bio data

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Appendix 1

Learning Styles Checklist

Check one box in each item that best describes you. Boxes A and E would indicate that the sentence is very much like you. Boxes B and D would indicate that the sentence is somewhat descriptive of you. Box C would indicate that you have no inclination one way or another.

	A	B	C	D	E	
1. I like to try out new words and structures that I am not completely sure of.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like to use only language that I am certain is correct.				
2. I feel very confident in my ability to succeed in learning English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel quite uncertain about my ability to succeed in learning English.				
3. I really enjoy working with other people in groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I would much rather work alone than with other people.				
4. When I make errors, I try to use them to learning something about the language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	When I make an error, it annoys me because that's symbol of how poor my performance is.				
5. When my classmate makes an error, I feel like helping him/her.	<input type="checkbox"/>	When my classmate makes an error, I just ignore it.				

Appendix 2

Role-play scenario and error list

Scenario 10 (Police report) – Past Tense	
<p>You witnessed a bank robbery. While you were at the bank, a robber suddenly came in with a knife and took money from the bank. A police officer is now interviewing you. You are asked to describe what you saw.</p>	
Error List	
Error	Correct
<p>I am withdrawing some money. The robber is wearing a mask. He has a knife. Everyone is scared. He says “give me the money.”</p>	<p>I was withdrawing some money. The robber was wearing a mask. He had a knife. Everyone was scared. He said “give me money.”</p>
<p>I am withdrawing some money. The robber is yelling. He puts the knife on the counter. The bank teller is killed. He runs away from the scene.</p>	<p>I was withdrawing some money. The robber was yelling. He put the knife on the counter. The bank teller was killed. He ran away from the scene.</p>
<p>I am withdrawing some money. A boy is screaming. He sees me. An old lady is kicked. He shoot the banker.</p>	<p>I was withdrawing some money. A boy was screaming. He saw me. An old lady was kicked. He shot the banker.</p>

The ability of a deaf Japanese university student to learn spoken English and take listening tests through lip-reading

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Abstract

The ability to learn English as an L2 in Japan is usually reserved for the able bodied with an above average motivation level. One deaf Japanese freshman student and her lecturers challenged this norm to allow the student to become part of the inclusive society. This was achieved through weekly lip-reading sessions, that improved not only the student's communicative competence, but also allowed her to sit TOEIC and TOEFL tests and participate in a foreign exchange program.

Key Words: deaf ESL students, inclusive society, lip-reading, needs analysis

日本で第二言語として英語を学ぶ能力は通常、身体的に健康であると共に学習意欲がより高い者が持っていると考えられる。ある耳の不自由な日本人大学一回生と彼女の英語講師達は、彼女が一般社会の一員に溶け込めるよう、この標準的な考えを覆そうと挑んだ。この試みは、読唇術を使った授業を通して毎週行われ、彼女のコミュニケーション能力を向上させただけでなく、TOEICとTOEFLテストの受験や留学プログラムへの参加も可能にした。

キーワード：耳の不自由な ESL 学生、読唇術、一般社会、

Learning English as an L2 in Japan is a challenge face by all Japanese at some point in their education. One deaf Japanese university student, who previously had been stereotyped as unable to learn spoken English, has worked to become part of the inclusive society (Kellet Bidoli, Ochse, & Bern, 2008). This student after entering university worked closely with lecturers to learn how to lip-read in English and communicative effectively in spoken English. Through lip-reading, and a desire to learn

this student was able to become a “normal” member of university English classes, improve her TOEIC score, and participate in an American university foreign exchange program for several months. This article will focus on how the student was able to improve her spoken English, and learn to lip-read and improve her TOEIC score.

Current Literature

With the number of foreign residents in Japan ever increasing (Ministry of Justice, 2000) and the Japanese government forging a policy to move from the expanding circle of English influence into the outer ring (McKay, 1996) through the introduction of English at the critical age (Fromkin, 1991), it is easy to imagine Japan having one of the most proactive English as a foreign language (EFL) systems in the world. However, even as English is considered the “foreign language” (Oishi, 1990) of Japan, the education system pays greater attention to the grammar translation method (Richards, 2001) of language learning, as the goal of students at the primary and secondary level is to pass tests rather than improve communicative competence.

The focus of literature with regards to deaf students in education (Marschark & Spencer, 2003) has been how deaf students can learn an L2 through the use of sign language, or how they can improve their writing skills in L2. Essays written by deaf learners have been said to be “indistinguishable” (Gerald & Clymer, 2007) from hearing students, which fits well with the previously mentioned grammar translation method of delivery. Yet Doughty and Long (2003) suggest the neurobiological, cognitive, developmental, sociolinguistic, and motivational factors in relation to hearing are understandably different and thus the spoken discourse of hearing and deaf students will inevitably differ.

Development of assessment material for deaf ESL students (Foster & Walter, 1992; Goldberg & Broadman, 1974) has focused on the visual channel rather than the acoustic (Tweney, Hoemann, & Andrews, 1974) in relation to delivery method. Whilst this is understandable when limited time and resources are considered, it does leave those who wish to be part of the inclusive society in isolation. These restrictions, coupled with the importance of learning English in Asian countries for the sake of future employment, has left those students with hearing impairments participating alongside their hearing counterparts with little or no assistance.

The Nippon Foundation of Japan (The Nippon Foundation) has helped fund the

Post Education Network in the United States of America (The Post Secondary Education Network, 2009) which is working to develop and provide state-of-the-art instruction to deaf students wishing to be in the inclusive society, yet these methods are still in their infancy and are yet to reach Japan.

Background and Method

The subject of this study was a Japanese university freshman in 2007 who is 95% deaf, meaning she has no ability to receive oral communication through her acoustic channel. She began her formal English L2 education on entering junior high school and at high school for a further three years. The subject was not born deaf, but lost her hearing before an age where her linguistic ability in L1 had developed and is the only member of her five-person family to have any hearing related difficulties.

Teachers of this student were informed in advance of her attendance in English classes for the first semester in 2007. The English department initially had concerns at this student's ability to participate and thus decided to conduct a needs analysis (Ferris, 1998). Once the faculty had met with the subject face-to-face, a brainstorming session was held where teachers expressed ideas on how best to teach English as an L2 to the student. Various methods of teaching were put forward including weekly lip-reading sessions. As no members of the faculty had any experience in this area, it was agreed that a reevaluation of teaching methods was to be administered at a later, unspecified date.

The lip-reading sessions consisted of a one-hour session per week where the teacher would practice reading passages from the students textbook with the student at first watching the teachers lips, reading the text, and finally speaking the text. During the speaking section the teacher could focus on the pronunciation of words, correcting any errors as they occurred. This would be repeated one or two sentences at a time. Lip-reading sessions also consisted of some phonetic training to help improve pronunciation and word practice.

Before TOEIC tests these sessions changed focus and were solely used to practice TOEIC questions. To make the practice sessions as real as possible the speaker attempted to read the questions at the same speed as they are in the test. For institutional TOEIC tests, the student again took them via lip-reading. The student was moved to a separate class for the listening section of the test and then asked to join other students

once the listening time had been completed. For mid-semester and end-of-semester tests, the listening section was administered via lip-reading. Again, the tests were conducted at the same speed as the listening test for the other students. No extra lip-reading sessions were held for this as it may have been seen as being bias towards the student.

Results and Discussion

The subject was originally placed in the second lowest level English class, as she was unable to take the placement test, there were concerns from members of the English Faculty about the student's ability to fit into higher-level classes. However, after mid-semester testing, the subject's scores in all four fields were in the top three of her class. From mid-semester of her freshman year the subject was promoted to a pre-intermediate level class even though her results suggested she should have been moved into an intermediate class. The subject again took tests at the end of the first semester and was once more moved to a higher-level class when her results topped the class in three out of the four disciplines, listening being the one class where the subject had a score just above the class average. This time she was moved to an intermediate class, which was the top class at the time.

During her freshman year this student took an institutional TOEIC test on two occasions, both the listening and reading sections. Her first score in June of 2007 was 190 points, and the second 270 points in October of 2007, an improvement of 70 points in four months. The student did not make the exact breakdown between reading and listening available. Whilst on a foreign exchange program in Felician College, New Jersey the subject was required to take TOEFL tests. On her arrival in August 2008 she scored 350 points, and at the end of her nine months of study she gained a score of 480 points. It should be noted that on both occasions she was not permitted to take the listening section of the TOEFL test.

The subject began her formal English L2 learning in the first grade of public junior high school. Here, no special arrangements to take her condition into consideration were made; she sat through the English grammar lessons and could complete them as required, because they were taught in her L1. Japanese English education places bias on the grammar-translation method, thus it is of little surprise that she could actively take part in this area. She also was required to sit through the listening parts of lessons but was not expected to take part in them, as obviously she

couldn't hear the CD. She got the answers for the questions of listening questions through copying down answers as they were given to the class on the blackboard or from answer sheets given to her. However, when it came to learning it is debatable whether she actually learnt anything from this process of just copying down answers. She did participate in class speaking drills, although because she was in a public junior high school class of 40 with only one teacher and no assistant, she was not and could not be awarded any special attention. During tests she was required to take the reading and writing sections of English tests but not the listening. Her High School life followed much the same pattern, except she transferred from a public to a private school during her first year for undisclosed reasons. The focus of the Japanese education at junior high school and high school level is to pass tests. Thus, as long as the subject was able to pass her English grammar tests and sit quickly through the listening ones, she would not be considered a disturbance to other students and could continue without causing ripple within the school community.

In 2007 when the subject entered university she was fortunate that the university opened in the same year, thus at the time there were on 204 freshman students at the university. This meant teachers had extra time to spend with the student, as the responsibilities that come with an established university were not yet entrenched. If the student had entered a more established university then she may have not been given the chance to learn English. Due to this extra time teachers, whilst having no previous experience or knowledge of teaching students with hearing impairments, were able to discuss how to teach English to the subject, perform a need analysis, and design specific activities to improve her L2.

Whilst conducting individual needs analysis with all students would be ideal, in reality it is not practical. However, due to the needs analysis conducted on this occasion teachers discovered that the subject could lip-read and speak English at a beginners level. Teachers were also somewhat surprised to see the subject only used lip-reading to communicate in Japanese. The subject has knowledge of sign language but has no desire to use it as to be seen using sign language is an outward sign of her not being part of in the "inclusive society."

Although teachers had no objections to teaching a student with hearing impairments, some expressed concern that other students might complain that too much time was being used to give special attention to her in class, thus effecting their learning

experience, whilst further faculty members believed the subject would lag behind other students in her ability, or she would be bullied by other students. The teachers decided to, on top of her four weekly English classes, to meet with her for one hour a week to practice lip-reading and pronunciation in English, the youngest teacher on the faculty was volunteered to undertake this responsibility.

The original fears of faculty members were quickly relieved. The subject sat at the front of class and watched, and participated actively during lessons. The subject quickly showed herself as the most diligent student in class, volunteering answers and opinions before her classmates, although proportionally the subject made more mistakes in her answers than those without hearing impairments, she demonstrated what dedication was needed to improve L2 communication competence. As the results previously discussed, this student quickly moved up through the class levels based on her desire to learn and test scores.

As with many universities, institutional based TOEIC tests were administered on regular occasions. When the subject indicated she wished to participate this brought about the problem of how to administer the listening section of the test to her. It was decided that reading the TOEIC script to the subject at test, or as close to test speed as possible was the best solution. Thus for three weeks prior to the TOEIC test the weekly lip reading practice sessions were used solely to practice TOEIC questions. This was beneficial to both the subject and instructor, as the student needed practice with TOEIC questions, and the instructor discovered via trial and error, which was the best was to administer the various parts of the TOEIC listening test.

Part one of the TOEIC test was the easiest to administer, as there is a picture followed by 3 short statements of which one is correct. This visual aid was beneficial for the subject as even if she was unable to receive information via lip-reading the picture enable her to make an educated guess. Part two (Appendix 1) of the TOEIC test was also relatively easy for both the instructor and subject as a short question or statement is followed by three short answers or replies. Each question in parts one and two could be administered in less than 20 seconds.

Parts three (Appendix 2) and four (Appendix 3) of the TOEIC test were more difficult to administer. Part three involves a series of conversations between two people and then three questions about each conversation. The subject found it difficult to comprehend the end of one persons utterance and the start of the other. This was due to

there being a single instructor administering the test and an over exaggerated pause between parts was unnatural. Teachers originally believed they could solve this issue by introducing a second instructor to read one of the parts, however it was decided this would not be fair to other test takers as being able to watch the conversation might allow the subject to see visual cues that are not available on the CD. A simple solution to this problem was to use (O) (X) cards (Diagram 1) that are usually used to indicate yes (O) and no (X) in quizzes. By converting the (O) to (A) and (X) to (B) the instructor could proceed with the conversation at natural speed and flip the cards when necessary.

エラー! 参照元が見つかりません。

Part four of the TOEIC test had a separate set of challenges from part three. In this section a short monologue is read out followed by three separate questions. For the instructor the main issue was keeping pace with the normal TOEIC speed, about 45 seconds to 1 minute per monologue. For the subject the difficulties were exacerbated. Students with no hearing impairments are able to read the questions whilst listening to the monologue. In contrast, the subject had to lip-read for 45 seconds to a minute, take in all the information, and then answer three questions in the allocated time.

In August 2008 the subject took part in a foreign exchange program at Felician College, New Jersey, an opportunity that only came fruition because of the work of the instructors in Japan to improve the subject's communicative competence. The subject's instructors in Japan shared information with their counterparts in the US on the best ways to teach the subject, and although no needs analysis or weekly lip-reading session were conducted the student continued to excel with a 130 point improvement on her TOEFL score. The subject was not allowed to undertake the listening portion of the TOEFL test.

Issues

The company that provides the institutional TOEIC tests does not provide a listening script of the test for commercial reasons. This meant the instructor administering the test had to transcribe the entire listening section of the test. This is an issue as it is not practical for instructors to do this frequently, and may see instructors unwilling to help students with disabilities. The instructor when reading the questions and answers will obviously know what the answer is. It is very important that the instructor keeps the same facial expressions for all answers and does not give the answer to the subject.

Both the official TOEFL and TOEIC test do not currently have provisions for those with hearing impairments, meaning the subject will never have the chance to get an official score that will reflect her true L2 ability, thus limiting her opportunities for future employment in Japan where a high score in TOEIC is sought by many employers. Although the subject has expressed a desire to use English in future employment, her lack of an official score and decision not to use sign language will count against her when it comes to any English speaking position.

Conclusion

Whilst many would believe that having a disability such as being deaf would make it impossible to learn how to speak English as an L2, this article has demonstrated how one Japanese freshman was, with some fortunate circumstances and dedicated instructors, able to increase her communicative competence. Although able to take institutional tests, and participate in a 9 month foreign exchange program in New Jersey, this student, under the current policy of test makers will be unable to gain an official TOEIC or TOEFL score that takes into account her full ability to communicate in English. This article has demonstrated that with some dedication on the part of the instructors and creativity with regards to delivering tests, this student was capable of competing with her peers with no hearing impairments. Unfortunately, as this market is small, the companies who make these tests may feel it is not economically worthwhile for them to invest in developing such tests and thus students such as the subject of this article may find themselves excluded from the “inclusive society.”

Bio data

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Appendix 1

Part 2 TOEIC Test example questions

(Adapted from Shin TOEIC TEST Speed Master, Vicki Glass)

11) Has the manager arrived yet?

a) I have no idea

b) I managed to go yesterday

c) No, it hasn't

12) Where should I put these files?

a) There are on the filing cabinet

b) I put them away

c) On the desk

Appendix 2

Part 3 TOEIC Test

(Taken from Shin TOEIC TEST Speed Master, Vicki Glass)

Dialogue

M: How are your plans for the trip coming along? Are you all packed and ready to go?

W: Not quite yet. I just found out that my passport will expire the day after tomorrow, so I will have to run to the passport office this afternoon to get it renewed. Not to mention I have a thousand other things to do today and tomorrow.

M: Is there anything I can help you with? I can't go to the passport office, but I can certainly help you around here.

W: That would be great, thanks. I have to input a load of data. Maybe you could do that

for me.

41) What are the speakers discussing?

- a) **The woman's test preparations**
- b) Their passports
- c) Their vacations
- d) The woman's data

42) What will the man most likely do for the woman?

- a) Go to the passport office for her
- b) Help her pack
- c) Give her some input
- d) **Do one of her duties at work**

43) What can be inferred about the woman?

- a) She has packed for her trip
- b) **She is in a rush**
- c) She doesn't like to travel
- d) She is busy inputting data

Appendix 3

Part 4 TOEIC Test

(Taken from Shin TOEIC TEST Speed Master, Vicki Glass)

Questions 71 through 73 refer to the following advertisement.

Come on down to Menotti's Restaurant and please your palate with some of the in-house specials we are offering this week only! On Monday, our chicken and rib plates are 30 percent off the regular price. On Tuesday our sirloin steak is only \$12.99 and includes all the trimmings. On Wednesday, you can save \$2.00 on any dish in the restaurant during lunch or dinner. And if seafood is what you're craving this week, come down on Thursday and take advantage of our special prices on lobster bisque and our popular perch with lemon butter sauce. Friday, Saturday and Sunday all our Italian dishes will be half-price, including our best selling prosciutto pasta.

- 71) What is the main purpose of this advertisement?
- a) To introduce in-house specials at a new restaurant.
 - b) To attract customers to a one-week sale**
 - c) To get customers for a pasta special
 - d) To announce new dishes that are discounted.

- 72) When will the Italian dishes be half-price?
- a) On Monday
 - b) On Tuesday
 - c) On Wednesday
 - d) On Friday, Saturday and Sunday**

- 73) What dish is the most popular at Menotti's?
- a) Sirloin steak
 - b) Lobster bisque
 - c) Prosciutto pasta**
 - d) Perch with lemon butter sauce

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Reference data:

Wright, M. (2010) Implementing authentic materials in the student-centered interactive EFL classroom. In K. Bradford-Watts, E. M. Skier & M. Walsh (Eds), *Pan-SIG 2010 Conference Proceedings*. Kyoto: JALT

Abstract

This paper, in three parts, will look at the role that authentic materials can play alongside commercial textbooks in developing student interest, reading and discussion skills. First, it will briefly discuss some of the thought processes involved when learners are faced with a reading or discussion task. Second, some of the advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom will be highlighted. Finally, it will also provide an example of a lesson plan currently used in my English communication classes at Doshisha University, which requires learners to research and lead discussion tasks using the authentic texts they have chosen.

本論は、第二言語学習環境において学習用教材と併用するオーセンティック教材が、学習者の関心、読解力、およびディスカッション・スキルの向上にどのような役割を果たしうるかを考察する。全三部構成の論考では、まず学習者がリーディングやディスカッションのタスクで直面する思考プロセスにいくつか触れ、教室内でのオーセンティック教材の使用に際する長所と短所とを詳述した後、筆者が現在同志社大学の英語コミュニケーションの授業で使用している教案を一例として紹介する。教案は、学習者がリサーチを経て自ら選定した読解用の生のテキストを素材として、ディスカッションをリードすることを求めるものである。

Keywords: authentic materials, schema, bottom-up processing, top-down processing, collaborative learning, scripted materials

オーセンティック教材、スキーマ、ボトム・アップ処理、トップ・ダウン処理、協調学習、学習用教材

For some time now in the field of second language study, there has been some debate regarding the types of class materials that are more appropriate for reading and discussion activities. The choices seem to be between authentic materials that are taken from authentic sources, such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, and, more recently, downloaded from the Internet, and those that are scripted either by the teacher or prepared especially from a textbook. On one hand, the argument is that the use of authentic materials can present students with opportunities to study English in a more realistic environment. In other words, authentic materials assist in the creation of situations and scenarios that learners may face in their every day life when using English. However, the other side of the argument is that these materials may perhaps introduce students to ideas and situations beyond their current level of language ability. In this case, materials that are scripted or prepared with some sort of focus or language target in mind may be considered more suitable.

Selecting the right resource, whether authentic or scripted, is by no means an easy task. Teachers need to consider many variables, including:

- How students process information from the selected resource
- The initial purpose or motivation for students to enrol in the class
- Other factors, such as sociological or cultural differences, that could influence the relevance of the selected resource for students.

Despite the current status of the authentic materials debate and these variables, this writer believes that it is important to include some examples of authentic materials as classroom resources in order to motivate students.

Literature Review

The Reading Process – Schema Theory

Teachers cannot select effective materials without considering what actually happens in the reading process. Until the 1960's, it was thought that reading is a "skill in which the reader passively absorbs what the writer has produced" (Kitao, 1989, p.1). The reader was thought to simply decode groups of letters into words, which were then joined to make phrases, and clauses, then eventually linking them together to make sentences and texts. This process was referred to as *bottom-up processing*.

However, in the 1960's researchers began to theorize that perhaps attention should be paid more to the person who was reading the text, not just on the grammatical relationships residing in the text itself. Goodman (1971), for example, rejects the notion of reading being a passive skill with a "precise process of perception and identification" (Sequera, 1995, p.1) suggesting that it is more like a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1987, p. 219), in which the reader is able to re-construct meaning using parts of the text as clues to fill in any missing gaps using a *top-down processing* approach. Goodman (1971) explains, the "reader reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display" (In Carrell & Eisterhold, 1987, p. 219). Reading is now regarded as being an interactive process, involving "the reader, the text, and the interaction between the reader and the text" (Rumelhart, 1977, in Singhal, 1998, p.1), in which both *bottom-up* and *top-down processing*, compliment each other.

One theory developed to help explain this interaction is *schema theory*, according to which, the text acts only in providing directions for the reader, so they can "construct meaning from their own cognitive structure" (Hadley, 2001, p. 147). In other words, the reader relies on his or her *schemata* or "preexisting concepts about the world and about the text to be read" (Barnett, 1988, p.2), to make sense of these directions.

There are two main types of schemata: *formal* and *content*. *Formal schemata*, is the background knowledge that the reader has in relating to the different type or genre of the text (Singhal, 1998). This includes knowing how the pieces of the textual information fit together by taking into account such factors as the structural configuration, vocabulary, level of grammar, and the order that these details are likely to appear: Rules often learnt through schooling (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1987; Singhal, 1998). *Content schemata* on the other hand, is the background knowledge a person may have about the content or subject matter of the text, including, for example, such things as knowledge of the era and cultural-settings (Barnett, 1988, p.2).

For teachers of second languages, understanding how *schema theory* works in relation to the selection of reading texts is crucial. As Carrell (1984) explains, "An ESL reader's failure to activate an appropriate schema during reading may result in various degrees of non-comprehension" (p. 333).

Authentic Materials

In recent years, it has become common for authentic materials to be used in second

language classrooms. In addition to providing opportunities for students to enhance *schemata*, there are a number of other advantages to using authentic materials in the classroom, including:

- Students are exposed to “real life” situations
- Students and teachers can keep up to date with current trends in the target language, such as slang, sayings, and idioms
- Students may gain confidence by experiencing language in a practical way
- Students gain cultural awareness of the target language, and, in some cases, also have the opportunity to understand how their own culture is viewed by others
- Students practice micro skills such as “skimming” and “scanning”, by looking for key words, and ideas
- Authentic materials offer variety and are available everywhere
- Authentic materials help to add life to the class, as well as to stimulate and motivate students (Karpova, 1999; Martinez, 2002).

Contrary to this is the argument, which suggests that students may tend to panic or be afraid they will encounter some level of difficulty when faced with an authentic text. This could have the opposite desired effect of leading to a decrease in motivation for learning especially in the case of beginners.

Despite this, the case for introducing authentic texts early in language instruction is quite strong. As Dublin and Olshtain (1986) state, “As soon as possible, however, the use of authentic materials should become the objective, even if some adapting or abridging is necessary” (p. 151). Spelleri (2002) concurs, “Exposure to authentic language means that prediction skills will be honed and that learners will improve their strategies for dealing with uncertainty” (p. 17).

Example Lesson

Although authentic materials can play an important role in the foreign language classroom, it is possible to also incorporate scripted materials. The following lesson plan illustrates how this can be achieved.

Objectives

This lesson was taught in two 2nd year English elective courses at Doshisha University

over 4 weeks as one assessment item as part of a 15-week semester. In both classes, there were 25 students whose English abilities varied from low to intermediate. The main objectives of these courses were:

1. To focus on global issues
2. To discuss and work through problems concerning the global community
3. For students to research and present about their own topics or interests relating to the above

Materials

One of the main attractions of this approach is the activity should only take 45 minutes which is half the time of a regular University lesson of 90 minutes. This allows time for the teacher to work conjunctly either with another text, or implement their own materials. For these particular classes the following textbook was used:

Peaty, D., (2010), *You, Me and the World: A Course in Communicative English for Global Citizenship*, Tokyo: Kinseido

In this case, the theme for each week is taken from the text and from the students' own interpretation or area of interest relating to the theme. Themes included such topics as:

- Waste and Recycling
- Endangered Species
- Rain Forests
- Global Warming
- Energy
- Human Rights
- Peace and Conflict
- Refugees
- Developing Countries
- Gender Issues

Procedure before Class

Step 1.

Students are placed into groups of four people the previous week. One leader from each group is assigned and instructed to research and to find a short article from the Internet relating to the coming week's theme and then be prepared to present their findings in small groups in class the following week. The article should be around 300 words (Figure 1) and should be no longer than 12 months old. This is to ensure that the article is current and that enough time is allowed for the students to fully digest the article.



<http://www.peachygreen.com/wildlife/stop-elephant-poaching-ban-ivory-trade>

Figure 1. Internet Article relating to the week's theme.

Step 2.

After finding a suitable article, the students then need to convert the text onto an A4 page (Figure 2). This can be easily achieved by pasting the article into a word document.

STOP ELEPHANT POACHING: Ban the Ivory Trade

Twenty years ago, the international community bonded together to ban ivory trade. Yet wildlife officials in Kenya still discover African elephant slaughter at the hands of poachers due to some exceptions to the ban. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), officially banned ivory trade in 1989, but also has permitted countries to periodically participate in ivory sales. In Kenya's national parks, scores of elephants have been killed for their tusks. Just in the past two years, hundreds have been slaughtered. Recently, Kenyan Wildlife Authorities seized \$1 million of ivory tusks that had been bound for Asian markets. Sadly, ivory is still in demand, and that demand is rising. Unless and until ivory sales are made illegal worldwide – without exception – the barbaric elephant poaching will continue, threatening the survival of the African elephants.

Despite the 20-year ivory trade ban, the permitted legal ivory sales stand as a gaping loophole. Not surprisingly, with some sales classified as "legal," demand for ivory has been rising, even as the numbers of African elephants are in decline. The African elephant has a current estimated population of about 500,000, down from about 1.2 million in 1979. That's over 50% decline in just 30 years.

Black market prices for ivory drive the continued elephant poaching, with hundreds of the beasts being killed each year only for their tusks. The prices for the rare commodity are astounding: poachers can be rewarded with as much as \$3,000 per kilogram of ivory on the black market.

To state the obvious: If there were no legal market for ivory, demand for it would go down.

Ivory has long been used for a number of familiar goods, including piano keys, billiard balls and Scottish bagpipes – even false teeth! Today, of course, synthetic ivory substitutes are used instead. Amazingly, ivory from extinct mammoths is sometimes used too, although there are limited supplies (of course), and because it does not threaten the survival of a living species, it is tolerated.

So why have there been exceptions to the ban on elephant ivory trade? CITES carved out limited legal sales in part due to demand of African countries that claim the trade is necessary for economic reasons and to reduce unchecked animal populations. However, most of the money made from the legal sale of ivory does not help the residents of these nations. Instead, vendors and middlemen are the ones getting rich. Still, the UN-backed CITES partially lifted the ivory trade ban in 2002, in order to allow a few nations to export limited amounts of ivory.

We cannot save elephants as long as any sales of ivory are permitted. Legalizing ivory trade in any African nation endangers elephants across the continent because poachers will attempt to launder illegal ivory with legal stockpiles.

<http://www.peachygreen.com/wildlife/stop-elephant-poaching-ban-ivory-trade>

Figure 2. Text from the Internet article

Step 3.

Students are then required to attach this article to the "Communication Article Worksheet" A4 template (Figure 3). On this worksheet, the leaders need to list a number of things in advance. These include listing the article's title, URL, date and name of the author. In addition, they need to provide 6 keywords including the part of speech and meaning, 2 key points from the article and 3 discussion questions. The result is an A3 sheet of which copies are made for each member of the group plus Instructor.

Communication Article Worksheet

Name: _____

Article Title: STOP ELEPHANT POACHING: Ban the Ivory Trade

Author: Stephanie

URL: [_http://www.peachygreen.com/wildlife/stop-elephant-poaching-ban-ivory-trade](http://www.peachygreen.com/wildlife/stop-elephant-poaching-ban-ivory-trade) **Date of Article:** 27/08/2009

KEY WORDS (Vocabulary / Part of Speech / Meaning) [Leave 2 blank]

1. Slaughter – (v.) to kill
2. Score – (n.) a group of 20
3. Poaching – (v.) catch game (wild animals) illegally
4. Barbaric – (adj.) cruel / uncivilized
5. Tusks – (n.) enlarged tooth
6. Vendors – (n.) seller, someone who sells something
7. _____
8. _____

KEY POINTS (Three points. One Sentence each.) [Leave 1 blank.]

1. The prices for the rare commodity are astounding: poachers can be rewarded with as much as \$3000 per kilogram of ivory on the black market.
2. Most of the money from the legal sale of ivory does not help the residents of African nations, instead it is the middlemen who are getting rich.
3. _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Questions only – No Answers) [Leave 1 Blank]

1. Why do you think the Elephants are still being slaughtered despite the ban? _____

2. Why was it necessary for CITES to partially to lift the ban for some countries? Do you think this is a good idea? _____

3. Traditionally ivory was popular in Japan, do you know why? What can Japan now do to help this problem? _____

4. _____

RATING THE SOURCE

Reliability Bad ←-----+-----→ Good /10
Bias Bad ←-----+-----→ Good /10

|

Figure 3. Communication Article Worksheet – this is attached to the text article (Figure 2) to make an A3 print.

Completion of these tasks before class will help ensure a flowing and informative activity. For the students' worksheets, the selection of keywords and key points are the group leader's own opinion of words and phrases that they feel are important in the understanding of the article. The discussion questions are those that the leaders think may help stimulate discussion and to later ask in their collaborative groups. Parts of the worksheet are intentionally left blank as these are for the other group members to fill in during the class activity.

Classroom Flow

Step 1.

In class, group leaders distribute their A3 article print to all the members of the group. Students are then allocated 20 minutes to read the article and should attempt in this time to make notes on any key words or points that they may not understand. Group leaders should be using this time to prepare for the up and coming discussion. At this time I also usually get them to hand in a copy of their print and have them verbally summarize it for me.

Step 2.

After this reading period is completed, the next 20 minutes of the lesson is dedicated to the group leader guiding the students through the print. This includes covering the key words, key points and discussion questions, as well as rating the source for reliability, and bias. To help with this process I have enclosed a "leader's guide" (Figure 4) which outlays some simple steps to assist the group leader in organizing a guided discussion.

Leader's Guide

Below is a series of steps and question examples, to help you guide your way through the discussion activity. It is important as a leader that you ask every member in your group for their response or answer. You should also try to keep the discussion flowing with the use of follow up questions.

1. Please introduce yourself, you should ask your group members for their names and find out one point about each other.
 - What is your name?
 - What is your major?
 - What is your hobby?
2. Please engage the group in some warming-up talk prior to the main discussion.
 - How are you?
 - What did you do over the weekend?
 - What did you do last night?
3. Please check the Key Words.
 - Does anyone have any questions about any of the key words?
 - What do you have for your original key words?
 - Why do you think this is an important key word?
 - Why did you choose this particular key word?
4. Please check the Key Points.
 - Does everyone agree that this key point is really a main idea?
 - What do you think?
 - What is your original key point?
 - Does everyone agree that this is a key point?
5. Please discuss the Questions.
 - What do you have for question number (number 1/2/3)?
 - Does anyone have an answer that is different?
 - What is your original question?
 - What is your opinion about this answer?
6. Check the Source Rating:
 - Do you think this source is reliable (good source)?
 - What is the site type? (News site, science site, education, forum)
 - Do you think this source is biased (balanced)?
 - Why do you think so?
 - What is your score?

Figure 4. Leader's guide

Starting the Discussion

It is best to mix the groups up every week. As a result, a short amount of time should be set aside for introductions as well as warm-up talk. This allows all the group members to feel relaxed as well as to get them ready to use their English for the more detailed discussions relating to the article.

Checking for Keywords

The group leader guides the group through the six keywords to check for understanding. The next stage involves eliciting student responses for the two original keywords. These keywords should be words the students feel are necessary to understand the article's meaning. Students work collaboratively, discussing and negotiating these words in groups.

Identifying Key Points

In this section, students are to identify key points from the reading that they feel are necessary in order to understand the reading. In their collaborative groups, students discuss and compare key points, talking about the key points and the reason they feel the key points are vital in the readings understanding.

Discussing the Questions

In their collaborative groups the leader discusses and asks answers to the three prepared questions. It is during this part of the lesson, that the students have the opportunity to pose an original question of their own. By having students ask questions in their collaborative groups, students will further acquaint themselves with the topic of the material and think more about the theme of the week.

Rating the Source

Although this is primarily a discussion activity, it is important that the students are aware that just because the source is in English that it does not necessarily mean it is accurate or balanced. This can be quite problematic with the large volume of English reading texts available on the Internet. It is hoped that the students discussing the articles in their groups may be made aware of issues concerning reliability and bias.

Assessment

Each student presents once during the four-week cycle. For this activity I allocate a score based on the quality of the article and the questions posed. While the discussions are in progress, I also walk around monitoring the different groups allocating individual task scores based on how well they are interacting in the group.

Discussion

Although this paper describes only one type of the number of the wide variety of authentic materials available to second language teachers, the advantages in using this technique are plenty. First, it allows students to practice their research skills. With the plethora of articles available on the Internet, it helps to train them in accessing the article selected for its reliability, bias and validity. In other words, to help sort out what is not relevant or current. Second, end of course surveys show that the students tend to find it motivating. Rather than just having the materials handed to the students each week by the teacher, students have some input or choice over what they would like to study. Thus allowing the students to feel more stimulated to share what they have found (Martinez, 2002). Finally, it helps to improve the student's reading and discussion skills in a sharing and collaborative environment. The leader presents his or her material and is then subject to peer review within the group. This can provide the learners with the energy to feel positive about their own learning as well as a sense of success when a task, which has been challenging is achieved in English (Ebata, 2008).

Conclusion

Apart from providing variety and motivation for students to read and discuss, this lesson plan highlights the three layers of learning, which Spelleri (2002) believes are imbedded in all authentic materials. These are:

- Language learning – through reinforcement of such things as structure and vocabulary
- Cultural insights
- Practical application

All three of these are important if effective language learning is to take place. The implementation of authentic materials either used on their own, or together with scripted or commercial materials, such as textbooks, allow the opportunity for teachers to always create an indefinite number of language teaching activities. They also offer an excellent opportunity for students to practice both *bottom-up* and *top-down* processing by allowing them to draw on their relevant *schemata* – *formal* and/or *content*. However, more importantly, I have found that the students really enjoy doing the activities and tasks that are based on authentic materials.

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Languageing as an Extensive Reading Strategy

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Abstract

Swain (2006) defines languageing as a verbal process which can be used to mediate a variety of difficulties students face when learning their L2. This paper reports on the results of a research project which combines languageing with extensive reading. It was carried out at a Japanese university in two first-year reading classes. A brief review of the literature is provided, followed by a description of the design of the study. The findings highlight the effect that languageing had on reading comprehension, students' perceived enjoyment of their reading, and their ability to respond in writing to the text.

Keywords: extensive reading, languageing, reading strategies

Japanese Abstract

スウェイン(2006)はラングイッジングを,第二言語(L2)を習得する際に直面する困難を克服するために必要なスピーキングプロセスと定義している。この論文は,日本の大学の二つの一年生のエクステンシブ・リーディング授業で実行された研究プロジェクトの結果に基づいている。まずは概要を説明し,その後この研究の詳細を述べることにする。この研究結果はラングイッジングが読解力、学生の読解に対する満足度と読解で得た理解をどれだけライティングに反映出来るかに焦点を当てている。

Introduction

“I found a problem reading in English. When I read a textbook, I can find main ideas because structure is clear. But, when I read a story, even if words are easy, sometimes it’s hard to understand meaning because structure is different and style is different. I don’t know how to solve this problem. In that point, I feel I don’t want to read.”

The quote above was written by a first-year student enrolled in a reading class during the 2009-2010 academic year. It was in response to an end-of-course questionnaire which attempted to gauge students’ perceptions of the benefits and difficulties of extensive reading. This student was not alone in her confusion. Many others voiced similar concerns. One way of explaining the difficulty she reports is to assume that not all graded readers are well-written and that when editors are expected to render simplified versions of very complicated texts, much valuable information can be lost. Another explanation could be that students lack the cultural background necessary to comprehend and interpret stories set hundreds of years ago in distant countries. While these two explanations could partially account for the difficulty students expressed about their extensive reading, there is one other element that could be considered. In our program, we constantly remind students that the books they choose should be easy for them to read and that they should be able to complete their reading quickly. As a result, students are not likely to spend any time reflecting upon what they are reading between chapters or monitoring their comprehension as they read.

The above issues may have arisen due to the perception teachers have of ER based on some of the classic “how to” manuals. Many guidelines have been provided to extensive reading teachers, including “Reading is individual and silent” and “Reading is its own reward. There are few or no follow-up exercises.” (Bamford and Day, 1998). While useful, some of these guidelines could cause teachers to become dogmatic in their approach to teaching extensive reading. As Waring (personal communication, December, 2009) reminds us, “there is no ‘ideal’ way to do ER” and teachers should be open to experimenting to find out what works best for their students in their particular teaching context. Brierley further emphasized this point during his presentation at the

ER SIG forum at the national JALT conference in 2009 when he reported that what is recommended “from above” is not always feasible “on the ground”, particularly in terms of follow-up activities and assessment.

It is encouraging to hear from experts in our field that experimentation is not only possible but desirable. It is also motivating to see other practitioners bending the “rules” to better address student needs and improve pedagogical practice in their context. The current study aims at further experimentation by looking at languaging as a strategy for approaching extensive reading. In her plenary address at the 2009 JALT conference, Swain defined languaging as a process by which an individual works out a cognitive problem. Swain (2006) maintains that language is not only a conveyer of meaning but also an agent of meaning making. She explains that in the process of verbally working through our thoughts, we come to a new insights. (Swain, 2006). While Swain’s (2002, 2009) research studies on languaging focus primarily on students working out grammatical explanations, the notion of languaging could also be applied to reading. In fact, the source of Swain’s work on languaging is found in the self-explanation principle, a reading strategy used by students when tackling difficult texts in their L1.

Self-Explanation, The Root of Languaging

Starting with Chi et al.’s (1989) study investigating the ability of physics students to comprehend a text explaining Newton mechanics (in their L1), a link was established between a learner’s ability solve a complex physics problem and the skill with which he or she was able to explain the worked-out solution to him or herself. Simply put, learners who produced lengthy and detailed self-explanations were significantly more successful in solving these problems on post-tests than learners who were unable to extensively explain the material to themselves. A second study confirmed this link between self-explanation and comprehension in other scientific fields such as biology (Chi et al., 1994) using similar intensive texts.

With the establishment of the self-explanation principle, researchers sought ways to improve a learner’s comprehension of a text by improving his or her ability to successfully self-explain. Ainsworth and Th Loizou (2003) found that the addition of diagrams to a reading passage about the human circulatory system greatly improved the

ability of a learner to self-explain and had a significant positive effect on comprehension. Hausmann et al. (2009), concerned that self-explanation might fail to facilitate the deep processing necessary for learners to grasp complex concepts, developed “step-focused prompts”—prompts that asked learners to reflect upon and summarize each step in a problem solving sequence—which resulted in better understanding and less reliance upon assistance in the application of a detailed scientific theory.

While these studies focused on supplementing the text to facilitate robust self-explanations, McNamara (2004) instead focused on reader training as a means of improving a learner’s ability to self-explain. Self-explanation Reading Training (SERT) tested the effectiveness of training readers in six different strategy areas (comprehension monitoring, paraphrasing, making inferences, elaboration, using logic, and prediction) so as to improve their self-explanation acumen. Although SERT was not able to bring about comprehension gains in all of the participants tested, the effects of SERT were evident among those with low prior-domain knowledge. McNamara (2004) contends that while the benefits of SERT may not be equal among all learners, training in self-explanation provided readers who would normally encounter difficulty when confronted with such a demanding text with the means to successfully construct a detailed explanation and representation of its content.

While the above studies establish a link between the process of self-explanation and gains in reading comprehension, their context is removed from an EFL/ESL classroom setting. None of the research deals with text in the subjects’ L2. Furthermore, the texts used in testing the self-explanation principle were exclusively scientific. Swain and Lapkin (2002) and Swain et al. (2009) bridge this gap between self-explanation research and the field of foreign/second language learning by examining what they term languaging, or using verbalization of one’s thoughts as a means of solving a complex task.

In their 2002 study, Swain and Lapkin tested the effectiveness of languaging on a language learners’ ability resolve a variety of language-related problems. Two native English-speaking learners of French were tasked with collaboratively writing a story based on a series of pictures. The story which the learners produced was then rewritten by a native speaker of French, preserving the ideas of the original authors, but eliminating errors and other non-native-like structures. The learners then engaged in a

linguaging session in which they compared their original story with the revised version prepared by the native speaker of French, highlighted the differences that they noticed, and discussed the potential justifications for the changes that were made. In the post-test, the positive effects of the linguaging were apparent.

As similar study conducted by Swain et al (2009) showed that students who were “high languagers” learn about the grammatical concept of voice in French in greater depth than those students who are “low languagers”. This study demonstrated, as confirmed by immediate and delayed post-tests, that there is a link between the quality and quantity of linguaging produced by students and students’ understanding of this grammar point.

The Current Study

Taking into account the benefits of self-explanation on students’ comprehension of intensive texts in L1 and the benefits of linguaging on students’ grasp of grammatical concepts in the L2, the following study attempts to provide a preliminary investigation into the effects of linguaging on students’ extensive reading.

Participants

Two freshman class groups took part in the study. The first group, belonging to the International Communications (IC) Department, contained 25 students and the second group, belonging to the International Business Department, contained 30 students. Neither department streams students based on entrance examination scores and therefore the students’ levels of English range widely from low intermediate to advanced. Each group meets for a reading class twice weekly for 90 minutes; the first class is for intensive reading and the second for extensive reading. In addition to the reading classes, students also have another nine contact hours of English per week.

Research Questions and Procedures

The research questions are as follows:

1. Does linguaging improve students’ comprehension of a text?
2. Does linguaging improve students’ perceived enjoyment of reading?

3. Does languaging improve students' ability to respond to a text as measured by the number of words they produce in a response?

The study took place over three 90 minute sessions. The reading material used for the study comprised the first three chapters of a simplified version of Shakespeare's *Othello* from the Black Cat series. The level listed by the publisher is "pre-intermediate". This text was selected because none of the students participating in the study had ever read *Othello* nor did they report being familiar with the storyline. During each session, the students read one chapter of the text and were then requested to answer three types of questions: 1. Ten multiple-choice comprehension questions. 2. A question about their level of enjoyment while reading, i.e. Did you enjoy reading this chapter? Yes/No/Not Sure. After answering the enjoyment question, students were asked to write a one-sentence statement qualifying their answer. 3. A response to the reading, i.e. What is your personal response to the chapter which you have read?

During the first session, students were given 30 minutes to read the first chapter and answer the questions. During the second session, students were given 60 minutes to read the second chapter of *Othello*. As they read, they stopped to answer eight questions in writing which were interspersed throughout the text. The questions were prompts, loosely based on McNamara's (2004) self-explanation prompts that encouraged the students to language, or to mentally work through certain parts of the text. The prompts focused on getting the students to review their prior knowledge, make predictions, paraphrase sections of the text, make inferences, elaborate on their impressions of the characters, imagine the scenes, critically question the behavior of the characters, and comment on their perceptions of what they had read. These types of prompts were created because it was thought that they reflected not only the strategies employed by "good" readers but they also encourage students to mentally work through the text and monitor not only the surface level of the comprehension but also deeper levels of understanding. It would have been possible to ask students to simply think about the questions as they went through the text but the researchers required students to write down their answers so that the depth and quality of their languaging could be looked at to a certain degree. During the last session, students were given 90 minutes to read the third chapter of *Othello* and to discuss languaging prompts in groups of four. The

prompts were similar to those used for chapter two. As students went through the text, they experienced some silent periods during which they read several paragraphs at a time. When all group members had read that portion of the text, students discussed the prompt and wrote down their group answers. They then continued reading the next part of the text until they arrived at the next prompt, discussed it, wrote down their group answers and repeated the process until they had covered all the text in the third chapter. After they had gone through the third chapter together, students separated to answer the multiple choice questions, the enjoyment question, and the response question by themselves.

The students were given 30, 60, and 90 minutes respectively at each session to read the text and go through the questions because the researchers thought that, for session two an additional 30 minutes would be required to respond in writing to the languaging prompts. Another extra 30 minutes was given in session three because students had to discuss the languaging prompts and also record them in writing.

Results

Table 1

Chapter One	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
Comprehension 74%	57%	85%
Enjoyment 22%	54%	75%
Response 18 words	25 words	37 words

As is shown in Table 1, students started off with a fairly good rate of comprehension (74% overall). However, their reported level of enjoyment was relatively low, only 22%. Their ability to respond as measured by word count was 18 words. The results after reading the second chapter are quite interesting. The rate of comprehension went down but this result needs to be qualified. The researchers noticed that instead of answering the comprehension questions first, students went directly to the response question, which was actually the last question on the paper. This may have been because students had been better prepared to write a response as a result of having gone through the languaging prompts. In addition, they spent a longer time writing qualifying statements for the question on their perceived level of reading enjoyment.

This left them with less time to answer the multiple-choice comprehension questions. During the third session, the students were asked to do the questions in order. They were reminded of the time at regular intervals as they worked their way through the languaging questions in groups. The results of the third session are also quite interesting. Although students' comprehension rates rose somewhat, their reported level of enjoyment more than tripled and their ability to respond doubled when compared with the first session.

Discussion

The voices of the students themselves are required to best interpret the data collected in this study. A brief survey of some of the statements which appeared regularly in the data help to shed light on what some of the students reported they experienced while reading. It is these experiences which likely influence student comprehension, enjoyment, and ability to respond. To begin with, when the majority of students (78%) reported that they did not enjoy (or were not sure about enjoying) reading chapter one, many of the qualifying statements pointed to the fact that students felt sleepy while reading or that they were focusing on unknown words in the text. This may be because students knew that they had to read alone and answer the post-reading questions alone. There may not have been that much motivation because of the lack of interaction and the lack of support. The qualifying comments that followed the reading of chapter two reinforce that students need support while reading to help them focus, to prompt them to monitor their level of comprehension and to think more deeply about what they are reading. Rather than seeing the prompts as a nuisance which interrupts their flow of reading, students' answers demonstrate that they were engaged more deeply with the text as a result of the languaging questions. One student wrote, "In the first chapter I can't get all the story but in the second chapter, I can imagine the story." Another wrote, "I can think more about background and characters so I can understand and enjoy more." One final point is that student comments written during the last session broadly indicate that discussion is the root of much of the perceived enjoyment students have in reading and seems to improve their ability to respond to a text. One student wrote, "I liked talking with my friends about this story. We can see that Othello is honest and sincere man. But we can also sympathize with Brabantio

because his daughter married Othello without father's permission." Another student wrote, "We talked about racial discrimination. This is interesting for us."

In summary, the findings of this study indicate that students in this context feel sleepy when reading alone and tend to focus more on what they don't know than on what they do know. The findings also show that languaging prompts aid students in fostering deeper comprehension of the text and more profound consideration of the themes of the story. Finally, the study seems to indicate that much of the enjoyment of reading appears to come from the discussions which develop as a result of reading and that students' viewpoints were expanded as a result of discussion with peers.

There are a couple of important issues that have been raised by these results. First, reading "silently and alone" with "reading as its own reward" may not necessarily be realistic guidelines to apply to the extensive reading program in this context since it seems as if students respond well to the support of the prompts and find part of the reward of reading to be the shared experience of discussion with peers. Second, the notion that students need to enjoy reading a different book a week may not be a sustainable way of running our extensive reading program. If our students seem to benefit significantly from working things out in their own minds as they read and to find a lot of the enjoyment of reading in discussion. It may be then that students should spend a greater amount of time in discussion about their books, before, during and after reading.

The following pedagogical recommendations may be put into practice as a result of conducting this study. First, it may be worthwhile to complete an ER training period in the class during which time students read the same book and are introduced to various types of strategies, including languaging strategies. Second, it may be useful to have students recommend books to each other on a regular basis. The student who has read the book can benefit from introducing it to another person and that person would have a chance to build up their background knowledge before reading. There could also be mid-week checks about how the reading is going so students could have the opportunity to talk about their books while they are in the process of going through them. Third, it would be interesting to suggest to publishers that they produce longer

books at various levels. Very low level books are often short and the length of readers progressively increases with the level of difficulty. It would be helpful for students to read a longer book which they could cover over a period of weeks. This way, students may develop more of a connection with the material they are reading and find some measure of satisfaction as a result.

Conclusions

While we can consider ourselves to have been successful extensive reading teachers if we manage to get our students to read one book a week, the question of what our students do after our course still remains. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to answer this question, it may be reasonable to assume that most of our students do not continue reading at such a pace. If the teacher is meant to be an example of an avid extensive reader, why do we not look more at our own reading habits and try to impart some of those to our students? We would likely find it difficult to find a short book we liked each week and read it. Even if we were able to do so, sustaining motivation to continue reading at this pace would be difficult unless we had other people to share our ideas with. ER is vital to helping our students recognize words and learn and review new expressions. But would we ourselves continue reading if all we gained were word recognition skills and new expressions? It is probably safe to say that if we hope for our ER courses to make a deeper impact on the students, they need to work through the text on a deeper level. They need to have private-speech conversations with the author as they read. They need to publicly discuss their ideas and be enriched by the thoughts of their peers. Without these key elements, extensive reading probably has less of a chance of developing into a life-long habit. Languaging with the self and with others may be one of the keys that bridges the gap between the L2 acquisition benefits of ER and the more profound benefits of reading in general.

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