



# KOTESOL Proceedings 2023

Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars,  
Instructors, and Students



Proceedings of  
The 30th Korea TESOL International Conference  
April 29 - 30, 2023; Seoul, Korea & Online

Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages  
(Korea TESOL / KOTESOL)





# KOTESOL Proceedings 2023

Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among  
Scholars, Instructors, and Students

Proceedings of  
The 30th Korea TESOL International Conference  
April 29–30, 2023; Seoul, Korea & Online

Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages  
(Korea TESOL / KOTESOL)

# KOTESOL Proceedings 2023

## ***Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students***

Proceedings of the 30th Korea TESOL International Conference  
Seoul, Korea & Online  
April 29 - 30, 2023

**Edited by**

**Dr. David Shaffer**  
Gwangju International Center, Gwangju, South Korea

**Published by Korea TESOL**  
KOTESOL Publications Committee Chair: Dr. David Shaffer



**Layout/Design:** Mijung Lee, Media Station, Seoul

<p><b>For information on this or other Korea TESOL publications, as well as inquiries on membership and advertising, contact us at:</b></p> <p><b><a href="http://koreatesol.org">koreatesol.org</a> or <a href="mailto:publications@koreatesol.org">publications@koreatesol.org</a></b></p> <p>© 2023 Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Korea TESOL / KOTESOL)</p> <p><b>ISSN 2586-4173 (Online) Price: 15,000 KRW / 10.00 USD (Free to Members)</b></p>
---



# THE 30TH KOREA TESOL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TEAM

**Conference Chair**

Garth Elzerman

**Conference Advisor,  
Registration Director**

Lindsay Herron

**Logistics Director**

Sean O'Connor

**Financial Affairs &  
Invited Speakers  
Director**

Dave Shaffer

**Publicity Director**

Bryan Hale

**Program Director (F2F)**

Michael Free

**Program Director  
(Online)**

Kirsten Razzaq

**Guest Services  
Director**

Mike Peacock

**Venue Director**

Nam Joon Kang

**Sponsorship  
Committee Chair**

Rob Dickey

**Communications  
Coordinator**

Julie Ha

**Moderators**

Bryan Hale  
James "Jake" Kimball  
Garth Elzerman  
Mike Peacock  
James Grant II  
Rhea Metituk  
Jocelyn Wright  
Heidi Vande Voort  
Nam  
Michael Free  
Kirsten Razzaq

**Submission Veters**

Luis Caballero  
Garth Elzerman  
Keenan Fagan  
Michael Free  
Stewart Gray  
Lisa Hunsberger  
Kara MacDonald  
Maria Lisak  
Lisa Maxwell  
Kirsten Razzaq  
David Shaffer  
Joseph P. Vitta  
Kara Waggoner  
George Whitehead  
Daniel Wolkenfeld  
Jocelyn Wright

**~ 560 Participants**  
**430 Face-to-face**  
**130 Online-only**  
**~ 200 Sessions**  
**30+ Countries**  
**70+ Volunteers**

## Foreword

The 2023 Korea TESOL International Conference marked a significant milestone as we celebrated our 30th annual event. After two consecutive years of exclusively online conferences due to the pandemic, the 2023 conference emerged as our first-ever hybrid event. While a majority of the presentations took place in person, an online video presentation component was integrated to accommodate individuals unable to attend in person. Themed “Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students,” the hybrid event unfolded over the weekend of April 29–30, 2023.

Distinguished plenary sessions featured three prominent figures in professional development: Jack C. Richards, Thomas S. C. Farrell, and Gabriel Diaz Maggioli. The speaker lineup showcased eight featured speakers, including Boyoung Lee, Raichle Farrelly, Francisca Maria Ivone, George Jacobs and Chenghao Zhu, Nikki Ashcraft, Judy Yin, and Lindsay Herron, offering a total of 18 sessions. The Graduate Student Showcase included eight in-person presentations and three asynchronous sessions. Additionally, the conference featured numerous panel discussions, research reports, workshops, poster presentations, and pecha kuchas. A noteworthy highlight was the unique collaboration between Farrell and Richards titled “Jack C. Richards and Thomas S. C. Farrell in Conversation.”

Over the two-day weekend, the conference hosted approximately 200 sessions during its 15-plus hours of programming, drawing more than 560 participants from over 30 countries. Attendees embraced the return to in-person conferencing after a three-year hiatus and appreciated the opportunity to view recorded presentations for a full month following the conference. (A list of all presenters and the titles of their presentations can be found in the Conference Overview section in the back of this volume.)

This volume gathers 32 papers derived from presentations at KOTESOL 2023, representing the diverse interests within the field of TEFL. Categorized into five groups, the papers include three invited speaker papers, 18 research papers, one action research paper, eight papers on techniques and approaches, and two workshop reports. We express our gratitude to all the paper authors for their valuable contributions to this volume.

Transitioning from two years of totally online conferences, this year’s hybrid format proved to be the most suitable arrangement for the Korea TESOL 2023 International Conference. It reunited colleagues who had not engaged in face-to-face interactions throughout the pandemic years and virtually connected speakers, presenters, and attendees who would have otherwise been unable to participate due to time or financial constraints. Both participants and organizers alike deemed KOTESOL 2023 a resounding success.

Buoyed by this success, members can anticipate the 2024 Korea TESOL International Conference, titled “Players on the World Stage: From EFL Classrooms to Global Lives,” scheduled for April 27–28 in Seoul and online.

*David Shaffer*  
Editor

# KOTESOL Proceedings 2023

## *Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students*

Proceedings of the 30th Korea TESOL International Conference

### CONTENTS

#### Invited Speaker Papers

- The Power of Collaboration: Building Networks, Connecting Educators 3  
*Chenghao Zhu, George M. Jacobs, Deliang Man, Meng Huat Chau,  
and Jasper Roe*
- Collaborating on Cross-Cultural Connections: Promise, Pitfalls, 9  
and Cosmopolitan Potential  
*Lindsay Herron*
- Walking the Talk and Walking with Students Together: Teacher 21  
Authenticity  
*Chenghao Zhu, Qingli Guo, George M. Jacobs, Jasper Roe,  
and Meng Huat Chau*

#### Research Papers

- Analyzing the Felt Sense of Writing in English 31  
*Yutaka Fujieda*
- The Exploration of EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Flourishing Through 39  
Online Mentoring  
*Eunjeong Park*
- High- and Low-Immersion VR Effects on Students' Speaking and 45  
Anxiety  
*Yukie Saito*
- Horizontal Collaboration: Intra-Departmental Integration as a Bedrock 59  
for Second Language Acquisition  
*Iain Maloney and Jaime Morrish*
- Reassessing Classroom Observation for University Teachers 73  
*Benjamin Filer and Niall Walsh*
- SDGs and COIL in Japan: Reflections on Design 85  
*Robert Remmerswaal*

Exploring Foreign Teacher Behaviors That Affect Korean Adult Students' Motivation <i>Curtis Life</i>	99
Integrating Social Emotional Learning and Collaborative Online International Learning <i>Lynsey Mori and Panachanok Chanwaiwit</i>	111
EFL Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Critical Thinking: A Case Study <i>Hsiao-Wen Hsu</i>	119
Vietnamese Students' Perception of Pecha Kucha in English Public Speaking Classes <i>TRẦN Đoàn Thư, MAI Hồng Quân, and VÕ Thanh Nga</i>	131
Malaysian University ESL Students' Perceptions Toward Using Smartphones for English Learning <i>Rafidah Abd Karim</i>	145
ESP Listening Difficulties and Strategies: A Metaphorical Analysis <i>Shu-Fei Hsieh</i>	155
Guiding Beginning Academic Writers Toward Effectively Integrating Source Texts <i>Mary Eddy U and Jeremy Phillips</i>	175
The Effects of a Self-Study Program on Pre-Service Teachers' Pronunciation <i>Mai Matsunaga</i>	187
Reading Anxiety and Reading Performance Among Vietnamese English-Major Students <i>Nguyen Le Bao Ngoc, Tran Thuy Hang, and Nguyen Hoang Phuong Mai</i>	197
Shared Development: Promoting Shared Lesson Plans to Enhance Professional Development <i>Nomintuul Byambatsogt, Davaanyam Damdin, Tamir Myagmarsuren, and Chuluuntumur Damdin</i>	211
English Language Teacher Education Programs in the Indonesian Context <i>Emmi Naja</i>	219
Limited-Term Contracts and Foreign Language Teachers' Integration into Japanese Institutions <i>Bladimie Germain</i>	231
<b>Action Research Paper</b> Collaboration in Times of Anxiety <i>Maria Lisak</i>	247

<b>Techniques and Approaches</b>	
Advancing Global Education in EFL Classrooms <i>Alexis Busso and Aida Corpuz</i>	259
Lights, Camera, Interaction: Developing Confidence and Motivation Through Filmmaking Projects <i>Brett Davies</i>	267
Using Google Forms for Learners' Self-Assessment to Enhance Learning and Foster Autonomy <i>Kara Mac Donald and Unsoon Won</i>	279
Using Story-Based Activities to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Linguistic Skills <i>Andrew S. Nelson</i>	287
The Use of Internet-Based Paraphrasers in Developing Written Language Complexity <i>Ngoc-Ha Nguyen</i>	293
Our Collaborative Journey as Learning Advisors <i>Prateek Sharma and Thomas Ashton</i>	305
Providing Authentic Communication Through a Discovery Experience <i>Junko Chujo</i>	315
Collaboration in Schools for Materials Preparation Using Google's G Suite <i>Michael Mielke</i>	327
<b>Workshop Reports</b>	
Cross-Cultural Awareness at Home: Activities for the Language Classroom <i>Caroline Hutchinson</i>	337
Developing Teacher–Student Collaboration Across Subjects in English in the Classroom <i>Queenie Kawabe</i>	343
<b>Conference Overview</b>	
Presenters and Presentations at the 30th Korea TESOL International Conference	349



---

## **Invited Speaker Papers**

---





## **Collaboration Among Educators: Multiple Authorship in Language Education Articles**

---

**Chenghao Zhu**

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

**George M. Jacobs**

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

**Deliang Man**

*Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China*

**Meng Huat Chau**

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

**Jasper Roe**

*James Cook University, Singapore*

This article begins with background on arguments for and against collaboration in general, before looking at collaboration among academics in the form of multiple authorship (MA), that is, when two or more academics work together on a journal article, book chapter, etc. and share credit as authors of that work. The general rise in MA in academia is noted and thoughts are offered as to the order in which the authors might be listed in MA articles. Next, the article reports a study done by the authors of this article to examine MA in academic journals in language education. The study found that MA increased in the period from 1982 to 2021. Finally, based on literature in psychology, sociology, and cooperative learning, advice is given on how to do successful MA. This advice refers to principles of positive interdependence, individual accountability, maximum peer interactions, heterogeneous grouping, and cooperation as a value.

### **INTRODUCTION**

A perennial issue in many spheres of life concerns the relative merits of working alone versus working with others (Goldman et al., 1992; Pluhar et al., 2019; Sampson & Clark, 2009; Walker & Shaw, 2015). In academia, the possible advantages of working alone include ease of communication, fewer distractions, greater autonomy, and more self-reliance. On the other hand, possible advantages of academics collaborating with others include more resources, additional psychological support, building bonds, and learning to collaborate. Of course, no one truly works alone in academia, as knowledge is gained from others via books, internet resources, etc. At the same time, even when working with others, academics will usually have individual roles and responsibilities. Furthermore,

developments in artificial intelligence offer an increased possibility of nonhuman collaborators (Ye et al., 2023).

## **AN OVERVIEW OF MULTIPLE AUTHORSHIP**

The authors of this paper have long had a preference for collaborating with academic colleagues, whether that might be on teaching tasks or on research and publication. Our attention was drawn to what seems to be an overall increase in collaboration in the writing of journal articles, that is, multiple authorship (MA), where two or more academics work together to publish an article and share authorship credit (González-Alcaide et al., 2015; Keough et al., 2018; Schrock et al., 2016). Indeed, all the articles cited thus far in this paper have been instances of MA.

We learned that MA can extend to “hyperauthorship” (Cronin, 2001), that is, when one publication has hundreds or even thousands of authors. To our knowledge, the most co-authors to date is approximately 15,000, on a single article about COVID-19 research (University of Birmingham, 2021). Can you imagine a study in language education with even 100 authors? So many academics collaborating to contribute to learning in our field would be awesome; it would possibly signal an urgency for learning and improvement.

Moving back to reality, in a publication with multiple authors, the order of authors can be difficult to decide upon, as one idea by one of the authors may be of greater value than many hours of work by another author. Various advice on the order of authors can be found in various places including the American Psychological Association (2023), Drenth (1998), and Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2020). One of the authors of the current paper was a student in a Research Methods class that worked together to do a study, although that author did most of the work (Jacobs et al., 1988). The professor suggested many criteria for deciding on the authorship order, including not only who did the most work, but also who needed a publication more to find a job or receive a promotion, or taking turns when the researchers had collaborated multiple times.

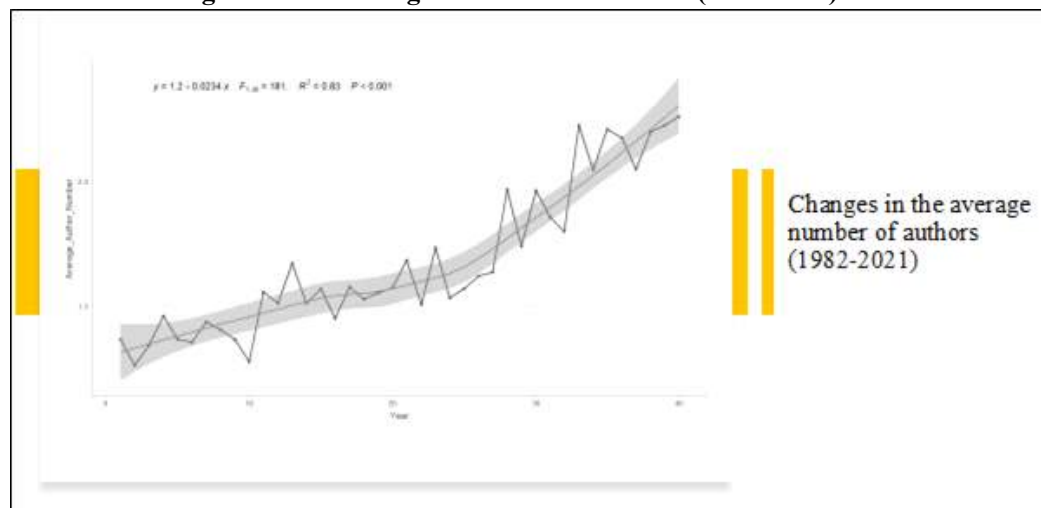
## **OUR OWN STUDY OF MULTIPLE AUTHORSHIP**

We wanted to look at MA in our own field on language education. Here briefly is what we did and what we found. We hope to publish a much fuller account of our research in the next year or two, subject to the trials and tribulations of the journal publication process in language education. Our main goal (others will be reported in subsequent papers) was to see if MA was on the rise in language education journals. Of course, this goal could be addressed in multiple ways. We looked at the articles published from 1982 to 2021 in four prestigious journals in language education: *Foreign Language Annals*, *Language Learning*, *Modern Language Journal*, and *TESOL Quarterly*. We found 4,796 articles published in the four journals during the time period being studied.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the number of multiple authored articles increased during the period we studied. We also looked at other variables not reported here

including whether the research was funded, whether the authors were from multiple countries, and the interaction of MA and the articles' impact as measured by the problematic measure of citations.

**FIGURE 1. Changes in the Average Number of Authors (1982-2021)**



## SUCCESSFUL MULTIPLE AUTHORSHIP

As to advice on how to do MA successfully such that  $1 + 1 = 3$  or more, not just 2, the literature on cooperative learning and related domains offers insights from psychology and sociology (Cohen, 1996; Johnson, et al., 1992; Webb et al., 2009). Some of these insights are presented below in the form of principles that can be loosely applied.

The first principle, positive interdependence, may be the most important. Positive interdependence can be understood as the feeling among group members (a group can be composed of as few as two members) that their outcomes are positively correlated, that is, what helps one group member helps all, and what hinders one group member hinders all. Groups share a common goal, in this case producing a valuable, publishable academic work. To reach this goal, the members may have different roles (e.g., conducting the literature review, designing the study, and analyzing the data). Resources can also be different (e.g., knowledge of how to conduct focus groups, how to do references in a particular reference style, and how to do corpus analysis). The point is that all the roles and resources are necessary for the group to achieve its goal.

A second principle addresses a common complaint about groups, that some members do not do their fair share or what they agreed to do. This principle is known as individual accountability. One way to implement this principle could be to have a roster of what each member will do and by what date they will do it. The opposite, although perhaps less common, problem also deserves attention: that no one is excluded from participation in the group effort.

A third principle may be one that does not receive much consideration, the principle of maximum peer interactions. Maximum has two aspects: maximum

quantity of interactions, that is, that group members discuss (by speaking, in writing, face-to-face, or online) many times, and maximum quality of interactions, that is, that the interactions consist of more than exchange of information and also include higher-order thinking (e.g., asking why, disagreeing politely, praising with reasons, and making suggestions). In contrast, what maximum peer interaction is not would be one author agreeing to write the abstract, introduction, and literature review, while another writes the research methods and results sections, and a third group member writes the discussion and conclusion. Then, the corresponding author puts the pieces together and submits the resulting manuscript.

A fourth principle is heterogenous grouping. In other words, the writing group appreciates the benefits of having group members of diverse backgrounds. This diversity could involve such factors as academic background, years of experience, nationality, and skill set. Another principle, one not often explicitly found in lists of cooperative learning principles, is cooperation as a value. This principle involves cooperating with people beyond the group involved in producing the articles, etc. Examples could include publishing in a free-online format to increase accessibility of the work, offering to do workshops based on your work, and involving other academic, as well as members of the public, in follow-up writing and practical applications.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper has been to summarize our presentation at the 2023 Korea TESOL conference. We are grateful to the conference organizers and to everyone who attended, as well as to all of you reading this paper. We hope that this will inspire those of you who have already done MA to do it more often, with more colleagues, and with even greater success. We hope that those of you who have yet to explore MA will be encouraged to try, to overcome the obstacles that you will undoubtedly face, and to cherish those who agree to collaborate with you.

Beyond working together on academic writing, we hope that academics will encourage their own students to learn together in cooperative learning groups. Perhaps, by doing MA themselves, academics will have greater insight into the cooperation process, insight they can share with their students. Last, but not least, we hope that MA can contribute, in whatever limited way, to making the world a more cooperative place. For instance, many of the authors of this paper co-authored a free, online book that uses cooperative learning to involve students and teachers in working toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Lim, 2023).

## THE AUTHOR

**Chenghao Zhu** is currently pursuing his PhD in the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics at Universiti Malaya. He holds a master's degree in applied linguistics from Beijing Language and Culture University. Before embarking on his PhD research journey, he was

a teacher of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. His research interests include the study of second language development and corpus and computational linguistics. Email: zhu\_cheng\_hao@163.com

**George M. Jacobs** teaches language and education in Singapore and beyond. His areas of interest include student-centered learning, ecolinguistics, teacher authenticity, and humane education. Email: george.jacobs@gmail.com

**Deliang Man** currently teaches at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China. His research interests include assessment feedback in L2 writing. His recent work has appeared in *System*, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, and *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. Email: mandeliang@hotmail.com

**Meng Huat Chau** teaches and mentors students conducting research in applied linguistics at Universiti Malaya. He holds/has held adjunct and visiting scholar positions or professorships at Jeonbuk National University in the Republic of Korea, the University of Cambridge in the UK, and Yogyakarta State University in Indonesia. His teaching, research, and mentoring on topics in applied corpus linguistics, Global Englishes, language and writing development, multilingualism, and language education have been motivated by ecojustice considerations. Email: chaumenghuat@yahoo.co.uk

**Jasper Roe** is an academic, researcher, and current head of department for JCU Language School. Originally from the UK, Jasper has been living between Asia and Europe since 2014. His research interests are related to the relationship between language, discourse, and society, along with higher education and teaching, student experience, EAP, TESOL, and academic integrity. Jasper has published articles in sociology, linguistics, and education journals, including the *Journal of Academic Ethics*, the *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, and the *International Journal of TESOL Studies*. Email: jasper.roe@jcu.edu.au

## REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2023). *Publication practices and responsible authorship*. <https://www.apa.org/research/responsible/publication/>
- Cohen, E. G. (1996). *A sociologist looks at talking and working together in the mathematics classroom* (ED423135). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED423135>
- Cronin, B. (2001). Hyperauthorship: A postmodern perversion or evidence of a structural shift in scholarly communication practices? *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 52(7), 558–569. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.1097>
- Drenth, J. P. (1998). Multiple authorship: The contribution of senior authors. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280(3), 219–221.
- Ebrahimi, S., & Ebrahimi, A. (2020). Ethical challenges around multiple authorship in journal articles. *Journal of Archives in Military Medicine*, 8(4), Article e111263. <https://doi.org/10.5812/jamm.111263>
- Goldman, S. R., Cosden, M. A., & Hine, M. S. (1992). Working alone and working together: Individual differences in the effects of collaboration on learning handicapped students' writing. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 4(4), 369–393. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1041-6080\(92\)90020-F](https://doi.org/10.1016/1041-6080(92)90020-F)
- González-Alcaide, G., Park, J., Huamani, C., Belinchón, I., & Ramos, J. M. (2015). Evolution of cooperation patterns in psoriasis research: Co-authorship network analysis of papers in medline (1942–2013). *PLoS One*, 10(12).

- <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0144837>
- Jacobs, G., Chuawanlee, W., Itoga Jr., B. K., Sakumoto, D., Saka, S., & Meehan, K. A. (1988). *The effect of pausing on listening comprehension* (ED304018). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED304018>
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., Ortiz, A. E., & Stanne, M. (1991). The impact of positive goal and resource interdependence on achievement, interaction, and attitudes. *The Journal of General Psychology*, 118(4), 341–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.1991.9917795>
- Keough, S. M., Lamsal, K., Thornton, T., & Diers, L. (2018). Multiple authorship trends in top tier accounting journals 1980–2014. *International Journal of the Academic Business World*, 12(1), 107–112.
- Lim, S., Reidak, J., Chau, M. H., Zhu, C. H., Guo, Q., Brooks, T. A., Roe, J., & Jacobs, G. M. (2023). *Cooperative learning and the SDGs*. Peachey Publications. <https://payhip.com/b/obOwr>
- Pluhar, E., McCracken, C., Griffith, K. L., Christino, M. A., Sugimoto, D., & Meehan III, W. P. (2019). Team sport athletes may be less likely to suffer anxiety or depression than individual sport athletes. *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, 18(3), 490–496.
- Sampson, V., & Clark, D. (2009). The impact of collaboration on the outcomes of scientific argumentation. *Science Education*, 93(3), 448–484. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.20306>
- Schrock, J. B., Kraeutler, M. J., & McCarty, E. C. (2016). Trends in authorship characteristics in the American Journal of Sports Medicine, 1994 to 2014. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 44(7), 1857–1860. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0363546516639955>
- University of Birmingham (2021, August 26). *Global COVID-19 surgery study scoops scientific world record*. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/2021/global-covid-19-surgery-study-scoops-scientific-world-record>
- Walker, C. L., & Shore, B. M. (2015). Myth busting: Do high-performance students prefer working alone? *Gifted and Talented International*, 30(1–2), 85–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332276.2015.1137461>
- Webb, N. M., Franke, M. L., De, T., Chan, A. G., Freund, D., Shein, P., & Melkonian, D. K. (2009). “Explain to your partner”: Teachers’ instructional practices and students’ dialogue in small groups. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(1), 49–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640802701986>
- Ye, Y., You, H., & Du, J. (2023). Improved trust in human–robot collaboration with ChatGPT. *IEEE Access*, 11, 55748–55754. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2023.3282111>

## Collaborating on Cross-Cultural Connections: Promise, Pitfalls, and Cosmopolitan Potential

---

Lindsay Herron

*Gwangju National University of Education, Gwangju, Korea*

Cross-cultural connections between classrooms can be rewarding and motivating; indeed, they have the potential to help cultivate open, reflective, responsive dispositions in students as the participants encounter a variety of perspectives and practice authentic communication across difference. It can thus be quite beneficial for educators to team up with global peers to create a cosmopolitan community where their students can interact with each other – but this process is not always as straightforward or simple as it might seem. Having collaborated with educators around the world on cross-cultural exchanges, I explore in this paper my own experiences: the highlights and benefits as well as the difficulties and disappointments. I seek to better understand the factors that facilitated or hindered these exchanges, with the ultimate aim of offering practical insights to practitioners interested in collaborating on exchanges and providing an enjoyable, positive, uplifting experience for everyone.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the course of my nearly two decades in Korea, I've experienced countless gaps in communication. From misunderstandings about the nuance and intention of a question to differing conceptualizations of what a particular word – even an ostensibly shared word such as *notebook* – means, to different ways of valuing built into the language itself (e.g., “Work hard!” in Korea compared to “Take it easy!” or a sarcastic “Have fun!” in the U.S.), my life here has been rife with fascinating disjunctures. These gaps have emphasized for me how strongly all aspects of communication and understanding are reliant on our unique personal experiences and contexts.

Interacting with people from different contexts, with a variety of perspectives and cultural expectations, can help disrupt assumptions, highlight the situated nature of taken-for-granted norms, and present previously unpondered paths and possibilities. Aiming at cultivating this kind of critical cosmopolitan openness, I have, over the course of multiple semesters, arranged for my students to participate in a plethora of intercultural exchanges. These exchanges have involved Korean students at both the high school and university levels writing to partners in Korea, the United States, and Japan. While the prospect of pen pals was typically embraced with eager enthusiasm by my students, the exchanges, themselves, experienced varying levels of success as external factors related to myself and my partner-teacher either facilitated or hampered fluid interaction.

This paper offers a reflective, candid postmortem exploration of factors – personal and otherwise – that aided or impeded the exchanges, with the ultimate aim of uncovering considerations and recommendations for teachers interested in implementing similar online cross-cultural exchanges.

## **WHY DO A CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE?**

There are a variety of reasons to incorporate cross-cultural exchanges into the language classroom – from the personal to the pedagogical.

### **Enhancing Motivation**

The three keys to motivation, in a nutshell, are said to be autonomy, purpose, and mastery (Pink, 2009). Cross-cultural exchanges naturally incorporate these three elements. First, autonomy exists in the form of choice: Students choose how much of themselves to reveal, which conversational threads and topics to pursue based on what has piqued their interest, and how best to express themselves – including whether to include links, photos, emojis, and more. Purpose comes from the authentic audience; that is, “an audience that is concerned exclusively with the meaning of the speaker’s message” (Johnston, 1999, p. 60). The students are not creating letters and projects purely for pedagogical purposes (i.e., solely for the teacher and a score in the class) but rather are sharing their lives and perspectives with a real person with whom they might form a connection. Finally, students can revise their letters and projects, especially in response to feedback from the instructor and/or their peers, allowing them to identify and revisit language forms they had difficulty with and revise accordingly, demonstrating their mastery of the material. The vast amount of choice available also ensures students can demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways, according to their own skill level, need, and desires.

### **Building Mental Models**

Providing students with this kind of authentic opportunity for self-expression also helps them connect the learning to their own experiences and further flesh out their mental models. In a language classroom, this is particularly valuable, as students can begin to see English as a tool for communication rather than just an academic subject that can be memorized and then forgotten after the exam. Students are, in essence, “doing with understanding” (National Research Council, 2000, loc. 517) as they use language for a purpose. Indeed, students learn best when they see the point of mastering something; if teachers create a need (i.e., self-expression, especially for an authentic audience), students are more likely to integrate the expressions and target language into their mental model of English, helping them to “make sense of what they are learning” (National Research Council, 2000, loc. 2478) far more than alternatives that divorce language practice from purposeful communication.



## **Redefining What “Counts” as Learning**

Valuing students’ self-expression and positioning it as a way of demonstrating mastery also helps to redefine what counts as knowledge and learning, which in turn, supports inclusive, student-centered, and social justice-oriented pedagogies. Inviting students to write about themselves and their lives acknowledges the importance of their personal experience and provides a crucial connection between home and school. Gerald Campano (2007) argues that students (particularly immigrant students, though his analysis seems widely applicable) often experience a disconnect, an inability to relate the information presented in school to their own lives. He encourages teachers to bring students’ home lives into the classroom as much as possible to help generate a sense of relevance and personalization of – and personal connections to – the knowledge. Asking students to write personal letters can help do this, demonstrating respect for what Moll et al. (1992) have termed *funds of knowledge*: the valuable wealth of information provided by the family, social, and community networks a student participates in outside of school. By accessing these funds of knowledge, teachers can create a more student-centered class that builds on students’ personal strengths, interests, and abilities while challenging standard conceptualizations of what “doing school” means.

## **Supporting Cosmopolitan Orientations**

In addition, interacting with others across difference encourages cosmopolitan orientations. Cosmopolitanism, in essence, entails openness and receptiveness to difference (Corpus Ong, 2009; Hannerz, 1990); empathy and forgiveness (Ahn, 2010); trust (Hirose, 2019) and belonging (Ramadan, 2015; Vasudevan, 2014); solidarity, mutuality, and connectedness (Glick Schiller, 2015; Osler & Starkey, 2018; Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013); and an underlying thread of fundamental hospitality (Derrida, 2001). Connecting with others, discovering shared interests, giving others the benefit of the doubt, and positioning oneself as a receptive and interested interlocutor are all cosmopolitan aspects of cross-cultural exchanges (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014).

Cosmopolitanism involves, too, a more critical awareness of the contextual, limited nature of our understandings. It highlights the values of plurality, the acknowledgement that there are many possible perspectives and ways of being in the world, and fallibility, the idea that our particular perspectives and beliefs are not necessarily “right” (Appiah, 2006). Intercultural exchanges can help cultivate these aspects, as interacting with others across difference typically entails a discovery of new paths and possibilities in the world – and by encountering these new perspectives, we “gain reflective distance from [our own prejudices]” (Hansen, 2014, p. 9) and begin to notice the limitations in our own understandings, leading us to grow and evolve. Communication across difference also involves perspective-taking and encourages new awareness of the situated nature of what we consider “normal.” Indeed, “activities can be viewed as social practices situated within communities invested with particular norms and values” (Lewis et al., 2007, p. 5); the meanings we create and the meanings we understand are necessarily informed by our own experiences and perspectives. As

we interact with others, creating meaning necessitates some consideration of the audience's perspective and situation, as well as reflection on our own position, in order to determine how best to express ourselves using our repertoire of semiotic resources (Kress, 2003; New London Group, 1996; Street, 1998; van Leeuwen, 2005). Cosmopolitanism thus is not only a space of hospitality but also one in which "shifts in self-understanding" (Delanty, 2009, p. 11) can occur as people engage with others across difference.

## **IMPLEMENTING A CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE**

### **Stories of Success**

#### **My First Endeavor: A Physical Exchange Within Korea**

My first exchange wasn't "cross-cultural," strictly speaking; instead, it was an exchange between a boys high school and a girls high school in the same city, with subsequent exchanges between boys, girls, and co-ed high schools in other parts of Korea. Though these initial forays occurred between students in the same country, ostensibly with similar cultural backgrounds, the students' respective contexts – all boys vs. all girls vs. co-ed, a city in the mainland vs. a more rural island community – arguably involved quite different (micro-)cultures and perhaps even underscored differences that became evident in the face of presumed homogeneity.

At the time, I was a novice teacher starting my second semester as a Fulbright English teaching assistant (ETA) at an all-boys high school in Jeju-do. For this initial exchange, I teamed up with a fellow ETA teaching at my high school's sister school (located just down the road); the following semester, I partnered with an ETA teaching at a girls high school in Daejeon, a much larger city on the mainland; the semester after that involved exchanges among multiple schools across Jeju-do as well as in Daejeon. All of these exchanges entailed an exchange of physical personal ads and letters, much to the excitement of our students, and each exchange was a multi-week endeavor.

This initial exchange established a procedure that I follow (with minor adjustments) to this day, nearly two decades later, for pen pal exchanges. I first did a lesson on personal ads, introducing the concept and inviting students to read a selection of personal ads using common self-introduction language, including personality, hobbies, likes/dislikes, favorite things (favorite color/sport/proverb/animal, etc.), and ideal match. From among these ads, the students selected the person they were most interested in meeting and told their partner whom they chose and why. With great fanfare, I then revealed each person's picture – and students were delighted to discover that each personal ad actually described a popular fictional character (e.g., the fifth hokage from the anime *Naruto*, Nami from the anime *One Piece*, Fiona from *Shrek*, etc.). Using these personal ads as models, each student then wrote their own, including a unique, assigned identification number for easy tracking. My partner-teachers offered similar lessons to their own students, and then we swapped the resulting personal ads. In the next lesson, we spread the newly arrived ads around the room and invited our respective students to each choose one personal ad.

Students then wrote a Western-style personal letter to that person, with format and phrasing suggestions provided by a model letter. Finally, my partner-teachers and I sent the letters to each other, distributed them to the correct students, helped students write and revise reply letters, and then collected the students' final drafts for one last mailing. Students, it should be noted, thus had two different pen pals: the person whom they chose and the person who chose them; this way, they were almost guaranteed a substantial response even if one pen pal proved unreliable.

These exchanges were wildly successful, with students vociferously expressing their enthusiasm and repeatedly inquiring about when they would receive replies from their pen pals. My partner-teachers and I were similarly excited, exchanging a flurry of emails and text messages about our students' engagement and sharing gossip about the couples that had apparently developed from these exchanges.

The exchanges had their share of challenges, though, especially in terms of the sheer number of students participating (around 430 at my school, alone, and far more than that at the girls school in Daejeon). Other aspects that required careful consideration were coordinating the timing of the project and managing the class, including warning students not to throw away or crumble up unchosen personal ads (a problem we honestly had not anticipated when planning the exchange) and not to include their contact information in the personal ads (so students couldn't send text messages in Korean to the person before deciding whether or not to write to them). In the pilot exchange, the one connecting my students to female students at their sister school, my partner-teacher and I also quickly discovered a need to further obscure identifying information beyond simply using official student ID numbers, as we each caught students messaging their friends at the partner school to ask if the writers of particular personal ads were attractive. It is common for Korean students to be familiar with each other's official ID numbers, so using these was not an effective way to mask students' identities.

My fellow teachers and I also invested a large amount of time in managing students' emotions. We strived to ensure each of our own students received an ad to which they could write and also to make sure each ad received a reply; this involved keeping track of who wrote to whom and making sure the letters identified both the sender and recipient (i.e., that the letters were addressed to someone and also said whom they were from. That this was surprisingly challenging might be attributed to our students' overall lack of familiarity with traditional forms of communication such as email or physical letters; these students were likely more accustomed to text messaging, which doesn't require explicit inclusion of either a "to" or a "from"). We also monitored students' replies for rudeness (including Korean curse words that our students thought we might not know) – a surprising trend, particularly among my boys.

My partner-teachers and I were able to manage (and learn from) these challenges by drawing on two key strengths: extensive communication and a mutual duty of care. We frequently discussed the exchanges in depth via email, text message, and in person, and we felt an ethical responsibility to make this the best possible experience for everyone involved – not just our own students but also our partners' students. This ethical duty sometimes involved begging students to write a second (or third) letter so everyone received a reply, or even writing a fake letter or two, ourselves, on blank stationery provided by our partner-teachers

just in case a reply letter went astray.

This fluid communication and mutual duty of care were greatly facilitated by our personal connection (as friends, ETAs in the same cohort, and colleagues who had previously collaborated on winter camps) and mutual respect as well as our shared and equal investment in the success of the exchange. Other enabling factors included our shared goals (i.e., fun and providing an authentic context for communication), the similar levels of investment/interest among our respective students, our operating on the same academic calendar (which helped with the timing of the exchange), and our relative lack of other commitments (i.e., we had sufficient spare time to dedicate to this process). I didn't fully appreciate these facilitating factors at the time; in retrospect, however, they were instrumental in ensuring the triumph of the exchange – as became clear with subsequent exchanges, both virtual and physical, of varying success.

### **A Fully Integrated Online Exchange**

My most fully integrated exchange, and also one of my most successful, occurred in Fall 2018, about a decade after I left Jeju-do to teach at a university on the mainland. It was a semester-long project conducted in my English composition class, a mandatory course for third-year English education majors. Over the course of the semester, my 28 students interacted extensively with diverse students at a community college in the eastern United States. They exchanged emails with an assigned partner, created and shared multimodal projects in a Facebook group designed for the purpose, and completed additional reflection and writing activities.

My partner-teacher, “Sam,” was a classmate in my distance doctoral program. She taught at a community college in the eastern United States and had a little space in her curriculum for an intercultural exchange, so she generously incorporated it into her plans at my request. As we discussed our intentions, priorities, and ideas prior to the start of the semester, it quickly became clear that we had radically different visions for this exchange. Fortunately, we had worked together on class projects in the past, so we had experience in compromising with each other in order to achieve our respective goals.

After some initial friction, we came up with a plan involving similar, agreed-upon activities supporting shared pedagogical goals and disparate projects with independently designed tasks that would mesh but also suit our own individual goals. Both classes read a description of their partners' context before the pen pals were actually assigned, for example; at Sam's (excellent) suggestion, Sam and I wrote and then swapped descriptions of our respective contexts (demographics about the composition of the student body, the goals of the school, and other salient aspects we thought might be intriguing) so students could reflect on their expectations and curiosities prior to the start of the exchange. Activities completed exclusively by my students, on the other hand, included a variety of reflection activities, such as pre-exchange reflections in response to the context description and guided by question prompts. In addition, when many of my students' reflections included similar questions about the diverse community college and its students (primarily questions my students thought might be too insensitive or intrusive to ask their pen pals), I arranged for a Zoom call with Sam during my class time so students could ask her directly. Both classes engaged

in a pen pal exchange and Facebook discussions of projects the students created and shared, but the focus and requirements of these projects were separately determined. While Sam's students, many of whom were immigrants in the United States, created video reflections on stereotypes and prejudice they had experienced, my students created projects to introduce an aspect of their culture (Korean culture, university culture, their family's culture, etc.) to their overseas counterparts.

The exchange was, on the whole, very popular and well received by my students, but like the exchange in Jeju-do, it required some effort and coordination to overcome its challenges. Obstacles to the smooth running of this exchange included differing numbers of students – but compared to the Jeju exchange, the numbers and the difference were far more manageable (only 28 students on my end, while Sam taught 23). We also had to work out the timing of the exchange, as my semester started slightly before hers, and my classes were interrupted throughout the term by a mandatory two-week teaching practicum and Korean national holidays. Finally, as with the Jeju exchange, my collaborator and I worked to ensure a positive experience for all involved, including striving to make sure each project shared on Facebook received at least one response and that each pen pal received a reply. This latter concern required additional communication between me and Sam and extra work on Sam's part to follow up with negligent students and, several times, to reassign my students to more active and enthusiastic correspondents. Her efforts were not always successful, though; while a majority of my students reported receiving two or more replies from their pen pals, including three (10.3%) who received four or more replies, 9 students (31%) received just one reply from their pen pal, and one student received zero replies despite having sent multiple emails to their initial pen pal and additional attempts to contact new pen pals after being reassigned. A few students expressed disappointment with the lack of response; one student, for example, enjoyed the exchange but noted, "One sad thing was that there were students who did not participate in exchange activities sincerely," a sentiment echoed in a few other students' final reflections or evaluation forms.

The enduring problems with a lack of response – or only minimal response – on the part of Sam's students, meanwhile, can be attributed to our differing expectations, investment, and enforcement. For me, the authentic interaction provided by the exchange was an integral part of my composition class – and also was the basis of an inquiry project for my doctoral coursework. In contrast, the exchange was a peripheral part of Sam's class; her course was focused on service learning, and her participation in the exchange was simply a generous favor to me. We also had different types of students with varying definitions of academic success, different engagement with academic requirements, and different priorities during non-class time. My students were attending a competitive university, planning to become teachers, primarily concerned with completing their university education, and tended to be quite focused on scores and grades; Sam's students, in contrast, tended to be taking classes part-time while working and, often, caring for and contributing to their families. Sam's students also tended to be from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and even national backgrounds, while my students were all Korean and had minimal overseas experience; the opportunity to communicate with a multicultural pen pal was thus, I would speculate, likely to be more

exciting to my own students on the whole compared to Sam's.

Overall, though, the exchange was a success, facilitated by my very positive relationship with Sam, our mutual respect, our shared interest in cultivating cosmopolitan openness, and our dedication to our teaching and students. Though Sam's curriculum changed in subsequent years, preventing her from collaborating on future exchanges, the success of this integrated exchange encouraged me to seek out other overseas collaborators for similar exchanges.

### **Communication in the Time of COVID**

By the time COVID hit in the spring of 2020 and my university's classes were moved online, I had been offering workshops on digital tools for nearly a decade and was extremely familiar with Zoom from my own distance doctorate work. Though implementing online-only classes necessitated greater time investment, I welcomed it as a chance to put into in-depth practical use some of the tools I had dabbled in already – one of which was Padlet, an online bulletin board. Padlet, I decided, would be an ideal space for online pen pals to exchange letters while also letting me keep track of their work.

At the virtual KOTESOL National Conference in April 2020, I reached out to fellow conference attendees via the backchannel chatrooms provided by the conference, and I inquired if anyone (preferably someone teaching at the university level) was interested in starting an online pen pal exchange. A university teacher in Japan took me up on my offer, and we started to coordinate the online exchange. This would be the first time I had tried an international exchange with my first-year university students, all of whom were majoring in specific aspects of elementary education (in this case, English education, special education, and pedagogy), and all of whom were taking an introductory, mandatory English conversation course with me.

The overall structure of this exchange was similar to my first exchange in Jeju-do, except entirely online. First, my students did a lesson on personal ads (along with the “read and choose” activity described previously), then they used Canva to design multimodal personal ads introducing themselves, following the models provided by the personal ads provided in the “read and choose” activity as well as a multimodal ad I designed for myself to give students an idea for how I expected text and imagery to work together to create meaning. Students posted their completed multimodal ad on a class padlet. After each student had posted an ad, I swapped Padlet links with my partner teacher in Japan. In the next lesson, our students visited the partner school's Padlet collection of personal ads, selected one person with whom they were interested in corresponding, and claimed that ad by posting (as a comment on that ad) a link to a personal padlet they had created for the purpose of communicating with this individual pen pal. Students wrote a response letter to that person, again following a model letter with an eye toward meeting the requirements I had set (e.g., must include three or more personal questions and three or more things about themselves). Finally, they posted their final draft as a PDF on their personal padlet for their new pen pal to view. (In an effort to take full advantage of the digital medium and capitalize on students' multiliteracies, I also required students throughout this exchange to include on their padlet additional resources for their pen pal. If they mentioned in their letter their favorite song, for instance, they might also post a

link to the music video for that song; if they mentioned their pet dog, uploading a photo or drawing of the pup was encouraged. Students had freedom of choice in what they included, as long as they posted at least two additional resources for each letter they “sent” via Padlet.) As with my Jeju students, each student had two pen pals: the person they chose (with whom they corresponded on their own personal padlet) and the person who chose them (with whom they corresponded on the pen pal’s personal padlet). For about six weeks, my students were required to write a (brief) letter each week to one pen pal, alternating between the two, typically with a few content requirements laid out according to that week’s class focus (e.g., asking about preferences using superlatives, asking experience questions using present perfect tense, etc.). Links to the students’ individual correspondence platforms were always accessible via the class padlets (the personal ad collections).

The challenges of this exchange were generally easy to anticipate based on my prior experiences. We had slightly differing numbers of students, but the numbers and gaps were much smaller and more manageable than they had been in Jeju. Coordinating the timing was a bit of a challenge, since the Korean and Japanese academic calendars were off by more than a month, and a few technical issues required troubleshooting. But overall, the exchange was a success, greatly facilitated by active communication between my partner teacher and I; our mutual, diligent efforts to ensure every ad was claimed and responses posted in a timely fashion; our similar levels of investment in the project; shared overall goals (fun and communication), with specificities individually set to suit our respective pedagogical and curriculum goals; and a similar level of investment from students – particularly since this exchange was mandatory in both of our classes. As a result, my students in a semester-end survey overwhelmingly agreed that they had enjoyed having a pen pal (25 students agreed or strongly agreed, with only five students marking neutral and no one disagreeing on a five-point Likert scale), while many specifically mentioned the pen pal exchange in response to the open-ended question: “Which activities did you enjoy MOST in this class?” A completely online intercultural exchange, it seemed, could be highly rewarding even when it wasn’t as fully integrated as my previous exchange with Sam.

## **A STORY OF FAILURE**

Pleased with the success of our previous collaboration, my partner teacher in Japan and I decided to try another digital exchange after classes returned to face-to-face; in the fall of 2022, we initiated another exchange. This time, I had far too many first-year students in my five introductory conversation classes to match well with my partner’s single class, so I decided to try this exchange with third-year English education majors taking the same mandatory writing class that had been so conducive to the exchange with Sam four years prior. My partner and I had each built personal and cultural introductions into our course syllabi, and we agreed that one pen pal per pupil was probably sufficient this time. My partner’s students thus created personal ads as well as a personal padlet for correspondence, while mine did not; a few weeks later, my students claimed a pen pal and posted a reply letter on their pen pal’s personal padlet.

This is where the exchange faltered. The Korean autumn semester is always a bit challenging for course planning, in general, due to the many national holidays that pop up in September and October (i.e., the multi-day Chuseok holiday, Hangeul Day, and National Foundation Day); in addition, third-year students at my university always spend two weeks in October doing practice teaching at assigned elementary schools. I thought my semester plan adequately accounted for both the Korean and Japanese school schedules as well as my students' planned two-week absence; my partner's students would have to wait a couple of weeks for a response to their ads and self-introductions, but that seemed reasonable to me. A month into our semester, I required my students to choose a pen pal and post a personal letter, and I allocated time in each class thereafter to reply to pen pals; however, very few of my students ever received a response. After being repeatedly rebuffed, most lost interest. We ended up never sharing our multimodal culture-introduction projects with our hypothetical partners in Japan, and the class in Japan never shared their own culture projects with us. The communication between my partner and I was very limited, and the exchange quietly lapsed.

All of these factors contributed to the ultimate failure of this exchange. My students were incommunicado for two weeks at the start, and though I had warned my partner of this timing and also alerted him when the replies had been posted, it seems this gap was enough to dim his students' enthusiasm. Although we had shared goals of fun, authentic communication, and cultural exchange, the exchange this time was incidental to our core syllabi – a bonus rather than an integral element – and as a result, we both had limited investment in this exchange, and neither of us seemed particularly avid about enforcing the requirements or following up on students' work. My students started out with a high level of investment and enthusiasm, but this soon petered out with the ongoing disinterest from their pen pals. It was disappointing, on the whole, for everyone involved.

## **TAKEAWAYS AND FINAL THOUGHTS**

Pen pal exchanges, both virtual and physical, can offer amazing, motivating opportunities for students to engage in authentic communication and cosmopolitan growth; however, as I have discovered from experience, there are plenty of challenges that must be overcome in order to maximize the potential and success of the exchange. Participating teachers must carefully plan around different schedules and different goals; make the exchange an integral element in their classes, such as by customizing the requirements to suit their own pedagogical purposes and mandating (and following up on) student participation; and invest time and effort into managing students' emotions, including by ensuring each student receives a response and possibly even checking the appropriateness of the content and language in their students' letters – particularly with younger or less restrained learners. Communication between partner teachers, careful consideration of the exchange's structure and organization, and sufficient time to manage the exchange are thus critical.

A key element underpinning all of this – an inviolable element, really, easily



overlooked when focusing on the practicalities – is a cosmopolitan duty of care between participating teachers. This refers to a sense of mutual obligation to help each other craft a meaningful, positive experience; it includes mutuality and connectedness, trust and empathy, perspective-taking and openness. It means giving each other the benefit of the doubt and seeking to support not just our own students but our partner's, as well. It means giving students opportunities to discover new pathways and perspectives, to notice and question taken-for-granted norms, to reflect and grow. Ultimately, these exchanges, in their spirit as well as their demands, have the potential to help all participants – teachers and students alike – become more empathetic, responsive, critical citizens of the world.

## THE AUTHOR

**Lindsay Herron** is the president of KOTESOL and a visiting professor at Gwangju National University of Education in Gwangju, Korea. Currently a doctoral candidate in literacy, culture, and language education at Indiana University (USA), she also has a master's in language education; a master's in cinema studies; bachelor's degrees in English literature and psychology; a postgraduate certificate in learning sciences, media, and technology; a CELTA; and the CELTA Young Learner Extension. Her research focuses on the critical cosmopolitan literacies of pre-service teachers. Email: Lnherron@gmail.com

## REFERENCES

- Ahn, I. (2010). Economy of “invisible debt” and ethics of “radical hospitality”: Toward a paradigm change of hospitality from “gift” to “forgiveness.” *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 38(2), 243–267. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9795.2010.00428.x>
- Appiah, K. A. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a world of strangers*. W. W. Norton.
- Campano, G. (2007). *Immigrant students and literacy: Reading, writing, and remembering*. Teachers College Press.
- Corpus Ong, J. (2009). The cosmopolitan continuum: Locating cosmopolitanism in media and cultural studies. *Media, Culture, and Society*, 31(3), 449–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443709102716>
- Delanty, G. (2009). *The cosmopolitan imagination: The renewal of critical social theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Derrida, J. (2001). *On cosmopolitanism and forgiveness* (M. Dooley & M. Hughes, Trans.). Routledge. (Original work published 1997)
- Glick Schiller, N. (2015). Diasporic cosmopolitanism: Migrants, sociabilities, and city making. In N. Glick Schiller & A. Irving (Eds.), *Whose cosmopolitanism? Critical perspectives, relationalities, and discontents* (pp. 103–120). Berghahn Books.
- Hannerz, U. (1990). Cosmopolitans and locals in world culture. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 7, 237–251.
- Hansen, D. T. (2014). Cosmopolitanism as cultural creativity: New modes of educational practice in globalizing times. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12039>
- Hirose, Y. (2019). Trusting rather than understanding others: Another intercultural cosmopolitan education. *Journal of Multiculture and Education*, 4(1), 65–79.
- Hull, G. A., & Stornaiuolo, A. (2014). Cosmopolitan literacies, social networks, and “proper distance”: Striving to understand in a global world. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44(1), 15–44.
- Johnson, B. (1999). Theory and research: Audience, language use, and language learning.

- In J. Egbert & E. Hasons-Smith (Eds.), *CALL environments: Research, practice, and critical issues* (pp. 55–64). Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge.
- Lewis, C., Enciso, P., & Moje, E. B. (2007). Introduction: Reframing sociocultural research on literacy. In C. Lewis, P. Enciso, & E. B. Moje (Eds.), *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power* (pp. 1–11). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141.
- National Research Council. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.) [Kindle version]. The National Academies Press.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92.
- Osler, A., & Starkey, H. (2018). Extending the theory and practice of education for cosmopolitan citizenship. *Educational Review*, 70(1), 31–40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1388616>
- Ramadan, T. (2015). Cosmopolitan theory and the daily pluralism of life. In N. Glick Schiller & A. Irving (Eds.), *Whose cosmopolitanism? Critical perspectives, relationalities, and discontents* (pp. 57–65). Berghahn Books.
- Sobré-Denton, M., & Bardhan, N. (2013). *Cultivating cosmopolitanism for intercultural communication: Communicating as global citizens*. Routledge.
- Street, B. (1998). New literacies in theory and practice: What are the implications for language in education? *Linguistics and Education*, 10(1), 1–24.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing social semiotics*. Routledge.
- Vasudevan, L. M. (2014). Multimodal cosmopolitanism: Cultivating belonging in everyday moments with youth. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44(1), 45–67. <https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12040>
- Pink, D. (2009, August 25). Dan Pink: The puzzle of motivation [Video file]. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=rrkrvAUbUgY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rrkrvAUbUgY)

# Walking the Talk and Walking with Students Together: Teacher Authenticity

---

Chenghao Zhu

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

Qingli Guo

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

George M Jacobs

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

Jasper Roe

*James Cook University, Singapore*

Meng Huat Chau

*Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

This paper explores the power of teacher authenticity, drawing on a collection of teacher authenticity narratives from diverse teaching contexts. The stories, framed within a three-part model – Talk, Walk the Talk, and Walk Together – provide a perspective on how authenticity might reshape classroom dynamics, fostering a more inclusive, engaging, and democratic learning environment. The narratives, from a Chinese language teacher in Beijing to an English teacher in Efate, Vanuatu, suggest the potential of teacher authenticity to enrich the teaching and learning experience. While the journey towards teacher authenticity is not without challenges, these narratives underscore its potential. This paper aims to inspire educators, offering what may be a fresh perspective on the role of authenticity in education.

## INTRODUCTION

In education, the role of a teacher extends beyond the dissemination of knowledge, important though that is. Teachers are not just instructors but also role models, mentors, and facilitators who influence the learning environment and the overall educational experience of their students. One attribute that can enhance teacher effectiveness in these roles is authenticity (Akoury, 2013; De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2017; Johnson & LaBelle, 2017). Teacher authenticity, defined as the alignment between teachers' beliefs and actions, can foster an inclusive, engaging, and democratic learning environment. However, the concept of teacher authenticity, while widely acknowledged, is often not fully explored.

Drawing on a three-part model of teacher authenticity – Talk, Walk the Talk, and Walk Together – the paper presents five inspiring narratives from diverse teaching contexts (Asmawi et al., 2023). Each narrative provides a unique

perspective on how teacher authenticity can reshape classroom dynamics and enhance student engagement. From a Mandarin teacher in Beijing who embraced the wisdom of Confucius to an English teacher in Efate, Vanuatu, who empowered his students to become constructors of their own learning journey, these stories serve as a source of inspiration. They demonstrate the possible impact of aligning one's beliefs with actions and engaging students in a shared learning journey.

## **ONE METHOD OF AUTHENTICITY IN EDUCATION**

The model of authenticity illustrated here involves the phases of (a) Talk, (b) Walk the Talk, and (c) Walk Together. This model provides a framework for teachers to align their actions with their words and to engage students in a shared learning journey.

The Talk phase of the model emphasizes the importance of open and honest communication in the classroom. Teachers share their ideas and expectations about education with their students, thereby laying the foundation for a transparent and inclusive learning environment. This open dialogue encourages students to, in turn, express their own thoughts, fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Of course, the dialogue must be appropriate to the age and language level of the students.

The Walk the Talk phase underscores the importance of consistency between words and actions. When teachers model the behaviors and values they advocate, they not only reinforce their teaching philosophy but also demonstrate their commitment to it. This consistency is crucial because it enhances the credibility of the teacher and fosters a sense of trust among students. Moreover, it provides students with concrete examples of values and behaviors, facilitating their understanding and application.

The Walk Together phase highlights the importance of shared learning-in-action experiences. Teachers provide opportunities for students to carry out behaviors that resonate with those that their teachers explained and demonstrated in the first two phases of the model. In other words, teachers invite students to walk together with them. When teachers and students embark on such a learning journey together, they create a collaborative and inclusive learning environment. This collaborative approach shifts the dynamics of the classroom from teacher-centered to learner-centered.

The stories shared in the next sections of this paper provide what we hope are compelling illustrations of teacher authenticity. They demonstrate how teachers, by being authentic, can foster a sense of shared responsibility, emotional authenticity, and honesty in the classroom. However, it is important to note that the journey towards teacher authenticity is not without challenges. It requires teachers to reflect on their beliefs and values, to confront their biases and assumptions, and to be open to change. It also requires – or if necessary take place in the absence of – a supportive and inclusive school culture, where teachers feel safe to express their authenticity and students feel valued and included.

## ILLUSTRATIVE NARRATIVES OF TEACHER AUTHENTICITY

In this section, we delve deeper into the narratives of Qingli, Jasper, Chenghao, Anupriya, and Brian, each of whom exemplifies the practice of teacher authenticity in unique and impactful ways. These stories serve as rich, real-life illustrations of our proposed three-part model of teacher authenticity: Talk, Walk the Talk, and Walk Together. Notably, these stories are included in the book *Stories of Teacher Authenticity*, edited by Adelina Binte Asmawi, George M. Jacobs, Guo Qingli, and Willy A. Renandya (Asmawi et al., 2023). This book was published online for free by Peachey Publications in 2023 (<https://payhip.com/b/k3Oq9>).

### **Qingli's Story: "I Don't Know"**

Qingli's narrative unfolds in a Mandarin teaching context at a top-rated secondary school in Beijing. Her story provides a unique perspective on the role of honesty and humility in teaching, demonstrating how she fostered a new classroom culture where everyone – teachers and students – admitted their lack of knowledge and helped each other learn collaboratively.

In the Talk phase of our three-part model, Qingli introduced her students to an aspect of the philosophy of Confucius, the idea that “the wise should admit that they know some things. What’s more, they should also admit that they don’t know some things.” She emphasized the importance of honesty and humility, challenging the traditional image of teachers as all-knowing figures. However, moving to the Walk the Talk phase, Qingli faced a challenge when a student asked about a discrepancy between the textbook and the original version of an ancient Chinese text. Initially, she gave a vague answer to hide her lack of knowledge. Immediately thereafter, Qingli regretted her hypocritical decision. After a few days, she confessed to her students that she had not read the original text, demonstrating her commitment to the philosophy of Confucius. Fortunately, the students forgave her, and the class embarked together with Qingli on a successful search to answer the student’s initial question.

This was the start of the Walk Together phase, as Qingli and her students embarked on a journey of shared learning. One example of this was that the class leader also changed her behavior. Previously, classmates had posted questions, and the class leader had taken responsibility for answering all these questions. In the Walk Together phase, instead, various students volunteered to find tentative answers to classmates’ questions, and in the spirit of Confucius, these answers were subject to further discussion.

Qingli's story offers valuable insights into the role of teacher authenticity in fostering a culture of honesty and humility in the classroom. By embracing the philosophy of Confucius, Qingli was able to create a classroom culture where everyone – teachers and students – were comfortable admitting their lack of knowledge. Her approach challenges traditional classroom dynamics that often portray teachers as all-knowing figures. By admitting her lack of knowledge, Qingli was able to shift these dynamics and foster a culture of honesty and humility.

### **Jasper's Story: Taking Responsibility**

Jasper Roe's narrative unfolds in an English teaching context in a university in Vietnam. His story provides a unique perspective on the role of responsibility in the classroom, demonstrating how he fostered a new classroom culture where everyone – teachers and students – took responsibility for their actions.

In the Talk phase of our three-part model, Jasper initiated an open dialogue with his students about expectations and responsibilities. He introduced the concept of contracts, a long-standing practice in education, but with a unique twist. These contracts outlined not just students' roles and responsibilities but also those of teachers. This two-way approach fostered a sense of accountability and shared responsibility in the classroom. Moving to the Walk the Talk phase, Jasper demonstrated his commitment to the agreed-upon responsibilities. For instance, when his students promised to submit assignments on time, he promised to give feedback within three days. Jasper kept his word, setting clear expectations and thereby reducing potential confusion or frustration among his students. In the Walk Together phase, Jasper and his students embarked on a journey of shared responsibility. With the new classroom culture, students became more punctual with their assignments, and they continued to negotiate contracts in other areas with Jasper. This practice not only eased the teacher's anxiety but also provided clarity for students and reduced their study stress.

By using contracts to outline the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and students, Jasper was able to create a classroom culture where everyone was accountable for their actions. His approach challenges traditional classroom dynamics that often place the burden of responsibility solely on the students. By including teachers in the contracts, Jasper was able to shift these dynamics and foster a sense of shared responsibility.

### **Chenghao's Story: "Every Answer Can Be a Reference Answer"**

Chenghao's narrative provides a perspective on the concept of teacher authenticity in the context of assessment techniques. His story unfolds in the backdrop of China's education system, where the emphasis on standard answers often stifles creativity and critical thinking.

In the Talk phase of our three-part model, Chenghao began by discussing the limitations of the traditional approach to assessment, which often prioritizes standard answers. He emphasized to his students that from now on, there would be no standard answers in the course. Instead, everyone's thoughts could be considered a "reference answer." He encouraged students to share their opinions in class, drawing from textbooks, their own experiences, and discussions with others. Moving to the Walk the Talk phase, Chenghao demonstrated his commitment to this new approach through his own actions. He adjusted his assessment techniques by no longer limiting grading criteria to standard answers. He began paying attention to how well arguments were supported with reasons, giving high marks for answers that were not standard but had convincing reasons. In the Walk Together phase, Chenghao collaborated with students to construct a new classroom culture where students no longer gave answers only from the textbook, and class discussions became more lively. He expanded his role from

being only a listener and evaluator to also being a participant in discussions. Everyone in the classroom could ask questions, and others, not just teachers, were encouraged to respond to these questions. This new culture allowed for a more open and equitable exchange of ideas between teachers and students.

Chenghao's story offers an understanding of the role of teacher authenticity in fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to assessment. By challenging the traditional emphasis on standard answers, Chenghao encouraged creativity and critical thinking. Moreover, Chenghao's story highlights the importance of teacher-student relationships in fostering a more inclusive approach to assessment. By inviting students to share their thoughts and participate in discussions, Chenghao was able to build a relationship of trust with his students. This trust likely made the students feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas, thereby contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable classroom culture.

### **Anupriya's Story: "It's Okay to Be Not Okay"**

Anupriya's narrative is a compelling exploration of the role of emotional authenticity in the classroom, particularly in the context of preschool education. Her story unfolds in a culture that traditionally suppressed the expression of negative emotions, a norm that she realized needed to be challenged for the benefit of her students and herself.

In the Talk phase of our three-part model, Anupriya began by openly discussing the importance of acknowledging and expressing a range of emotions. She emphasized to her students that it was okay to feel and share a variety of emotions with others, challenging the cultural norm that only positive emotions should be displayed. This open dialogue served as a foundation for fostering emotional authenticity in her classroom.

Moving to the Walk the Talk phase, Anupriya demonstrated her commitment to emotional authenticity through her own actions. She shared personal experiences with her students, such as expressing sadness when she had seen an injured bird and expressing gratitude when the bird was rescued. By doing so, she not only modeled the expression of emotions but also showed how to respond constructively to these emotions, in this case by calling an organization that rescues wild animals who are in danger.

In the Walk Together phase, Anupriya guided her students in practicing the behaviors she had modeled. She created opportunities for students to express their emotions and discuss how to manage them. For instance, she encouraged students to draw pictures depicting their feelings, discuss these drawings and feelings with their classmates, and consider what might be constructive actions when faced with negative emotions. These opportunities helped students develop emotional intelligence, including empathy, thereby promoting students' personal and social development.

Anupriya's story challenges traditional norms that suppress the expression of negative emotions. By acknowledging that it is okay to feel and express a range of emotions, including negative ones, she helped her students understand that emotions of various kinds are a natural part of human experience and that they can be managed in healthy ways. This is particularly important in the context of preschool education, where children are just beginning to understand and navigate

their emotional world.

Moreover, Anupriya's story highlights the importance of teacher-student relationships in promoting emotional authenticity. By sharing her own emotions with her students, Anupriya built a relationship of trust with them. This trust likely made her students feel more comfortable expressing their own emotions and discussing them openly. Finally, Anupriya's approach to "walking together" with her students underscores the importance of active learning in emotional education. By practicing expressing and managing their emotions, students were not just passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in their emotional development. This active learning approach is likely to lead to deeper understanding and longer-lasting behavioral change.

### **Brian's Story: The Efate Novelists**

Brian's narrative, titled "The Efate Novelists," unfolds in Efate, Vanuatu, a Pacific island nation. His story provides a compelling perspective on the role of appropriate learning materials in education and the power for change of student-centered learning.

Brian's story begins with teacher and students realizing that the textbook they were using did not meet the students' needs. This realization led Brian to a bold decision that would significantly alter the dynamics of his classroom. In an act of defiance against the inadequacy of the textbook, Brian instructed his students to throw their textbooks out of the window. Really! This act was not symbolic; it was a practical step toward creating a more relevant and engaging learning environment. Following this, Brian and his students embarked on a journey of creating their own learning materials. Without textbooks, students began writing stories based on their lived experiences, effectively becoming novelists of their own learning journey. This approach not only made the learning materials more relevant to the students but also engaged them in a meaningful and active learning process.

Brian's story is unique in that it does not directly follow the three-part model of Talk, Walk the Talk, and Walk Together, although certainly Brian explained his decisions to students (Talk), took the unusual and challenging step of teaching without a textbook (Walk the Talk), and helped student write their own stories and use those stories as learning tools (Walk Together). By challenging the status quo and empowering his students to become novelists of their own learning journey, Brian was able to create a learning environment that was not only more relevant but also more engaging for his students.

Moreover, Brian's story highlights the importance of relevance in education. By encouraging students to write stories based on their lived experiences, he made the learning materials more relevant to them. This relevance likely made the learning process more engaging for the students and facilitated their understanding and retention of the learning materials. Finally, Brian's story underscores the importance of active learning. By creating their own learning materials, students were active participants in their learning process.



## CONCLUSION

The exploration of teacher authenticity through the three-part model and the diverse narratives shared in this paper reveals the profound potential impact of aligning one's beliefs with actions and fostering a shared learning journey with students. The power of teacher authenticity challenges the conventional teacher-student hierarchy, encouraging a mutual exchange of ideas and shared responsibility. This shift not only enhances the learning experience for students but also enriches the teaching experience, making it more fulfilling and meaningful. However, as mentioned earlier, the journey towards teacher authenticity is not a linear or easy one. It requires introspection, courage, and a willingness to embrace change. It demands a shift from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one.

## THE AUTHORS

**Chenghao Zhu** is currently pursuing his PhD in the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics at Universiti Malaya. He holds a master's degree in applied linguistics from Beijing Language and Culture University. Before embarking on his PhD research journey, he was a teacher of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. His research interests include the study of second language development and corpus and computational linguistics. Email: zhu\_cheng\_hao@163.com

**Qingli Guo** is a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Universiti Malaya. She earned her master's degree in teaching Chinese as a second language at Beijing Language and Culture University. Her research interest is Chinese teaching and learning. Email: gql1672@163.com

**George M. Jacobs** teaches language and education in Singapore and beyond. His areas of interest include student-centered learning, ecolinguistics, teacher authenticity, and humane education. Email: george.jacobs@gmail.com

**Jasper Roe** is an academic, researcher, and current head of department for JCU Language School. Originally from the UK, Jasper has been living between Asia and Europe since 2014. His research interests are related to the relationship between language, discourse, and society, along with higher education and teaching, student experience, EAP, TESOL, and academic integrity. Jasper has published articles in sociology, linguistics, and education journals, including the *Journal of Academic Ethics*, the *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, and the *International Journal of TESOL Studies*. Email: jasper.roe@jcu.edu.au

**Meng Huat Chau** teaches and mentors students conducting research in applied linguistics at Universiti Malaya. He holds or has held adjunct and visiting scholar positions or professorships at Jeonbuk National University in the Republic of Korea, the University of Cambridge in the UK, and Yogyakarta State University in Indonesia. His teaching, research, and mentoring on topics in applied corpus linguistics, Global Englishes, language and writing development, multilingualism, and language education have been motivated by ecojustice considerations. Email: chaumenghuat@yahoo.co.uk

## REFERENCES

- Asmawi, A., Jacobs, G. M., Guo, Q., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.). (2023). *Stories of teacher authenticity*. Peachey Publications. <https://payhip.com/b/k3Oq9>
- Akoury, P. N. (2013). *Teacher authenticity: A theoretical and empirical investigation*. (UMI Publication No. 3557185) [Doctoral dissertation, Boston College]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/434200ae1755147196c0896208d6942d/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>
- De Bruyckere, P., & Kirschner, P. A. (2017). Measuring teacher authenticity: Criteria students use in their perception of teacher authenticity. *Cogent Education*, 4(1), Article 1354573. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1354573>
- Johnson, Z. D., & LaBelle, S. (2017). An examination of teacher authenticity in the college classroom. *Communication Education*, 66(4), 423-439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2017.1324167>

---

## **Research Papers**

---



## Analyzing the Felt Sense of Writing in English

---

Yutaka Fujieda

*Kyoai Gakuen University, Gunma, Japan*

This study sought to interpret the meaning of English writing by analyzing the indescribable emotions, or felt sense, of Japanese EFL writers through their writing experience and practice. This research employed the thinking-at-the-edge (TAE) method to investigate the emotions associated with English writing among ten Japanese EFL students. Following the three phases of the TAE procedure, data were collected from ten TAE worksheets and individual interviews. Due to the linguistic distinctions between Japanese and English, the learners had difficulty expressing themselves in English, which negatively affected their writing confidence. Through their English writing experience, they emphasized the significance of enhancing their writing skills and developing a sense of accomplishment in the work they produced. This paper discusses the potential of adapting the TAE method to comprehensively explore the emotions involved in second language writing.

### INTRODUCTION

Emotional research in the field of second language (L2) writing has recently gained attention. In the field of L2 writing, there has been considerable interest in writers' psychological facets, particularly affective elements such as anxiety. For example, previous studies have examined how L2 writers navigate and regulate the emotional challenges of writing in English (Byrd & Abrams, 2022; Li & Reynolds, 2021). An alternative avenue of this line of research has examined how emotional factors affect the performance and development of L2 writing (Chen, 2004; Fartoukh et al., 2012; Han & Hirver, 2018; Teng et al., 2022). The theoretical stances and research paradigms of L2 acquisition have underpinned emotional research on L2 writing.

Current research on emotions in L2 writing has stressed the importance of exploring writers' internal emotions (Chamcharatsri, 2013; Iida & Chamcharatsri, 2022). These studies have identified alternative pedagogical approaches to teaching writing. Although this type of emotional study of L2 writing has enabled critical examinations of writers' affective experiences, few studies have explored the difficult-to-articulate emotions in writers, commonly known as felt sense (Fujieda, 2020).

This study reviews my emotional research on L2 writing, which has been supported by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research. Specifically, this research uses the thinking-at-the-edge (TAE) framework proposed by Gendlin and Hendricks (2004) to explore the felt sense of ten college-level Japanese EFL (English as a

foreign language) writers through their English writing experience. The study focuses primarily on interpreting the meanings of English writing by examining writers' felt sense through their experience and practice of English writing.

## **EMOTIONS IN L<sub>2</sub> ENGLISH WRITING**

The emotional dimension, which is sometimes overlooked in favor of cognitive and pedagogical factors, is a crucial feature of L<sub>2</sub> writing. Both positive and negative emotions (e.g., fear, anxiety, confidence, and pleasure) can have significant impacts on writers' processes and writing development (Chamcharatsri, 2013). Thus, a complex web of emotions can significantly impact on writers' perceptions, behaviors, and textual output.

Prior studies on emotions in L<sub>2</sub> writing have yielded valuable insights into alternative pedagogical strategies for teaching writing (Fujieda, 2019, 2020; Huerta et al., 2016; Kapur, 2016). Nevertheless, emotional research on L<sub>2</sub> writing has adopted a textual perspective to emphasize learners' affective experiences. Emotions encompass intricate feelings and senses that extend beyond the confines of linguistic expressions. Exploring the affective encounters of L<sub>2</sub> learners yields a holistic comprehension of their personal experience. This study contributes to tailoring pedagogical techniques for individual and curriculum purposes.

By clarifying the intricacies of these emotional aspects, researchers can suggest approaches to teaching writing in order to enhance learners' writing competence. Emotional studies have examined the unspeakable feelings of L<sub>2</sub> writers and investigated the emotional aspects of L<sub>2</sub> writing. To do so, the TAE method can be employed as a qualitative approach to explore complex elements of emotions in a holistic manner. This TAE approach facilitates the expression of emotions that are challenging to articulate through language but are instead experienced as a felt sense. Therefore, the TAE approach is applicable to the construction of a writer's perceived sense of meaning.

## **METHOD**

The present study investigated the felt sense of English writing among Japanese EFL students. Specifically, this study interpreted the meaning of English writing by examining the students' indescribable feelings or felt sense through their encounters with English writing. The study utilized a qualitative case study approach and thematic analysis to showcase the significance of English writing experiences and practices (Boystzis, 1998; Yin, 2018). Snapshots of the writers' felt sense of writing were constructed by examining data sources, including TAE worksheets and individual interviews.

### **Participants**

The research sample comprised 10 Japanese undergraduate students who participated voluntarily and were selected using a convenience sampling method. The participants were pursuing a bachelor's degree in English language studies at

a four-year private university in Japan. They showed an intermediate level of English proficiency, with a TOEIC score of approximately 500. The research covered the period from 2019 to February 2022; eight participants were second-year undergraduate students, while two were fourth-year students. They all had similar backgrounds in English writing practice. During their secondary school years, they concentrated primarily on enhancing their sentence construction skills by translating Japanese into English. Upon entering university, they gained expertise in the use of patterns to construct specific sentence structures, such as argumentative writing, within a given paragraph.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

To obtain the study data, I asked each participant to participate separately in TAE-based reflection activities. During the TAE session, I used printable worksheets to demonstrate how to represent one's felt sense while writing in English (Tokumaru, 2008). The TAE methodology comprises three primary phases, each of which affords several opportunities for reflective activity. These analyses emphasized 10 TAE worksheets written in Japanese to gain a better understanding of the participants' felt sense in relation to English writing. The first step, which centered on a single line of English (Worksheets 1–3), aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of emotions and sense. The second section required the participants to abstract their felt sense by extracting patterns and creating intersecting forms based on their daily experiences (Worksheets 4–7). The last phase presented a logical organization of their felt sense and offered a theory of the felt sense of writing in English (Worksheets 8–10). Once the session had ended, I used the worksheets completed by each participant to conduct individual semi-structured interviews in Japanese, which each lasted approximately 50 minutes. The interviews were transcribed with the participants' approval.

To analyze the data, first, all participants' worksheets were carefully reread, examined, and then accurately translated into English. Next, a participant member check was conducted to verify the translated meanings of the TAE worksheets and interviews. The first step was to create categories based on the thematic topics crucial to writing in English. Subsequently, all the data sources were imported into a qualitative research software, NVivo, to recheck them in accordance with the recursive process characteristic of qualitative methods (Boystzis, 1998). During the second phase of the research project, additional categories were created by comparing the papers and interview transcripts, where necessary, with pre-existing codes. Finally, NVivo was employed to examine the coding schemes in the databank and analyze the reliability of the coding systems and categories. This was done to ensure the credibility of the results of this study.

## **RESULTS**

This section highlights the EFL writers' felt sense of writing in English by presenting snapshots of each phase of the TAE approach.

## First Phase

The first point was related to the participants' ability to develop their English writing through various practices. Table 1 summarizes the general felt sense toward writing in English.

**TABLE 1. General Felt Sense of the Participants**

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Felt Sense (Worksheet 1-3)	One Sentence of the Felt Sense
Aoi	quality, quantity, skills, heartbeat, <i>confusing</i> , <i>exciting</i>	While I was reading a new essay, I felt my heart beating fast and exciting.
Eri	<i>difficult</i> , impressions, <i>attractive</i> , stylish	Expressing my thoughts in English is difficult.
Tomokazu	<i>difficult</i> , <i>concerns</i> , connection, expressions, <i>fun</i>	English writing gives me a sense of connection to foreign countries.

*Note.* Italicized words indicate general feelings about writing in English.

Aoi's experience was characterized by multiple feelings that cut across qualitative, quantitative, and embodied feelings. The confusing and exciting elements of her experience were palpable, and their solitary sentence encapsulated the sensorial experience with the phrase "While I was reading a new essay, I felt my heart beating fast and exciting," revealing a vivid intersection of cognitive processing and emotional arousal. Eri's felt sense of writing is nestled in the dichotomy between difficulty and attraction. The challenging aspect of expressing thoughts in English was counterbalanced by the allure and stylishness of the language. Her reflection eloquently illustrated this, as she stated, "Expressing my thoughts in English is difficult. English is attractive and fashionable, so I'm fascinated by such difficulty of writing." However, Tomokazu alluded to a feeling of connection with foreign countries while engaged in English writing. This evoked a profound sense of international engagement, more than just a mere practice of writing in English. These feelings were succinctly illustrated in his statement: "English writing gives me a sense of connection to foreign countries."

## Second Phase

In this phase, the participants conceptualized the act of writing in English through the application of metaphoric representations of experiences derived from daily life. Rika's perception of the writing process was likened to cooking and practicing music using a score. She underscored the procedural elements of the task, emphasizing the need for continuous practice, and grappling with difficult grammatical constructs and vocabulary, akin to refining a recipe or mastering a musical piece. Rika perceived writing as a competition and viewed the culmination of this process as a significant achievement comparable to winning an award. Sanae regarded it as an insurmountable challenge that must be confronted head-on. Despite the difficulty involved in writing tasks, she recognized the importance of embracing the challenge of infusing the process with enjoyment. She also stressed the need for clarity in writing so that her classmates could accurately capture her thoughts. Koki constructed his understanding of English



writing by comparing it to the challenge of mountain climbing and gaming. He acknowledged the need to master grammar and various expressions in order to succeed in writing. Furthermore, he recognized the repetitive cycle of successes and failures in his writing journey, analogous to the ups and downs experienced in a challenging game. The accuracy of grammar and word usage played a pivotal role in his writing success. Every feat achieved gave him the feeling of triumph, akin to winning a game.

### **Final Phase**

The last phase of the TAE approach calls for the amalgamation of participants' encounters from Phases 1 and 2 and the formation of theories about the topic. Three participants, Tomoka, Kei, and Shinji, shared their reflections by highlighting their individual interpretations of English writing.

Tomoka perceived English writing as a rigorous pursuit that prioritizes structure, lucidity, and substantiation through evidence. The technical aspects of writing were emphasized, such as the requirement for strong vocabulary, grammatical structures, and diverse expressions. Her trial-error processes of English writing depicted an accomplishment in overcoming obstacles, thus fulfilling her writing experience. Kei balanced the pleasure and complexity of English writing and acknowledged the occasional perplexity arising from the process of writing well and expressing ideas lucidly. However, the prospect of English writing connecting him with others made his writing process worthwhile. He emphasized self-expansion and global connectivity through language acquisition. Shinji added another layer by delving into the emotional aspects of English writing. His narrative underscored exceptional feelings about writing through reflection on the emotional attachment to the process. The theme of self-development was also prevalent in his account, as he viewed writing as a means to delving deeper into the English language. The completion of his written products paved the way for further learning and enjoyment.

## **DISCUSSION**

This section unpacks the emerging themes and meanings arising from the three phases of the TAE approach. Through this approach, this study provided a more profound comprehension of the participants' perceptions and encounters with English writing.

### **Disciplined Endeavor**

The participants uniformly emphasized that writing was a disciplined and process-oriented task that necessitated structured, lucid sentences, and supportive evidence. Tomoka highlighted the significance of technical skills such as extensive vocabulary, grammatical skills, and various English expressions. This perspective aligns with extant research that advocates the development and refinement of specific linguistic competencies as critical in achieving writing proficiency in an L2 (Cumming, 2013).

### **Process of Self-Expansion and Global Connection**

Writing as a means of self-expansion and global connection was a recurrent theme in the participants' experiences. Kei's reflection underscored this idea, suggesting that writing in English bridges learners with the world despite the inherent challenges involved. This perspective is consistent with existing research that characterizes language learning as a transformative journey involving learners' intercultural competence and sense of global citizenship (Byram, 2008).

### **Vehicle for Emotional Engagement and Self-Development**

The emotional dimension of writing in English emerged as a significant theme within the participants' narratives, particularly in Shinji's reflections. Most of the participants frequently expressed their emotional experiences, ranging from confusion to excitement, while writing in English. They viewed writing as a means of personal growth and self-development as well as providing opportunities to deepen their language skills and self-awareness. These findings reaffirm the integral role of positive emotions and personal growth in effective language learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999).

### **The Interplay of Success and Failure in the Writing Journey**

In the final emergent theme, the process of writing was shown to be characterized by trial, error, success, and failure. The process involving the iteration of writing led to a feeling of achievement and highlighted the learners' perseverance and ability to gain knowledge from their errors. This process of writing expounds upon the advantages of productive failure in the realm of learning (Kapur, 2016).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study examined the interpretation of the meaning of English writing by analyzing the felt sense of EFL writers through their involvement and engagement in English writing. It employed the TAE approach to investigate the emotions from the English writing of 10 undergraduate-level Japanese EFL students. The findings show that the notable disparity in the linguistic structure between Japanese and English presents a significant obstacle for writers. The students had difficulty expressing themselves in English effectively, resulting in a decline in their overall writing confidence. They recognized the importance of improving their writing abilities and cultivating a sense of achievement from their efforts in English writing. They were also cognizant of their desire to enhance their writing skills through personal development and academic success.

Although emotional studies employing the TAE approach pose challenges to exploring emotions from English writing, this type of research offers a novel means of investigating and interpreting the meanings of writing in different languages. Emotional studies of L2 writing have the potential to inform pedagogical approaches and instructions that reduce learners' anxiety about

writing and enhance their writing proficiency. In addition, emotional research using qualitative methods can significantly enhance the research area of L2 writing.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C), Grant Number 18K0877 (2018–2021) and 23K00702 (2023–2027).

## THE AUTHOR

**Yutaka Fujieda** is a professor at Kyoai Gakuen University, Gunma, Japan. His publications include *Academic Discourse Socialization: Case Study on Multilingual Learners* (Lexington Books / Rowman & Littlefield, 2022) and several papers in peer-reviewed journals. His research interests include second language writing, second language teaching, and teacher development. Email: [fujieda@c.kyoai.ac.jp](mailto:fujieda@c.kyoai.ac.jp)

## REFERENCES

- Arnold, J., & Brown, D. H. (1999). A map of the terrain. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 1–24). Cambridge University Press.
- Boystzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. SAGE.
- Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and reflections*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byrd, D., & Abrams, Z. (2022). Applying positive psychology to the L2 classroom: Acknowledging and fostering emotions in L2 writing. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 925130. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.925130>
- Chamcharatsri, P. B. (2013). Emotionality and second language writers: Expressing fear through narrative in Thai and in English. *L2 Journal*, 1(5), 59–75. <https://doi.org/10.5070/l25115703>
- Chen, Y. S. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(4), 313–335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.07.001>
- Cumming, A. (2013). Multiple dimensions of academic language and literacy development. *Language Learning*, 63(1), 130–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00741.x>
- Fartoukh, M., Chanquory, L., & Piolat, A. (2012). Effects on emotion on writing process in children. *Written Communication*, 29(4), 391–411. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088312458640>
- Fujieda, Y. (2019). A pilot study of emotions of writing in L2: Unpacking the felt sense of an EFL writer. *Kyoai Gakuen Journal*, 19, 1–18.
- Fujieda, Y. (2020). Complex emotions and sense of writing in English: A case study of three Japanese EFL writers. *KOTESOL Proceedings 2019*, 61–67.
- Gendlin, E., & Hendricks, M. (2004). Thinking at the edge (TAE) steps. *The Folio*, 19(1), 12–24.
- Han, J., & Hiver, P. (2018). Genre-based L2 writing instruction and writing-specific psychological factors: The dynamics of change. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 40(1), 44–59. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2018.03.001>
- Huerta, M., Goodson, P., Beigi, M., & Chlup, D. (2016). Graduate students as academic writers: Writing anxiety, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. *Higher Education*

- Research and Development*, 36(4), 716–729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1238881>
- Iida, A., & Chamcharatsri, B. (2022). Emotions in second language poetry writing: A poetic inquiry into Japanese EFL students' language learning experiences. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 16(1), 53–66. <http://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2020.1856114>
- Kapur, M. (2016). Examining productive failure, productive success, unproductive failure, and unproductive success in learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 51(2), 289–299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2016.1155457>
- Li, M., & Reynolds, B. L. (2021). Academic emotions in giving genre-based peer feedback: An emotional intelligence perspective. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 14(4), 993–1026. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2020-0134>
- Teng, M. F., Wang, C., & Zhang, L. J. (2022). Assessing self-regulatory writing strategies and their predictive effects on young EFL learners' writing performance. *Assessing Writing*, 51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2021.100573>
- Tokumaru, S. (2008). *TAE ni yoru bunsho hyogen workbook* [TAE-based workbook for written expressions]. Keisuisha.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.

# The Exploration of EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Flourishing Through Online Mentoring

---

Eunjeong Park

*Sunchon National University, Suncheon, Korea*

This study examines how EFL pre-service teachers perceive and experience online mentoring, which aims to enhance their flourishing and well-being as eligible prospective teachers. The study employed qualitative research methods to gain insights into pre-service teachers' encounters with flourishing in their teacher education repertoire. Data was collected from 23 pre-service teachers who were pursuing English language education at a medium-sized national university in Korea, through interviews, e-survey questionnaires, and artifacts. Among the participants, six individuals were selected for in-depth interviews to better understand their understanding of flourishing and well-being. The findings identified four dimensions of flourishing, contributing to the research on teaching EFL learners and teacher education in TESOL. The study concludes by suggesting the need for further research to explore the concept and the role of flourishing in fostering positive attitudes among EFL pre-service teachers towards their teaching and learning experiences in English language teacher education.

*Keywords:* flourishing, pre-service teachers, teacher education, well-being

## INTRODUCTION

Many pre-service teachers grapple with selecting and implementing effective and suitable teaching strategies and classroom management techniques. Several researchers have stressed the significance of adequately preparing pre-service teachers to understand the roles of English language teachers and English language education in the 21st century (Jaimes, 2013; Lutovac & Flores, 2021; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). Particularly during the pandemic, pre-service teachers may have had limited opportunities to gain teaching experience outside the university setting due to school closures and distance learning. Therefore, there is a need for additional training opportunities to equip prospective teachers with the skills to teach their respective subjects effectively and manage classrooms. These training opportunities can encompass mentoring, service learning, tutoring, and other relevant activities. It is anticipated that through such teacher training, pre-service teachers can develop confidence and a passion for teaching. The purpose of this study is to explore EFL pre-service teachers' experiences and perceptions of online mentoring in the EFL context.

## **THE MEANING OF *FLOURISHING***

*Flourishing* refers to social functioning and positive emotions that encourage individuals to thrive despite challenging circumstances or illness (Keyes, 2007; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Flourishing entails feeling good and achieving psychological and social well-being through positive emotions (Hone et al., 2014; Keyes, 2002). Research indicates that college students who flourish are likely to find a purpose in life, maintain social connections, possess a positive outlook, and accomplish academic success (Fink, 2014; Nelson & Padilla-Walker, 2013) while exhibiting fewer risky behaviors (Jorgensen & Nelson, 2018). Flourishing implies that individuals should engage in activities that enable them to fulfill their potential and promote quality life and mental well-being (Keyes, 2002). In other words, flourishing represents a state of fulfillment and self-actualization conducive to positive mental health (Keyes, 2007). To flourish, individuals must function actively and positively.

While consensus on the definition of flourishing is yet to be reached, Keyes and Ryff's (1999) model of flourishing is considered the most comprehensive in terms of social well-being. Keyes and Ryff (1999) identified five dimensions of psychological well-being that contribute to positive functioning: personal growth, autonomy, mastery of the environment, positive relationships with others, and a sense of purpose in life. Keyes (2002) argued that individuals can function well when they perceive society as meaningful, reasonable, and capable of growth, as they feel a sense of belonging and acceptance within their communities, and when they see themselves as valuable contributors to society. Undoubtedly, students with sound mental health strive to flourish in life. They exhibit positive psychological and social functioning.

Flourishing is positively correlated with student engagement and academic success, self-esteem, and career direction (Randles & Quillinan, 2014). Among various engagement activities, participation in service-learning projects has a positive influence on students' academic performance, leadership skills, and critical-thinking abilities (Astin & Sax, 1998). Service learning also provides opportunities for fostering societal responsibility and personal development and growth (Colby et al., 2008; Washburn et al., 2004). Boyd and co-researchers (2012) assert that students engaging in service learning tend to exhibit high levels of psychosocial well-being, such as intrinsic motivation for learning, strong connections with others, and effective stress management strategies. Particularly, Maples et al.'s (2020) study investigated the relationship between various components of service learning and flourishing. This study sheds light on the positive connection between service-learning experiences and flourishing among students. The results demonstrated that quality mentoring relationships and supportive connections were two significant predictors of flourishing in college students. Based on prior literature, this study aimed to gain a far-reaching understanding of the components and aspects of flourishing through qualitative means.

## **METHOD**

### **Context and Participants**

This study took place at a national university located in southwestern Korea. The online mentoring project, conducted during the autumn semester of 2021, involved approximately 80 pre-service teachers from nine education departments within the College of Education. These departments were the Departments of Agriculture, Chemistry, Computer, English, Environment, Korean, Mathematics, Physics, and Social Studies. The pre-service teachers were paired with middle school students from nearby secondary schools. This study mainly focuses on a specific portion of the project involving 23 pre-service teachers majoring in English education. The majority of the participants were in their senior year, comprising 10 women and 13 men, with ages ranging from 21 to 23.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

A qualitative research design was adopted with an e-survey and interviews to understand Korean pre-service teachers' flourishing and well-being in online mentoring. An electronic survey was distributed and shared to allow participants to freely convey their ideas and thoughts regarding their experiences and perceptions of flourishing and teacher resilience. The survey included questions about satisfaction and expectations, the significance of online mentoring, self-realization, career prospects, and suggestions for improving online mentoring programs. A total of 23 participants completed the electronic survey. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with six pre-service teachers, with each interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview questions revolved around topics of flourishing, encompassing their overall perceptions of the mentoring program and the acquired benefits from the mentoring sessions.

In addressing the research questions related to pre-service teachers' flourishing as observed in online mentoring, content analysis was employed. The analysis process began by identifying key concepts as preliminary coding categories, drawing from existing theories or relevant literature. The objective of this content analysis was to extend the theoretical framework or theory. The model presented by Keyes and Ryff (1999) was considered the most comprehensive in terms of flourishing and social well-being. They identified five dimensions of psychological well-being related to positive functioning: personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and purpose in life. These dimensions served as preconceived codes for analyzing the data to explore flourishing in this study. The data were analyzed inductively and qualitatively. Initially, theme codes were generated using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of analyzing qualitative data. Recurring themes were categorized, compared, and further refined as sophisticated themes.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

For pre-service teachers, participating in mentoring programs in various community contexts allows them to acquire teaching skills as well as important

soft skills like communication and collaboration. The concept of flourishing has recently gained significance as a way to achieve personal fulfillment and self-actualization for a better life (Keyes, 2002). We believe that mentoring programs are well-suited for fostering flourishing. Based on Keyes and Ryff's (1999) five dimensions of flourishing, we identified four categories: personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The interview and survey data revealed the following examples for each of the four categories:

**Personal Growth**

I felt like self-fulfillment by performing this mentoring program. [PST7, interview]

**Positive Relations with Others**

I had a good relationship with my mentee.... I asked her about the motivation to learn besides the content of the lessons. [PST2, interview]

**Purpose in Life**

It's worthwhile to become an English language teacher. I had a good impression and more desires to become an English teacher. When I prepared the materials for the mentoring sessions. [PST4, e-survey]

**Self-Acceptance**

Based on the past experiences, I think I can certainly structure mentoring sessions including quizzes and assignments by myself.... I wanted to showcase my entire mentoring process by expressing my motivation for participation. [PST11, interview]

The results of this study shed light on the strategies and approaches employed by pre-service teachers in online mentoring programs, which have the potential to enhance their well-being and future careers. The findings suggest that personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance play crucial roles in achieving self-actualization and overall flourishing. Mentoring programs can proactively support pre-service teachers in navigating challenges and obstacles in the demanding field of education. Many participants emphasized the significance of building rapport with their mentees, indicating a sense of meaningfulness and belonging to society. These mentoring programs genuinely fostered flourishing by addressing various contextual needs, as highlighted by Volstad et al. (2020). Self-actualization, determination, autonomy, and passion emerged as key attributes for attaining long-term goals among pre-service teachers. The experience of flourishing was described as a process of personal growth and self-realization. Flourishing can be understood through different relationships, such as those with mentees and their communities (Keyes, 2007). The participants' mentoring stories unveiled their individual interpretations of flourishing in relation to their career paths and mindset. Ultimately, flourishing, encompassing self-acceptance, positive relationships, personal growth, and purpose in life; it has the potential to extend beyond higher education institutions and positively impact communities (Gadamer, 2006). The findings of this study are of significance as affective factors greatly influence language learning and teaching success. Consequently, the flourishing of pre-service teachers may contribute to cultivating a positive mindset and attitudes towards English language education.



## CONCLUSIONS

Flourishing has emerged in many fields of study, particularly focusing on senior pre-service English teachers and their intrinsic motivation and attitude towards becoming secondary English teachers (Lee, 2018). Empirical research in teacher education is crucial for understanding and addressing the issues faced by pre-service teachers in terms of flourishing and their well-being. This study uncovered that EFL pre-service teachers experienced various aspects of flourishing, such as self-acceptance, positive relationships, personal growth, and purpose in life, through their participation in mentoring programs. This study opens up new possibilities in the field of English language education and teacher education, specifically in the areas of flourishing.

However, there are several limitations that should be recognized. Firstly, the results of this study were based on non-probability convenience sampling and cannot be generalized to different populations. Secondly, the duration of the study was limited to approximately four months within one semester, which may not capture a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences within a short time frame. Thirdly, while this study employed survey and interview data, the subjectivity inherent in qualitative data analysis may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

To gain deeper and broader insights into the phenomena of flourishing and teacher resilience, further studies should involve diverse student populations in different higher education contexts. Longitudinal studies would be valuable as they could study the experiences of flourishing over an extended period, encompassing college life and the transition into prospective careers, thereby elucidating the dynamics of flourishing within changing contexts. Moreover, investigating flourishing from cross-cultural perspectives would be informative, as there is limited research from Asian and/or Eastern cultures. Such cross-cultural perspectives could offer a deeper understanding of the nature of flourishing and the role of contextual factors in their development.

## THE AUTHOR

**Eunjeong Park** is an associate professor in the Department of English Language Education at Sunchon National University in South Korea. Her research interests include teacher education, reflective practice, second language writing, and the interdisciplinarity of foreign/second language learning in education and applied linguistics. Email: parkej@senu.ac.kr

## REFERENCES

- Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39(3), 251-263.
- Boyd, M. J., Kawashima-Ginsberg, K., Zaff, J., & Levine, P. (2012). Assessment spotlight: Tufts University, Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. *Bringing Theory to Practice Newsletter*, 2012(Fall).
- Colby, A., Beaumont, E., Ehrlich, T., & Corngold, J. (2008). *Educating for democracy: Preparing undergraduates for responsible political engagement*. Jossey-Bass.

- Fink, J. E. (2014). Flourishing: Exploring predictors of mental health within the college environment. *Journal of American College Health*, 62(6), 380–388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2014.917647>
- Gadamer, H. G. (2006). Classical and philosophical hermeneutics. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 23(1), 29–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276406063228>
- Hone, L. C., Jarden A., Schofield G. M., & Duncan, S. (2014). Measuring flourishing: The impact of the operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of well-being. *International Journal of Well-Being*, 4(1), 62–90. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v4i1.4>
- Jaimés, J. C. (2013). The role of English pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in teacher education programs. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 195–206.
- Keyes, C. L. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43(2), 207–222. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090197>
- Keyes, C. L. (2007). Promoting and protecting mental health as flourishing: A complementary strategy for improving national mental health. *American Psychologist*, 62(2), 95–108. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.2.95>
- Keyes, C. L., & Ryff, C. D. (1999). Psychological well-being in midlife. In S. L. Willis & J. D. Reid (Eds.), *Middle aging: Development in the third quarter of life* (pp. 161–180). Academic Press.
- Lee, K. (2018). Pre-service English teachers' motivation for entering English education department and its change in college. *Journal of the Korea English Education Society*, 17(2), 113–136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18649/jkees.2018.17.2.113>
- Lutovac, S., & Flores, M. A. (2021). “Those who fail should not be teachers”: Pre-service teachers' understandings of failure and teacher identity development. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 47(3), 379–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2021.1891833>
- Maples, A. E., Williams-Wengerd, A., Braughton, J. E., Henry, K. L., Haddock, S. A., & Weiler, L. M. (2020). The role of service-learning experiences in promoting flourishing among college-student youth mentors. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 16, 1–12.
- Nelson, L., & Padilla-Walker, L. (2013). Flourishing and floundering in emerging adult college students. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1(1), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696812470938>
- Orland-Barak, L., & Wang, J. (2021). Teacher mentoring in service of preservice teachers' learning to teach: Conceptual bases, characteristics, and challenges for teacher education reform. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 72(1), 86–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119894230>
- Randles, E., & Quillinan, B. (2014). Community civic engagement as an enabler of student flourishing. *The ITB Journal*, 15(2), 37–44. <https://doi.org/10.21427/D70B2D>
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014) Positive psychology: An introduction. In M. Csikszentmihalyi (Ed.), *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279–298). Springer.
- Volstad, C., Hughes, J., Jakubec, S. L., Flessati, S., Jackson, L., & Martin-Misener, R. (2020). “You have to be okay with okay”: Experiences of flourishing among university students transitioning directly from high school. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 15(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2020.1834259>
- Washburn, J. H., Till, B. D., & Priluck, R. (2004). Brand alliance and customer-based brand-equity effects. *Psychology and Marketing*, 21(7), 487–508. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20016>

# High- and Low-Immersion VR Effects on Students' Speaking and Anxiety

---

Yukie Saito

*Chuo University, Tokyo, Japan*

Previous research has suggested positive outcomes for high-immersion virtual reality (VR) with head mount displays (HMDs) in reducing foreign language anxiety (FLA) and improving speaking skills; however, comparative studies of high-immersion VR and low-immersion VR with personal computers (PCs) on FLA and speaking proficiency are limited. This study investigates the differential effects of high-immersion and low-immersion VR English lessons on eight Japanese university students' FLA, speaking proficiency, and perceptions. The results indicate that high-immersion VR lessons may effectively reduce FLA levels, though effects on speaking proficiency are varied depending on the individual students. The students also reported a higher sense of presence and immersion in the high-immersion VR lessons, suggesting that these factors may have contributed to lowering their FLA. The study highlights the need for future research with larger sample sizes, including a control group without VR, and investigating the long-term effects of FLA reduction through high-immersion VR lessons.

## INTRODUCTION

Virtual reality (VR) has been recognized as an emerging technology that will substantially impact teaching and learning in higher education institutions in the future (Educause, 2020). Defined as computer-generated simulations of 3D objects and environments, VR allows user interaction (Dionisio et al., 2013). There are two types of VR: low-immersion VR, experienced through a PC with a 2D display, a keyboard, and a mouse; and high-immersion VR, experienced through a head mount display (HMD; Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2019).

VR allows users to enter a real-world-like environment through interactive simulations, allowing them to be fully immersed in a virtual space and has significant potential for foreign language learning, where visual and auditory immersion is critical to success (Scrivner et al., 2019). The benefits of VR include enhanced memory retention, increased intrinsic motivation, cross-cultural awareness, and decreased emotional filtering (Scrivner et al., 2019; Schwienhorst, 2010). Lin and Lan's (2015) content analysis of VR research also demonstrates how virtual learning environments can foster learner autonomy, self-efficacy, and creativity, and reduce learning anxiety.

Related to foreign language anxiety (FLA), York et al. (2021) investigated the impact of three different computer-mediated communication modes of voice, video, and high-immersion VR on EFL learners' FLA, and the three modes

effectively reduced FLA, though no significant differences in mean scores were found. On the contrary, the study by Kaplan-Rakowski and Gruber (2022) comparing speaking practice using Zoom and high-immersion VR indicated that speaking practice in VR showed significantly lower FLA scores compared to speaking practice in ZOOM.

Several studies have also explored VR's effects on speaking skills. For instance, Valls-Ratés et al. (2022) showed reduced anxiety and improved voice quality among high school students using high-immersion VR. Similarly, Markransky and Lilleholt (2018) found high-immersion VR more engaging and motivating than low-immersion VR. However, high-immersion VR using an HMD has some drawbacks, such as causing motion sickness, headache, tiredness, eye fatigue, and dizziness (Dolgunsöz et al., 2018; Kaplan-Rakowski & Wojdyski, 2018), although high-immersion VR with an HMD gives a more immersive experience than low-immersion VR (Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2019).

Existing literature suggests the benefits of high-immersion VR on reducing FLA, enhancing speaking skills, and enhancing motivation (Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2022; Valls-Ratés et al., 2022; York et al., 2021). Despite these findings, comprehensive comparisons between the effects of high-immersion VR using HMDs and low-immersion VR with personal computers (PCs), particularly concerning FLA and speaking skills, remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by examining potential differences or similarities in the impacts of high- and low-immersion VR English lessons on students' FLA and speaking proficiency. Also, the study explores whether students perceive their experiences of VR English lessons with HMDs and VR English lessons with PCs differently or similarly in terms of presence, immersion, and distraction. The following research questions guide this investigation:

- RQ1. Do VR English lessons using HMDs and using PCs similarly or differently affect students' FLA?
- RQ2. Do VR English lessons using HMDs and using PCs similarly or differently affect students' speaking proficiency?
- RQ3. Are there any differences in students' perceptions of VR English lessons using HMDs and using PCs in terms of presence, immersion, and distraction?

## **METHOD**

To address the research questions, this study employed a questionnaire about FLA, a speaking test, and another questionnaire on presence, immersion, and distraction. This section will first describe the VR platform used, followed by details of the study participants and an outline. Subsequently, it will explain the data collection and analysis methods.

### **VR English Lessons by Immerse Inc.**

The Immerse VR platform by Immerse Inc. was used for this study. This VR platform offers various immersive environments, such as an airport, a restaurant,

a park, and a supermarket. Participants can access the platform through their chosen avatars, using either HMDs or PCs, regardless of whether they are at home or at school. This platform was selected for the study because of its versatility, facilitating research into VR English lessons using both HMDs and PCs.

### **Participants in the VR English Lessons and an Outline of the Study**

Eight university students from a private Japanese university were the study participants. They were divided into two English proficiency-based groups: Group A, consisting of students A, B, C, and D, with an average TOEIC L&R score of 825, and Group B, consisting of students E, F, G, and H, with an average TOEIC L&R score of 576.

Each group took ten VR English lessons at home: five using HMDs and five using PCs. Group A's lessons focused on presentations, discussions, and debates, while Group B's lessons focused on general English such as self-introductions, hobbies, and conversations in various settings. Due to concerns about motion sickness from the use of HMDs, all VR lessons were limited to 30 minutes to maintain a uniform lesson duration.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

For this study, a FLA questionnaire, a computer-based TOEIC Speaking test, and a questionnaire on presence, immersion, and distraction were collected and analyzed. This section provides procedures and analysis of the FLA questionnaire, the TOEIC Speaking test, and the questionnaire about presence, immersion, and distraction.

#### **Procedures and Analysis of the FLA Questionnaire**

For the FLA questionnaire, the items on foreign language classroom anxiety and the same answer choices as those by Horwitz et al. (1986) were adapted to this study. There are 33 items in the questionnaire by Horwitz et al. (1986); however, nine items (Items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32) were considered less related to foreign language anxiety and were excluded from this study, resulting in a 24-item questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was employed, with 5 for *strongly agree*, 4 for *agree*, 3 for *neither agree nor disagree*, 2 for *disagree*, and 1 for *strongly disagree*. The FLA questionnaire was administered three times, before the five VR English lessons with HMDs, after the five VR English lessons with HMDs, and after the five VR English lessons with PCs.

#### **Procedures and Analysis of TOEIC Speaking Tests**

To investigate whether the VR English lessons with HMDs and PCs affect the students' English proficiency similarly or differently, a computer-based TOEIC Speaking test was conducted three times, before the five VR English lessons with HMDs, after the five VR English lessons with HMDs, and after the five VR English lessons with PCs. The TOEIC Speaking test included tasks such as reading text aloud, picture description, responding to questions, using provided information to answer, and expressing an opinion. The Institute for International Business

Communication (2023) states that the maximum score for this test is 200, with a recent average among test-takers of 135.2.

Seven out of eight students completed the test before the VR lessons with HMDs, and eight took the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the five VR English lessons with HMDs and the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the five VR English lessons with PCs. Average scores were compared across the three phases: before VR lessons with HMDs, after VR lessons with HMDs, and after VR lessons with PCs, and the scores of the individual students at the three phases were also compared.

### **Procedures and Analysis of the Questionnaire About Presence, Immersion, and Distraction**

The questionnaire regarding the presence, immersion, and distraction for this study was developed with reference to the presence measures by Oh et al. (2019) and the measures for dependent variables by Herrera et al. (2020). Also, on the questionnaire, questions asking about the feelings of immersion and distraction and the avatars' effects on their anxiety were added. Example questions were "1. In the VR lessons with HMDs, I felt as if I were in the VR scenes" and "2. In the VR lessons with PCs, I felt as if I were in the VR scenes." As answer choices for each question, *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree* were provided. Finally, the participants were asked to state their preferred VR learning method for future VR lessons, either HMDs or PCs, with an additional open-ended question seeking the reasons behind their preferences. This questionnaire was administered after the students completed their VR English lessons using PCs.

## **RESULTS**

In this section, the results of the FLA questionnaires, the TOEIC Speaking tests, and the questionnaire about presence, immersion, and distraction are presented. The results of the individual students' TOEIC Speaking tests were also compared to the results of the FLA questionnaires. Furthermore, the results of the individual students' TOEIC Speaking tests were compared to the students' preferences for taking VR English lessons with HMDs or with PCs.

### **Results of the FLA Questionnaires**

For the FLA questionnaires, a five-point Likert scale was used: 5 for *strongly agree*, 4 for *agree*, 3 for *neither agree nor disagree*, 2 for *disagree*, and 1 for *strongly disagree*. Table 1 presents the results of the 24 items hypothesized to show decreases if the levels of FLA are lowered. Among these items, 20 items have their scores bolded in gray cells in the post-questionnaire (Post-Q) after VR with HMDs in Table 1, indicating a decrease between the pre-questionnaire (Pre-Q) and the post-questionnaire after the VR English lessons with HMDs. Eight of these items showed a decrease of more than 0.5 between the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs. These eight items are as follows: (3) I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language

class, (7) I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am, (10) I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class, (20) I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class, (23) I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do, (25) Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind, (29) I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says, and (31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

Among the 20 items, eight items (Items 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 30, and 31), scores of which are bolded and in gray cells in the Post-Q after VR with PCs column in Table 1, continued to show a decrease in the post-questionnaire after the VR English lessons with PCs. Among these items, three items showed a decrease of more than 0.5 between the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs and the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs. These three items are as follows: (24) I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students, (30) I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language, and (31) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language. On the contrary, ten items (Items 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 23, 25, 26, 27, and 29) showed an increase on the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs compared to the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs, which indicates increases in their FLA levels. Items 20 and 33 did not change between the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs and the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs.

Among the 24 items, four items (Items 1, 9, 13, and 21), which showed an increase on the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs compared to the pre-questionnaire, showed a decrease on the questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs.

**TABLE 1. Results of the FLA Questionnaires**

Items	Pre-Q	Post-Q after VR with HMDs	Post-Q after VR with PCs
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	4.13	4.25	3.88
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.75	<b>3.00</b>	3.25
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	3.25	<b>3.13</b>	<b>3.00</b>
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	3.13	<b>2.75</b>	3.00
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.	3.88	<b>3.38</b>	4.25
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.25	3.75	3.50
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	4.00	<b>3.25</b>	<b>3.00</b>
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.88	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.13</b>

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.13	3.25	3.13
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.25	<b>1.88</b>	2.38
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.63	<b>3.25</b>	3.38
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.	3.25	<b>3.00</b>	<b>2.75</b>
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.50	<b>2.38</b>	<b>2.00</b>
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.75	<b>3.25</b>	3.25
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	2.38	2.50	2.00
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	4.25	<b>3.75</b>	4.00
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.50	<b>3.13</b>	<b>2.38</b>
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	2.50	<b>2.00</b>	2.75
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	3.13	<b>2.75</b>	2.88
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.13	<b>2.75</b>	3.38
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.00	<b>2.50</b>	2.75
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	3.50	<b>3.25</b>	<b>2.63</b>
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	3.13	<b>2.38</b>	<b>1.75</b>
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.50	<b>3.13</b>	3.13

Table 2 presents the individual students' average points for the 24 items on the pre-questionnaire, the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs, and the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs. In Table 2, if the average points for the questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs are lower than those for the pre-questionnaire, they are bolded in gray cells. Similarly, if the average points of the questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs are lower than those of the questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs, they are also bolded in gray cells.

As shown in Table 2, all of the students' average points after the VR lessons with HMDs were lower than those on the pre-questionnaire, although the degrees of decrease varied. Among the eight students, four students' points on the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs became lower than those on the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs. On the contrary, the average points of three students' post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with PCs became higher than those on the post-questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs, indicating an increase in their levels of FLA.



**TABLE 2. Average Points on the FLA Questionnaires Among Individuals**

Student	Pre-Q	Post-Q after VR with HMDs	Post-Q after VR with PCs
Student A	2.42	<b>2.29</b>	<b>2.08</b>
Student B	3.58	<b>2.83</b>	2.83
Student C	3.58	<b>3.38</b>	3.54
Student D	2.42	<b>2.21</b>	<b>1.96</b>
Student E	3.25	<b>3.17</b>	3.71
Student F	3.46	<b>3.21</b>	3.29
Student G	3.58	<b>2.92</b>	<b>2.58</b>
Student H	4.29	<b>4.04</b>	<b>3.83</b>

### Results on the TOEIC Speaking Tests

Table 3 shows the overall results of the TOEIC Speaking pre- and post-tests. Student D was unable to take the TOEIC Speaking pre-test due to an unstable Wi-Fi connection. The average score on the TOEIC Speaking pre-test was 117.14, that of the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with HMDs was 128.75, and that of the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with PCs was 133.75. Compared to the TOEIC Speaking pre-test, the average score for the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with HMDs increased by 11.61 points. Additionally, the average score on the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with PCs increased by 5 points compared to the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with HMDs, and by 16.61 points compared to the TOEIC Speaking pre-test.

**TABLE 3. Overall Results on TOEIC Speaking Tests**

Category	TOEIC Speaking Pre-test	TOEIC Speaking Post-Test after VR with HMDs	TOEIC Speaking Post-Test after VR with PCs
Number of Participants	7	8	8
Average	117.14	128.75	133.75
Medium	110	120	135
Mode	100	120	130
SD	17.50	21.47	16.54
Range	40	70	50
MIN	100	110	110
MAX	140	180	160

Table 4 shows the individual students' results of the TOEIC Speaking pre- and post-tests. Notably, Student A improved their score by 40 points, and student E improved their score by 20 points, while students F, H, and G increased theirs by 10 points each. However, scores for students B and C remained unchanged on the TOEIC Speaking post-test following the VR lessons with HMDs, compared to the TOEIC Speaking pre-test.

As for the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with PCs compared to the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with HMDs, students D, F, and G increased their scores by 20 points. Student B improved by 10 points, but students C and F did not see any change. In contrast, student A's score decreased by 20 points and Student H's by 10 points. When comparing the TOEIC Speaking pre-test and the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR English lessons with PCs, students A, E, and G increased their scores by 20 points, 40 points, and 30 points, respectively. Meanwhile, Students B and F increased their scores by 10 points, but there was no increase for Students C and H.

Regarding the comparison for FLA, four students lowered their FLA levels on the FLA questionnaire after the VR lessons with HMDs and increased their TOEIC Speaking test score on the TOEIC Speaking post-test after the VR lessons with HMDs. Student G, who showed gradual increases in the TOEIC speaking test scores after the VR lessons with HMDs and after the VR lessons with PCs, also showed gradual decreases of FLA levels after the VR lessons with HMDs and after the VR lessons with PCs.

**TABLE 4. Individual Students' Results on TOEIC Speaking Tests**

Participants	Pre-Test	Post-Test after VR with HMDs	Gap (Pre- & Post-Test after VR with HMDs)	Post-Test after VR with PCs	Gap (Post-Test after VR with HMDs & Post-Test after VR with PCs)	Gap (Pre- & Post-Test after VR with PCs)
A	140	180	40	160	-20	20
B	140	140	0	150	10	10
C	130	130	0	130	0	0
D	—	120	—	140	20	—
E	100	120	20	140	20	40
F	100	110	10	110	0	10
G	100	110	10	130	20	30
H	110	120	10	110	-10	0

### Results of the Questionnaire on Presence, Immersion, and Distraction

Table 5 presents the results of the questionnaire regarding presence, immersion, and distraction. Items 1 to 6 were questions related to presence. As shown in Table 5, students felt more as if they were in the VR scenes during the VR lessons with HMDs compared to the VR lessons with PCs. Eight students reported that they felt as if they were with their classmates during the VR lessons with HMDs, while in the VR lessons with PCs, four students reported feeling this sense of togetherness, and two students did not. Additionally, eight students felt as if the other students were close to them during the VR lessons with HMDs. However, in the VR lessons with PCs, only two students felt the same sense of closeness, and four did not. Items 7 and 8 dealt with the feeling of immersion. The responses, as shown in Table 5, suggested that the VR lessons with HMDs

provided a stronger sense of immersion compared to the VR lessons with PCs. Items 9 and 10 explored the levels of distraction during the lessons. Notably, no students reported feeling distracted during the VR lessons with HMDs, while five did so during the VR lessons with PCs.

**TABLE 5. Results of the Questionnaire on Presence, Immersion, and Distraction**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. In the VR lessons with <b>HMDs</b> , I felt as if I were in the VR scenes.	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2. In the VR lessons with <b>PCs</b> , I felt as if I were in the VR scenes.	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25.0%)	5 (62.5%)	0 (0%)
3. In the VR lessons with <b>HMDs</b> , I felt as if I were together with the other classmates.	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4. In the VR lessons with <b>PCs</b> , I felt as if I were together with the other classmates.	0 (0%)	4 (50.0%)	2 (25.0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)
5. In the VR lessons with <b>HMDs</b> , I felt as if the other students were close to me in the VR scenes.	4 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6. In the VR lessons with <b>PCs</b> , I felt as if the other students were close to me in the VR scenes.	0 (0%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)
7. In the VR lessons with <b>HMDs</b> , I got immersed in the VR lessons.	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
8. In the VR lessons with <b>PCs</b> , I got immersed in the VR lessons.	0 (0%)	6 (75.0%)	0 (0%)	2 (25.0%)	0 (0%)
9. In the VR lessons with <b>HMDs</b> , I was distracted by other things during the VR lesson.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	5 (62.5%)	2 (25.0%)
10. In the VR lessons with <b>PCs</b> , I was distracted by other things during the VR lesson.	0 (0%)	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
11. In the VR lessons with <b>HMDs</b> , I was an avatar, so I felt less nervous in speaking English than speaking English face to face.	4 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
12. In the VR lessons with <b>PCs</b> , I was an avatar, so I felt less nervous in speaking English than speaking English face to face.	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)

The final, open-ended question asked students whether they would prefer to take VR English lessons using HMDs or PCs for their next session. Of those surveyed, six expressed a preference for VR English lessons with HMDs, while two favored VR English lessons with PCs. A subsequent question asked for the reasons behind their choices. Students who opted for VR English lessons with HMDs provided the following reasons, with comments related to presence,

immersion, and distraction highlighted in bold:

I felt more confident using HMDs than PCs. It was like **I was really in the space** and also **felt like I was in the same space with my friends**. [Student A]

When I was in the VR lessons with HMDs, I felt less nervous in speaking English, and I could concentrate on the class more than the VR lessons with PC. HMDs was easier to operate my avatar, so that **I could feel more immersed** in the situation. [Student B]

It is easy to learn English because it can change the location and environment. **I can learn** English not just by studying, but **by enjoying it with a sense of play**. [Student E]

I felt like more reality and enjoyed the lessons with HMDs than lessons with PCs. **The feeling of actually talking to others was very effective**. VR sickness is certainly critical, but I don't mind if it's a class of about 30 minutes. [Student F]

The sound had a 3D effect, and **I felt as if I was in a real classroom**. And avatars can be moved freely, broadening my range of communication. [Student G]

**I feel more immersed** when using an HMD. During lessons on a PC, **I tend to get distracted by other things, compared to when using an HMD**. [Student H]

In their feedback, students who chose VR English lessons with HMDs cited characteristics typical of high-immersion VR experiences, such as a sense of presence and immersion, as the reasons for their preference. Also, five out of the six students who expressed a preference for VR English lessons with HMDs saw an improvement in their TOEIC Speaking post-test scores following VR English lessons with HMDs compared to their TOEIC Speaking pre-test scores, although the extent of score improvement varied.

Conversely, the two students who favored VR English lessons with PCs provided their own reasons. As indicated in their comments, their preference for PCs was largely due to discomforts such as sickness and fatigue experienced when using HMDs during VR English lessons. Comments specifically relating to sickness and fatigue are highlighted in bold.

It is true that VR English lessons using HMDs are more fun to enter that world, but I would choose VR English lessons with PCs because **I would feel sick** if I used it (an HMD) for a long time. [Student C]

VR is more immersive and fun, but gradually I get used to the situation and get bored. Also, **VR is more fatiguing**. [Student D]

Related to the results of TOEIC Speaking tests, Student C, who chose to take VR English lessons with a PC, did not show any increase after the VR English lessons with an HMD or after the VR English lessons with a PC.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The current study aimed to investigate whether VR English lessons using HMDs and VR English lessons using PCs have different or similar effects on students' FLA. While previous studies have shown that the use of VR may reduce the affective filter (Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2022; Schwienhorst, 2010), this study revealed that VR English lessons using HMDs and VR English lessons using PCs have different effects on students' FLA. The results of the FLA questionnaires and the individual students' results for FLA indicated that VR English lessons with HMDs helped reduce FLA. However, the results for VR English lessons with PCs were mixed, with some items showing a consistent positive effect while others had a negative effect on FLA. This suggests that VR English lessons with HMDs are effective in reducing FLA, whereas VR English lessons with PCs may not have the same positive impact. The questionnaire responses regarding presence, immersion, and distraction showed that participants felt more present and immersed and were less distracted during the VR English lessons with HMDs compared to the VR English lessons with PCs. This suggests that the combined effects of feeling more present, immersed, and less distracted in the VR lessons with HMDs may contribute to lowering their FLA. Consequently, VR English lessons with PCs may not be as effective as those with HMDs in lowering students' FLA, even though avatars were used in both conditions. Additionally, while the students' FLA levels decreased after the VR lessons with HMDs, some students experienced an increase in FLA following the VR lessons with PCs. This indicates that the positive effects of lowering FLA through VR English lessons with HMDs may be short term and not long lasting. To determine whether the effects of lowering FLA by taking VR lessons with HMDs persist over time, further investigation is needed by conducting a delayed post-questionnaire on FLA.

Related to the effects of VR on speaking skills, the study by Valls-Ratés et al. (2022) explored the impact of high-immersion VR on public speaking skills and the VR group showed reduced anxiety and improved voice quality after training compared to the non-VR group. In line with this, the current study aimed to explore whether VR English lessons using HMDs and VR English lessons using PCs have different or similar effects on students' speaking proficiency. The results show that overall, the average scores increased after the VR English lessons with HMDs and after the VR English lessons with PCs, which suggests that both VR lessons with HMDs and those with PCs may have positive effects on students' speaking proficiency. However, it is important to consider that the score increases could potentially be attributed to the act of participating in English lessons alone. Therefore, further investigation with a control group in which students receive English lessons without VR could provide valuable insights. In the comparison of FLA, five students improved their TOEIC speaking scores and lowered their FLA after the VR lessons with HMDs and one student with gradual score increases exhibited gradual decreases in FLA for both types of lessons, while a student with consistent scores across the three TOEIC Speaking tests consistently displayed low levels of FLA. These findings suggest that reducing FLA may enhance students' speaking proficiency. Future studies should explore the correlation between participants' FLA and speaking proficiency.

In conclusion, this study examined the differential effects of high-immersion with HMDs and low-immersion VR English lessons with PCs on FLA, speaking proficiency, and perception among eight Japanese university students. The findings suggest that high-immersion VR lessons can be effective in reducing FLA levels, although their impact on speaking proficiency varied among individual students. Furthermore, the students reported a high sense of presence and immersion during the high-immersion VR lessons, indicating a potential influence on FLA reduction. Future research should consider a larger sample size, incorporate a control group without VR, and explore the long-term effects of FLA reduction through high-immersion VR lessons. These efforts will further enhance our understanding of the benefits and effectiveness of immersive VR in language learning contexts.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported by a JSPS KAKENHI grant, number JP22K13165.

## THE AUTHOR

**Yukie Saito** is a professor on the Faculty of Global Informatics at Chuo University in Japan. Her main research areas are the application of EdTech in English education, the application of CEFR, and teachers' cognition and classroom practice. Email: ty-saito@tamacc.chuo-u.ac.jp

## REFERENCES

- Dionisio, J. D. N., Burns III, W. G., & Gilbert, R. (2013). 3D virtual worlds and the metaverse: Current status and future possibilities. *ACM Computing Surveys*, 45(3), 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2480741.2480751>
- Dolgunsoz, E., Yildirim, G., & Yildirim, S. (2018). The effect of virtual reality on EFL writing performance. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 14(1), 278–292.
- Educause. (2020). *2020 Educause horizon report* (Teaching and learning edition). <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2020/3/2020-educause-horizon-report-teaching-and-learning-edition>
- Institute for International Business Communication. (2023, June 5). *Average score / score distribution details*. [https://www.iibc-global.org/toEIC/official\\_data/speaking/data\\_avelist/s\\_20230416.html#anchor01](https://www.iibc-global.org/toEIC/official_data/speaking/data_avelist/s_20230416.html#anchor01)
- Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Wojdowski, T. (2018). Students' attitudes toward high-immersion virtual reality assisted language learning. In P. Taalas, J. Jalkanen, L. Bradley, & S. Thouësny (Eds.), *Future-proof CALL: Language learning as exploration and encounters – Short papers from EUROCALL 2018* (pp. 124–129).
- Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Gruber, A. (2019). Low-immersion versus high-immersion virtual reality: Definitions, classification, and examples with a foreign language focus. In *Proceedings of the Innovation in Language Learning International Conference 2019*. Pixel.
- Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Gruber, A. (2022). The impact of high-immersion virtual reality on foreign language anxiety when speaking in public. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3882215>

- Lin, T. J., & Lan, Y. J. (2015). Language learning in virtual reality environments: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Educational Technology and Society*, 18(4), 486–497. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.18.4.486>
- Makransky, G., Lilleholt, L. (2018). A structural equation modeling investigation of the emotional value of immersive virtual reality in education. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 66, 1141–1164. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-018-9581-2>
- Herrera, F., Oh, S. Y., & Bailenson, J. N. (2020). Effect of behavioral realism on social interactions inside collaborative virtual environments. *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments*, 27(2), 163–182. [https://doi.org/10.1162/pres\\_a\\_00324](https://doi.org/10.1162/pres_a_00324)
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
- Oh, C., Herrera, F., & Bailenson, J. (2019). The effects of immersion and real-world distractions on virtual social interactions. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 22(6), 365–372. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2018.0404>
- Schwienhorst, K. (2010). The state of VR: A meta-analysis of virtual reality tools in second language acquisition. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 15(3), 221–239. <https://doi.org/10.1076/call.15.3.221.8186>
- Scrivner, O., Madewell, J., Buckley, C., & Perez, N. (2019). Best practices in the use of augmented and virtual reality technologies for SLA: Design, implementation, and feedback. In M. L. Carrió-Pastor (Ed.), *Teaching language and teaching literature in virtual environments* (pp. 55–72). Springer.
- Valls-Ratés, I., Niebuhr, O., Prieto, P. (2022). Unguided VR public-speaking training enhances your confidence – But does not improve your intonation. In *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference of Speech Prosody 2022* (pp. 160–164). <https://doi.org/10.21437/SpeechProsody.2022-33>
- York, J., Shibata, K., Tokutake, H., & Nakayama, H. (2021). Effect of SCMC on foreign language anxiety and learning experience: A comparison of voice, video, and VR-based oral interaction. *ReCALL*, 33(1), 49–70. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344020000154>





# Horizontal Collaboration: Intra-Departmental Integration as a Bedrock for Second Language Acquisition

---

Iain Maloney and Jaime Morrish  
*Sugiyama Jogakuen University, Nagoya, Japan*

Horizontal integration across university curricula is an oft-cited ambition but one that frequently falls foul of instructor individualism and ground realities, and experiences communication shortfalls. We put to the test the theory that inter-syllabi coordination could prove beneficial for second language acquisition. In one class, students worked on cooperative projects, including making a short movie. In another, they studied creative writing, producing their own poems, stories, and scripts. In a third, they were learning academic writing with a particular emphasis on peer review skills. However, there was no specific integration between these three syllabi. When it was discovered that nine students were enrolled in all three courses, it presented an ideal opportunity to test horizontal integration in a controlled real-world context. This research report will explore the theories behind horizontal integration before explaining the methodology of the experiment, the results, and the lessons learned for the future.

## INTRODUCTION

Academic institutions are a hotbed of competing interests and divergent intentions, not least when grant money and departmental budgets are involved. This can lead to individual fiefdoms, jealously guarded courses, and a lack of detailed communication between colleagues. As a result, teachers are often unaware what students are learning in other classrooms, a state of affairs that can facilitate redundancies and repetition on the one hand and fragmented patchwork coverage on the other.

English language teaching at the tertiary level is no different. As a result, in recent years attention has been drawn to intra-departmental integration, a form of horizontal collaboration, as a fundamental element in enhancing second language acquisition (SLA). At our university in Japan, integration is a much-desired, much-discussed ambition, and one that has been attempted to varying degrees of success. In 2022, we found ourselves in the position to strongly integrate three hitherto separate courses and study how integration could work, and how it was received by the students.

This paper, which follows our presentation at the Korea TESOL International Conference at Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul, in 2023, details the aforementioned study. We begin by providing background through a literature review, followed by contextual information about the university and student body. We then outline our methodology and results, before moving into a discussion and looking ahead to the future.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review aims to synthesize existing research on syllabus integration in higher education. The study draws on several academic journal articles spanning decades, disciplines, and geographical regions. The findings of this review suggest that effective syllabus integration, which involves aligning learning objectives, teaching methods, assessments, and content across a curriculum, can enhance student learning outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction. However, syllabus integration poses challenges and requires significant resources, training, and institutional support.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Horizontal collaboration, often characterized by information sharing, joint problem-solving, and collective decision-making, is a powerful tool for improving organizational processes, and it is particularly popular in business and industry (Torjussen & Erikshamar, 2011). It can be particularly beneficial in the context of SLA, where integrating perspectives and resources can create a more holistic and practical approach to language teaching and learning. Intra-departmental integration, a form of horizontal collaboration, emphasizes the importance of collaboration within a single department or unit. Specifically, Townsend (2018) defines it as “the joining of different classes, EFL and/or content, with common goals and related content, so that language learning is more structured and efficient” (p. 170). When effectively implemented, intra-departmental integration can lead to the creation of a supportive, cohesive learning environment that is conducive to SLA (Malik & Malik, 2011).

### **Impact on SLA Curriculum**

In the context of higher education, the syllabus is the cornerstone for directing faculty and student interaction within the didactic and experiential settings. The influence of horizontal collaboration on the SLA syllabi and curriculum is evident in several aspects. Primarily, it fosters a sense of coherence and continuity across different courses and levels. Law and Tsui (2007) argue that integrating syllabi, teaching materials, and assessment methods can enhance the overall quality of the curriculum. This consistency can be particularly beneficial in SLA, where the sequential development of language skills is crucial.

In addition, intra-departmental integration can facilitate the exchange of teaching resources and ideas, leading to the development of innovative pedagogical approaches. For instance, Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) described how teachers can collectively develop thematic units or project-based assignments, creating a more engaging and authentic learning experience for students. Cohen et al. (2018) found that “tight syllabuses exert a significant impact on teaching methods and restriction of class activities (leading to) little extended recourse to using or ‘thinking in’ English” (p. 658). Providing faculty and students with a well-rounded and well-created syllabus allows teachers to add creativity and freedom to their classes while also allowing students the time to use and play with the language to enhance and promote student autonomy.

## **Influence on Learning Outcomes**

Intra-departmental integration can have a profound impact on learning outcomes in SLA. Collaborative planning and decision-making can lead to more effective teaching strategies, enhancing students' language skills and intercultural competence (Crandall, 2000). There are multiple ways in which teachers can develop their teaching strategies. Crandall (2000) highlights that the process is “most successful when teachers collaborate in the research process or engage in inquiry or study groups which meet periodically” (p. 42).

Furthermore, research suggests that horizontal collaboration can improve the assessment and tracking of student progress. By sharing assessment data and observations, teachers can better understand students' strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to provide more targeted feedback and support (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

Despite its potential benefits, horizontal collaboration in SLA is not without challenges. Resistance to change, lack of time, and issues related to power dynamics and trust can hinder the implementation of intra-departmental integration (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Horizontal syllabus integration is often cited in many school syllabi, with little thought of how that occurs, and it is more than simply studying some of the same topics in more than one class. Teachers' use of the syllabus varies widely between countries and institutions, and depends on financial resources and teaching approaches (Ur, 2012). Faculty need to be aware of potential pitfalls when developing course syllabi such as when faculty use vague language in their syllabus related to course expectations (Wagner et al., 2022)

However, several strategies can be employed to overcome these barriers. Firstly, establishing a clear vision and shared goals can enhance buy-in and commitment among staff. Syllabi should include specific, measurable course objectives that detail how students should develop their skills but also avoid using vague language, such as “students are encouraged to attend class regularly” (Wagner et al., 2022, p. 4). Secondly, providing opportunities for professional development can equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in effective collaboration. Finally, creating a supportive institutional culture that values collaboration and continuous improvement can further facilitate intra-departmental integration (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

To conclude, horizontal collaboration, in the form of intra-departmental integration, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of SLA. It can lead to developing a coherent, innovative curriculum, improving learning outcomes, and fostering a supportive learning environment. However, its successful implementation requires careful planning, ongoing professional development, and a supportive institutional culture.

## **Context**

The subject university is an all-female multi-disciplinary university in Central Japan. The Faculty of Foreign Studies is the umbrella under which all language

and some humanities study takes place. In the majority of cases L1 is Japanese but not exclusively; at the time of writing, students from Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and quite a few from mixed heritage backgrounds where one parent is an L1 English speaker are enrolled in the faculty. Intake level is around A2/B1 on the CEFR scale. All the students who did their school education in Japan have studied English for a minimum of six years, though the Japanese English curriculum focuses heavily on reading, grammar, and vocabulary at the expense of communication, making it hard to give accurate level results: Most students will be excellent on paper – they pass rigorous English entrance exams – but have a lower communicative ability. This is the standard situation across Japan.

Students study one major language (English, Chinese, French, or German) and a further minor. They are not exclusively language students, however, but rather cross-cultural communication majors. Language makes up a large part of their classes, especially in the first year, but the rest is made up of cultural classes – literature, film, history, politics – usually taught in Japanese, though not exclusively. To give one example, the authors of this paper, in addition to traditional four-skills language course, teach classes on tourism, literature, creative writing, cinema, and Japanese culture abroad.

Focusing on English language students, the subjects of our study, in first their year, students attend daily English classes. Grammar on Monday, Writing on Tuesday, Reading on Wednesday, Learner Training on Thursday – this is an academic skills class, but it also functions as a homeroom and a tech class – and Projects on Friday, which is a presentation skills class. For these classes, the students maintain the same classmates. These five classes are grouped together under the banner Communicative English Program (CEP). In the second semester Learner Training becomes a Drama class. Each class is 90 minutes long. In addition, they have about an hour's homework from each class and have to attend the Self-Access Centre once a week for free conversation practice or extra study. They also have a number of elective classes they can choose from, including, relevant for this study, Maloney's (the first author's) creative writing class. Most electives are offered across all four years, while others are restricted by age group. Creative Writing is offered to all levels, though it is predominantly taken in the first year.

Our study into horizontal integration focused on three of these classes: Writing, Drama, and Creative Writing. This is because in Drama, the semester project is to produce a short film, an aspect of which involves writing a script. This clearly synergizes with the scriptwriting unit of the Creative Writing syllabus, which in turn overlaps with the peer review skills students learned in their Tuesday academic writing class.

Turning directly to horizontal integration, the CEP is designed to be a fully integrated program where skills and language are recycled and reinforced through all five classes. Teachers meet regularly to discuss progress, and all teachers follow the same lesson plans utilizing the same materials. However, a mixture of full-time and part-time teachers with busy schedules can inhibit full communication and collaboration, meaning gaps can and do emerge across the semester. The electives by contrast are free standing, and teachers have little awareness of what happens in other classes.

In the second semester (September to January) of the 2022–2023 academic year, nine students from the first-year CEP program also enrolled in the Creative Writing elective. This presented a unique opportunity to explore and test how horizontal integration could work, and also whether it was indeed desirable from a student perspective. As such, we developed the following research questions:

- RQ1. To what extent is horizontal syllabus integration desirable?
- RQ2. From a practical pedagogical perspective, how could horizontal syllabus integration work?
- RQ3. How does it impact student attitudes towards their classes?

## **METHOD**

As was mentioned above, on Thursdays in the CEP Drama class, students, working in groups of 3–5, would conceive, write, act in, film, and produce a short film of five to seven minutes in length. Each class would then have a competition to choose the best film, which would then go forward to an end-of-year film festival incorporating the best film from all nine first-year Drama classes. Traditionally, teachers have very little involvement in the production of the films beyond ensuring certain rules are adhered to (such as obeying copyright laws and the technical specifications of the end result). Students have very little experience of any aspect of filmmaking, and as such, the course is a steep learning curve of independent and collaborative learning.

At the same time, the students in Maloney’s Creative Writing class were embarking on a scriptwriting unit. Prior to 2022, the year of this study, students in Creative Writing would work in groups to produce the script for a radio play, which would then be recorded. The audio-only format was chosen because it simplified production from both a technical and time-intensive perspectives. It also meant students had to focus on language as the sole means of plot exposition and character development.

In 2022, however, it was decided to adapt the syllabus to take into account the unique opportunity presented by nine first-year CEP students enrolling in the Creative Writing class. In addition, there were two second-year students who had completed the CEP classes the previous year. They followed the original radio play format and are therefore outside the scope of this study. The focus of the Creative Writing (CW) class was, of course, the film script itself. The students were grouped together according to which CEP class they were in, to ensure that the work done in CW could be carried over to Drama, something to which their respective Drama teachers agreed. In preparation, the students reviewed dialogue, particularly using dialogue to show character and exposition. They also reviewed narrative arcs and structure, all of which had been studied during the prose writing unit of the first semester.

For the first few weeks, the students worked in their film groups, developing an outline and then a script. Once they had something on paper, the groups were then divided and mixed. At this point students were called on to utilize the peer review skills they had been learning in their Tuesday academic writing class, critiquing their peers’ scripts for everything from editing for typos and layout to

character arc, plot, and voice. In addition, peer review groups performed the script in order to hear the language out loud and to better understand how performance affects timing. Once the scripts were ready to be filmed, they were submitted to Maloney as part of their CW portfolio, and responsibility was handed back to their respective Drama teacher to oversee production of the final product. The CW class then moved on to write a short story.

As for data collection, before the scriptwriting process began, the students were given two questionnaires: one exploring their beliefs about peer review and the other about their experience of scriptwriting, each containing a mixture of Likert scale and open questions. (The questionnaires are reproduced in full in the Appendix). These questionnaires were answered by everyone in the authors' Writing and Drama classes (two classes each), and the nine first-year students in the CW class. These nine students were in all three classes. This totaled 61 completed peer review questionnaires (52 + 9) and 54 scriptwriting questionnaires (45 + 9).

Upon submission of the final script, students in the authors' Drama classes and the nine CW students were given an exit scriptwriting questionnaire that explored whether their beliefs had changed as a result of their experience.

## RESULTS

At the beginning of the study, students completed two questionnaires (included in the Appendix). The first was on peer review, followed by an initial scriptwriting questionnaire (SW1). Closed questions were given with a Likert scale of 1–10, while open questions included a “why/why not?” or “please tell us more” prompt. What follows is a summary of the most relevant student responses from these two questionnaires, followed by a summation of the second exit scriptwriting questionnaire (SW2).

### Scriptwriting 1

In answer to Question 1, “Have you ever written a script in English or in Japanese?” all but two out of 54 respondents had no experience. Those two only had experience of scriptwriting in L1.

Question 2 focused on their nervousness about scriptwriting. Table 1 collates responses that are highly representative of the whole. On a scale of 1–10, 100% of the responses were 7 or above.

**TABLE 1. Scriptwriting 1, Question 2**

<b>Question 2: How nervous are you in writing a script in English?</b>
7/10 – I'm a little nervous, but I'm looking forward to thinking with my group members.
7/10 – I'm nervous about writing a script.
9/10 – Because I've never written a script.
10/10 – I've never written script.

However, something interesting happened when these responses were compared with those to Question 3, “How confident are you in writing a script in English?” These two questions were included and were worded in such a way as to tease out possible issues with L1 interference and cultural assumptions about confidence and nervousness. For the majority of the students, the results held: scores of 7+ out of 10 for Question 2 were echoed with scores of 3 and below for Question 3. The nine students enrolled in the Creative Writing class, on the other hand, seemed more confident, in spite of their nerves, all returning scores of 5 or 6 out of 10.

This overall nervousness was echoed in the responses to Question 4 (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2. Scriptwriting 1, Question 4a**

---



---

**Question 4: Would you rather write the script by yourself or with a partner?**

---

- With a partner. Our group’s rule is to cooperate.
  - With a partner. Writing better together.
  - I’d rather with my partner because I think talk with my partner is come out with more idea.
- 

However, there was much less unanimity on this front. Some students explained how their nervousness and inexperience translated into a desire to work alone.

**TABLE 3. Scriptwriting 1, Question 4b**

---



---

**Question 4: Would you rather write the script by yourself or with a partner?**

---

- I’m embarrassed if I make a mistake.
  - Myself, I’ll probably get nervous.
  - By myself. I will probably make many mistakes and I can’t talk well.
- 

The trend was very much towards safety in numbers, with around 75% of the respondents preferring group work to going solo.

## Peer Review

With regards to the peer review questionnaire, the 61 respondents showed similar sentiments to those expressed in SW1. After a semester of doing peer review in their Writing class and conducting some peer reviews in their Projects (presentation) class, the students were comfortable with peer review activities, with these responses being highly representative:

**TABLE 4. Peer Review, Question 2**

---



---

**Question 2: How useful do you find doing peer review?**

---

- 9/10 – Because I don’t find mistakes, my partner can find it.
  - 10/10 – Because I found out things I didn’t know.
- 

Students showed a strong preference for doing peer review with a friend.

**TABLE 5. Peer Review, Question 4**

---

---

**Question 4: How comfortable are you doing peer review with someone you know very well?**

---

10/10 – It is easy to ask fix point with someone that I know well.

10/10 – If I know peer, I can talk casually.

---

This contrasted with the results of Question 5.

**TABLE 6. Peer Review, Question 5**

---

---

**Question 5: How comfortable are you doing peer review with someone you don't know very well?**

---

3/10 – It is difficult to talk about fix point with people I don't know so well.

5/10 – It's not fun, but sometimes we can become good friends.

---

## **Scriptwriting 2**

Following the completion of the scriptwriting and peer review process, the nine students enrolled in all three classes completed a second scriptwriting questionnaire (SW2). This section includes responses most directly relevant to our research and research questions. Overwhelmingly, the students found it beneficial to have worked on the scriptwriting process with their partners and in more than one class.

**TABLE 7. Scriptwriting 2, Question 2**

---

---

**Question 2. How helpful was it to work on your drama script in the Active English (Creative Writing) class?**

---

10/10 – It was so helpful, through AE I could think about story and learned how to make the script.

10/10 – It became easier for my friends to read and understand the script.

7/10 – It was easier to come up with the story to use in drama.

---

Responses to Question 3 showed a definite increase in confidence among the students of the Creative Writing class.

**TABLE 8. Scriptwriting 2, Question 3**

---

---

**Question 3. How confident are you in writing a script in English now?**

---

8/10 – It's been more than six months since I entered college and have started learning and using English more and more.

8/10 – I love story so I could make story fast, but I still need the person to teach me some words and grammar that I didn't know.

7/10 – Maybe because I learned to write better stories.

---

When asked directly about horizontal syllabus integration, responses were encouraging to the original hypothesis.



**TABLE 9. Scriptwriting 2, Question 5a****Question 5. Would you like to see more connections between your English classes?**

Yes – I think it'll be easier to understand and consider to use some topics in each classes.

Yes – Test what I learned from the other classes.

Yes – It helped me in writing class, with speed writing and making a summary.

Yes – It will be useful for other English classes as well, as it will give students an insight into writing, grammar and how to express themselves in English.

Yes – Because I felt like I was able to learn with plus alpha.

However, as with the initial scriptwriting questionnaire, there were a few students who offered an alternative viewpoint that was not so positive.

**TABLE 10. Scriptwriting 2, Question 5b****Question 5. Would you like to see more connections between your English classes?**

No – I want to switch in my mind. Reading is Reading, Writing is writing. It makes me refreshed.

No – I'm not interested in shallow connections.

No – Because I'm looking forward to watch all classes movie, I don't want to know their story before I watch.

The implications of these results will be discussed in the next section.

## DISCUSSION

All 54 respondents to SW1 were new to scriptwriting in English, with only two having experience in L1. This translated into a general nervousness across the board, something reflected in the lack of confidence they felt at the start of the process. The fact that the nine students enrolled in Creative Writing showed higher levels of confidence than their peers is not unexpected since those students actively chose a creative writing course with a scriptwriting element, while the Drama class was a compulsory course for every first-year student regardless of interest or ability. Those nine were necessarily more open to the experience of scriptwriting, and this is what we found in the results.

In hindsight, we saw a trend between levels of nervousness/confidence and English language ability. As previously stated, classes in this department are streamed so we knew in advance the general level of each student. However, we did not specifically factor this into our questionnaires and data gathering, and are therefore unable to accurately collate these factors into our conclusions. This is one area in which further investigation is required.

In the Peer Review questionnaire, a semester's worth of experience led to an overall confidence in and understanding of the peer review process, particularly with a partner familiar to them. In the environment of the Creative Writing class, this may have led to an increase in nervousness, since the situation guaranteed that their peer review partners would be from another Drama class and therefore relatively unknown to them. Of course, this would be somewhat mitigated by peer

review not taking place until around Lesson 5 or 6, meaning that they would have interacted with their classmates for a few weeks by this point.

The exit questionnaire (SW2) in general confirmed our hypothesis and gave positive outcomes to our research questions. Student confidence was shown to increase as a result of the process, and while the sample size is too small to perform statistical analysis, the trend was certainly promising. Overall, the students felt they had benefited from horizontal integration between their Writing, Drama, and Creative Writing classes, as clearly shown in Table 9. In particular, this answered our third research question, “How does horizontal syllabus integration impact student attitudes towards their classes?” by showing a strong positive reaction among the majority of the respondents. For these students, horizontal syllabus integration provided both comforting familiarity by utilizing skills and techniques with which they were already comfortable (in particular, peer review) and reinforcement of new knowledge by recycling it in other classes.

The negative responses outlined in Table 10, by contrast, suggest that the answer to our first research question, “To what extent is horizontal syllabus integration desirable?” is ambivalent. Student reactions show a need to think through how far horizontal syllabus integration should be pursued. While integration can allow students the chance to review and recycle, it could also lead to repetitive and boring classes if the recycling is shallow, as one student stressed, or is done for knowledge and skills that the students have already mastered. This was perhaps the most positive outcome of our research, as it suggests there is a way to do horizontal syllabus integration correctly as well as a way to do it badly.

Further study is needed to explore how to embrace the positive outcomes of this research and to avoid or mitigate potential negative outcomes, particularly with reference to our second research question. Other limitations of this study include the relatively small sample sizes as well as the fact that our research was focused entirely on writing, as we were unable to conduct our research across the entire first-year student body or to investigate classes we were not directly teaching. In addition, while this study focused entirely on the beliefs and experiences of students, it would be of value to explore the same questions in teachers. Anecdotally, while discussing this topic with other instructors fears were raised over what horizontal syllabus integration would mean for teacher independence. Horizontal syllabus integration requires either a team working closely together or a single supervisor making sure that syllabi are being followed and teachers are doing their jobs according to guidelines laid down in advance. This could lead to resentment and extra stress in an already fraught environment and as such needs more exploration.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of our study give credence to the belief that horizontal syllabus integration is desirable within university departments, but only when done right. It can lead to deeper understanding of the L2 and the assimilation of desirable skills and techniques useful both in the classroom and in life outside. It can hugely benefit students' confidence in their ability both in the classroom and going forward. As Dörnyei's (2009) work on imagined future selves has shown,

confidence in the present translates into increased positivity regarding future outcomes. Finally, from a teacher's perspective, our study showed that horizontal syllabus integration can tackle the long-standing issue of task justification and understanding.

However the negativity shown by a few students towards horizontal syllabus integration gives pause. Should integration be done badly, or lazily, it could have the opposite effect of that intended, acting as a demotivating factor for students. In addition, it could cause problems for departmental relationships.

## THE AUTHORS

**Iain Maloney**, PhD, is an associate professor at Sugiyama Jogakuen University, Nagoya, Japan. His research interests include creative writing, Japanese literature, Scottish literature, identity, and motivation. He is the editor of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching Journal*, and he is the author of nine books. Email: maloneyiain@sugiyama-u.ac.jp

**Jaime Morrish** is an associate professor at Sugiyama Jogakuen University in Nagoya, Japan, where he coordinates and teaches on the Communicative English Programme. He is currently writing his EdD thesis at the University of Sheffield. His research interests include IELTS, of which he has been a speaking examiner since 2014, and other English proficiency tests, second language acquisition, English-medium instruction, and English language education policies. Email: morrishjam@sugiyama-u.ac.jp

## REFERENCES

- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment, *Phi Delta Kappa International*, 80(2), 139–144.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Crandall, J. (2000). Language teacher education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20, 34–55.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Murphey, T. (2003). *Group dynamics in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivation self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity, and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Education reform for social justice: A review of professional capital – Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.
- Law, D. Y. K., & Tsui, A. B. M. (2007). Learning as boundary-crossing in school–university partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 1289–1301.
- Malik, A. S., & Malik, R. H. (2011). Twelve tips for developing an integrated curriculum. *Medical Teacher*, 33(2), 99–104.
- Torjussen, A. B. L., & Erikshamar, J. J. (2011). Horizontal supply chain collaboration in Swedish and Norwegian SME networks. *19th Annual Conference of the International Group for Lean Construction 2011*. IGLC 2011, 340–349.
- Townsend, D. J. (2018). An integrated university language curriculum. *JALT Postconference Publication*, 2017(1), 170–176.
- Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University

Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students

Press.

Wagner, J. L., Smith, K. J., Johnson, C., Hilaire, M. L., & Medina, M. S. (2022). *Best practices in syllabus design*. American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy.

## APPENDIX

### Scriptwriting Questionnaire 1

1 = not at all; 10 = very.

1. Have you ever written a script in English or in Japanese?	
Please tell us more:	
2. How nervous are you about writing a script in English?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
3. How confident are you in writing a script in English?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
4. Would you rather write the script by yourself or with a partner?	
Why?	

### Peer Review Questionnaire

1 = not at all; 10 = very.

1. Do you enjoy doing peer review?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
2. How useful do you find doing peer review?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
3. How useful do you find receiving peer review?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
4. How comfortable are you doing peer review with someone you know very well?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
5. How comfortable are you doing peer review with someone you don't know very well?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	

### Scriptwriting Questionnaire 2

1 = not at all; 10 = very.

1. Now you have finished, how do you feel about writing a script in English?	
Please tell us more:	
2. How helpful was it to work on your drama script in Active English?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
3. How confident are you in writing a script in English now?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Why?	
4. Do you think connecting your English classes in this way is helpful?	
Why?	
5. Would you like to see more connections between your English classes?	
Why?	
6. Do you think peer review helped with your scriptwriting?	
Yes/How?	
No/Why not?	



## Reassessing Classroom Observation for University Teachers

---

Benjamin Filer and Niall Walsh

*Aichi Prefectural University, Nagakute, Japan*

Classroom observations allow educators to reflect on and improve their teaching practice. However, anecdotal evidence in Japan suggests this exercise is underutilized in a university context. The perceived lack of observations prompted the authors to explore this issue further by investigating three areas: the amount of classroom observations teachers have been involved in, who was involved, and teachers' attitudes towards classroom observations. The population of this study was 53 English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Japanese universities. An online questionnaire was distributed that collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings indicate that most teachers have not experienced extensive classroom observations, with some viewing it as threatening or intimidating. However, this attitude may reflect how observations are implemented, as many teachers acknowledge the benefits of this practice and indicate a desire for greater observation.

### INTRODUCTION

Suggesting that teacher development must be a central tenet of professional educators' practices is not controversial. Many initiatives, such as reflective practice, student surveys, research, professional development seminars, and attendance at language conferences, allow language practitioners to develop, foster, and refine their pedagogical skills and techniques. Among these, Farrell (2019) wrote that there is growing research within the TESOL profession, indicating that reflective practice positively impacts teachers' careers, and many practitioners are aware of the opportunities it presents. One practical avenue for reflective practice and teacher development that could yield positive outcomes is classroom observations. Unfortunately, documentation on the extent of classroom observations in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in Japanese universities remains scarce. Besides anecdotal evidence, how often teachers are observed, who assumes the observer's role, and teachers' attitudes towards observations are relatively unknown. This study will address this paucity in empirical research by examining the extent and nature of teacher observations undertaken in universities in Japan and report on teachers' attitudes towards this form of professional development.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reflective practice that enables professional development is a staple of many educational institutions and classrooms. Farrell (2007) described reflective practice as a continuous process where teachers examine and reflect upon their beliefs and practice throughout their careers. To guide teachers, Farrell (2019) outlined a comprehensive list of activities that allow teachers to become more reflective, such as the use of technology, critical friendships, peer coaching, dialoguing, service learning, writing, action research, and analysis of critical incidents. Embedded within some of these activities is the role of classroom observation and feedback. Classroom observation has been defined as “the bridge between the worlds of theory and practice” (Reed & Bergemann, 2001, p. 6). Observations enable teachers to view, assess, and reflect upon how language learning theory manifests in the language classroom and make informed decisions about their teaching. Farrell (2007) recommended situating classroom observations within a reflective practice paradigm that allows teachers to examine their classroom practices more rigorously. It appears that educational institutions are increasingly conscious of this advice and embracing observations as O’Leary (2020) reported that “over the last three decades, classroom observation has emerged as a pivotal tool for measuring, assuring, and improving the professional skills and knowledge base of teachers and lecturers in schools, colleges, and universities” (p. 3). According to Farrell (2018), observations can manifest in three ways – alone, in pairs, or in small groups. Each of these methods presents its own advantages and challenges, but their goals are consistent: to allow teachers to develop a deeper awareness of their classroom management and lesson delivery as well as gain insight into the student’s perspective, for example, the quality of their explanations, if they talk too quickly and any speech mannerisms, such as repeated use of “yes” or “okay,” (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Identifying key components of their lesson delivery that can be improved allows teachers to develop professionally.

However, classroom observations should not be misinterpreted as one-dimensional barometers focused on measuring teacher performance. While traditionally, the observation has focused on the observed, for the observer, it presents opportunities for development, such as becoming more aware of options and possibilities that were previously unknown (Somogyi-Tóth, 2012). Gore (2013), an experienced teacher trainer, saw the potential for the observer as it can improve their teaching by looking outside their classrooms and observing other teachers. For example, being invited to the inner sanctuary of the observed teacher’s classroom allows the observer to view another practitioner’s classroom management techniques and blackboard layouts along with the student’s perspective. Unlike supervisor observations, Richards and Lockhart (1995) stressed that the observer must be professional and understand that their role is not to assess or criticize the teacher’s lesson but “simply to learn through observing” (p. 24). This process of learning from the observed is standard practice in teacher training institutions where student teachers observe experienced ones.

All too often, Farrell (2018) remarked, classroom observations are often viewed with hesitation by teachers who feel they are a mechanism for evaluating and measuring classroom performance. Harmer (2015) confirmed these fears when writing that very few people welcome a supervisor observing their lessons



when they suspect rightly or wrongly that the purpose is “to decide whether the teacher can keep his or her job” (p. 129). While deciding to terminate someone’s contract based on observations may occur, it is unlikely the sole intended purpose. Many educational institutions may view them as a way to sustain best practices and standards in the language classroom, which is what language teachers should also aspire to.

One underlying cause of anxiety may result from the failure of language institutions to initiate dialogue with the employees regarding observations and openly communicate their function within the professional development paradigm. Barber (2008) worried that teachers’ stress surrounding observations can be traced to a lack of engagement in their planning, an unequal relationship between the instructor and the observer, and the relative infrequency of classroom observations. This exclusion of teacher involvement is depicted in a study conducted by Wang and Day (2001) that found none of the teachers was asked about their pedagogical approach before the observation, and only a few teachers engaged in a follow-up consultation with the observer post-observation. Even then, the feedback was brief and vague.

Despite the high level of anxiety associated with classroom observations, limited studies nevertheless suggest there is consensus among teachers about the benefits of observations. In his study, Merç (2015) reported that most Turkish EFL teachers had a positive disposition to classroom observations. However, there is a shortage of empirical studies examining observational practices within the EFL industry in Japanese university EFL classes. This lack of research is surprising, given that, as reported, reflective practice that includes observations is becoming standard practice in language institutions. Subsequently, this study attempts to tackle this issue by addressing three areas: investigating the amount of observations being carried out in universities, establishing who is carrying them out, and surveying language teachers’ views on this practice.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Questions**

Three research questions were designed to guide this study and provide insight into teachers’ lived experiences in Japan.

RQ1. How often have university teachers in Japan been observed?

RQ2. Who has been observing them during this time?

RQ3. How do they feel about these observations and observations in general?

### **Participants**

The study participants were 53 English university language teachers working within the EFL industry in Japan. The respondents were recruited via social media platforms Facebook and Twitter, and also through personal contacts.

## Data Collection

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via a Google Forms questionnaire (see Appendix). The questions were designed primarily to provide a general overview of the state of classroom observation practice amongst teachers in universities in Japan from our sample. The questionnaire began by addressing RQ1 by asking the participants to share how long they had been teaching at a university in Japan and how many times their classes had been observed during that time. To answer RQ2, the participants were asked to record who had observed them during their university life in Japan. RQ3 was then tackled by asking the participants to share their feelings regarding the observations they had experienced. Firstly, there were Lickert scale items (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very happy*) to uncover the respondents' attitudes to these observations and how useful they had found them. They were asked to comment to gain a deeper insight into the teachers' feelings regarding these observations.

Finally, participants were asked to comment on whether they believed there was sufficient classroom observation in EFL classes in Japanese universities and to express their thoughts regarding classroom observations in general.

## RESULTS

To gain a basic understanding of the participants' experiences of classroom observations at the university level in Japan, they were asked to outline how long they had been working in the field and the number of times they had been observed. Table 1 shows the results of the following question:

How long have you been teaching English at the university level in Japan, and how many times have your English classes been observed?

**TABLE 1. Participant Experience of Classroom Observation**

No. of Times Observed	0–5 Years Experience	6–10 Years Experience	11–15 Years Experience	16–20 Years Experience	21+ Years Experience	Total
0	6 (54.5%)	6 (31.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	15 (28%)
1–3	2 (18%)	6 (31.5%)	2 (25%)	3 (60%)	4 (40%)	17 (32%)
4–6	1 (9%)	4 (21%)	5 (62.5%)	1 (20%)	2 (20%)	13 (25%)
7–9	2 (18%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	4 (7.5%)
10+	0 (0%)	3 (16%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	4 (7.5%)
Total	11	19	8	5	10	53

As can be seen in Table 1, six out of the eleven (54.5%) participant teachers who have been teaching for five years or less have not been observed once during that period. This then drops to six out of nineteen (31.4%) for respondents who have taught in Japan at university for between six to ten years. Of the thirteen teachers who have been working in Japan for eleven to twenty years, they all

reported that they had been observed at least once. However, when looking at the results for the cohort of experienced teachers with twenty-one years or more experience, there were three out of ten (30%) who had never had their classes observed.

Respondents were then asked to provide information on who observed their classes and how happy they had been for these observations to take place. These results were split into two categories related to being observed by a senior English teacher or a fellow English teacher. The results in Table 2 are related to the following question:

On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being *not at all* and 5 being *very happy*, how happy were you for these observations to take place?

**TABLE 2. Participant Quantitative Feedback on Classroom Observation**

Observer	1	2	3	4	5	Total Respondents
Senior English Teacher	2 (8%)	4 (15%)	9 (35%)	5 (19%)	6 (23%)	26
Fellow English Teacher	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	4 (33%)	11 (37%)	12 (40%)	30

From this data, we can see that there was generally a positive outlook regarding being observed by a senior English teacher. There were six out of twenty-six (23%) of the respondents with negative opinions. On the other hand, there were eleven out of the twenty-six (42.3%) with positive emotions relating to these observations. It is worth noting that the most common response fell in the middle, with nine out of the twenty-six (34.6%) showing they were neither happy nor unhappy with these observations. The results relating to being observed by a fellow teacher, however, reveal a more positive outlook (23%) from the respondents. There were three (10%) with a negative view of these observations. Most of the feedback highlights positive feelings towards classroom observation by fellow teachers, with 23 (77%) respondents expressing such emotions.

Participants were asked to comment on their experiences of being observed by both a senior English teacher and a fellow English teacher. The results are summarized in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. Participant Qualitative Feedback on Classroom Observation**

Observer	Positive Feedback	Neutral Feedback	Negative Feedback	Total Respondents
Senior English Teacher	4 (20%)	7 (35%)	9 (45%)	20
Fellow English Teacher	12 (55%)	8 (36%)	2 (9%)	22

Twenty teachers provided feedback related to their experiences of being observed by a senior English teacher. Upon analysis of the results, the comments can be categorized as follows: Four of the twenty (4/20; 20%) were positive, 7/20 (35%) were neutral, and 9/20 (45%) were negative. On the positive side, one respondent commented that “it was a good experience. My supervisor was very thorough and gave lots of things to consider.” However, from the negative feedback, one respondent noted that “I have had two observations by a superior. Both were essentially box-checking exercises with no real feedback or use to me

as a teacher.” Another negative comment about being observed by a senior teacher was “It was stressful, and it changed the classroom dynamic. Student reactions were different and my own actions were less automatic and more consciously considered.”

Twenty-two teachers provided feedback about being observed by a fellow English teacher. Upon analysis of the results, the comments can be categorized as follows: 12/22 (55%) were positive, 8/22 (36%) were neutral, and 2/22 (9%) were negative. From the positive comments, one respondent said, “Very positive. The instructors were not critical, and following discussions were constructive.” Another positive respondent noted that “it was useful and less stressful than being observed by a manager. It was also less time consuming as it was informal.”

Participants were allowed to make any other comments relating to classroom observation, and a selection of these comments can be seen in Table 4.

**TABLE 4. General Comments Regarding Classroom Observation in Japan**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Respondent A	The point is observations should be done in a way that doesn't interfere with the class. It should be used for improving classes rather than punishment or reward. No matter the intent, many teachers seem to feel like observations are a sign of distrust.
Respondent B	In my experience, tenured professors are often resistant to constructive feedback. So much so that at my current position, tenured professors voted to quit doing observations at a meeting that the rest of us were not invited to.
Respondent C	I set up a peer observation scheme in my department but came up against significant resistance from most coworkers.
Respondent D	Often, the main barrier to observations is scheduling. I would like to see what other teachers do that teach the same courses as myself, but often I find that teachers do not want to even trade lesson plans, which is a tragedy.
Respondent E	We should all be doing it as much as feasibly possible.
Respondent F	I don't have a problem, given prior notice. I was observed a lot earlier in my career, when getting certified and when working in language schools, so I'm used to it now. I'm not sure I've received useful feedback.... I think I'm quite settled in my teaching by now, for better or worse, and I am not sure how much insight feedback from an observer would provide. However, I would like to observe others. Seeing how other teachers work can be very refreshing, and I think that would be more valuable. I am sure I could pick up some new perspectives from watching someone else. I think the value in observation is to the observer, rather than the "observee."
Respondent G	I'm fairly shocked that it isn't standard practice at universities in Japan.
Respondent H	Full-time teachers should encourage classroom observations as a way to improve teaching. I think that inviting other teachers to observe your classes reduces resistance towards the idea of observations. Once the teachers understand that observations are opportunities for development rather than for evaluation, they may be more receptive to the idea. Unfortunately, in the case of English classes, they are often taught at the same time, so scheduling observations can be difficult. One way around this could be to videotape your class and analyze it with other teachers.
Respondent I	It is clearly useful, but can be hard to achieve in a way that is not formulaic. Having a trusted fellow teacher observe a class and give feedback may be the best way to get genuine discussion going about areas for improvement.

Respondents to this questionnaire were asked two further questions related to classroom observations (see Tables 5 and 6).

**TABLE 5. Respondents' Opinions on the Amount of Classroom Observation at Universities in Japan**

	Far Too Little	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Far Too Much	Total Respondents
Responses	25 (46%)	11 (20%)	15 (28%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	54

**TABLE 6. Respondents' Interest in Peer Observation**

	Not Interested at All	Not Interested	Neutral	Interested	Very Interested	Total Respondents
Responses	6 (11%)	6 (11%)	14 (26%)	18 (33%)	10 (19%)	54

## DISCUSSION

The fact that over 30% of the respondents to this survey have never had their English classes observed, with around 9% of the total having been teaching for 20 years or more, is remarkable. Arguments could well be made that this presents a negative view of the state of English language teaching in universities in Japan. If there are a large number of teachers who are not having their classes observed, then it could suggest that they are not getting regular feedback, which is a vital part of a teacher's professional development. Furthermore, this might result in stagnation amongst those teachers, as they may not be provided with opportunities to discuss their classes and think of fresh ideas. A large majority of the respondents feel there is not enough classroom observation in Japan, which indicates that they would be open to their institutes helping to set up the framework for observations to take place.

The results show a discrepancy indicating a wide variety of classroom observation practices in universities in Japan. Despite over 30% of respondents never being observed, there were over 10% who had been observed more than ten times. This suggests that whether a teacher engages in classroom observation depends on where they work and who they are working with.

It is perhaps no surprise that the respondents' results show that they are happier to be observed by their peers as opposed to a senior teacher. One of the main reasons for this is that observations by senior teachers are, as one respondent noted, "essentially box-checking exercises." Furthermore, there may not be the type of feedback from senior teachers that the teachers being observed are hoping for, which is vital to make the practice worthwhile. However, despite rather negative results from this study, it is important to note that classroom observation from senior teachers does not necessarily lead to a bad experience for the observed teacher. It essentially comes down to the amount of time and care the observer puts into observing and providing constructive feedback after the class.

Respondents' comments related to being observed by a peer, on the other hand, were far more positive, with very few negative points being expressed. It

seems that the stress that comes with being observed by a senior teacher or manager is less evident when doing observations with peers. When teachers are observed by their peers, it is often reciprocal and used as a form of professional development to improve their teaching. Therefore, it should not feel evaluative as it might seem when observed by senior teachers. This can lead to a more relaxed atmosphere for the observed teacher as they do not have to worry that their class, and potentially their job, is being judged. Teachers at the same institution can use peer observation to discuss shared experiences that may be specific to their particular place of work. In doing observations, peers are the best people to help each other due to their knowledge of that working environment and of the students.

However, it was mentioned in the study that scheduling conflicts could make classroom observations difficult to organize. One respondent spoke of videotaping classes and conducting observations of these classes in development sessions with colleagues. This seems to be a possible way to solve such a problem. Furthermore, it also helps to avoid another issue that some respondents noted in the questionnaire: how classroom observations not only make the teacher nervous but also the students. Whether or not recording classes with a video recorder would make teachers and students more or less nervous remains to be seen.

According to the results of this research, there seems to be a significant contingent of teachers who are concerned about how classroom observations can change the classroom dynamic from the norm. One respondent noted that a way of solving this could be “walk-by observations.” In this case, the students and teachers may become used to the practice, and that initial nervousness could become less of an issue. However, the issues of logistics and whether this is feasible in practice cannot be ignored.

When asking the respondents whether they would like to have more peer observation, the results suggest that a majority of teachers are in favor of it. In order for this to become a reality, there are two possible ways for it to become common practice. Firstly, teachers could set up peer observation on a small-scale basis with colleagues and keep the organization and implementation at a personal level. The benefits of this approach are that it can be put into action fairly simply and hopefully without stress and unnecessary paperwork. Furthermore, in selecting a colleague this way, teachers are free to work with other teachers they feel comfortable with, as opposed to being assigned a peer observer whom they may not feel as relaxed with. A second approach to this would be for institutions themselves to organize a peer observation scheme amongst the teachers working there. This could be more structured and would require some administration for it to work effectively. The advantages of this method are that it should ensure that the observations actually take place, and all teachers have the opportunity to take part. However, one of the responses from this study highlights the problems this approach could face. The respondent noted that they “set up a peer observation scheme in my department but came up against significant resistance from most coworkers.” This indicates that without a collective motivation to engage in classroom observation as a form of professional development, such schemes could encounter a backlash and fail to materialize.

One final issue this study raises concerns who, if anyone, is the main beneficiary of classroom observation. Some respondents commented on the

relative benefits to the observer of the classroom as opposed to the teacher being observed. This idea of classroom observation as being of more use to the observer is related to how they are able to learn from another professional and essentially pick up techniques of teaching that they would not otherwise see in action. One respondent noted how they “could pick up some new perspectives from watching someone else.” There should be no shame in this notion of observing fellow teachers’ classes and learning from them just as much, if not more, than they would from the feedback they receive from the observer. However, it remains vital that the observer provides a detailed, thoughtful, and fair review of the observed lesson post-observation.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Several implications can be drawn from this study. First, there is a clear neglect of classroom observations in EFL classrooms in Japanese tertiary education. Additionally, many teachers indicated their suspicions about the reason for classroom observations. Despite this, there appears to be a recognition among university EFL teachers in Japan that classroom observations can play an integral part in personal development, as the majority of this study’s cohort seemed responsive to this practice. Consequently, it may not be observations that create anxiety but that teachers feel threatened as they are perceived as an evaluative feature of teacher performance. Therefore, teachers must be consulted at all stages on the purpose of this form of reflective practice and its function within a professional development paradigm. This process must include an equal distribution of power between the observed and the observer that begins with an initial consultation stage that sets out the goals of the observation, and a constructive feedback stage that allows both parties to the observation to consult on the experience.

## **LIMITATIONS**

While the results of this survey indicate a general appreciation of the benefits of classroom observations despite a lack of them in practice, several limitations must be addressed in future studies. First, the sample size of 53 is limited, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions based on that number. Additionally, this study primarily focused on educators in the tertiary sector and is not representative of Japan’s overall community of language teachers. Replication studies must incorporate a wider demographic of participants that extends to all language practitioners to provide a comprehensive overview of the entire industry.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Despite the limitations of this study, the results offer a glimpse into the lived experiences of a sample of university EFL teachers in Japan. The data indicates

that classroom observations are limited in Japanese university classes. Despite this, most teachers are cognizant of the potential benefits of such practices but, too often, view them with mistrust and as a mechanism for evaluation. Subsequently, language institutions must carefully develop their observational activities to situate them within a collaborative system of reflective practice. Such an inclusive approach requires careful planning through an equal distribution of power and teacher consultations at every pre- and post-observation.

## THE AUTHORS

**Benjamin Filer** is a full-time lecturer at Aichi Prefectural University. He received his MA in TESOL at the University of Essex. He has published papers on dictionary usage, storytelling in language teaching, and extensive reading. His current research interests include teachers' beliefs, dictionary usage, and reflective practice. Email: benjamin\_filer@for.aichi-pu.ac.jp

**Niall Walsh** is a full-time lecturer at Aichi Prefectural University. He received his MA in applied linguistics and TESOL at the University of Leicester. He has published papers on materials development, literature in language teaching, corrective feedback, and presentations. His current primary research interests include student-developed materials, autonomous learning, materials development, and reflective practice. Email: nwalsh@for.aichi-pu.ac.jp

## REFERENCES

- Barber, D. (2005). Watching and being watched. *English Teaching Professional*, 56. Available from <https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/watching-and-being-watched>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. Bloomsbury.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2018). Reflective practice in L2 teacher education. In S. Walsh & S. Mann (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teacher Education* (ch. 3). Routledge.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2020). The “look”: Reflecting on classroom observation. *The English Connection*, 24(3), 30–31.
- Gore, J. *How observing other teachers can improve your teaching*. British Council. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-observing-other-teachers-can-improve-your-teaching>
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Pearson.
- Merç, A. (2015). The potential of general classroom observation: Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions, sentiments, and readiness for action. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3(4), 193–205.
- O'Leary, M. (2020). *Classroom observation: A guide to the effective observation of teaching and learning*. Routledge.
- Randall, M., & Thornton, B. (2001). *Advising and supporting teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reed, A. J., & Bergemann, V. E. (2005). *A guide to observation, participation, and reflection in the classroom*. McGraw-Hill.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge University Press.



- Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Somogyi-Toth, K. (2012). Observation tasks: A workbook for student teachers.
- Wang, W., & Day, C. (2001, February 27 – March 3). *Issues and concerns about classroom observation: teachers' perspectives* [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). Retrieved from ERIC database [ED467734].

## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire on Classroom Observation

1. How long have you been teaching English at university level in Japan and how many times have your English classes been observed?

	Never Been Observed	1-3 Times	4-6 Times	7-9 Times	10 or More
0-5 Years					
6-10 Years					
11-15 Years					
16-20 Years					
21 Years or More					

2. Who observed your classes? Please select all that are applicable.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor / Manager / Senior English teacher (higher level than you)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fellow English teacher (same level as you)

3. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being *not at all* and 5 being *very happy*, how happy were you for these observations to take place?

	1	2	3	4	5
Supervisor / Manager / Senior English teacher					
Fellow English teacher					

4. If you have been observed by a “supervisor/manager/senior English teacher,” please comment on how the experience was for you.
5. If you have been observed by a “fellow English teacher,” please comment on how the experience was for you.
6. In general, how do you feel about your English classes being observed?
7. How do you feel about the amount of English classroom observation at universities in Japan?
8. How interested are you in peer-to-peer observation?
9. Do you have any other comments related to classroom observations?

## SDGs and COIL in Japan: Reflections on Design

---

Robert Remmerswaal

*Sojo University, Kumamoto, Japan*

Students in Japan worked with students from Spain and Türkiye in groups of six to seven to produce written reports and a video about sustainable development goals (SDGs). Students experienced, conceptualized, and analyzed various aspects of SDGs in their culture before applying what they learned to a video made for their peers. Students completed a pre-intervention and post-intervention survey, including two open-ended questions. Two teachers of the Japanese students kept field notes and reflected after each class. Students successfully completed all tasks and perceived themselves as successful in all but their ability to speak with their international group members. To complete tasks, many groups relied on asynchronous, written messages. The author suggests providing semi-structured speaking activities for groups to increase the total spoken interactions between group members.

### INTRODUCTION

Three universities from Japan, Spain, and Türkiye (Turkey) created a collaborative online international learning (COIL) program within their respective courses. The students worked together to write reports and make a video exploring how to incorporate sustainable development goals (SDGs) into their communities. The instructors designed the project and its tasks with the pedagogy of multiliteracies (PedML), first developed by the London Group (Cazden et al., 1996).

One goal of this project was for students to experience being in a global virtual team (GVT). GVTs are a growing trend in corporations where teams across national boundaries connect through advanced information technology (Scott & Wildman, 2015). Furthermore, group and pair work has long been recommended for second language learning, as it increases language practice opportunities, improves the quality of student talk, helps individualize instruction, creates a positive affective climate, and motivates learners (Long & Porter, 1985). An additional benefit of COIL is a chance to grow student digital literacy, cross-cultural understanding, creativity, and collaboration skills (Wicking, 2022).

In designing the course, the instructors had to consider the differing English language proficiency between the schools, with the average Japanese student being slightly lower than Spanish students and much lower than Turkish students. This differing proficiency could pose a benefit, as Varonis and Gass (1985) found that non-native dyads more frequently negotiated for meaning than those with native

speakers, with the highest frequency occurring with dyads from different language backgrounds and proficiency levels. This differing proficiency could make the project too complex for Japanese students. This paper explores whether the COIL project was appropriate for Japanese students by asking the following questions:

- RQ1. How did Japanese student perceptions of their ability to work within a global group change in a COIL project?
- RQ2. What aspects of the project were appropriately challenging for the Japanese students?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Virtual Exchange and COIL**

To better understand COIL, it is important to understand virtual exchange (VE). The Virtual Exchange Coalition, based in America, defines VE as a technology-enabled, people-to-people education program that builds mutually affirming relationships and fosters meaningful dialogue (Virtual Exchange Coalition, 2015). The European counterpart, EVOLVE, put forth a similar definition that included geographic separation and different cultural backgrounds as a requirement (EVOLVE, n.d.). Online interactions, such as emails, forums, and video calls, are mediums for VE. VE is usually an all-encompassing term, whereas COIL is a type of VE.

COIL was first coined by John Rubin in 2006 (Rubin, 2022) when his university opened a new center for online exchanges. While several definitions exist, in this paper, COIL refers to bilateral exchange and corresponding pedagogy embedded in for-credit, post-secondary-level academic courses; co-developed by two or more teachers based in different cultures and locations; almost always taught by the same instructors who designed the exchange; and built around and focused upon collaborative project work between diverse student cohorts (Rubin, 2022).

### **Pedagogy of Multiliteracies**

Pedagogy of multiliteracies (PedML) is a product of the New London Group, a group of ten instructors discussing their teaching practice in search of a better way to meet the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity they saw around them (Cazden et al., 1996). They believed that instructors should teach literacy for the context (cultures, social, or domain-specific), media, and technology students need. Two members of the New London Group, Kalantzis and Cope, continued pursuing PedML and, in 2003, started the Learning by Design project (Kalantzis & Cope, 2016). PedML gives students agency by making them active designers of meaning and values the student perspective.

Kalantzis and Cope describe eight learning processes (2016). Table 1 describes these processes with the pedagogical traditions added by Lim et al. (2022). The role of the instructor is to weave these processes and their learning traditions in a way that leads students to meaning.

TABLE 1. PedML Knowledge Processes

Knowledge Process	Description
Experiencing (In the tradition of authentic pedagogy)	<b>The Known:</b> Learners reflect on their experiences, interests, and perspectives to find and build on knowledge gaps using evidence from their everyday lives. <b>The New:</b> Learners are immersed in various information sources such as the web, hands-on activities, and immersive experiences. It should be in an unfamiliar domain of experience with some familiarity for the learners.
Conceptualizing (In the tradition of didactic pedagogy)	<b>By Naming:</b> Learners categorize, classify, and define concepts. They draw distinctions, identify similarities and differences, and organize with labels. Learners give abstract names to things and develop ideas. <b>With Theory:</b> Learners take the concepts and categories of a subject and link them to discipline knowledge. Learners put the key terms together into theories.
Analyzing (In the tradition of critical pedagogy)	<b>Functionally (Objectively):</b> Learners provide an argument or explanation for a topic, idea, or artifact. It may include text, diagrams, or data visualization. It involves reasoning, inferring, and deductive conclusions. Learners logically consider the connections between cause and effect. <b>Critically (Subjectively):</b> Learners analyze the interests of people and the purposes of knowledge. They question human intention and interest. The argumentative process asks how the claims made in an argument align with the evidence supplied.
Applying (In the tradition of functional pedagogy and transferable learning)	<b>Appropriately (Near Transfer):</b> Learners put meaning and knowledge to work effectively in proximate contexts. It is a predictable or typical expression of an idea. It is not an exact replication as it has some form of reinvention or revoicing the world hasn't seen. <b>Creatively (Far Transfer):</b> Learners transfer knowledge to different contexts, hybrid knowledge, and cultural creations expressing the student's voice and perspective. It takes knowledge from one setting and adapts it to a reasonably different setting.

## Authentic Tasks and Self-Efficacy

Lombardi (2007) describes authentic learning as effective engagement in the learning environment where students can develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. These skills will help students succeed in their future careers. A COIL project that resembles a GVT makes the project interactionally authentic, using language processing found outside of the classroom (Ellis, 2017). Creating groups with only non-native English speakers is representative of the real world. Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2019) wrote that 80% of English interactions occur between non-native speakers. Therefore, students will likely use English most often with non-native speakers after graduation.

Bandura (1995) connects authentic tasks with mastery experiences, promoting self-efficacy (self-perceived ability to complete a task successfully), and influencing an individual's behavior. To be a mastery experience, a student must have viewed themselves as successfully completing a task they viewed as difficult (Bandura, 1995). If students have a successful experience collaborating with people from other cultures using English, they are more likely to see themselves succeeding in a similar situation.

## METHOD

To determine if there were any changes in self-efficacy, students completed a Likert survey pre- and post-COIL. The instructors made field notes, met with groups, and reflected on these inputs throughout the course. It is essential to understand the project to understand these Likert items and the instructors' reflections on course appropriateness.

### Participants

The participants were students from the three universities in Japan, Spain, and Türkiye, and each group of participants included differing levels of English proficiency. Japan had the lowest average proficiency, with most students at a teacher-assessed CEFR A2 level and a few at a B1 level. These first-year students were in their second mandatory English Communication class. The instructors assigned pairs of students to groups (up to three) from each university, making groups of six to seven students. The instructors designed this to ensure that there would always be one student who could assist another if communication broke down in the larger group.

### Project Design

The instructors designed the project using PedML to promote student agency in the learning process, allowing the students to be active designers of meaning. The planning for the COIL project began several months before the exchange. The teachers designed activities to explore concepts in class individually and in pairs before meeting with group members. Each instructor taught this project alongside existing courses concurrently with the content below. The project consisted of four parts: the introduction, SDGs at school, SDGs buying power, and the video project. Tables 2–5 describe the weekly activities for each section.

**TABLE 2. Preparing for COIL: Weeks 1-3**

Week	Knowledge Process	Task	Resource
1	Experiencing the known	Create an introduction video and post it to the COIL Teams group page by Week 3.	Any video software (PowerPoint demonstrated)
2	Experiencing the known	Take 5 minutes to write everything you know about SDGs, do not use the internet. Discuss in groups of 2-3 students.	Physical or digital notepad
2 2HW	Experiencing the new Categorizing by naming/theory	Create an infographic to represent one SDG. Present it to your classmates and explain the key components of that SDG.	Internet, media software (canva.com demonstrated)
3	Experiencing the new	Comment on the videos of your group members from other countries.	Teams

*Note.* “HW” refers to homework or any task expected to be completed outside of class time.

In Week 1, students watched a welcome video that included a project overview, introduced the teachers, and set expectations. The teacher summarized

the video, and students discussed it with a partner. After this, students completed the first survey. By making an introduction video, students met each other asynchronously to hopefully lower social anxiety in the first group call. In preparation for the first call, Week 3 included a review of online etiquette, live call expectations, and practice of the ice-breaking activity, two truths and a lie. To further lower social anxiety and confusion, the Japanese students were assigned to start the call on Teams (pressing the button), while the Turkish students were assigned to start the conversation.

**TABLE 3. SDGs at School: Weeks 4-6**

Week	Knowledge Process	Task	Resource
4	Experiencing the known and new	Participate in a large group call and play a large quiz game hosted by Blooket ( <a href="https://www.blooket.com/">https://www.blooket.com/</a> )	Teams
4	Experiencing the new Conceptualizing by naming	Meet your international group members for the first time synchronously.	Teams
4-6	Conceptualizing by naming/theorizing Analyzing functionally	Work with your international group to complete assignment 1 (Remmerswaal, 2023a). Must create deadlines and a schedule for synchronous and asynchronous work	Any platform (Teams and Word were provided; many used Instagram and WhatsApp)

The large group call included more than 150 students, and almost everyone joined. During class time in Weeks 5 and 6, students worked on Assignment 1 with their Japanese partner and met with their teacher. Teachers advised on the assignment and how to overcome language and cultural barriers. Besides the first small-group call, work with the international members was done outside of class throughout the project.

**TABLE 4. SDGs Buying Power: Weeks 7-9**

Week	Knowledge Process	Task	Resource
7 HW	Experiencing the known and new	Participate in a large group call and play a quiz game hosted by Blooket. Review Assignment 2 and break into small groups.	Teams
7	Analyzing functionally/critically	The teacher introduces a company working towards an SDG(s). Students discuss in small groups what the company is doing and critique whether it is for ulterior motives.	Online article or video provided by a teacher
7 7HW 8	Experiencing the new Analyzing functionally/critically	Find a company in your country that is working towards an SDG. Discuss it with other students in class functionally and critically.	Any online resource or media
7-9	Conceptualizing by naming/ theorizing Analyzing functionally /critically	Work with your international group to complete Assignment 2 (Remmerswaal, 2023a). Create deadlines and a schedule for synchronous and asynchronous work.	Any platform (Teams and Word were provided; many used Instagram and Whatsapp)

*Note.* In all three weeks, the teachers gave class time to work on the project and met with each group to assist as needed.

**TABLE 5. SDGs Video: Weeks 10-12**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Knowledge Process</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Resource</b>
10 HW	Experiencing the known and new	Participate in a large group call and play a quiz game hosted by Blooket. Review the video assignment and break into small groups.	Teams
10–12	Conceptualizing by naming/theorizing Applying appropriately/ creatively	Review what you learned about SDGs and create a five-minute video for your peers (Remmerswaal, 2023a). Create a poster that represents this video.	Internet, any media platform (PowerPoint demonstrated)

*Note.* In all three weeks, the teachers gave class time to work on the project and met with each group to assist as needed.

### **Student Surveys and Reflections**

In Week 1, students took a survey with several Likert statements on their ability to complete the project (see Figure 1) and a similar survey after it (see Figure 2). The second survey included Likert statements on enjoyment (see Figure 4) and the following open-ended questions:

1. Provide some reasons and examples, when possible, for your rankings (of success).
2. What was the most enjoyable aspect of this project? Why? Alternatively, give some detail as to what made it unenjoyable.

### **Teacher Reflections**

Two teachers in Japan took field notes and reflected on each class during class time and immediately after its conclusion. The author is the teacher who planned the course, and the second teacher mirrored the activities in her class, as the students were similar, but she was not involved with the design process. The author summarized, reviewed, and summarized the reflections again to ensure data reliability. Teachers used an observation sheet that included a list of the class objectives, a place to write any changes made to those objectives, observations (with prompts of what may be interesting), and a place to reflect under the heading Notes for Improvement.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The data collected represents students who provided informed consent and completed both surveys. The second teacher opted into the COIL project and provided written consent to use her observations and reflections. The author's university provided ethical approval before the project began. All student information was anonymized for this study, and data were stored and accessible solely by the author and the two instructors from Spain and Türkiye who were using the data in another study.

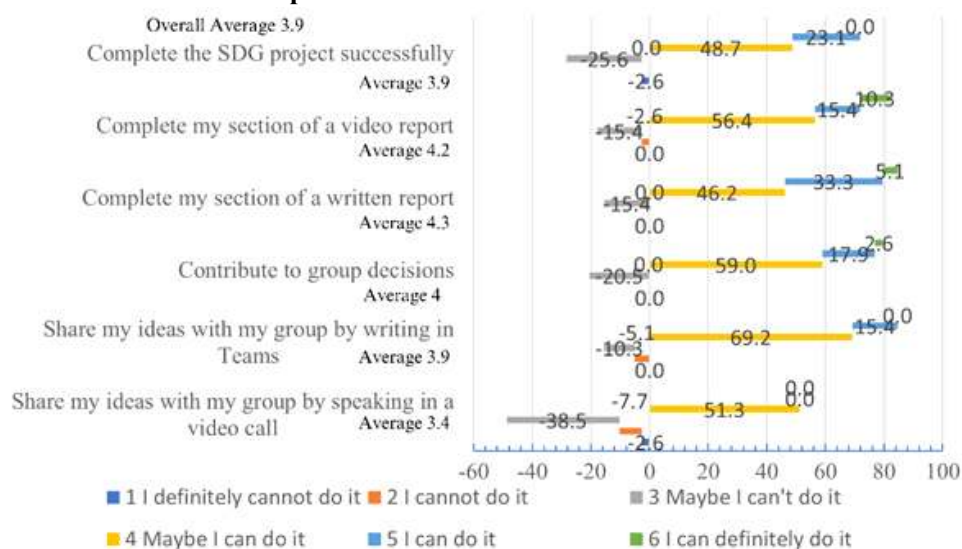


## RESULTS

### Student Surveys

A total of 39 students participated in both surveys. Before the COIL project, the majority of students felt that they might be able to complete all the tasks necessary (see Figure 1). Only a few students thought they could not do it, whereas speaking in a group call received the most responses of *I cannot do it*, *Maybe I can't do it*, and the only *I definitely cannot do it*. In Figures 1–4, *average (ave)* is the average of the Likert scale responses represented as numbers. In the three 6-point Likert scales, *I definitely cannot do it*, *very unsuccessful*, and *very unenjoyable* represent a score of 1 with response numbers increasing in increments of one for the final items; *I can definitely do it*, *very successful*, and *very enjoyable* were equal to 6. Looking at the averages, speaking in a video call was the only average score connected to a negative statement (anything below 3.5 being negative). The overall average of 3.9 is nearest the statement *Maybe I can do it*.

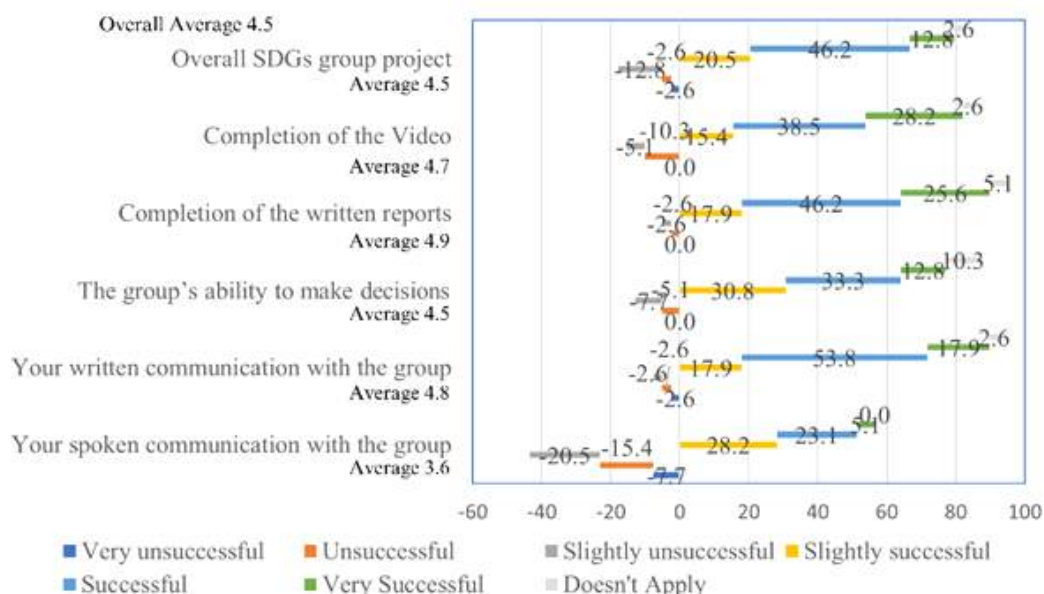
FIGURE 1. Student Perceptions: Pre-Intervention



Note. Negative numbers represent responses that include the word *cannot* or *can't*. The numbers representing *I cannot do it* were all raised on the graph for reading clarity.

The pre-intervention survey provided some insight into the perceived difficulty of the tasks, and the post-intervention survey gave insight into student views of success. Figure 2 shows how most students saw themselves as successful in the COIL project. A significant shift from the pre-intervention survey was from *Maybe I can do it* to *successful* and *very successful*, with the average in the pre-survey being 3.9 and the average in the post-COIL survey being 4.5. In this survey, *doesn't apply* was offered as groups were free to choose between spoken and written communication and did not necessarily use both. Students used *doesn't apply* in all categories (though no single student used it for all responses), despite all groups successfully completing the COIL project.

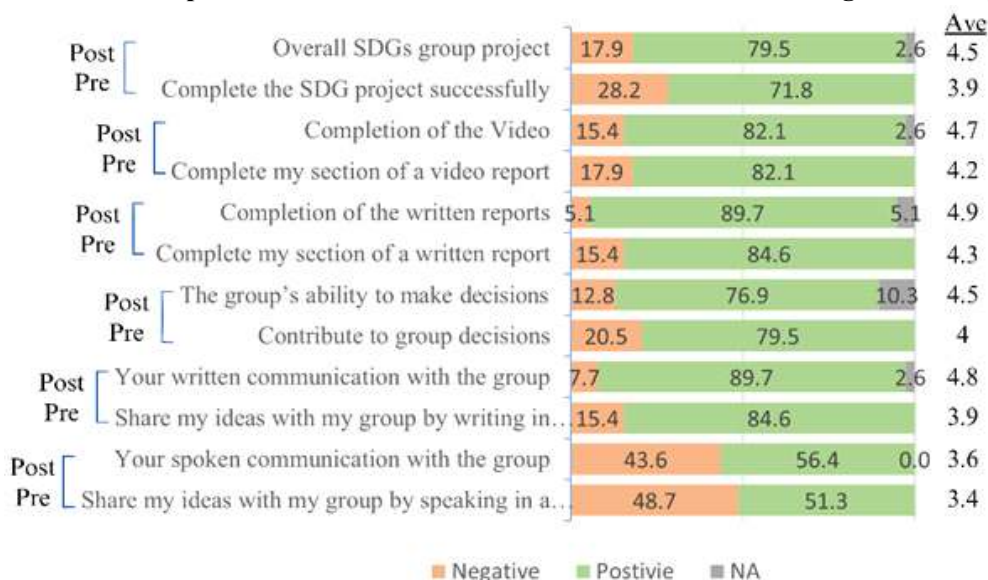
FIGURE 2. Student Perceptions: Post-Intervention



Note. Negative numbers were used to represent responses that included the word *unsuccessful*. The numbers representing *unsuccessful* were all raised on the graph for reading clarity. *Doesn't apply* was not given a numerical value and was therefore not included in the average scores.

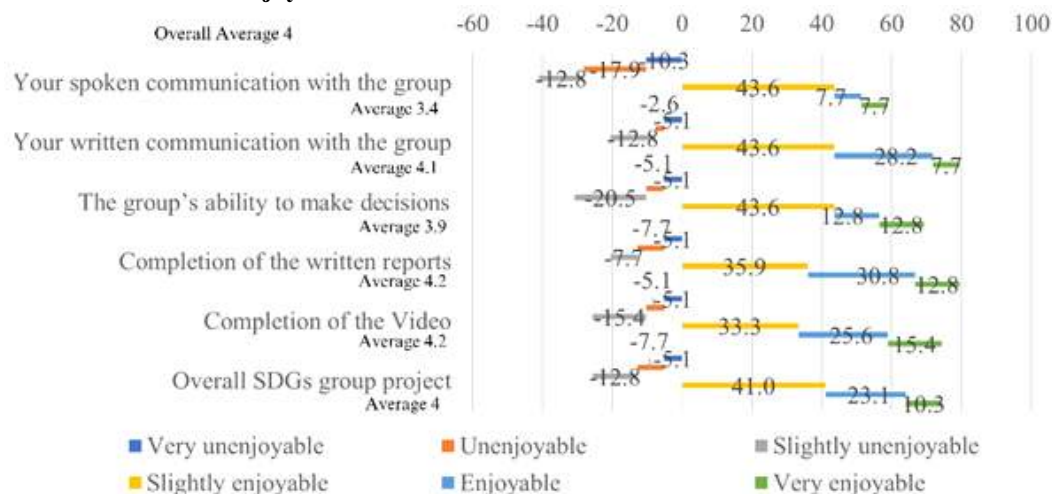
Figure 3 compares the pre- and post-intervention surveys as purely positive (*can* and *successful* statements) and negative (*cannot* and *unsuccessful* statements). For all statements, negative perceptions of students' ability to complete the project decreased after the COIL project. Spoken communication saw the least amount of change between the two surveys. Of course, there were still students who still did not believe they were successful in all aspects of the project.

FIGURE 3. Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Positive and Negative Perceptions



In all categories, the majority of students enjoyed the project (see Figure 4). Verbal communication was the least enjoyed, while written communication and written reports were the most enjoyed. The overall average of 4 equates to *slightly enjoyable*.

**FIGURE 4. Student Enjoyment: Post-Intervention**



Note. Negative numbers were used to represent responses that included the word *unenjoyable*. Some numbers representing *unenjoyable* were raised on the graph for reading clarity.

The author summarized the 39 open-ended responses in Tables 6 and 7. Due to their scope, the author divided some answers into two categories, so the negative and positive comments total more than the 39 responses received. Some students wrote in English, but most wrote in Japanese. The author used Deepl.com to translate Japanese answers, and two Japanese speakers confirmed the validity of the translation.

**TABLE 6. Why Students Believed They Were Successful/Unsuccessful**

Reasons for Being Successful	N	Reasons for Being Unsuccessful	N
The work was divided well	16	Group communication was difficult	9
The work was completed	11	Scheduling meetings times was difficult	3
Great communication	1	Collaboration was difficult	1
		Internal conflicts	1
<b>Total Positive Comments</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Total Negative Comments</b>	<b>14</b>

Many students commented on the division of labor as a reason for success. Student comments were generally short, but one student wrote in English, “I think that our group did well. Because our group members performed each part nicely.” Some students appeared to contribute success to the fact they had completed all the assignments. It is unclear from the comments if their grades shaped this view of success. One student wrote in Japanese, “I think we were successful because we could submit all the assignments.” Another student wrote,

“I think it was moderately successful because I was able to submit a reasonable amount of work by the deadline.”

Students did not specify to which item their comments referred. As such, students feeling their group communication was difficult does not necessarily mean they felt unsuccessful overall. One response provided more detail: “It did not go somewhat well. I was able to communicate well with my [Japanese] pair, but not well with others from other countries.”

**TABLE 7. Why Students Found the Project Enjoyable/Unenjoyable**

<b>Reasons COIL Was Enjoyable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Reasons COIL Was Unenjoyable</b>	<b>N</b>
Opportunity to interact with foreigners	27	The gap in English proficiency among group members was too large	2
The written chats with group members	3	Communication	2
Learning new ways of thinking	3	Spoken communication (written was fine)	1
The video creation and output	3	Too few calls with group members	1
		Too many assignments	1
		The time difference was too large	1
<b>Total Enjoyable</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Total Unenjoyable</b>	<b>8</b>

As Table 7 shows, interacting with foreigners was the most enjoyable aspect of the project. One student expressed in English, “I think that most interesting was to interact with foreigners. Because it is rare chance. It was so good.” Another student wrote, “It was fun to learn about each country’s culture and to get to know them.” For two students, communication was unenjoyable: “It was difficult to communicate in English, and I was not very good at it, so I did not enjoy it very much.”

### Teacher Reflections

Both Japan teachers had to change a few class objectives during the project. In Week 1, instructors moved some of the instructions for the project to email because of a lack of time in class. One instructor suggested that the instruction video have Japanese subtitles to improve student understanding of the project. From there, very little changed until the international team of instructors gave a three-day extension to Assignment 1. The instructors gave all three assignments a three-day extension for various reasons.

Due to time conflicts, none of the instructors could use the class activities in Weeks 7 and 8. Instead, groups completed Assignment 2 without exploring the concepts involved with buying power with a teacher. Time conflicts were also an issue for the large group calls in Weeks 7 and 10. In the first call, all three classes met during class time, but after daylight savings time in Spain, Japanese students had to meet outside of class for these large calls. Few Japanese students were able to participate in these two calls. When scheduling calls with their groups, many students informally reported difficulty finding a time to meet due to jobs and time differences.

Instructors encouraged spoken communication between groups, but many moved to written communication from Assignment 2. For some students, it was

easier to understand written communication; for others, the asynchronous nature of written messages was more convenient. Instructors did not discourage this behavior, as it is authentic to the workplace. However, students learned how to divide the work among countries and limit the interactions necessary to complete an assignment. The instructors found that all tasks and assignments were completed successfully, with groups and individuals scoring well on the given criteria.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this case study cannot be reliably generalized to broader populations. Describing the setting, participants, and phenomena may allow for transferability. This information will enable readers to determine how this case may apply to their context (Brown, 2014; Duff, 2008). The pre- and post-intervention survey items used different phrasing, which limits their comparability. Both surveys should have used the same responses and items for the best results.

In answering the first research question, students' self-efficacy increased in all the survey items, though spoken communication only slightly changed. The most significant change was with written communication and written reports. The shift in writing and lack of change in spoken self-efficacy may be due to the teacher-observed move from video calls to asynchronous, written communication. As emails and messaging apps are standard in the workplace, this improvement in written self-efficacy is a positive development for students.

Teachers did not monitor group interactions, spoken or written, so it is unknown if these interactions increased in accuracy or complexity over time. Teachers did assess the written and video reports, which were all well done (no score was below 75%). Student responses of success matched teacher observations. Responses indicating being unsuccessful in those areas may have been students who relied heavily on their local partner and felt they did not contribute significantly. Teachers observed a few groups where this dynamic occurred but can only speculate whether this led to feelings of being unsuccessful.

To answer the second research question, successfully completing these assessments indicates that the project was not too challenging. Compared to students' initial perceptions of possibly being able to complete the tasks, the project was likely appropriately demanding. The project was probably beyond the students' comfort level but not beyond their ability. However, the two written assignments may not have been suitably challenging due to their similarity. Long and Porter (1985) noted that two-way communication tasks could increase the amount of talk and negotiation work, while familiarity with a task decreases the amount of negotiation work it produces. Since the communication between groups decreased in the Assignment 2, familiarity may be to blame.

In the Assignment 1, the teachers observed many negotiations for meaning and negotiations in assigning tasks. In Assignment 2, students indicated to their group what they would complete and proceeded to complete it, which was efficient but did not promote communication. Different questions and activities may be necessary to avoid decreased communication in future iterations of the project. Instructors could remove the SDGs buying power section and make time

for new activities that promote cross-cultural exchange. One example is a semi-structured interview task where students prepare questions to learn about SDGs on each other's campus. All tasks should encourage communication and collaboration.

It was not surprising that students found international communication to be the most enjoyable aspect of the exchange. The author found similar findings (2023b) with his students who wrote to students worldwide. Students at the author's university appeared to like VE and viewed it as a unique opportunity. While the COIL project appeared challenging and enjoyable for students, more research is necessary to determine if it offers a more significant benefit than a traditional classroom.

## CONCLUSIONS

On average, the Japanese students felt that they successfully completed an SDGs COIL project with the students from Spain and Türkiye. The students were especially confident in completing the reports and video assignment. They felt less successful in their spoken communication with group members. When designing a COIL program with students of similar English proficiency, instructors should offer a few structured spoken interactions, such as interviews, to provide authentic interactions that better fit the students' skill sets. On the other hand, writing a report with foreigners and interacting with those students via chat was seen as successful and slightly enjoyable in the student surveys. The students likely viewed themselves as more competent in these areas than before the COIL project. The students' overall perceived success and enjoyment, and the teacher observations indicate that this COIL project was worthwhile and, with a few modifications, is appropriately challenging for university students.

## THE AUTHOR

**Robert Remmerswaal** has been teaching English in Japan since 2015. His research interests include self-efficacy, gaming, and virtual exchange. His most recent projects include collaboration with teachers worldwide. He constantly seeks ways to introduce authentic communication into the classroom. Email: [robertr@m.sjoo-u.ac.jp](mailto:robertr@m.sjoo-u.ac.jp)

## REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (1995). Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. In A. Bandura (Ed.), *Self-efficacy in changing societies* (pp. 1–45). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527692.003>
- Brown, J. D. (2014). *Mixed methods research for TESOL*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., Kress, G., Luke, A., Luke, C., Michaels, S., & Nakata, M. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92.
- Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ellis, R. (2017). Position paper: Moving task-based language teaching forward. *Language Teaching*, 50(4), 507–526. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000179>

- Evidence-Validated Online Learning Through Virtual Exchange. (n.d.). *What is virtual exchange?* <https://evolve-erasmus.eu/about-evolve/what-is-virtual-exchange/>
- Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2016). *Learning by design*. Common Ground.
- Kiczkowiak, M., & Lowe, R. J. (2019). *Teaching English as a lingua franca: The journey from EFL to ELF*. Delta Publishing by Klett.
- Lim, F., Cope, W., & Kalantzis, M. (2022). A metalanguage for learning: Rebalancing the cognitive with the socio-material. *Frontiers in Communication*, 7, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2022.830613>
- Lombardi, M. M. (2007). Authentic learning for the 21st century: An overview. *Educause Learning Initiative*, 23(1), 240–241.
- Long, M. H., & Porter, P. A. (1985). Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(2), 207–228. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586827>
- Remmerswaal R. (2023a). *COIL 2022*. <https://sites.google.com/view/rremmerswaal/coil-2022>
- Remmerswaal R. (2023b). First-year student perceptions of the international virtual exchange. *SILC Journal, Sojo University*, 2, 37–45.
- Rubin, J. (2022). Preface to an evolving international educational landscape. In J. Rubin & S. Guth (Eds.), *The guide to COIL virtual exchange: Implementing, growing, and sustaining collaborative online international learning* (pp. 28–45). Stylus.
- Scott, C. P. R., & Wildman, J. L. (2015). Culture, communication, and conflict: A review of the global virtual team literature. In J. Wildman & R. Griffith (Eds.), *Leading global teams* (pp. 13–32). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-2050-1\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-2050-1_2)
- Varonis, E. M., & Gass, S. (1985). Non-native/non-native conversations: A model for negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), 71–90. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/6.1.71>
- Virtual Exchange Coalition. (2015). *Virtual Exchange Coalition*. [http://www.virtualexchangecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/VirtualExchange\\_MediaKit-1.pdf](http://www.virtualexchangecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/VirtualExchange_MediaKit-1.pdf)
- Wicking, P. (2022). Learning-oriented assessment in an international virtual exchange. In S. M. Hilliker (Ed.), *Second language teaching and learning through virtual exchange* (pp. 9–33). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110727364-002>





# Exploring Foreign Teacher Behaviors That Affect Korean Adult Students' Motivation

---

Curtis Life

*Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea*

The focus of this proposed research design is exploring the Korean adult learner context within the classroom environment. Current qualitative research (Csizér, 2021; Waddington, 2021; Henry, 2021) illustrates the need for further research in specific language learner motivation contexts. This research aims to find emerging characteristics of motivation and motivational strategies to compare with previous research. The phenomenological qualitative research approach will be used, utilizing two groups of participants: Korean adult English learners and foreign adult English language teachers. Two different methods of data collection will be implemented: open-ended surveys and one-on-one interviews. The interviews will be transcribed, and data will be formulated using Otter.ai and NVIVO software programs. The in vivo coding method will be used to code the words into groups and themes to interpret results and derive conclusions. Results will be analyzed and used as a base for recommendations to apply within the Korean context.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Al-Hoorie (2017) covers the extensive 60-year history of language motivation research. Language learner motivation started in 1956 at McGill University in Canada with Robert Gardner and his supervisor Wallace Lambert (Al-Hoorie, 2017). Al-Hoorie notes that language learner motivation research has gone through three phases: the social-psychological period, the microcontext of the classroom/cognitive processes of language learning period, and the yet-to-be-named third phase that includes various themes such as the unconscious, dynamic, long-term, and affective aspects of motivation to learn English or other languages. Although modern-day research is more focused on the third (current) period, this current research paper will investigate the second period within the Korean context. Dynamic and long-term themes will also be lightly integrated into the research, as the adult perspective of language learning will include long-term goals and adults will have an opportunity to reflect and compare their language learning journey as it is now to when they were younger.

Al-Hoorie (2017) also mentioned that factors or reasons for language learning motivation are sensitive to contextual and temporal variation. This further validates the need to research the Korean context to add to the existing data of language learner motivation characteristics. Most of the theory and design of this

research uses the perspective, framework, and definitions provided by Zoltán Dörnyei. Al-Hoorie and Hiver (2022) wrote about Zoltán Dörnyei's life and work, including that Dörnyei made a significant contribution to understanding second language acquisition, including individual differences and motivations.

In Dörnyei and Csizer's (1998) study, it is stated that neither appropriate curricula nor good teaching can guarantee students' success without sufficient motivation. Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) were concerned about the lack of attention in the academic field towards how to motivate language learners. Learners will not learn the language if they lack the desire to learn. Dörnyei formed a three-part model to capture the three main dimensions of language learning motivation: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998). The learning situation level is related to situation-specific motives among different aspects of language learning in a classroom setting.

Dörnyei's research on the characteristic categories of language learning motivation include teacher, climate, task, rapport, self-confidence, interest, autonomy, personal, goal, culture, group, effort, usefulness, reward, rule, finished, decoration, and comparison (Dörnyei, 1994, cited in Dörnyei & Csizer (1998). These will be used as a reference when coding for themes in this current research.

Dörnyei's final "ten commandments for motivating language learners" consisted of ten of the most useful strategies that a teacher can use to help motivate students: (a) Set a personal example with your own behavior, (b) create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, (c) present the tasks properly, (d) develop a good relationship with the learners, (e) increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence, (f) make the language classes interesting, (g) promote learner autonomy, (h) personalize the learning process, (i) increase the learners' goal-orientedness, and (j) familiarize learners with the target language culture (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p. 215). These ten strategies will be used to compare the strategies that this current research's participants will provide.

Dörnyei's work was not only theoretical and concerned with methods. He also investigated the practical approaches and strategies that can be used in actual classrooms. Dörnyei's research and methods will be used as the largest source of reference for this research design. The characteristics found in Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) will be used to predict what to expect from this current research and to compare if these results match existing data. If characteristics are found that are not on Dörnyei's list, then there are many ways to interpret this data such as finding more modern needs of the learner or finding motivational characteristics specific to Korea.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The Korea TESOL International Conference 2023 theme was "Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students." In line with this goal, the aim of this research design is to bring researchers, teachers, and students into one research paper and work together towards a shared goal of improving the quality of education.

Current research questions about language learner motivation ask about

specific characteristics and contexts that can affect learner motivation (Csizér, 2021; Henry, 2021; Waddington, 2021). Applying the Korean context and investigating which motivations and motivational strategies are unique to the Korean context will add to existing research in the field of language learning motivation and provide a Korea-specific context.

## **Research Questions**

The research questions posed in this thesis are based on questions posed by modern literature in the field of language education and applied linguistics. The questions posed in this research design will be backed by the gaps in current research in the field.

Csizer (2021) posed research questions related to the main characteristics of students' L2 motivation in various contexts and the changes of student L2 motivation characteristics in different contexts. L2 motivation in various contexts is an area that needs further investigation.

Waddington (2021) posed research questions related to how language teachers understand motivation, how language learners understand motivation, and which approaches to motivation are more present or more neglected in the classroom than others.

Henry (2021) posed research questions related to the relationships that exist between types of teacher relational practice and students' motivation.

Souri and Merc (2021) also conducted a similar study to the current research design and posed a research question related to what motivates a learner to continue to learn English after work or studying other subjects.

With these modern research questions posed by Csizér (2021), Waddington (2021), Henry (2021), and Souri and Merc (2021) in mind, three research questions have been developed for this research design.

- RQ1: What kind of factors impact Korean adult English language learners' learning motivation?
- RQ2: What kind of characteristics and behaviors of a language teacher (in the classroom environment) affect Korean adult students' motivation to learn English?
- RQ3: In what ways do adult Korean students and English teachers differ or relate in terms of their perceptions and strategies of language learning motivation?

## **Significance of the Study**

The data that emerges from this current research can aid foreign English language teachers in Korea who are either teaching in Korea for the first time or who are looking to better understand the students that they may be teaching. It will also provide modern, up-to-date descriptions of motivation and motivational strategies in Korea.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Language Learner Motivation**

Henry and Thorsen (2018) conducted research that is specific to the involvement of teacher–student interaction to influence learner motivation. They provide more data specific to the teacher’s involvement and how teachers can influence the learner’s motivation.

Souri and Merc (2021) conducted very recent research specifically regarding adult learner motivation. This research can provide more data specific to adult learners, which is relevant to this research design topic.

Makarchuk (2005) conducted research on a very similar subject (motivation) with very similar participants (Korean EFL university students). Results from the research indicated that most Korean university students wanted to learn English to have conversations with native English speakers and to help them get a job after graduating. These results can provide predictions as to what surface-level responses may be provided in the interviews of the current research. Additional responses that came out of Makarchuk’s study included reasons to talk in formal situations and having a passion to learn a new language.

Song and Kim (2017) conducted a similar study examining motivational and demotivational factors in a similar age group (high school students). Many students who had participated in the study listed teaching methods and aspects of teachers’ personalities as being both motivating and de-motivational factors (depending on the context).

### **Research Gap / Need for the Study**

Three articles found in Mohebbi and Coombe (2021) provide insight into the possible gaps in research on language learning motivation. These articles include Waddington (2021), Csizér (2021), and Henry (2021). Waddington (2021) stated that more attention is needed to be put into the practical aspects of studying motivational strategies in the classroom setting. Henry (2021) emphasized that it is important to investigate how connections are made in interpersonal interactions and in activity designs as well as how teachers’ perspective-taking practices affect students’ engagement. Indeed, the relationship and role of a teacher is an area that needs to be investigated further to reveal more findings about the influence on learner motivation.

Csizér (2021) noted that L2 motivation research involves exploring different contexts due to the nature of English being the lingua franca. They also note that a social perspective should be used to explore L2 motivation in a globalized world. This further shows that contexts such as the adult learner context in Korea need to be studied further.

## **METHOD**

### **Context of the Study**

Phenomenological qualitative research has been chosen as the research method for this thesis. This method is the most suitable method for what is planned to be researched, how the research will be approached, and how the perspectives will be framed. The academic background for this choice of the phenomenological research method comes from Strauss et al. (1998) and Finlay (2009).

Qualitative research refers to research about behaviors, lived experiences, emotions, and feelings. It attempts to understand the meaning or nature of participants' experiences and discover what people are doing and thinking (Strauss et al., 1998). The aim of the research is to find unknown answers to questions asking what something is or should be. These types of research questions are more aimed towards a qualitative approach. Specifically, a phenomenological qualitative research method has been chosen for the current research design proposal.

Finlay (2009) described phenomenological research as such: "Phenomenological researchers generally agree that our central concern is to return to embodied, experiential meanings. We aim for fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived" (p. 17).

Research will be conducted in Seoul, South Korea. While the purposive convenience sample groups for the initial pilot interviews will represent a wide variety of age ranges and proficiency levels, the second stage of surveys and interviews will follow a stricter criterion to be specifically from universities in South Korea. This context was chosen because adult students have a unique amount of freedom when it comes to learning English. Aside from mandatory courses, Korean university students have more freedom as to whether they want to continue to study English or not, and how often or how much they want to study English.

### **Participants**

As the topic of the research design is about the motivation of Korean adult English language learners in the classroom environment and the characteristics and behaviors of the teachers teaching them, the data collection method has been approached in a way that provides data from both the teacher and student perspective.

Two groups of participants have been chosen to be included in the thesis research. The first group consists of Korean adult English learners, and the second group consists of adult foreign English language teachers.

Fourteen participants (seven professors and seven students) were selected using purposive convenience sampling to survey and interview. This group will be considered non-participants and will be used to pilot the interview and survey questions. This number has been chosen because phenomenological research is best done with at least three participants. Giorgi (2008) states that "at least three participants are included because a sufficient number of variations are needed in

order to come up with a typical essence” (p. 37). Having more than three participants will help to understand individual differences from more generalized responses or generalized data. After surveys and interviews have been conducted, snowball sampling will be used to add to the initial pool of data.

To specify the first group further, the Korean adult English language learners must meet three qualifications. These qualifications include age (must be older than 18), “native English teacher-taught” university English language class learning experience (must have taken or are currently taking a native speaker-taught university English class after high school/during adulthood), and nationality (must have been born in Korea, must have lived in Korea for more than half of their life, and must identify as being Korean in ethnicity/nationality). The reason why these qualifications have been chosen for the learners is because they would be expected to provide data that is in line with the goals of this research plan. The context is specific to Korean adult learners in Korea who are learning English. This will hopefully provide data to gain more insight into this group to see if any of these factors can reveal new data.

To specify the second group further, the adult native-speaker English language teachers must meet three criteria as well. These qualifications include experience in Korean adult education (must have taught or currently teach Korean-identifying adult students within the last three years), experience in Korea (must have taught or are teaching students in Korea within the last three years), and experience in language education (must have taught within the last three years or is currently teaching language-learning-focused classes). The reason these qualifications have been chosen is also due to the data that will be collected. The teachers chosen must meet these criteria to provide responses that relate to their experiences of teaching English language to Korean adult students in Korea.

Observing university freshmen Korean students and foreign teachers will both add deeper descriptions to the current literature and will check if what students are feeling is in line with how well the teachers understand them.

Participants will be asked to voluntarily participate. They will be contacted via email. Participants will be briefed on the purpose of the study and will be asked to choose to sign a consent form before participating.

## **Materials**

Two different methods of data collection will be conducted: open-ended surveys and one-on-one interviews. The interviews will be piloted with non-participants first, then the data collection tools will be refined. After the surveys and interviews have been conducted, interviews will be transcribed and data from the surveys and the interview transcriptions will be coded into groups and themes.

Strauss et al. (1998) help to validate data collection decisions by noting that methods normally associated with qualitative research, such as interviews and observations, are sometimes used by researchers to gather data. This indicates that the chosen data collection methods are in line with the standards of qualitative research.

Finlay (2009) described a typical approach to phenomenological research as involving concrete descriptions of lived experiences in everyday language, away

from abstract intellectual generalizations. In this manner, the interviews will be conducted in a way that will intentionally re-word questions to help participants understand and provide an easier way to express themselves. “Motivation” will often be switched to “goals” to help participants understand what kind of information should be provided.

To further validate the chosen data collection methods, Souri and Merc (2021) conducted research on a very similar topic (adult English learner motivation) and used two data collection instruments: questionnaires and interviews. In their research, Souri and Merc used a quantitative questionnaire, as opposed to the chosen qualitative method of open-ended survey for this thesis. What can be viewed as a possible limitation of Souri and Merc’s article is the lack of additional data provided by the questionnaire. In the questionnaire by Souri and Merc, it was noted that participants did not provide additional reasons for language learning motivation. By providing open-ended questions that require survey participants to express themselves in writing, the expectation is to maximize the amount of new data revealed in the results.

Questions in Souri and Merc’s (2021) interviews are worth noting as reference for this research design, considering that the topic is very similar in nature. Questions that they chose to use in interviews included why the learners were learning English, the important parts of English for learners to learn, the problems areas of learning English, and how much time learners spent learning English.

A full list of questions that will be used in the current research design is included in the appendix. Appendix A contains questions that will be asked in the interviews with the language learner participants. Appendix B contains questions that will be asked in the interviews with the language teacher participants.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection has been approached in a way that provides data from both the teacher and the student perspective. Data will be collected through interviews and open-ended questions. A qualitative approach is preferred over a quantitative approach due to the nature of the data collection methods used.

Once participants have been contacted and have given consent to participate, the initial interview phase will begin. Participants will be interviewed in a one-on-one format for a period of 40–60 minutes. Learner participants will be asked the questions in Appendix A, and teacher participants will be asked the questions in Appendix B.

After the first 14 participants have been interviewed, pilot data will be analyzed to determine which questions provided sufficient responses and which questions may not have provided optimal responses. The questions will then be refined and formatted into open-ended survey questions. Additional participants will then be recruited and asked to complete the survey.

After additional participants have been surveyed, additional interview participants will be selected based on survey responses.

## **Data Analysis**

After the surveys and interviews have been conducted, interviews will be transcribed and data from the surveys and the interview transcriptions will be coded. Transcription will be done using a software program called Otter.ai. Interview audio recordings will be uploaded to Otter.ai, and Otter.ai will then transcribe the audio files into text. Once any potential errors in AI transcription have been checked, the data coding process will begin. Data analysis and coding will be done through a software program called NVIVO. The in vivo coding method will be used to code words that the interviewees have said into groups and themes.

Adding further validity to the choice of coding method, Strauss et al. (1998) stated that, regarding qualitative research techniques, they “usually consist of conceptualizing and reducing data, elaborating categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, and relating through a series of prepositional statements” (p. 12). Coding the data in this manner is a basic characteristic of qualitative research, which is the kind of research that has been chosen for this research design.

These themes, which will be the result of data coding, can be used to interpret results and derive conclusions from them. Coding the data into themes will assist in relating the interviewees’ responses to the initial research questions posed in the thesis.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This research is still a work in progress. Methodology, approach, and participants may be modified as research progresses.

Based on the proposed research design, limitations such as time and sample size can influence the research. As each interview is intended to be lengthy, there will be a limit to the number of interviews that can practically be conducted within a reasonable time frame. In the same regard, the scope of the research will be limited to one region of South Korea and a subgroup of the population. More extensive research in other parts of South Korea or at other universities or other age ranges may reveal more diverse responses. It is suggested to expand the range of these factors in future studies.

Further background research, specifically in research conducted in Korea and with Korean participants, will aid the proposed research.

## **FURTHER RESEARCH**

As the research design is still in the proposal stage, further research will be conducted in the future.

Deeper research covering the most prolific authors in the field of language learning motivation is recommended. The authors who have been found to be the most prolific and are most heavily cited include Gardner, Dornyei, Csizer, Al-Hoorie, Hiver, and Henry (to name a few authors).



Research on Korean language learner motivation specifically has been found to be less widely available in international journals. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand the scope of what has already been studied using Korean participants. Makarchuk (2005) and Kim and Margolis (2000) are a few articles of note that have been published in KOTESOL journals and can be directly related to the research topic of this paper. Another prolific researcher in the field of Korean language learner motivation is Kim Tae-Young, of whom further articles will be analyzed. Lyons (2014) will also be analyzed further.

## THE AUTHOR

**Curtis Life** is a Canadian graduate student who is currently studying in the GS TESOL program at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. After graduating in 2024, he plans to further develop his career as a language instructor in South Korea. His academic interests are language learning motivation and gamification in language learning. Email: curtislifemarch@gmail.com

## REFERENCES

- Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2017). Sixty years of language motivation research. *SAGE Open*, 7(1), Article 215824401770197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017701976>
- Al-Hoorie, A. H., & Hiver, P. (2022). Zoltán Dörnyei (1960–2022). *Language Learning*, 72(4), 896–898. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12519>
- Csizér, K. (2021). Second language learning motivation. In H. Mohebbi & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Research questions in language education and applied linguistics: A reference guide* (pp. 865–869). Springer.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research*, 2(3), 203–229. <https://doi.org/10.1191/136216898668159830>
- Finlay, L. (2009). Debating phenomenological methods. In N. Friesen, C. Henriksson, & T. Saevi (Eds.), *Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Education* (pp. 17–37). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-834-6\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-834-6_2)
- Giorgi, A. (2008). Concerning a serious misunderstanding of the essence of the phenomenological method in psychology. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 39(1), 33–58. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916208x311610>
- Henry, A. (2021). Teachers' relational practices and students' motivation. In H. Mohebbi & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Research questions in language education and applied linguistics: A reference guide* (pp. 143–149). Springer.
- Henry, A., & Thorsen, C. (2018). Teacher-student relationships and L2 motivation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 102(1), 218–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12446>
- Kim, D., & Margolis, D. (2000). Korean student exposure to English listening and speaking: Instruction, multimedia, travel experience, and motivation. *Korea TESOL Journal*, 3(1), 29–54.
- Lyons, D. (2014). The L2 self-concept in second language learning motivation: A longitudinal study of Korean university students. In K. Csizér & M. Magid (Eds.), *The impact of self-concept on language learning* (Vol. 79; pp. 108–130). Multilingual Matters.
- Makarchuk, D. (2005). Integrative motivation and EFL learning in South Korea. *Korea TESOL Journal*, 8(1), 1–25.

- Mohebbi, H., & Coombe, C. (Eds.). (2021). *Research questions in language education and applied linguistics: A reference guide*. Springer.
- Song, B., & Kim, T.-Y. (2017). The dynamics of demotivation and remotivation among Korean high school EFL students. *System*, 65, 90–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.12.010>
- Souri, D., & Merc, A. (2021). Adult EFL learners' drives to improve their English in private language schools. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 8(3), 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2021.8.3.322>
- Strauss, A., Anselm, L., Corbin, J., & Juliet, M. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. SAGE.
- Waddington, J. (2021) Motivation in practice. In H. Mohebbi & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Research questions in language education and applied linguistics: A reference guide* (pp. 123–127). Springer.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Learner Interview Questions**

- 1a) Tell me about your journey as an English language learner. What kind of classes have you taken, and when did you take them?
- 1b) Why did you take these classes? What was your goal for learning English?
- 2a) What do you think about these classes in terms of your language learning goals? How would you evaluate them?
- 2b) If the class was good, what did you like about it?
- 2c) If it was not good, what did you dislike about it?
- 2d) Tell me more about the ways that the teacher was effective at helping you meet your goal.
- 3a) Can you think of an English teacher that was good at teaching the class?
- 3b) What about them made them a good teacher?
- 4a) Is there an approach that adult English teachers should have when teaching English?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Teacher Interview Questions**

- 1a) Please describe your experience as a teacher. What kind of classes have you taught, and how long have you taught for?
- 1b) Please give me an example of an adult student or a class that you've taught.
- 1c) What do you think were the students' motivations to learn English? Did they have a particular goal in mind?
- 2a) Did you have an experience where a student was resistant to your attempts to motivate them, or did you have an experience where a student lost motivation in your class?
- 2b) What did you do to help motivate them?
- 2c) If you haven't experienced a student like this, what is one technique or approach that English teachers need to try to help motivate adult English learners in Korea?



# **Integrating Social-Emotional Learning and Collaborative Online International Learning**

---

Lynsey Mori

*Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Kyoto, Japan*

Panachanok Chanwaiwit

*Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Chiang Mai, Thailand*

This paper investigates the effectiveness of a combined intervention in promoting self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and motivation to study English among Japanese and Thai university students. The project incorporated principles of social-emotional learning (SEL) and collaborative online international learning (COIL) to create a conducive learning environment for students. The paper discusses the research design, methods employed, and data collection procedures, and presents the results obtained. The findings highlight the positive impact of combining SEL and COIL on language learning outcomes, social-emotional competencies development, intercultural understanding and communication, and motivation to study English. The paper concludes with implications for future research and the importance of integrating SEL and COIL into educational settings.

## **INTRODUCTION: A POWERFUL COMBINATION FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION**

In today's interconnected world, promoting self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and language proficiency is crucial for students' holistic development and their ability to navigate diverse global environments. This project focuses on raising awareness of sustainable businesses and consumer habits, while promoting self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and motivation to study English.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is an important aspect of education that has gained increasing attention in recent years (Arao, 2019; CASEL, 2022; Jagers et al., 2019; Rahimi & Liston, 2023). It is basically about learning to live our best lives possible. Research has consistently shown that cultivating strong relationships and having supportive social networks is associated with improved mental health, increased levels of happiness, and reduced rates of depression and anxiety (Etherington & Costello, 2019). This recognition of the positive impact of social connections on well-being forms the foundation for the exploration of SEL in this paper. SEL will serve as a conceptual framework and lens through which various aspects of the research will be examined and analyzed. Various studies have highlighted the potential of SEL in promoting positive outcomes (Arao, 2019; CASEL, 2022; Fullerton, 2023; Jagers et al., 2019; Januszkiewicz et al., 2023; Lyn et al., 2023; Mori, 2023; Shively & Geesa, 2023).

However, to meet the equity-responsive demands imposed by the current

socio-political landscape of global education, it is crucial to continuously gather and assess data (Conley, 2017; Conn, 2017; Jagers et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2023; Weare, 2017). This ongoing data collection and evaluation process is essential for ensuring that SEL initiatives align with the evolving needs and contexts of diverse student populations. By staying attuned to the ever-changing educational landscape, researchers and practitioners can uphold the principles of equity and inclusivity in the implementation and advancement of SEL practices.

Collaborative online international learning (COIL) is an emerging field of research and practice that facilitates collaboration and knowledge exchange among students and faculty across different geographical locations (Hackett et al., 2023). During the late 1990s, the concept of internationalization from home first began to emerge through university programs like Erasmus. The notion of acquiring global perspectives and training students with lifelong learning skills, characterized by the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge via international networks, was in its infancy stages (Aponte & Jordan, 2020; Beelen & Jones, 2018; Zapp & Lerch, 2020). The term COIL has been described by Rubin (2017) as collaborative learning for both educators and learners and is more specific to intercultural competence than simple virtual exchanges (Hackett et al., 2023).

This paper investigates the synergistic effects of combining the principles of SEL and COIL among Japanese and Thai university students. The paper shares the research design and methods employed, data collection procedures, and presents the results obtained from this six-session study. The following section describes the research design and method used, discussing the participants, materials, and procedures employed to collect data on students' experiences and perceptions. The subsequent section presents the results, highlighting the impact of combining language learning, SEL competency development, intercultural understanding, and communication, while increasing motivation to study English. The discussion section analyses the findings and discusses their implications. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research and the importance of integrating SEL and COIL in educational contexts to foster students' holistic development and prepare them for a globalized world.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD**

This section outlines the research design and method employed to investigate the effectiveness of combining SEL and COIL in promoting self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and motivation to study English among Japanese and Thai university students.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were Japanese and Thai sophomores enrolled in English study programs. The volunteer students were grouped and matched with partners in the other country. There were 16 Japanese students and 30 Thai students, so the group sizes were slightly different: groups of 3-4 in Japan and groups of 3-6 in Thailand. The participants in this study had varying levels of English proficiency, but they were generally at a low-intermediate level. They

came from diverse backgrounds and were attending universities located in popular contemporary tourist destinations.

## **Materials**

The materials used in this project included a syllabus in a plan of action format, course documentation including a rubric for assessment, template PowerPoint presentations, Google Slide and PowerPoint voice narration tutorials, example Google Slides final video, shared checklists, and weekly to-do lists. These materials were provided to the students at the start of the course to guide their learning and research activities throughout the course. Additionally, pre- and post-intervention surveys were administered to collect quantitative and qualitative data on students' experiences and perceptions.

## **Procedure**

The study was conducted over a period of three months, with six sessions spread across this time frame due to scheduling constraints. The students were given the main theme of discussing similarities and differences between businesses in Japan and Thailand, focusing on consumer habits and their influence on businesses' environmental sustainability. The students were encouraged to engage in collaborative research, negotiate new perspectives, and provide written and video evidence of their learning progression.

The students were provided with the necessary documentation and materials at the beginning of the course, including the complete six-session plan of action, learning objectives, assessment information, and a template PowerPoint presentation. They were given the flexibility to schedule their sessions and add their progression evidence data to a shared folder by the end of the final session.

## **Data Collection**

Data collection involved a mixed method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. Pre- and post-intervention surveys were administered to assess students' self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and motivation to study English. The surveys consisted of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions to gather both structured and unstructured data. The surveys were administered in the language of the students' choice, which could be English, Thai, or Japanese. The data collected from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis techniques.

Additionally, student reflections, collaborative writing and video tasks, and recorded presentations were collected as qualitative data to gain insights into the students' experiences and perceptions throughout the project. These qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns.

## **RESULTS**

This section presents the results obtained from the study, highlighting the impact on language learning outcomes, social-emotional competencies development, intercultural understanding and communication, and motivation to study English among Japanese and Thai students.

### **Language Learning Outcomes**

The findings indicated that combining SEL and COIL positively influenced language learning outcomes among the participants. Through engagement in virtual exchange activities, the students demonstrated improvements in their translingual communication skills. For instance, Thai students exhibited a more fluent use of English, including the use of discourse markers and engaging in extended conversations. On the other hand, Japanese students demonstrated a preference for thoughtful preparation, resulting in clearer and concise communication. Both groups of students developed strategies to negotiate accents and linguistic differences, such as asking for clarification and repetition. The participants reported an increased awareness of the importance of context and cultural knowledge in communication, which facilitated effective communication in diverse settings. However, the short duration of the project limited the establishment of long-term language outcomes, indicating the need for sustained exposure to linguistic diversity.

### **Social-Emotional Competencies Development**

The combined study successfully fostered the development of social-emotional competencies among the participants. The students demonstrated enhanced self-awareness by reflecting on their emotions and identifying patterns that influenced their emotional states. They also displayed greater empathy towards others by engaging in perspective-taking activities, such as writing letters from the perspective of a student from the other culture. The use of English as the lingua franca facilitated discussions on emotions and feelings, promoting a deeper understanding of one another in an additional language context.

### **Intercultural Understanding and Communication**

This project effectively promoted intercultural understanding and communication among the Japanese and Thai students. Collaborative activities, such as recorded presentations and discussion on cultural similarities and differences, provided opportunities for students to engage with peers from different backgrounds. Overcoming difficulties and managing emotions were essential skills in navigating the projects' requirements in the lingua franca. Empathy played a crucial role as students realized their shared challenges in understanding and completing the activities. The projects facilitated the development of intercultural competence, enabling students to bridge differing priorities and negotiate effectively.



## **Motivation to Study English**

This project significantly increased students' motivation to study English. Personalized learning plans and achievable targets, such as viewing English-language websites and information online, encouraged students to take ownership of their learning. Engaging with authentic materials, participating in language exchanges, and collaborating on meaningful projects enhanced students' intrinsic motivation to learn English. The projects provided opportunities for students to apply their language skills in relevant and enjoyable contexts, fostering confidence and interest in English learning.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate a positive outcome of increased self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and motivation to study English. The integration of SEL principles and COIL strategies created a conducive learning environment that facilitated learning. The combination of these approaches allowed students to engage in collaborative research, interact with peers from different cultures, and develop their language skills. The projects provided students with authentic learning experiences, enabling them to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts.

By themselves, these programs may be insufficient to fully prepare students for a global future. Teaching only SEL without incorporating real-world experience may lack the necessary interest and relevance to keep students engaged. Similarly, solely focusing on COIL while neglecting to include relationship-building and EQ skills can limit the effectiveness of the approach. However, when the principles of SEL and COIL are combined, a transformative learning environment emerges. This integration creates a space for nurturing growth where students can engage in collaborative research, interact with peers from diverse cultures, and sharpen their language proficiency. These projects provide authentic learning experiences, enabling students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. The implications of this study suggest that educators should consider integrating SEL and COIL in educational programs to foster students' holistic development and prepare them for a globalized world.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the inclusion of SEL principles in a COIL project proved effective in promoting self-awareness, intercultural understanding, and motivation to study English among Japanese and Thai university students. The research design and method employed in this study provided valuable insights into the impact of integrating SEL and COIL in educational contexts.

This study contributes to the existing and growing body of research on SEL and COIL by demonstrating the synergistic effects of combining these approaches. The results emphasize the need for educators to incorporate SEL principles and COIL strategies into their instructional practices to foster students' holistic

development and prepare them for the challenges of a globalized world.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of integrating SEL and COIL in different cultural educational contexts. Additionally, studies could investigate the impact projects like this on other aspects of students' development, such as critical thinking skills and cultural competence. By continuing to explore the potential of SEL and COIL integration, educators can create inclusive and engaging learning environments that empower students to thrive in an interconnected world.

## THE AUTHORS

**Lynsey Mori**, assistant professor at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, has over 20 years of experience living and working in Japan. Her research centers on intercultural communication and social-emotional learning in higher education, with a focus on language, culture, and identity in global contexts. Email: l\_mori@kufs.ac.jp

**Panachanok Chanwaiwit**, PhD, is an assistant professor at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand, with 20 years of teaching experience spanning primary, secondary, and higher education. Her research focuses on English language teaching, teacher education, and technology-enhanced learning. Email: panachanok\_cha@cmru.ac.th

## REFERENCES

- Aponte, C., & Jordan, R. (2020). Internationalization of the curriculum with a connectivism approach. *Procedia Computer Science*, 172, 412–420. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.092>
- Arao, A. F. (2019). Implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) in the Japanese classroom. *Learning Learning* (JALT Learner Development SIG Newsletter), 25(2), 45–49. <https://ld-sig.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Arao.pdf>
- Beelen, J., & Jones, E. (2018). Internationalization at home. In *Encyclopedia of international higher education systems and institutions* (pp. 1–4). Springer Netherlands. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9553-1\\_245-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9553-1_245-1)
- CASEL. (2022). *Collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning (CASEL)*. Allstate Foundation. <https://casel.org/>
- Conley, C. S., & Durlak, J. A. (2017). Universal mental health promotion and prevention programs for students. In S. Bährer-Kohler & F. J. Carod-Artal (Eds.), *Global mental health* (pp. 127–140). Springer International.
- Conn, D. K. (2017). Mental health promotion: How does education contribute? In S. Bährer-Kohler & F. J. Carod-Artal (Eds.), *Global mental health* (pp. 173–182). Springer International.
- Etherington, V., & Costello, S. (2019). Comparing universal and targeted delivery of a mindfulness-based program for anxiety in children. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 29(1), 22–38. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jgc.2018.22>
- Fullerton, K. (2023). Integrating SEL into online learning for lower elementary learners in an international school context: Stories from the online classroom. In R. Rahimi & D. D. Liston (Eds.), *Exploring social emotional learning in diverse academic settings* (pp. 1–22). Information Science Reference.
- Hackett, S., Janssen, J., Beach, P., Perreault, M., Beelen, J., & van Tartwijk, J. (2023). The effectiveness of collaborative online international learning (COIL) on

- intercultural competence development in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 20(1), Article 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-022-00373-3>
- Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032>
- Januszkiewicz, E., Martin, L. A., McNichol, J. M., Sainvilus, P., & Mulvaney, T. (2023). Social emotional learning spanning P-12 through higher education: SEL instruction from primary through post-secondary. In R. Rahimi & D. D. Liston (Eds.), *Exploring social emotional learning in diverse academic settings* (pp. 23–41). Information Science Reference.
- Kushner Benson, S. N. (2023). Beyond content and pedagogy: The importance of social-emotional learning in higher education. In R. Rahimi & D. D. Liston (Eds.), *Exploring social emotional learning in diverse academic settings* (pp. 127–151). Information Science Reference.
- Lin, M., Olsen, S., Simmons, D. N., Miller, M., & Tominey, S. L. (2023). “Not try to save them or ask them to breathe through their oppression”: Educator perceptions and the need for a human-centered, liberatory approach to social and emotional learning. *Frontiers in Education*, 7, Article 1044730. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.1044730>
- Lyn, A. E., Broderick, M., & Spranger, E. (2023). Student well-being and empowerment: SEL in online graduate education. In R. Rahimi & D. D. Liston (Eds.), *Exploring social emotional learning in diverse academic settings* (pp. 312–336). Information Science Reference.
- Mori, L. H. (2023). Having a zest for life: SEL in Japan. In R. Rahimi & D. D. Liston (Eds.), *Exploring social emotional learning in diverse academic settings* (pp. 102–125). Information Science Reference. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7227-9.ch006>
- Rubin, J. (2017). Embedding collaborative online international learning (COIL) at higher education institutions. *Internationalisation of Higher Education*, 2(2). <https://studyabroad.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/256/2020/08/Rubin-Embedding-Collaborative-Online-International-Learning-at-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>
- Shively, K., & Geesa, R. L. (2023). Professional learning series: Preparing P-12 educators to teach in online SEL environments. In R. Rahimi & D. D. Liston (Eds.), *Exploring social emotional learning in diverse academic settings* (pp. 271–295). Information Science Reference.
- Weare, K. (2017). Promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools. In S. Bährer-Kohler & F. J. Carod-Artal (Eds.), *Global mental health* (pp. 113–126). Springer International.
- Zapp, M., & Lerch, J. C. (2020). Imagining the world: Conceptions and determinants of internationalization in higher education curricula worldwide. *Sociology of Education*, 93(4), 372–392. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040720929304>



# **EFL Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Critical Thinking: A Case Study**

---

Hsiao-Wen Hsu

*Ling Tung University, Taichung, Taiwan*

Trends in academic curricula worldwide have highlighted the need for language learners to develop critical thinking skills both for academic and social success. However, few studies have examined what EFL teachers think about critical thinking and how they incorporate it into their teaching. This small-scale study is aimed to investigate EFL instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching and promoting critical thinking skills at the tertiary level. It also illustrated obstacles that hindered teaching critical thinking skills. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, the results revealing that teachers worked on their definition and understanding of critical thinking. The results also revealed that they were both optimistic about incorporating critical thinking into language teaching and that promoting learners' critical thinking skills was an essential element in it. However, teachers tended to find it difficult, because of both learners' low language levels and other contextual factors. Consequently, teachers desired explicit training in critical thinking skills.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Critical thinking is considered to be an essential life skill and is a key to achieving academic success and future working prospects (Luk & Lin, 2015). Furthermore, being critical entails recognizing fallacious arguments, hasty generalizations, and nebulous concepts (Espey, 2018; Wilson, 2016). Owing to the advances of technology, the increased connectivity of social media platforms means that critical thinking is even more important for living in such an information-centric age. This becomes more apparent when learners use their background knowledge to construct meaning through interpreting, analyzing, and processing information when they are responding to a problem or a question that requires more than one accurate answer.

Learning a foreign language is not only about mastering vocabulary and grammatical rules, it is also about offering opinions, providing sound reasons to support opinions, and evaluating and making judgments based on specific situation. Integrating critical thinking into EFL learning and teaching has now become a trend that has caught both educational authorities' and teachers' attention (Yuan et al., 2021). Hence, providing active environments consisting of various activities and opportunities for learners to make effective decisions, solve problems, and take responsibility to learn to think critically are the purposes of modern-day education (Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012). Researchers have

highlighted the importance of teachers in enhancing their students' critical thinking skills (Choy & Cheah, 2009; Stapleton, 2011). Nevertheless, studies on practitioners' beliefs and experiences regarding critical thinking in EFL classrooms remain limited (Petek & Bedir, 2018).

Hence, this study aimed to provide insights so that EFL practitioners might reflect on their critical thinking teaching practices in Taiwanese classrooms. More specifically, it set out to understand how university EFL teachers both define "critical thinking" by identifying obstacles they have encountered that prevent them from employing it in their teaching. Three research questions were required to be answered in this study:

- RQ1. What knowledge of and perceptions about critical thinking do university EFL teachers have?
- RQ2. What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards developing critical thinking among students?
- RQ3. What are the challenges in promoting critical thinking in their teaching?

## **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking has been defined in various ways (Ennis, 1985; Halpern, 2013). Some researchers have defined it by the actual nature of its components, which are cognitive skills, including problem-solving, inference formulation, and decision-making (Halpern, 2013; Mulcahy, 2008). Others focus on the cognitive and behavioral aspects of critical thinkers, which they exercise in their daily lives, especially in educational settings (Lipman, 2003; Paul & Elder, 2019).

Yet others focus on the process and product. For instance, Ennis (1985) conceptualizes critical thinking as "reflective and reasonable thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (p. 45). Terms referring to critical thinking are used interchangeably (e.g., "higher-order thinking," "logical thinking," "complex thinking," and "reflective thinking." Another consideration is the ability to question, as proposed by Beyer (1995) and Haynes and Bailey (2003). They define critical thinking as a systematic process that involves asking the right questions from multiple perspectives and ultimately making reasoned judgments.

Critical thinking is often associated with higher-order thinking, as categorized in Bloom's taxonomy (Al Zahrani & Elyas, 2017). A recently revised version classifies six thinking types: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Among them, analyzing, evaluating, and creating are often used to define critical thinking. Thomas and Lok (2015) defined critical thinking as a comprehensive viewpoint that involves knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In this sense, knowledge is considered to be a prerequisite for critical thinking, as it includes basic facts, general information, particular content-based knowledge, and knowledge obtained from life and work experiences. Cognitive skills include reasoning, evaluation, and reflection, while dispositions, denoting a willingness to be involved in doing something, are closely connected with each other (Cruz et al., 2021).

Engaging individual learning performance with critical reflection constructs a space in which students can build their critical thinking skills, and where they can increase their curiosity about new knowledge as well as increase their

self-confidence in adopting challenges and confronting difficulties in their learning.

### **Critical Thinking in Language Teaching**

Critical thinking is an essential educational goal (Davies & Barnett, 2015), and as mentioned earlier, it has gained much attention in educational studies (Thomas & Lock, 2015; Zhang, 2019). For instance, thinking and language development are inextricably intertwined; thus, language teachers are essential to enable students to develop critical thinking in the classroom. Previous studies have also highlighted the need for integrating critical thinking into language teaching (Tung & Chang, 2009). Therefore, the objectives of language curricula should automatically include developing language learners' critical thinking skills rather than merely focusing on improving their linguistic abilities (Brown, 2004). Teachers, therefore, play a vital role in learners' development, which means that they must understand as much as is necessary for them to perform the teaching process.

Although the importance of teachers in critical thinking has been frequently highlighted, studies have shown that they may not automatically be equipped with a full understanding of critical thinking, which, as Choy and Cheah (2009) have pointed out, may result in a lack of professional competence. For example, Li (2016) conducted a qualitative study in China, examining Chinese EFL teachers' beliefs and practices through questionnaires, interviews, class observations, and video reflections. She found that the concepts of critical thinking held by teachers were vague; although they were positive about the idea of critical thinking, the challenges mentioned earlier made it difficult for them to integrate critical thinking into their teaching. Another Chinese study, by Yuan and Stapleton (2019), obtained similar results in that they found there to be not only an insufficient understanding of critical thinking in teaching practices but also a lack of pre-service teacher training in the subject. Hence, they concluded that there was a need for critical thinking skills to be re-evaluated within the system. Moreover, when employing critical-based lessons, pre-service teachers should face up to specific challenges, particularly those related to both cultural issues and school policy.

In Iran, Asghatheidari and Tahriri (2015) collected data from 30 EFL teachers to examine perceptions about critical thinking. Their findings were that teachers had clear ideas about critical thinking and that they believed their responsibility was to improve students' critical thinking skills in this regard. Their teachers reported that there was a need for more training to enable them to teach critical thinking effectively. Working with five Turkish EFL teachers, Kavanoz and Akbaş (2017) conducted a qualitative study investigating high school teachers' concepts of critical thinking and the strategies they used for teaching it. They found that teachers had sufficient knowledge and understanding about critical thinking; however, they concluded that, based on the teachers' own definitions, it was difficult to judge if they fully understood all the elements of critical thinking themselves. Hence, they concluded that the standardized curriculum and educational system did not allow for incorporating critical thinking into their lessons.

Based on the above literature, teachers may have sufficient knowledge about what critical thinking entails; however, they interpret it from different perspectives, thus appearing to be unfamiliar with how to express it in their EFL teaching. Consequently, the importance of increasing EFL teachers' understanding of, and attitudes towards, critical thinking in its different contexts is necessary to construct a sound picture of what critical thinking in English language teaching involves.

## METHOD

### Participants and Instruments

This study was carried out at a mid-sized university in northern Taiwan. Four female EFL teachers, aged between 37 and 45 years, who worked full-time at the university, participated. Table 1 provides detailed demographic information about the teachers. Each of them held a PhD degree in TESOL or a relevant field and had at least seven years of university teaching experience. The research site was chosen based on its convenience and the willingness of the teacher participants to provide data.

**TABLE 1. Background Information of Teacher Participants**

Teacher	Gender	Age	Major	Teaching Experience
T1	F	37	Psycholinguistics	11
T2	F	40	TESOL	11
T3	F	43	Language Education	10
T4	F	45	Language Education	7

Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews alongside a pre-interview questionnaire. Before the interviews were conducted, the teachers were given an eight-item questionnaire to complete. This questionnaire aimed to explore their understanding of critical thinking in a broader sense, the idea of critical thinking in teaching, the importance of employing it in teaching, and the value of adopting it in teaching. The interviews were set to further investigate perceptions and experiences of critical thinking concerning their English language teaching. A semi-structured interview protocol was prepared, and some answers from the questionnaire were selected and included in the interviews to better understand their responses. Subsequently, they were interviewed individually on the campus in Mandarin Chinese, and the interviews were audio-recorded. Each interview lasted 40–60 minutes.

### Data Analysis

Due to the small number of participants, a comparative method for questionnaire items was used to compare their responses with each other. After transcription, the interview data were interpreted using content analysis, following the process of decontextualization, categorization, and compilation (Bengtsson,



2016). For quantitative data, means are reported to present an overall picture of the four teachers' perceptions of critical thinking.

## RESULTS

The pre-interview questionnaire generated a general view of critical thinking among the four teachers (see Table 2), indicating that all the teachers considered critical thinking to be an essential element in language teaching, and hence, their responsibility as language teachers. However, even though they deemed critical thinking to be an integral part of their job (Item 2, Mean = 4.25), they realized they might not be able to construct critical thinking explanations and exercises within most of their lessons (Item 4, Mean = 3.75), and that critical thinking should be incorporated into their curriculum as much as possible (Item 5, Mean = 3.75). Also, all four expressed their desire to receive more training in critical thinking skills (Item 8, Mean = 4.25).

**TABLE 2. Teacher Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Critical Thinking**

Items	Mean
1.I have a clear idea of what the term “critical thinking” means.	4.50
1. Teaching critical thinking skills is an important part of my job as a teacher.	4.25
2. My students are good at critical thinking.	2.25
3. I build critical thinking explanations and exercises into most of my lessons.	3.75
4. It is necessary to increase the role of critical thinking into the curriculum.	3.75
5. It is the job of the teacher to teach critical thinking in the classroom.	4.25
6. Critical thinking is especially important in language teaching.	4.00
7. Taiwanese teachers need more training about how to teach critical thinking skills.	4.25

*Note.* 1 = *Totally disagree*; 5 = *Totally agree*.

### Teachers' Knowledge and Perception of Critical Thinking

To explore how the four teachers defined critical thinking, they were asked to explain the term based on their understanding. Upon rereading and interpreting their transcriptions, all four frequently used phrases such as “criticizing assumptions,” “multidimensional thinker,” “questioning,” “analyzing,” and “making a critique.”

Table 2 shows that the teachers were confident about their understanding of critical thinking (Item 1, Mean = 4.50). In the interviews, they further explained the term “critical thinking” according to their knowledge, agreeing that it was an essential skill that involved remembering, understanding, analyzing, interpreting, and creating. As independent thinkers, they believed that instead of simply receiving information, they should be able to identify the given information, evaluate and analyze it from different perspectives, and finally make judgments about it. The four definitions they gave are as follows:

A process that being able to evaluate gathered information, criticize assumptions, and make logical interpretations. [T1 interview]

Remembering, understanding, analyzing, interpreting, creating, and making judgment, ultimately becoming an independent thinker. [T2 interview]

Becoming a multidimensional thinker, not simply receiving information but questioning things objectively and making a critique. [T3 interview]

Examining an issue from different perspectives, and learning to think differently and independently. [T4 interview]

### **Teachers' Attitudes Towards Employing Critical Thinking in Teaching**

The second and third research questions aimed to discover the teachers' attitudes towards employing critical thinking in the classroom and obstacles they may have encountered in doing so. The results of the pre-interview questionnaire revealed in Table 2 reflected positive attitudes towards critical thinking and also the need to implement critical thinking in their teaching to help students develop their own critical thinking skills, especially at the tertiary level. They made the following comments enthusiastically:

I think critical thinking plays an important role not only in any single courses but should be used in our daily lives. Helping students to develop critical thinking skills really takes time. Even though it is a little late now, I think I can make some efforts to help students to think critically even though our time is so limited. [T3]

The ability to think critically is crucial for students at the tertiary level, both in their future careers and everyday lives. Lack of such capacity, judgments would be seriously affected. [T2]

They appeared to be aware that the process of teaching and developing critical thinking skills requires much practice, since traditional cultural backgrounds make students hesitate to express themselves. However, as it is the teachers' responsibility to guide students to think critically, they tried by inviting their students to share their opinions and encouraging them to think from different perspectives.

We teachers need to help students to develop critical thinking skills. I constantly ask questions, and offer the opportunities for them to think, guide them step by step, and they learn to think critically. [T1]

Due to our cultural background and educational system, most students are used to taking in all the information teachers give in lectures without any doubts. Hence, it is pretty challenging to employ critical thinking strategies during the class because they are unsure what kind of answers would be accepted. I always tell them that I am not asking for model answers but encouraging them to think outside the box and share their thoughts. [T4]

As can be seen here, the teachers applied several techniques to foster students' critical thinking skills, and they generally believed that the materials

they adopted played a dominant role in this respect. For example, reading topics should relate to students' past experiences, thereby triggering their curiosity and motivation to be engaged during the process by way of critical thinking, as T4 commented:

I choose topics that interest students. I don't really TEACH critical thinking, but I always ask questions about the themes in texts we read, about the authors' ideas, about interpretative issues, and so on. Most importantly, I want to connect to students' life experiences and make them willing to think. [T4]

One teacher used video clips and pictures to guide her students in making predictions, encouraging them to discuss their content and be willing to make predictions. Debate was another frequently used class activity; teachers encourage students to share and discuss their opinions regarding topics related to the materials. By debating, students experienced collecting information, reading the materials, evaluating the evidence, and making critiques.

Before we start reading, we talk about the pictures, watch a short video, and then I prepare questions for students to think about and discuss. The point is not to get the correct answer but to get students thinking. I leave it up to the students to determine the nature of their assignment. They can choose a topic and the type of presentation to express their idea about that topic, either in static or dynamic form. [T2]

However, obstacles hindered the teachers from integrating critical thinking into their teaching. They expressed their concerns about students' learning attitudes and their levels of English language proficiency. Passive learning can be a barrier for those students with limited English proficiency, as they need to have reached a certain level to express themselves confidently and fluently. The teachers expressed a need for further training in critical thinking, not just to learn new techniques but also for self-development. It is only when the teachers have reached the required level of critical thinking that they can pass it on through their teaching.

Students didn't get good training in critical thinking before going to university. Most of them are passive learners, absorbing all the information and do not question it. On the other hand, some students' English skills are not good enough to ask questions. This can be a problem that hinders their critical thinking development... Also, there's a need for teacher training to assist teachers in teaching critical thinking practically. [T3]

We, teachers, may also need to improve in teaching critical thinking. Those who were not trained or had been teaching in a traditional method may not encourage students to think critically. They may not promote such skills in their class. So, it is necessary to offer related training sessions for in-service teachers to help them integrate critical thinking into teaching. [T2]

Other obstacles preventing the incorporating critical thinking, mentioned by the teachers, included large class sizes, limited class time, and the curriculum itself. These are also concerns for education authorities.

## DISCUSSION

This case study, devised to explore Taiwanese university-level EFL teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward critical thinking, drew on data obtained from only a very few participants. The analysis aimed to examine key issues emerging from the data.

The findings demonstrated that the teachers in this study had sufficient knowledge and understanding regarding critical thinking. They all believed that critical thinking is a systematic process involving questioning and analyzing from multiple perspectives. This echoes Haynes and Bailey's (2003) definition and highlights the ability to ask the right questions to improve students' critical thinking. However, the core elements of critical thinking, such as synthesizing and applying, did not appear in our teachers' interviews. Hence, in line with the Turkish study by Kavanoz and Akbaş (2017), it is hard to say whether teachers understand all the key elements of critical thinking. Accordingly, this reveals these university EFL teachers' narrow conception of critical thinking, which was what Stapleton (2011) also found.

The teachers recognized that they lacked the necessary professional training for teaching critical thinking, aligning with results from previous studies (Li, 2016; Yuan & Stapleton, 2019). This implies the desire expressed by these teachers to be more familiar with how to integrate critical thinking into their teaching and their assertions that current teacher training programs may not be geared to properly equip teachers with the relevant skills to teach critical thinking. Hence, this reveals the need to review the critical thinking element in EFL teacher training to promote critical thinking in EFL teaching.

The teachers were positive in accepting Kavanoz and Akbaş' (2017) view regarding critical thinking for themselves, and the teachers advocated the need to focus on it so that they might pass on that particular skill to their students. Several other teaching techniques were recommended by the teachers that would enhance the development of critical thinking among their students. These included posing questions that, while giving information about the topic being discussed, are couched in such a way that relates to the students' past experience.

The most crucial challenges that the teachers referred to were the low levels of their students' English language proficiency, which hindered the teachers in employing critical thinking. It was concluded, therefore, that without adequate English language proficiency, students may have problems exercising critical thinking, which mirrored Li's (2016) findings. For teachers, this can be particularly challenging when, on the one hand, they are trying to improve their students' language proficiency while, on the other, they are urging them to familiarize with critical thinking (Alnofaie, 2013). A similar result found in the study by Zhang et al. (2020) questions the reliability of teachers' concerns. Zhang et al. suggest that teachers apply tasks suitable for students' language proficiency rather than focusing on the conflict between language and critical thinking.

Owing to the traditional educational system and the collectivist nature of Chinese culture, the teachers reported that their students found difficulty in expressing their opinions; mostly, they preferred to wait for their teachers' guidance. Previous studies also reported these obstacles (Kavanoz & Akbaş, 2017; Li, 2016; Yuan & Stapleton, 2019). Such a reactive, examination-oriented culture

often affects teachers' willingness to implement critical thinking. One teacher in this study commented that students were "not ready to think critically when they came to the university."

Accordingly, students' initial language levels, together with low intrinsic motivation, are the main challenges that cause teachers to be anxious and to need extra time, and also to be very careful when they implement critical thinking in their classrooms.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This qualitative study was designed to examine EFL teachers' understanding and dispositions when employing critical thinking in their teaching at the tertiary level. It was found that teachers had adequate knowledge and understanding of critical thinking, although their definitions did not fully cover all the elements described in the literature. The teachers in this study showed positive attitudes towards including critical thinking into their teaching techniques. They highlighted the importance of using questions to foster critical thinking skills in their students, and they deemed discussions to be a powerful learning tool to encourage critical thinking among their students.

However, the education system itself and time limitations are also major obstacles that hinder the teaching of critical thinking in the classroom. Moreover, teachers stressed that a curriculum modification focusing on critical thinking is needed, incorporating various techniques encouraging students to think critically when using English.

This study has implications for both teachers and education authorities. Teacher training programs or workshops, both in-service and pre-service, need to incorporate learning opportunities into all their teacher education courses and programs. Because there were only four EFL teachers in this study, the results might not be generalizable. Nevertheless, the data gathered, the teachers' comments, and their responses to interview questions suggest that a longitudinal study with a larger sample size might be appropriate for future research.

## THE AUTHOR

**Hsiao-Wen Hsu** is an associate professor in the Center for General Education at Ling Tung University in Taiwan. Her main research areas include practical applications of technology in EFL classrooms, students' motivational changes, and EFL teachers' motivational strategies. Email: pennyhsu@teamail.ltu.edu.tw

## REFERENCES

- Al Zahrani, B. S., & Elyas, T. (2017). The implementation of critical thinking in a Saudi EFL context: Challenges and opportunities. *IJELTAL – Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 133-142. <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v1i2.21>
- Alnofaie, H. (2013). A framework for implementing critical thinking as a language

- pedagogy in EFL preparatory programmes. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 10, 154–158.
- Asgharheidari, F., & Tahriri, A. (2015). A survey of EFL teachers' attitudes towards critical thinking instruction. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(2), 388–396.
- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001>
- Beyer, B. K. (1995). *Critical thinking. Fastback 385*. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Brown, H. D. (2004). Some practical thoughts about student-sensitive critical pedagogy. *The Language Teacher*, 28(7), 23–27.
- Choy, S. C., & Cheah, P. K. (2009). Teacher perceptions of critical thinking among students and its influence on higher education. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 20(2), 198–206.
- Cruz, G., Payan-Carreira, R., Dominguez, C., Silva, H., & Morais, F. (2021). What critical thinking skills and dispositions do new graduates need for professional life? Views from Portuguese employers in different fields. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 40(4), 721–737.
- Davies, M., & Barnett, R. (2015). Introduction. In M. Davies & R. Barnett (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of critical thinking in higher education* (pp. 1–25). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ennis, R. H. (1985). A logical basis for measuring critical thinking skills. *Educational Leadership*, 43(2), 44–48.
- Espey, M. (2018). Enhancing critical thinking using team-based learning. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 37(1), 15–29.
- Halpern, D. F. (2013). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking*. Psychology Press.
- Hashemi, M., & Ghanizadeh, A. (2012). Critical discourse analysis and critical thinking: An experimental study in an EFL context. *System*, 40(1), 37–47.
- Haynes, T., & Bailey, G. (2003). Are you and your basic business students asking the right questions? *Business Education Forum*, 57(3), 33–37.
- Kavanoz, S., & Akbaş, S. (2017). EFL teachers' conceptualizations and instructional practices of critical thinking. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 4(4), 418–433. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssaoar-57250-7>
- Li, L. (2016). Integrating thinking skills in foreign language learning: What can we learn from teachers' perspectives? *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 22, 273–288.
- Lipman, M. (2003). *Thinking in education* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Luk, J., & Lin, A. (2015). Voices without words: Doing critical literate talk in English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 49(1), 67–91.
- Mulcahy, C. M. (2008). Chapter 1: The Tangled web we weave: Critical literacy and critical thinking. *Counterpoints*, 326, 15–27.
- Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2019). *The miniature guide to critical thinking: Concepts and tools*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Petek, E., & Bedir, H. (2018). An adaptable teacher education framework for critical thinking in language teaching. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 28, 56–72.
- Stapleton, P. (2011). A survey of attitudes towards critical thinking among Hong Kong secondary school teachers: Implications for policy change. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 6(1), 14–23.
- Thomas, K., & Lok, B. (2015). Teaching critical thinking: An operational framework. In M. Davies & R. Barnett (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of critical thinking in higher education* (pp. 93–104). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tung, C. A., & Chang, S. Y. (2009). Developing critical thinking through literature reading. *Feng Chia Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, 287–317.
- Wilson, K. (2016). Critical reading, critical thinking: Delicate scaffolding in English for

- academic purposes (EAP). *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 22, 256–265.
- Yuan, R., & Stapleton, P. (2019). Student teachers' perceptions of critical thinking and its teaching. *ELT Journal*, 74(1), 40–48.
- Yuan, R., Yang, M., & Lee, I. (2021). Preparing pre-service language teachers to teach critical thinking: Can overseas field school experience make a difference? *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 40, Article 100832.
- Zhang, H. (2019). Understanding English language major teachers' cognition on language and critical thinking integrated teaching. *Foreign Languages Research*, 176(4), 57–62.
- Zhang, H., Yuan, R., & He, X. (2020) Investigating university EFL teachers' perceptions of critical thinking and its teaching: Voices from China. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 29, 483–493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-020-00500-6>





## Vietnamese Students' Perception of Pecha Kucha in English Public Speaking Classes

---

TRẦN Đoàn Thư, MAI Hồng Quân, and VÕ Thanh Nga  
*International University, HCMC Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*

A pecha kucha is a presentation format of 20 slides of images with little text, each of which advances automatically after 20 seconds. Despite being quite popular globally in the last two decades, in Vietnam, pecha kucha is a relatively new concept, as most English public speaking classes still employ traditional slides. This includes the researchers' organization, International University, HCMC Vietnam National University. With the aim of offering students and their audience a new choice of presentation style, and investigating Vietnamese students' perception of this style, pecha kucha was introduced to ten English public speaking classes. A questionnaire was then administered to students who used pecha kucha for their assignments. Forty-five responses were collected for data analysis. The results show positive feedback in general, but there are some concerns about the time constraints and the extra amount of work. Implications of the results can assist changes in the syllabus for the subject.

### INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, having good presentation skills is no longer considered an extra advantage that sets students apart from their peers; instead, it is regarded as a valuable and desirable attribute. However, Vietnamese students still encounter many difficulties when designing and delivering an oral presentation (Bui et al., 2022). Most Vietnamese students' make the common mistake of putting too many words and images on their PowerPoint presentation slides, thus making it almost impossible for the speakers to have good eye contact and communicate with the audience, which results in a boring performance (Murugaiah, 2016). This is also one of the reasons why traditional PowerPoint slides are criticized by Garber (2001) and Thomson (2003). Developing a more captivating and concise approach to presentations is much-needed demand (Miles, 2009) because it has the potential to enhance students' language proficiency, communication skills, and self-confidence (Ryan, 2012).

In response to this need, pecha kucha emerged as a new phenomenon in the beginning of the 21st century. First introduced in the field of architecture by Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham, pecha kucha got its name from the Japanese term for "chit chat." This presentation format requires students to deliver their message within an exact frame of 20 slides with each showing for 20 seconds (Beyer, 2011). In total, the entire presentation spans a duration of 6 minutes and 40

seconds, with the emphasis lying on visual elements, rather than text-heavy slides. Christianson and Payne (2011) commented that pecha kucha is on the rise globally and, in the same study, pointed out that the pecha kucha format can improve presentation skills. This conclusion was also agreed on by Foyle and Childress (2015).

Although the pecha kucha has gained significant popularity globally in the last two decades thanks to its unique approach and dynamic nature, in Vietnam, this presentation style is still relatively new. A quick survey on this study's participants revealed that ninety percent of them had never heard of pecha kucha before being introduced to this style by their lecturers, also the authors of this paper. In fact, the traditional slide-based approach is still dominant in most English public speaking classes in Vietnam, including the authors' institution.

Therefore, this research aims to introduce pecha kucha as an alternative presentation style to Vietnamese students and to investigate their perceptions when experiencing this format. This study took place in the English public speaking classes at International University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City (IU-VNU). This is the first public university in Vietnam to use English as the official medium for instruction (EMI). The university offers various courses spanning a number of majors: business administration, economics, finance and accounting, electrical engineering, biotechnology, mathematics, physics, logistics, English linguistics, and others. Upon entering the university, all students are required to take academic English classes before registering for their major courses. These courses are Listening and Note-Taking, Academic Writing, Research Writing, and Public Speaking. The Public Speaking course (coded Speaking AE2) syllabus employs the conventional slide-based approach. The midterm and the final exams also require students to give presentations accompanied by PowerPoint slides. During the course, there are two assignments in which students have to give oral presentations in groups and individually. This study was conducted in ten different Speaking AE2 classes with over 200 students. The pecha kucha was introduced to these students, and they were asked to choose to present their assignments either employing the traditional slide-based approach or in pecha kucha format. By offering the students a choice for their presentations and gathering their feedback, this research aimed to explore the potential benefits and challenges of implementing pecha kucha in the Vietnamese educational context and to generate meaningful implications on the teaching and learning of presentation skills.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Pecha Kucha**

The pecha kucha is a dynamic presentation format that compels students to convey their message using 20 slides that automatically transition every 20 seconds (Miller, 2011). The slides, which consist mostly of images, smoothly transit without manual intervention, allowing the presenter to deliver the presentation while synchronizing their words with the visuals (Mabuan, 2017). The pecha kucha presentation format has gained widespread popularity on a global

scale. It has emerged as a worldwide phenomenon, with numerous pecha kucha training programs, workshops, and events held in more than 1200 cities worldwide (About PechaKucha, 2023). The concise nature of pecha kucha encourages presenters to distill their ideas into key points, fostering clarity and focus (Hayashi & Holland, 2016). This format promotes brevity, preventing information overload and enhancing audience engagement. Furthermore, the automatic 20-second slide advancement helps maintain a fast pace, keeping the audience attentive (Warmmuth, 2021).

Thanks to these advantages, pecha kucha has gained popularity not only in the field of architecture but also in other disciplines (Tomsett & Shaw, 2014). It also quickly spread into academia for showcasing class work and projects, as noted by Foyle and Childress (2015).

### **The Adoption of Pecha Kucha in Educational Settings**

Pecha kucha has been examined in diverse education settings. First and foremost, in the teaching and learning of EFL and ESL, pecha kucha has been employed by teachers and lecturers all over the world and across multiple majors. For example, Nguyen's study (2015) on Japanese EFL students showed that pecha kucha presentations helped them enhance their reading comprehension, speaking, and oral presentation abilities. More recently, Colombi (2017) found that the use of pecha kucha in the assessment of a unit carried important pedagogical implications for students of EAP. Pecha kucha was also explored in other undergraduate disciplines, including psychology (Beyer, 2011), marketing (Levin & Peterson, 2013), and medicine (Abraham et al., 2018). It has even been suggested that it become a format for thesis presentations so that more time can be allocated to a more extensive question-and-answer session (Chikushi et al., 2009).

Certainly, with its continuously widespread use in numerous educational settings, it is crucial to explore the students' perspectives and attitudes towards the use of pecha kucha so that this format can fully be understood and properly implemented.

### **Students Perceptions of Pecha Kucha**

Existing studies have reported mostly positive feedback on pecha kucha from students. For instance, students acknowledged that this presentation style helped boost their confidence (Thomsett & Shaw, 2014) or helped improve the overall speaking skills (Murugaiah, 2016). Students in all of the previously mentioned studies (Beyer, 2011; Levin & Peterson, 2013; Abraham et al., 2018) also developed an appreciation towards pecha kucha, citing such benefits as organized structure, concise content, and room for creativity.

Meanwhile, concerns have been raised regarding the time constraints and the additional workload associated with pecha kucha (Ruiz, 2016). In other words, the need for precise planning and synchronization may require students to invest more time and effort in preparing their presentations (Robinson, 2015). Additionally, the selection and integration of suitable visual elements, which can lead to "better visual design literacy" (Beyer et al., 2012, p. 38), may pose a design challenge for some students (Soto-Caban et al., 2011). However, the most

significant drawback of the pecha kucha presentation style may be that it may cause confusion to the learners when it comes to understanding the lesson's concept as a whole (Agsher et al., 2023)

## **Research Gap**

These findings highlight the great potentials of pecha kucha in various education contexts. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of literature on pecha kucha in the education context in Vietnam, not to mention its use among EMI learners. A quick search on Google Scholar would yield only 123 results, with no study taking place in Vietnam or including Vietnamese students as the research target group. Perhaps the closest connection of a Vietnamese with this style of presentation is that of Nguyen (2015), a Vietnamese who worked as an EFL assistant professor at the Kanazawa Institute of Technology, Japan. However, his pecha kucha study took place in Japan with Japanese students as the main focus, not Vietnamese students. This study aims to address that existing gap by investigating and analyzing students' perspectives and attitudes towards their experience of using pecha kucha in public speaking classes within a public university setting that uses English as the main medium of instruction in Vietnam. Therefore, our research objectives are

1. To explore Vietnamese students' perception on the use of pecha kucha in EMI public speaking classes.
2. To formulate pedagogical implications for a wider use of pecha kucha in the Vietnamese context.

To achieve those research objectives, this paper set the following research questions:

- RQ1. What are Vietnamese students' perceptions towards pecha kucha in public speaking classes?
- RQ2. What are some pedagogical implications for the use of pecha kucha in the Vietnamese context?

## **METHOD**

### **Study Design**

In this research, the qualitative descriptive research method was adopted. This matches with the aim of this research to gain insights into the perception of participants towards the pecha kucha presentation format.

### **Participants**

The voluntary participants of the research involved forty-five students from a variety of majors at IU-VNU, such as business administration, electrical engineering, logistics, finance, and information technology, who were enrolling in the Public

Speaking course, which is a compulsory part of the undergraduate program. To take part in this course, the English proficiency level of the student must be IELTS 6.0 or above. Initially, there were fifty participants who signed up for making pecha kucha presentations. However, four of the students changed their mind at the last minute, and one dropped out of the course due to a family issue. This resulted in a drop in the total number of participants (45) compared to the intended number.

## Implementation

First, the traditional presentation format was taught in the first six weeks of the 15-week course with each class session lasting 90 minutes. Then in the seventh week, pecha kucha was introduced by the lecturers. From the eighth week onwards, students had a choice of making presentations in the format they preferred: either the traditional method or pecha kucha. Those who opted for pecha kucha presentations would be given a questionnaire to provide insights into their perception of the new format.

## Data Collection

A questionnaire adapted from Solusia et al. (2019) was given to the 45 participating students. This included one background question, six questions on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, and concluded with four open-ended questions. The questionnaire was created and delivered to the participants on both paper (see Appendix) and Google Forms.

## Data Analysis

After data collection had been completed, each answer of the Likert scale questions was coded as follows to calculate the average score for the closed questions: *strongly disagree* = 1, *disagree* = 2, *undecided* = 3, *agree* = 4, *strongly agree* = 5.

For the open-ended questions, the answers were coded, counted, and grouped together in tables.

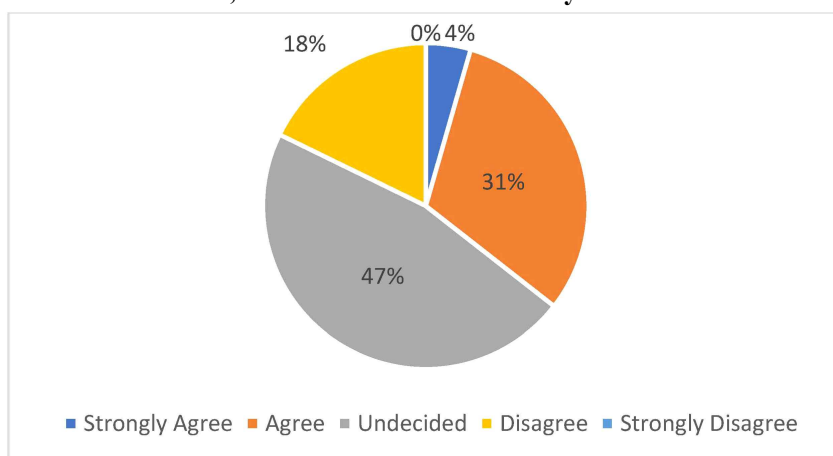
## RESULTS

Below are the results for each item on the questionnaire. Part 1 consists of six closed questions (Questions 2–7) with five Likert scale choices. Part 2 includes four open-ended questions (Questions 8–10).

**Question 2:** At first, it seemed easy to use pecha kucha style presentations.

When the pecha kucha style of presentation was introduced to students, the initial response was mixed, with nearly half of the students feeling neutral about this new style of presentation. However, a good starting signal was that 31% of them felt that pecha kucha may be easy to use in making a presentation while only 22% of them disagreed with this (see Figure 1).

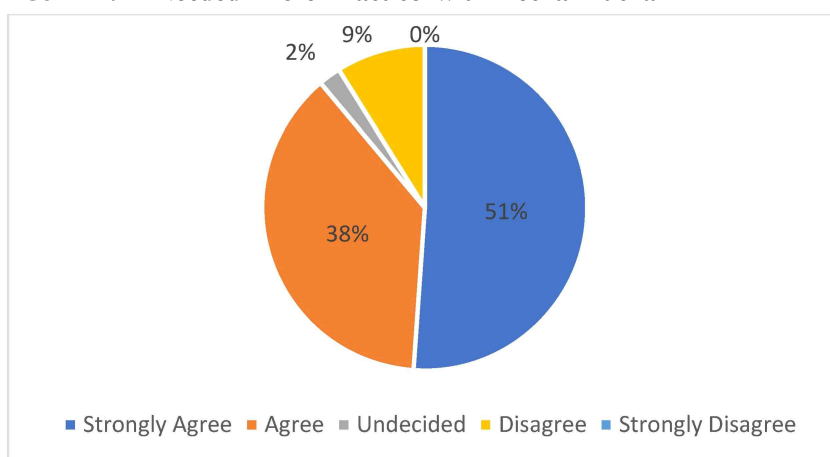
**FIGURE 1. At First, Pecha Kucha Seemed Easy**



**Question 3:** I needed a great deal of practice before doing a presentation using the pecha kucha method.

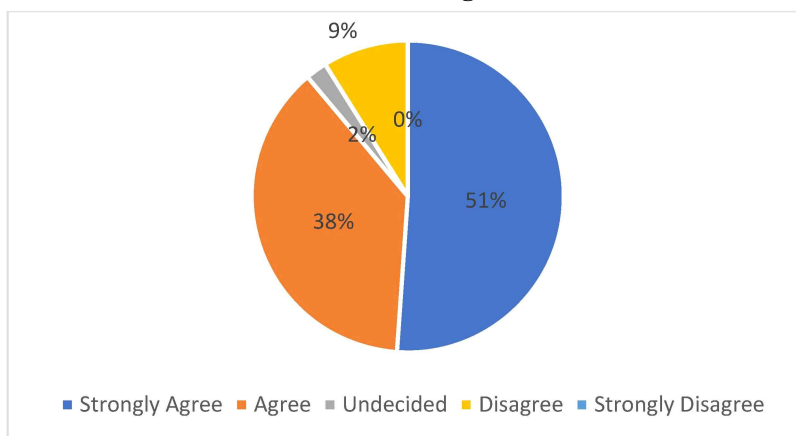
As shown in Figure 2, most of the students (89%) expected that they would need a great deal of practice to give a presentation using the pecha kucha style.

**FIGURE 2. I Needed More Practice with Pecha Kucha**



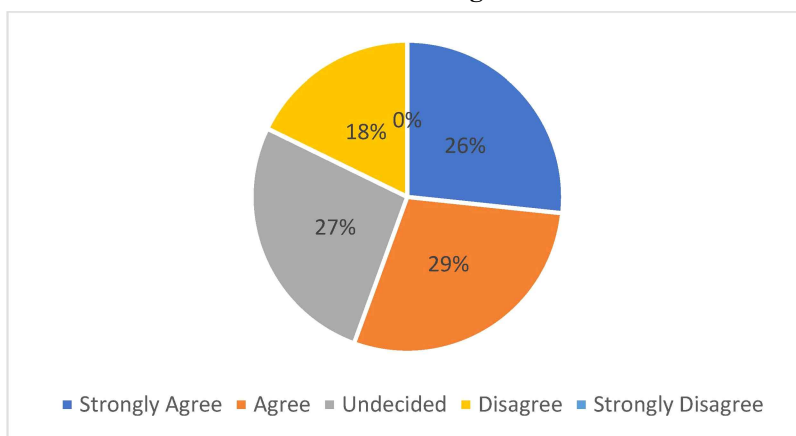
**Question 4:** I felt more pressure preparing a presentation using the pecha kucha method than preparing a normal presentation.

In addition to a greater amount of practicing, most students (nearly 90%) also felt more pressure preparing a presentation using pecha kucha than preparing a normal presentation (see Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3. I Felt More Pressure Using Pecha Kucha**

**Question 5:** While giving a presentation Using the pecha kucha method, I feel more confident than when I am giving a normal presentation.

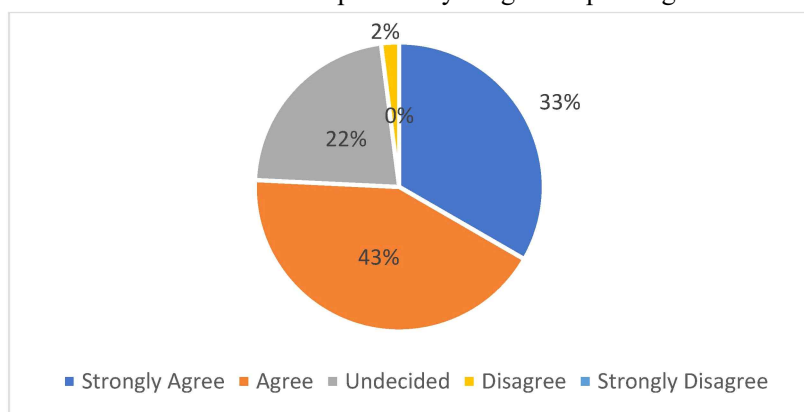
Surprisingly, more than half of the students (55%) reported that they felt more confident while presenting in pecha kucha style than presenting in the conventional presentation format. On the other hand, only 18% of the students felt the opposite, while 27% of them remained undecided (see Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4. I Feel More Confident Using the Pecha Kucha Method**

**Question 6:** I think the pecha kucha helps improve my English speaking and presentation skills.

Despite acknowledging that pecha kucha presentations do entail some difficulties, a full 75% of the student respondents acknowledged that pecha kucha helped them improve their English speaking skills as well as their presentation skills (see Figure 5).

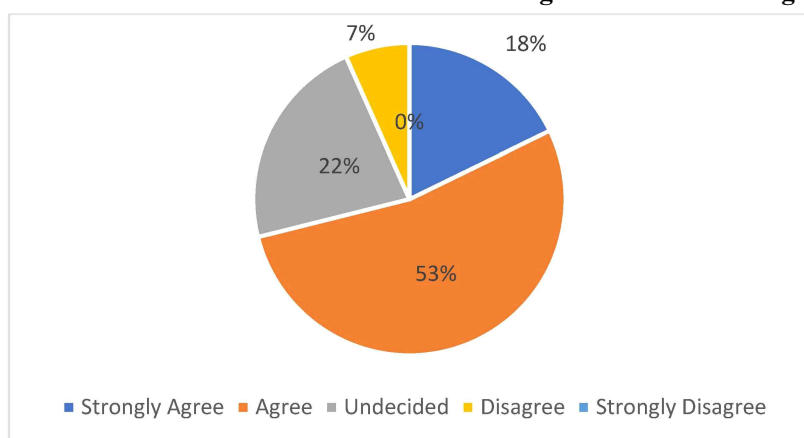
**FIGURE 5.** Pecha Kucha Improve My English Speaking and Presentation Skills



**Question 7:** Pecha kucha have more advantages than disadvantages.

Not only did the majority of the student participants believe that pecha kucha presentations helped to improve their speaking and presentation skills, nearly three quarters (71%) of the students also thought that, overall, the advantages of pecha kucha presentations outweigh the disadvantages that they may have (see Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6.** Pecha Kucha Had More Advantages than Disadvantages



The second section of the questionnaire sought more detailed answers from the participants. As shown in Table 1, regarding what they liked about pecha kucha, there was a wide range of factors, but the prominent one was better time control. Additionally, students highlighted increased fluency, confidence, and improved body language that came with this presentation style. Other advantages of this approach included easier slide design, more careful preparation, and shorter and more concise presentations.



**TABLE 1. What Students Like About Pecha Kucha Oral Presentations**

<b>Likes</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
Better time control.	11
More fluent, more confident.	5
More body language and eye contact.	5
Automatic, no need for pointer or helper.	5
Quicker and easier slide preparation.	5
More careful preparation and rehearsal.	5
Short and concise.	4
Audience pays more attention.	2
More flexible.	1
More fun in preparation.	1
New and different format.	1
More professional.	1
Undecided.	1

*Note.* Due to some respondents giving more than one response to this question, the number of responses (47) is greater than the number of respondents (45).

However, students did express some concerns associated with pecha kucha presentations. The most common issue raised was the strict timing requirement, which helps explain why in Question 4, nearly 90% of the students felt more pressure. Another problem with pecha kucha, as reported by many participants, was the difficulty in synchronizing the script with the slides, which required more preparation and practice (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2. What Students Dislike About Pecha Kucha Oral Presentations**

<b>Dislikes</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
Rigid timing and strict format.	16
Difficult to ensure the syncing between script and slides.	8
Requires a great deal of preparation.	6
Requires a great deal of practice.	5
Does not allow spontaneous jokes or comments.	2
Difficult to convey complex ideas.	2
I dislike nothing.	2
Having to memorize script very well.	2
Difficult to build the script.	1
No use of videos.	1
Generally more difficult than the traditional style.	1

*Note.* Due to one respondent giving more than one response to this question, the number of responses (46) is greater than the number of respondents (45).

Regarding their feelings after giving a presentation using the pecha kucha format, as compared to delivering a normal presentation, a significant number of students (23/45) reported a better experience, feeling increased comfort, excitement, and confidence. However, simultaneously, 7 students experienced

heightened nervousness and pressure. The remaining opinions varied, including both positive and negative feedback (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3. Students' Experiences Giving a Presentation Using Pecha Kucha Format**

Students' Experiences	No. of Responses
Better, more comfortable, exciting, confident, efficient	23
More nervous, more pressurized	7
More or less the same	4
Requires improvements in some aspects: timing, speed, pronunciation	3
Need more practice	3
Better for time management skills	3
More difficult in slide control	2
Better for body language	1
More memorization	1
More useful	1
More rigid	1
Newer	1

*Note.* Due to some respondents giving more than one response to this question, the number of responses (50) is greater than the number of respondents (45).

Despite mixed responses, most students (84%) still gave neutral to positive responses to the last question “For your next presentation, will you continue using pecha kucha?” This is solid ground for implications that will be discussed in the following section.

## DISCUSSION

When introduced to a new method of presentation, most students showed a positive attitude towards pecha kucha presentation style and acknowledged its beneficial impacts on their presentation skills. This result aligns with earlier studies (Christianson & Payne, 2011; Foyle & Childress, 2015) that have highlighted the advantages of pecha kucha, particularly in improving communication abilities.

### Implications

The investigation of students' perception of pecha kucha raises implications for both teachers and course designers. Firstly, the students' positive attitude towards pecha kucha and the benefits they identified suggest that teachers should incorporate it in presentation skills courses. Additionally, this can be a foundation for syllabus and examination revisions for the Public Speaking course at IU-VNU. Secondly, considering the widespread criticism regarding the rigid timing of pecha kucha, it is suggested to adapt a more flexible version that allows a margin of 2-3 seconds for each slide while maintaining the total presentation time at a fixed 6

minutes and 40 seconds. Thirdly, the limited timeframe can be discouraging for anxious students who prefer a more relaxed pace of speaking. The solution to this is to give them additional rehearsal time, particularly in paired or group settings, to enhance their confidence before presenting their work to the class.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the participants were limited to one university with a rather small sample size, which affects the generalizability of the results. Secondly, it may not be feasible for the students to apply the original pecha kucha in presentations in their major courses, as it is difficult to condense terminology and complex ideas of such courses into only a few slides of 20 seconds each (see Table 2). Therefore, the applicability of the study remains limited, and it is recommended that this original pecha kucha format should be used in general English courses only. To expand its use to ESP, modified and tailored versions will be needed.

### **Suggestions**

Finally, we would like to suggest some ideas for future research on pecha kucha in Vietnam. Future researchers may consider expanding the research scope with a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Another possibility is comparing pecha kucha presentations with other conventional PowerPoint presentations to determine any variations in students' performance. Incorporating a pre-test and a post-test could provide a more comprehensive evaluation of this presentation method. Furthermore, exploring ways to modify pecha kucha to fit ESP classes for different majors is also a potential research direction.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, the positive reception of pecha kucha presentations among students implies its value in enhancing presentation skills. By considering the implications and addressing the limitations mentioned, pecha kucha can be effectively integrated into teaching practices and further research endeavors.

## **THE AUTHORS**

**TRAN Doan Thu** is a full-time lecturer at the School of Languages, International University, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She holds a master's degree in applied linguistics from Curtin University, Australia. She has 14 years of experience teaching EFL, EAP, and linguistics. She is also a certified Cambridge English speaking examiner. Her research interests also include the field of literature and the study of linguistics, with a particular focus on pragmatics. Email: tdthu@hcmiu.edu.vn

**MAI Hong Quan** is a full-time lecturer at the School of Languages, International University, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He holds a master's

degree in applied linguistics from the University of Southampton, UK. He has 13 years of experience in teaching English language skills, American civilization, British civilization, intercultural communication, and sociolinguistics. His current field of research involves sociolinguistics and area studies, particularly on the Anglosphere, Southeast Asian countries, and Japan. He is also interested in lifelong learning and global citizenship education as essentials for students in the 21st century. Email: mhquan@hcmiu.edu.vn.

**VO Thanh Nga** holds a master's degree in TESOL from Victoria University, Australia. She has many years of experience teaching English in different universities and is now a full-time lecturer at the School of Languages of International University, Vietnam National University, HCMC. Her research interests include the study of linguistics and innovations in TESOL, especially in phonetics, pragmatics, writing, and public speaking instruction. Email: vtnga@hcmiu.edu.vn.

## REFERENCES

- About PechaKucha. (2023). PechaKucha, Inc. <https://www.pechakucha.com/about>
- Abraham, R. R., Torke, S., Gonsalves, J., Narayanan, S. N., Kamath, M. G., Prakash, J., & Rai, K. S. (2018). Modified directed self-learning sessions in physiology with prereading assignments and Pecha Kucha talks: Perceptions of students. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 42(1), 26–31.
- Agsher, T., Hanif, A., & Shahzad, A. K. (2023). Beyond the lecture: Uncovering learners' insight on Pecha Kucha for English language learning in Pakistani ESL classrooms. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 5(2), 303–311.
- Beyer, M. (2011). Improving student presentations: Pecha Kucha and just plain PowerPoint. *Teaching of Psychology*, 38(2), 122–126.
- Beyer, A. A., Gaze, C., & Lazicki, J. (2012). Comparing students' evaluations and recalls for student Pecha Kucha and PowerPoint presentations. *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, 1(2), 26–42.
- Bui, T. T. L., Huynh, T. M. D., Nguyen, T. M. N., Nguyen, T. N. C., & Nguyen, T. Y. N. (2022). The difficulties in oral presentation of English-majored juniors at Tay Do University, Vietnam. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 170–216.
- Chikushi, U. A. B., Dytham, M., & Klein, A. (2007). *Pecha Kucha Night: 20 images x 20 seconds*. KleinDytham Architecture.
- Christianson, M., & Payne, S. (2011). Using the 20x20 format for presentation training. *Language Research Bulletin*, 26, 1–15.
- Colombi, A. G. (2017). The impact of Pecha Kucha presentations in the assessment of a translation studies unit at the University of Western Australia. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 5(3), 67–85.
- Edwards, R. L. (2010). Pecha Kucha in the classroom: Tips and strategies for better presentations. *Remixing the Humanities*. <https://remixhumanities.wordpress.com/2010/11/03/pecha-kucha-in-the-classroom-tipsand-strategies-for-better-presentations/>
- Foyle, H. C., & Childress, M. D. (2015). Pecha Kucha for better PowerPoint presentations. *National Social Science Journal*, 1(1), Article 2.
- Garber, A. R. (2001). *Death by PowerPoint*. Small Business Computing. <https://www.smallbusinesscomputing.com/software/death-by-powerpoint/>
- Hayashi, P. M. J., & Holland, S. J. (2016). Pecha kucha: Transforming student presentations. In *JALT2016: Transformation in Language Education*, 307–313. JALT.

- Levin, M. A., & Peterson, L. T. (2013). Use of Pecha Kucha in marketing students' presentations. *Marketing Education Review*, 23(1), 59–64.
- Mabuan, R. A. (2017). Developing ESL/EFL learners' public speaking skills through Pecha Kucha presentations. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 6(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v6i1.765>.
- Miles, R. (2009). *Oral presentations for English proficiency purposes*. National University of Singapore. <http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/research/books/reit/vol8/no2/103-110miles.pdf>
- Miller, A. (2011). Improving student presentations: Pecha Kucha and just plain PowerPoint. *Teaching of Psychology*, 38, 122–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628311401588>
- Murugaiah, P. (2016). Pecha Kucha style PowerPoint presentation: An innovative CALL approach to developing oral presentation skills of tertiary students. *The Journal of Teaching English with Technology*, 16(1), 88–104.
- Nguyen, H. (2015). Student perceptions of the use of PechaKucha presentations for EFL reading classes. *Language Education in Asia*, 6(2), 135–143.
- Robinson, R. (2015). Pecha Kucha: How to improve students' presentation skills. In *The European Conference on Language Learning 2015 Official Conference Proceedings* (pp. 347–351). IAFOR.
- Ruiz, C. G. (2016). Student perceptions of the use of Pecha Kucha presentations in Spanish as a foreign language. In *Proceedings of EDULEARN16 Conference* (pp. 7504–7512). EduLearn.
- Ryan, J. (2012). Pecha kucha presentations: What are they and how can we use them in the classroom? *Shizuoka University of Art and Culture Bulletin*, 12, 23–27. <http://id.nii.ac.jp/1132/00000617>
- Solusia, C., Kher, D. F., & Rani, Y. A. (2019). The use of pecha kucha presentation method in the speaking for informal interaction class. *Advances in Social Science, Education, and Humanities Research*, 411, 190–194.
- Soto-Caban, S., Selvi, E., & Avila-Medina, F. (2011, June 26–29). Improving communication skills: Using PechaKucha style in engineering courses [Paper presentation]. *2011 ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition*. Vancouver, BC, Canada. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--18112>
- Thompson, C. (2003, December 14). 2003: The 3rd annual year in ideas: PowerPoint makes you dumb. *The New York Times Magazine*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/14/magazine/2003-the-3rd-annual-year-in-ideas-powerpointmakes-you-dumb.html>
- Tomsett, P. M., & Shaw, M. R. (2014). Creative classroom experience using Pecha Kucha to encourage ESL use in undergraduate business courses: A pilot study. *International Multilingual Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(2), 89–108.
- Warmuth, K. (2021). PechaKucha as an alternative to traditional student presentations. *Currents in Teaching and Learning*, 12, 44–51.

## APPENDIX

### Pecha Kucha Questionnaire

Please choose ONE answer for Questions 1–7, and provide your own answer for Questions 8–11.

1. Did you know what a pecha kucha was before the lecturer introduced it to you?  
 Yes       No
2. At first, it seemed easy to use pecha kucha style presentations.  
 Strongly agree     Agree       Undecided       Disagree  
 Strongly disagree
3. I needed a great deal of practice before doing a presentation using the pecha kucha method.  
 Strongly agree     Agree       Undecided       Disagree  
 Strongly disagree
4. I felt more pressure preparing a presentation using the pecha kucha method than preparing a normal presentation.  
 Strongly agree     Agree       Undecided       Disagree  
 Strongly disagree
5. While giving a presentation using the pecha kucha method, I feel more confident than when I am giving a normal presentation.  
 Strongly agree     Agree       Undecided       Disagree  
 Strongly disagree
6. I think the pecha kucha helps improve my English speaking and presentation skills.  
 Strongly agree     Agree       Undecided       Disagree  
 Strongly disagree
7. I think the pecha kucha has more advantages than disadvantages.  
 Strongly agree     Agree       Undecided       Disagree  
 Strongly disagree
8. What do you like about pecha kucha oral presentations?
9. What do you dislike about pecha kucha oral presentations?
10. After you have delivered a presentation using the pecha kucha method, how do you feel about your experience compared to delivering a normal presentation?
11. For your next presentation, will you continue using the pecha kucha method?

# Malaysian University ESL Students' Perceptions Toward Using Smartphones for English Learning

---

Rafidah Abd Karim

*Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, Malaysia*

With rapid developments in the field of digital literacy, technology has shifted from computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). The smartphone plays an important role in helping students learn English. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the perception of English learning among ESL students in Malaysia. This study uses a quantitative research design. An online questionnaire was used to collect data, which was completed by 115 students in selected public universities in Malaysia. The result was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, such as percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation. The empirical findings of the study show that students have a positive perception towards the use of smartphones as a potential tool to enhance their English learning. Therefore, the use of smartphones should be continuously practiced by university students in Malaysia to enhance English learning and increase digital literacy in 21st century education.

## INTRODUCTION

In the modern age, mobile technology development has expanded swiftly. Mobile technology is becoming increasingly common in tertiary education. To remain relevant, educators must embrace and capitalize on the use of mobile capabilities. Students are increasingly using smartphones. In comparison to mobile phones, this device has supplied users with superior computer structures and sophisticated apps. Furthermore, smartphones employ operating systems that serve as a platform for application creation. Smartphones and tablets are changing how teachers teach and students learn. It is not always a smooth or simple transition. In today's world, most students use mobile devices for e-learning in their classrooms. This is because they find the devices to be more convenient and versatile for their study. Because of the way mobile learning is used and structured, it is obvious that building an application to facilitate this learning can only be a difficult task. Mobile learning makes learning more private and individualized as well as making learning possible in formal and informal situations. Students are found using smartphones for learning translation and retranslation, reading online books, and practicing their communication skills via smartphones (Kukulka-Hulme & Shield, 2008). Karim et al. (2023) found the adoption and usage of mobile technologies to be crucial to enhancing the use of ICT to boost the role of women in higher education.

Today, many institutions at the tertiary level are widely using smartphones. M-learning has grown in popularity in Malaysia in recent years. Some research has been conducted to assess the potential of mobile devices to enhance classroom teaching and learning activities in Malaysian schools and universities. The Malaysian Education Blueprint for 2013–2025 also highlighted the requirements for preparing students with 21st century skills, such as communication, critical thinking, and creativity skills (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013). In Malaysia, mobile learning has been discovered widely by many individuals, educators, and researchers. Malaysian university students had a positive perception toward the mobile learning and accepted this learning approach during the pandemic (Karim & Mustapha, 2023). Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) brings advantages to the ESL classroom. Learners are more responsible in learning and regulating their communication between peers and teachers through technologically supported participation, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic (Murugan & Teoh, 2022). Furthermore, language apps can assist students in enhancing their English learning experiences. Themes from this study's interviews provide a framework of reference for educators to consider the English language apps to guide students to improve their English language learning (Annamalai et al., 2022). Thus, this paper further reviews perceptions of the use of smartphones for English learning among Malaysian university ESL students.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to identify Malaysian university ESL students' perceptions toward using smartphones for English learning. Specifically, the objectives of the study were as follows:

- To investigate perceptions of using smartphones among Malaysian university ESL students.
- To investigate perceptions of English learning using smartphones among Malaysian university ESL students.
- To determine the relationship between the use of smartphones and English learning among Malaysian university ESL students.

## **METHOD**

This study used a quantitative research design that identified Malaysian university ESL students' perceptions toward using smartphones for English learning. This study developed an online questionnaire consisting of three sections: (a) Respondent Profile (5 items), (b) Perceptions of Using Smartphones (18 items) and (c) Perceptions of English Learning Using Smartphones (24 items). The total number of items on the questionnaire was 47. The questionnaire items for (b) and (c) were developed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging over *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *uncertain* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1).

The questionnaire was disseminated to one-hundred and fifteen ( $N = 115$ ) ESL



students in selected public universities in Malaysia. The data were collected and analyzed by determining the mean and standard deviation for each item on the questionnaire. Pearson's correlation was used for examining the relationship between the perceptions of using smartphones and perceptions of English learning using smartphones. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software, version 26. The the results of the questionnaire are presented in the form of tables. The research questions for the study were developed as following:

- RQ1. What are Malaysian university ESL students' perceptions of using smartphones?
- RQ2. What are Malaysian university ESL students' perceptions of English learning using smartphone?
- RQ3. What is the relationship between Malaysian university students' perceptions of using smartphones and perceptions of English learning using smartphones?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented in six main tables: (a) respondent profile (b) perceptions of using smartphones, (c) perceptions of English learning using smartphones, (d) overall mean and standard deviation, (e) the relationship between the student's perceptions of using smartphones and English learning using smartphones, and (f) open-ended item analysis. For Tables 2 and 3, the interpretation for the mean values in this study was divided into five scale anchors: *strongly agree* (4.21–5.00), *agree* (3.41–4.20), *uncertain* (2.61–3.40), *disagree* (1.81–2.60) and *strongly disagree* (1.00–1.80). In the Likert scale section, the results of the three highest and the three lowest mean values of the items are described.

Table 1 shows the respondent profile of the 115 participating Malaysian university ESL students. The total of 115 respondents consisted of 41 male (35.7%) and 74 female (64.3%) students. Most of the respondents' were 20–22 years of age, which was 50 respondents (43.5%); followed by a group 17–19 years old, 28 respondents (24.3%). Twenty-five (25) respondents were from the age group 23–25 years old, which was 21.7% of the respondents. Only 12 (10.4%) respondents were 26 years old or above. Regarding their background in the use of smartphones, all of the respondents (100%) used a smartphone in learning. A majority of the respondents (99.1%) said that they used a smartphone for English learning except for one respondent (0.9%) who did not use a smartphone for English learning. Likewise, all respondents (100%) agreed that the smartphone helps them in English learning.

**TABLE 1. Respondent Profile (N = 115)**

Characteristics	Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	41	35.7
Female	74	64.3
<b>Age (years)</b>		
17–19 years	28	24.3
20–22 years	50	43.5
23–25 years	25	21.7
26 years and above	12	10.4
<b>Do you use a smartphone when learning?</b>		
Yes	115	100
No	0	0
<b>Do you use a smartphone for English learning?</b>		
Yes	114	99.1
No	1	0.9
<b>Do you think a smartphone helps you in English learning?</b>		
Yes	115	100
No	0	0

Table 2 describes the Malaysian university ESL students’ perceptions of using smartphones. With regards to perceived usefulness (PU), the results showed that the three highest means were in this section. The highest mean indicates that the respondents strongly agreed ( $M = 4.44$ ;  $SD = 0.72$ ) that the smartphone helps them to learn English better (Item 1) followed by Item 2, which indicates that the respondents also strongly agreed ( $M = 4.44$ ;  $SD = 0.70$ ) that the smartphone helped them in English learning. The third highest mean shows that the respondents strongly agreed ( $M = 4.42$ ;  $SD = 0.70$ ) that the smartphone helped them to understand English language better (Item 6).

However, among the lowest mean scores, the respondents were uncertain ( $M=3.39$ ;  $SD = 0.79$ ) whether the smartphone improves their English learning or not (Item 3). For Item 4, the respondents merely agreed ( $M = 3.88$ ;  $SD = 1.01$ ) that using the smartphone enabled them to accomplish English assignments more quickly. Both items were included in the section on perceived usefulness (PU). The lowest mean in perceived satisfaction (PE) described the respondents as only agreeing ( $M = 4.18$ ;  $SD = 0.76$ ) that they felt motivated to learn English when using the smartphone (Item 13). Overall, the students strongly agreed that the smartphone was useful for English learning, as shown in the Table 2. Similar results were observed in previous studies conducted in Jamaica (Ahmad, 2020; Mokhtar et al., 2022) in which students were enthusiastic about using the smartphone as a social connectedness and collaborative tool that could be used for flexible and personalized learning activities and to gain knowledge.

In terms of perceptions of English learning using smartphone, Table 3 shows the results of the student responses. Regarding comprehension, the three highest mean scores indicated that the respondents strongly agreed ( $M = 4.30$ ;  $SD = 0.82$ ) that the smartphone helped to enhance my English skills (Item 4). The second highest mean score was Item 16, in the self-directed learning section; it

shows that the respondents strongly agreed ( $M = 4.30$ ;  $SD = 0.74$ ) that they enjoyed learning English using the smartphone. In the same section, the respondents strongly agreed ( $M = 4.28$ ;  $SD = 0.76$ ) that they found it interesting to study English using the smartphone (Item 13). This finding was also supported by Ying et al. (2022), who stated that the integration of smartphone applications in their classroom assisted students in doing their preparation for their oral presentations, which indirectly increased their confidence and motivational level. This technique has shown to be beneficial to students, allowing them to study at their own pace while the teacher functions more as a facilitator, providing support as needed.

**TABLE 2. Perceptions of Using Smartphones**

Item	Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Response
<b>Perceived Usefulness (PU)</b>				
1	Using the smartphone helps me to learn English better.	4.44	0.72	Strongly Agree
2	Using the smartphone helps me in English learning.	4.44	0.70	Strongly Agree
3	Using the smartphone improves my English learning.	3.39	0.79	Uncertain
4	Using the smartphone enables me to accomplish my English assignments more quickly.	3.88	1.01	Agree
5	Using the smartphone improves my English proficiency.	4.18	0.76	Agree
6	Using the smartphone helps me to understand English language better.	4.42	0.70	Strongly Agree
<b>Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)</b>				
7	I find it easy to understand the English course using the smartphone.	4.30	0.74	Strongly Agree
8	I find it easy to learn English using the smartphone.	4.33	0.76	Strongly Agree
9	I find that the smartphone makes my English learning more flexible.	4.33	0.81	Strongly Agree
10	I find that the smartphone saves my time for English learning.	4.30	0.83	Strongly Agree
11	I find that the smartphone easy to use for English learning.	4.37	0.69	Strongly agree
12	I feel that using the smartphone enables me to do my English assignments easily.	4.37	0.76	Strongly Agree
<b>Perceived Satisfaction (PS)</b>				
13	I feel motivated to learn English when using the smartphone.	4.10	0.89	Agree
14	English learning is more flexible by using the smartphone.	4.23	0.85	Strongly Agree
15	I access my English resources through the smartphone.	4.33	0.79	Strongly Agree
16	I improve my English language using smartphone applications.	4.23	0.82	Strongly Agree
17	I find that the use of the smartphone improves my English language skills.	4.25	0.83	Strongly Agree
18	I acquire new knowledge of the English language through the use of the smartphone.	4.33	0.79	Strongly Agree
<b>Total Average</b>		4.23	0.64	Strongly Agree

**TABLE 3. Perceptions of English Learning Using Smartphones**

Item	Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Response
<b>Comprehension</b>				
1	I understand better English courses when using the smartphone	4.18	0.77	Agree
2	I improve my reading comprehension when using the smartphone	4.22	0.74	Strongly Agree
3	I improve my English proficiency when using the smartphone	4.19	0.78	Agree
4	I believe the smartphone helps me to enhance my English skills	4.30	0.82	Strongly Agree
5	I find it is much easier to understand English using the smartphone	4.28	0.73	Strongly Agree
6	The smartphone helps me to improve my English literacy performance	4.23	0.76	Strongly Agree
<b>Schema Building</b>				
7	I understand better new information when I use the smartphone for English learning	4.25	0.76	Strongly Agree
8	I develop new knowledge when I use the smartphone for English learning	4.26	0.73	Strongly Agree
9	I develop new information when I use the smartphone for English learning	4.22	0.79	Strongly Agree
10	I experience the real concept when I use the smartphone for English learning	4.08	0.82	Agree
11	I found that the smartphone helps me to build new information easily	4.20	0.79	Agree
12	I believe that the smartphone helps me to fill in the gap of knowledge for English learning	4.17	0.79	Agree
<b>Self-Directed Learning</b>				
13	I find it interesting to study English using the smartphone	4.28	0.76	Strongly Agree
14	I like study English by myself using the smartphone	4.19	0.87	Agree
15	I am confident in my ability to learn English using the smartphone	4.09	0.87	Agree
16	I enjoy learning English using the smartphone	4.30	0.74	Strongly Agree
17	I prefer to direct English learning by myself using the smartphone	4.14	0.84	Agree
18	I want to learn something new for English learning using the smartphone	4.16	0.82	Agree
<b>Memory</b>				
19	The use of smartphone enables me to better remember in English learning	4.03	0.90	Agree
20	I use the smartphone to remember new English words	4.06	0.89	Agree
21	I review English lessons often using the smartphone	4.03	0.88	Agree
22	I improve my English language skills using the smartphone for reviewing	4.12	0.82	Agree
23	I found that the smartphone enables me to recall	4.13	0.84	Agree

	new information of English learning			
24	I believe that the smartphone helps me to remember my English learning easily	4.11	0.76	Agree
	<b>Total Average</b>	4.18	0.66	Agree

Table 3 also shows the three lowest mean scores. The lowest shows that the respondents agreed ( $M = 4.03$ ;  $SD = 0.88$ ) that they reviewed English lessons more often using the smartphone, based on Item 21 in the memory section. In the same section, respondent agreed ( $M = 4.03$ ;  $SD = 0.90$ ) that the use of the smartphone enabled them to better remember in English learning (item 19) followed by Item 20, which shows the respondents agreed ( $M = 4.06$ ;  $SD = 0.89$ ) that using the smartphone helped them to remember new English words. The findings show that the students mostly responded with minimal agreement in the memory section of the questionnaire in Table 3.

Table 4 depicts the overall mean score and standard deviation for the two variables: (a) use of the smartphone and (b) use of the smartphone in learning English. The results of the two main variables show that, in general, the students had positive perceptions regarding the usage of the smartphone ( $M = 4.23$ ;  $SD = 0.64$ ) and in learning English using a smartphone ( $M = 4.18$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ).

**TABLE 4. Overall Mean and Standard Deviation**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Use of the smartphone	4.23	0.64
Use of the smartphone in learning English	4.18	0.66

As shown in Table 5, there was a highly significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.90$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between the use of smartphones and English learning using smartphones.

**TABLE 5. Relationship Between Students' Perceptions of Using Smartphones and English Learning Using Smartphones**

Variable	English Learning Using the Smartphone	
	$r$	$p$ -value
Use of the Smartphone	0.90	0.00

## CONCLUSIONS

The empirical data of this study resulted in several conclusions for the study. First, the Malaysian university ESL students mostly perceived the smartphone as a beneficial tool for learning English language. The students mostly agreed that the smartphone helped them to learn and improve English better. Concerning English learning using the smartphone, the respondents also strongly agreed that the smartphone help them to understand English better and to develop

self-directed learning. The findings also indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between the use of smartphones and English learning using smartphones.

In short, Malaysian university ESL students showed a positive response toward learning English via their smartphones. They enjoyed learning through their smartphones due to their portability, convenience, and flexibility. Thus, the application of mobile technologies has emerged as a substantial tool for university students in fulfilling the requirements of 21st century learning. Research may be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of integrating smartphones into English language learning activities in the classroom.

## THE AUTHOR

**Rafidah Abd Karim**, PhD, is a senior lecturer at Universiti Teknologi MARA Tapah Campus in Perak, Malaysia. She received her PhD in TESL with a specialization in mobile language learning from Sultan Idris Education University in Malaysia. She serves on an editorial board, and she is also an active writer and reviewer for ten distinguished international journals. She has published more than 60 publications mainly on TESL, mobile technology, mind mapping, gender studies, language, and educational technology at both the national and international level. Email: feida16@uitm.edu.my

## REFERENCES

- Ahmad, T. (2020). Student perceptions on using cell phones as learning tools: Implications for mobile technology usage in Caribbean higher education institutions. *PSU Research Review*, 4(1), 25–43. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-03-2018-0007>
- Annamalai, N., Ab Rashid, R., Saed, H., Al-Smadi, O. A., & Yassin, B. (2022). A phenomenological study of educators' experience after a year of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontier Psychology*, 13, Article 869687. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.869687>
- Karim, A., Mustapha, R., & Ismail, I. (2023). Women empowerment in higher education: Leveraging mobile technologies in achieving SDG5 in Malaysia. In *Sixth International Conference of Women in Data Science* (pp. 168–173). Prince Sultan University (WiDS PSU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. <https://doi.org/10.1109/WiDS-PSU57071.2023.00043>
- Karim, R. A., Mustapha, R. (2023). The Malaysian higher education students' perceptions and acceptance toward mobile learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In M. R. Laouar, V. E. Balas, B. Lejdel, S. Eom, & M. A. Boudia (Eds.), *12th International Conference on Information Systems and Advanced Technologies "ICISAT 2022"* (Lecture notes in networks and systems, Vol. 624). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25344-7\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25344-7_4)
- Karim, A., Abu, A. G., & Khaja, F. N. M. (2017). Theoretical perspectives and practices of mobile-assisted language learning and mind mapping in the teaching of writing in ESL classrooms. *Journal of English Teaching*, 2(1), 1–12.
- Kulkuska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. *ReCALL*, 20(3), 271–289.
- Malaysian Ministry of Education. (2013). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025*.
- Mohtar, S., Jomhari, N., Mustafa, M. B., & Yusoff, Z. M. (2022). Mobile learning: Research context, methodologies, and future works towards middle-aged adults – A systematic literature review. *Multimed Tools and Applications*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-022-13698-y>

- Murugan, A., & Teoh, G. B. S. (2023). The effectiveness of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) via smartphone applications for tertiary ESL learners. *Journal of Contemporary Social Science and Education Studies*, 2(2), 99-113.
- Ying, Y. H., Kehing, K. L., Suhaili, M. S., & Md Yunus, M. (2022). Speech pro apps: An innovative approach in enhancing tertiary students' presentation. *Creative Education*, 13, 1327-1336.





# ESP Listening Difficulties and Strategies: A Metaphorical Analysis

---

Shu-Fei Hsieh

*National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan*

This study presents qualitative data from a project. It aims to investigate the relationship between student concepts of listening difficulties and strategies in an ESP classroom. Eighty three fifth-year applied language students from a five-year junior college participated in this research. Students were required to do five writing assignments based on their comprehension and reflections on the listening activities in class. The writings were examined according to Lakoff and Johnson's model for analyzing conceptual metaphors. The results of this study indicate that through proper guidance, some students could express their listening difficulties and strategies with metaphors properly, and hence their thoughts were deeply understood. Not only students but also teachers can benefit from knowing students' ESP learning concepts. Pedagogical guidelines are suggested for ESP teachers, based on the results of the metaphorical analysis and the results of the questionnaire.

## INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to investigate student concepts of listening to English for specific purposes (ESP) materials and their listening strategies used in the business classroom through their use of metaphorical expressions. Listening has been considered a basic input resource for language learning. Without listening, one can hardly learn how to speak. Compared to the other input resource, reading, Taiwanese students receive less training and struggle more with listening comprehension (Sy, 2003). Moreover, English for specific purposes is receiving more and more attention in recent years. In view of this, this study focused on student concepts of listening in the business English classroom. This study analyzed students' spontaneous metaphorical expressions in describing the tasks of listening to ESP materials. By using metaphor as a tool, this study investigated the students' concepts, difficulties, and strategies for listening tasks in a business English class.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Metaphor is seen as an important part of human thinking and language. As cognitive sciences, particularly cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics develop, metaphors are considered a key element of human languages (Kirsch, 2018; Thomas, 2011). Nowadays cognitive science is in the leading position to

study how human beings recognize and understand things. Green and Evans (2006) pointed out that “cognitive linguists also argue that metaphor is a central feature of human language” (p. 38). The concept of metaphor is well known and is defined in a dictionary as “an expression which describes a person or an object in a literary way by referring to something that is considered to possess similar characteristics to the person or object you are trying to describe: ‘The mind is an ocean’ and ‘the city is a jungle’ are both metaphors. Metaphors and similes are the most commonly used figures of speech” (Gillard, et al., 2003, p. 803). A metaphor is not something that just occurs once in a while, but appears in daily speech. Littlemore and Low (2006) re-emphasized the significant value of metaphors: “Recent developments in cognitive linguistics have highlighted the importance as well as the ubiquity of metaphor in language” (p. 268).

On the other hand, student concepts toward learning are gaining more and more attention as educational theories develop. Levin and Wagner (2006) developed a systematic method to analyze students’ spontaneous use of metaphors. The methodology they developed contained multiple methods based on previous research. Levin and Wagner’s methods of analyzing metaphors were shown in two stages. In the first stage, they followed Lakoff and Johnson’s analysis of conceptual metaphors; in the second stage, they followed Fauconnier’s (1994) integrative or blending theory (BT). Their analysis set a good model for researchers to follow in analyzing metaphorical concepts.

## **OVERVIEW OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES AND STRATEGIES IN ESP**

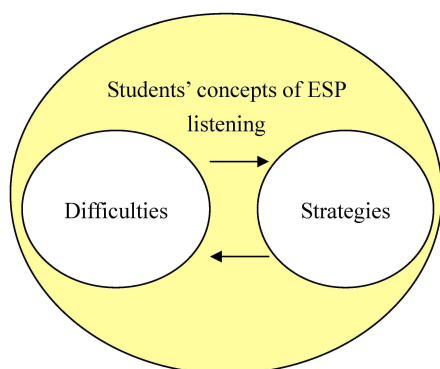
ESP has drawn teachers’ and scholars’ attention since the early 1960s (Huang, 2005). The focus of learning and teaching English by then had already moved into ESP from its original focus, English for general purposes (EGP). According to Huang (2005), ESP can be divided into two categories: English for occupational purposes (EOP) and English for academic purposes (EAP). Most of the research done recently on ESP has been in the EAP domain (Dwyer, 1993; Feak & Salehzadeh, 2001; Flowerdew & Miller, 1997; Huang, 2005; Murphy, 1996). More research studies need to be done on courses like Journalism English, Business English, and English for Studying Abroad, (Huang, 1997), which have been offered to help students to be more involved in a specific field while they were learning English.

As for the area of listening comprehension, research has mainly focused on the listening materials in EAP, especially on the issues of authenticity, assessment, and accents. Flowerdew and Miller (1997) examined five sets of EAP textbooks and compared the results with a recorded economic lecture. They pointed out the areas in which the textbooks were lacking, which lay mainly in an insufficiency in authenticity. Murphy (1996) also commented on current EAP teaching materials in reading and listening and suggested that more authenticity should be included.

Enlightened by the above studies, this author has developed a conceptual framework for this study as shown in Figure 1. Students’ concepts, difficulties, and strategies relevant to ESP are the areas for investigation. The big circle represents the students’ ESP listening concepts while the two smaller circles represent ESP

listening difficulties and strategies. Following the main principles of Nushi's (2020) and Levin and Wagner's (2006) works, the study tried to fulfill the purpose of researching listening comprehension difficulties with metaphorical analysis.

**FIGURE 1. Relationship Between Students' ESP Listening Concepts, Difficulties, and Strategies**



## METHOD

The present study involved 45 students in their fifth year of a private five-year junior technology institute in central Taiwan and enrolled in the Department of Applied Foreign Language. Participants were aged around twenty years old and had been learning English for at least seven years. They were taking the course Negotiation and Presentation Skills in English at the time the study was taking place. The professor used English as the medium of instruction in the classes. An MP3 CD with different topics, situations, and tips on it was distributed to the students to practice listening and speaking skills after school.

This study used Levin and Wanger's (2006) model of five reflective assignments with minor modifications to best serve the purpose of this study. The purpose of the reflective assignments was to induce students' metaphorical thinking and reflections on their learning process and feelings. Students were asked to write down how they tried to understand the lecture and how they felt. They were allowed to choose either English or Chinese for the writing task so that they could feel more comfortable and have a better chance to express themselves.

The following is an example of the questions asked in the reflective assignments:

If you were the president of the university and you needed to inform the teacher what the students' evaluation of him was, what would you say? Please write a letter to the teacher and tell him what students thought about the types of listening tasks he had set and what their relevance to business English was? How would the MP3 and the English in the classroom help students prepare for their future business careers? (Appendix E, Question 1)

Based on the understanding of the students and the teaching materials, the author started to design reflective assignments for the students. Given that the present study focused on the progress of listening comprehension difficulties and strategies, five assignments were developed according to the five presentation skills the teacher scheduled to teach the students. In each reflective assignment, three questions were provided to the students. They only needed to answer one question from the three in each assignment. Students had one to two weeks, depending on the time each presentation skill was taught, to finish each reflective assignment. (For the five reflective assignments, see Appendices A–E.)

Content analysis was used to analyze the students' reflective assignments. The data collected were analyzed in three dimensions: metaphor, difficulties in ESP listening, and strategies for ESP listening. The categorization of metaphors was based on Lakoff's (1993) model for analyzing conceptual metaphors. As for the analysis of difficulties and strategies, Hasan's (2000) five listening difficulties categories (see Appendix F) and Oxford's (1990) strategy system (Appendix G) were used as the coding system. Thus, the ESP listening difficulties and strategies in each metaphor category were revealed.

**TABLE 1. The Notation System Used in This Study**

CAPITAL LETTERS	For the conceptual categories.
<b>Bold Font</b>	<b>For metaphors that are produced by the subjects.</b>
' '	For the explanation the participants gave regarding the metaphors in (single quotation marks ) their reflective assignments.

Lavin and Wagner's (2006) model is a widely used process for metaphor analysis. This model aims at analyzing conceptual metaphors. Each metaphor was analyzed by its source domain and the target domain (Lakoff, 1993). The source domain is the sphere that appeared and the target domain is the meanings that the metaphor implied. For each metaphor, from the source domain to the target domain, the mapping of the metaphor is the main consideration to categorize the metaphor. The mapping refers to the reasons for why the students used the metaphor to describe their listening to ESP materials. Students' explanations of each metaphor they used showed the mapping rule. As Lakoff (1993) stated, "The language is secondary. The mapping is primary in that it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts" (p. 211).

The author then studied again all the data and identified the difficulties that students reported in their reflective assignments. Students' expressions for each ESP listening difficulty were examined and assigned to a corresponding statement listed in the form of Hasan's (2000) listening difficulties statements (see Appendix F). The 24 statements of listening difficulties, according to Hasan's categorization, belong to one of five types. Statements 1 to 3 are the listening difficulties in listening comprehension strategies. Statements 4 to 6 are listening difficulties in understanding the listening messages. Statements 7 to 12 are listening difficulties in listening tasks and activities. Statements 13 to 18 are listening difficulties of the speaker. Statements 19 to 24 are listening difficulties in the listener's cognitive concepts.

As for the strategy part, this study used Oxford's (1990) 62 strategies in her strategy system as the criterion to code students' reported strategies in their

reflective assignments. Each strategy that students mentioned in their reflective assignments was assigned a code in Oxford's strategy system (see Appendix G for a complete list of strategies).

Two weeks after the initial analysis, the author examined again all the data and repeated the same process. She marked the specific detailed strategies, students' difficulties, and expressed metaphors, and made a list of them. Then, she compared the data saved in an Excel file and the list to ensure the validity of the data analysis.

To sum up, the major methodology applied in this study consists of (a) the analysis of students' metaphorical expressions in their reflective assignments, (b) the questions in the assignments in which the students were asked to express their listening experiences by using metaphors, and (c) students' answers to those questions, based on their listening practice, which was all about their listening activities in the business English class. The metaphorical expression analysis was a specific method to analyze all students' responses. It is quite new and rather practical to apply metaphorical analysis to students' perceptions of strategies and difficulties in listening to ESP materials.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study collected 201 pieces of writing from 45 students' reflective assignments. The metaphors they used were assigned to five categories, based on the concepts and students' explanations: (a) GETTING LOST, (b) TORTURE, (c) NATURE, (d) GAME, and (e) SKILL. In addition to students' use of metaphor, this study also reports the results of students' reported listening difficulties and strategies used in their listening activities.

Table 1 shows that the first metaphor category, GETTING LOST, gained the highest percentage of use. Ten students described listening to ESP topics as GETTING LOST. Students expressed their situation as helpless in listening to ESP topics. They felt that they were **playing the lute to a cow (preaching to deaf ears)** or **in a black hole**. They could not see the future and felt sleepy when listening to ESP topics. Other metaphors illustrated by eight students in this category were: **playing chess with Chou Gong**, **duck listening to the thunder**, **playing the lute to a cow (preaching to deaf ears)**, **listening to rap**, or **Taoist reciting chants**, **blank brain**, and **getting lost**.

**TABLE 1. Metaphors of Listening to English for Specific Purposes**

<b>Listening to ESP topics is:</b>	<b>Because (reasons)...</b>
GETTING LOST	22.2%
<b>Duck listens to thunder</b>	Cannot understand anything.
<b>Get lost</b>	Cannot understand anything.
TORTURE	17.8%
<b>In hell</b>	Miserable.
<b>Sitting on a bed of needles</b>	Anxious.

NATURE	6.7%
<b>In a storm</b>	Scary during the storm, but beautiful scene after storm.
<b>Small hill becomes big mountain</b>	Gradually accumulate knowledge.
GAME	6.7%
<b>Jigsaw</b>	Easier at the end than at the beginning.
<b>Riding rollercoaster</b>	Sometimes down and sometimes up.
SKILL	4.4%
<b>Cooking</b>	The more you practice, the easier you cook.
<b>Driving</b>	The more familiar with the skills, the easier to drive.

The difficulties and strategies students had were different for each metaphor category (Table 2).

**TABLE 2. Students' ESP Listening Difficulties and Strategies in Each Metaphor Category**

Metaphor	Difficulties	Strategies
<b>GETTING LOST</b>	5, 6, 14, 16, 20, 21, 25	Memory D2, Cognitive A5; Compensation A1, B2; Metacognitive A1, B5, B6
<b>TORTURE</b>	5, 6, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21	Memory B3, Cognitive A1, D6; Compensation A2; Metacognitive A2, B1, B5, B6; Affective B1
<b>NATURE</b>	5, 6, 16	Cognitive B1; Compensation A1, A2; Metacognitive A2, B5; Affective B1; test-taking strategies
<b>GAME</b>	5, 6, 16, 17, 20, 21	Cognitive A5; Compensation A1, A2; Metacognitive A2; Affective B1
<b>SKILL</b>	5, 16	Memory B3, Cognitive A1, B1, D6; Metacognitive B6

*Note.* Numbers in the Difficulties column are Hasan's (2000) listening difficulties statements (see Appendix F). Numbers and letters in the strategy column are the strategy items in Oxford's strategy system (1990; see Appendix G).

Students actually had a more specific description of vocabulary difficulties. For the metaphor categories of GETTING LOST, GAME, and SKILL, students further expressed four different kinds of vocabulary difficulties: (a) not enough vocabulary, (b) not close to daily life, (c) too difficult, and (d) confusing meanings. Having poor vocabulary ability was a common vocabulary difficulty. Students needed to have a broad vocabulary in order to understand any given text. Second, one of the reasons why students could not comprehend ESP listening is that some of the vocabulary words were not commonly used in students' daily life. Third, in ESP, some of the vocabulary words are very specific to a particular field, and some students might think those vocabulary words are very difficult for them. The last vocabulary difficulty resulted from the multiple meanings of each vocabulary item. Students were confused and did not know which meaning could best fit in the content. Through the writing of reflective assignments, students not only discovered their own ESP listening difficulties but also figured out the reasons behind those difficulties. The vocabulary used in different subject areas caused difficulties in ESP listening. Furthermore, some of them even wrote down some strategies they could use to solve the problems and encouraged themselves.

Pronunciation was also one of the difficulties students mentioned. For the metaphor categories GETTING LOST and TORTURE, students mentioned that different ways of pronouncing a word also resulted in ESP listening difficulties for them. Through writing the reflective assignments, students reflected on their own ESP listening process and tried to figure out their own problems and thought of a way to solve them. For example, words with the same or similar pronunciation but different meanings also confused students. Student B4 in Reflective Assignment 3 wrote, “The [pronunciation] of some words are a little bit similar. Sometimes you might make some mistakes of the definition.”

Some students mentioned that different accents also resulted in listening difficulties. For the metaphor categories TORTURE and GAME, students also mentioned their problems with accents. They gave examples of different accents: “For instance, the name of ‘Harry Potter,’ which British may say ‘Harry Pota’ [Student B27]. Student B4 also wrote: “When you listen to your foreign teachers speak in English during the class, they are from different countries, so they have some different accents.”

Many students wrote that they had problems concentrating on listening tasks. For the metaphor category GETTING LOST, TOROUTE, and GAME, students reported that they were sometimes too nervous to concentrate on listening to their ESP topics. To solve the problems, the students also used many strategies. For example, it was interesting to see how students used affective strategies to encourage themselves. For the metaphor category NATURE, students used affective strategy B1. For this particular affective strategy, making positive statements, students used different kinds of encouragement. They gave positive statements for now or the future. Some students would imagine a better future in order to encourage themselves. For example, in Question 2 of Reflective Assignment 5, Student B43 imagined that she would become a diplomat and that the friend she described would be an official interpreter, serving the government.

For the metaphor category NATURE, students reflected on two strategies that could not be recognized and categorized, by using Oxford’s (1990) strategy system. They were (a) avoiding mental translation and (b) test-taking strategies. Students wrote that they could not help but translate what they heard into Chinese and thus sometimes missed important points of the oral messages. The second strategy was related to test-taking. Student B24, in Reflective Assignment 4, shared her test-taking skill as well. She wrote in English: “You have to put emphasis ESPECIALLY on the *wh*- words at the beginning of every question. [Then], having lexicon and logic is important as well. Half of the questions are presented in almost [the same] way, the ‘rhetorical question.’” She learned that *wh*- questions and words are often the keys to the answers, thus she highly recommended this strategy. The metaphor that this particular student used was **bath under sunshine**. Those students emphasized the value of *wh*-questions, words, and keywords. In the study, students pointed out some test-taking strategies and strongly trusted themselves. Some of them revealed that they learned the test-taking skills in the cram schools, and they found these strategies to be helpful.

Most of the time, when students tried to finish their reflective assignments, they also reflected on their difficulties and strategies based on their own experiences, such as taking an exam or listening to a lecture. They knew the

difficulties they encountered and would attempt to resolve the problems. For example, Student B44 in Reflective Assignment 2 wrote,

I faced several difficulties when I [was] listening to teachers, CD or MP3. First, when I listened to teachers from different countries, the teacher's accent always perplexed me. I also couldn't understand when teachers speak too fast. When I faced those difficulties in class, I listened to keywords that teachers said many times. Second, when I listened to a CD or MP3 to do my homework, I couldn't understand contents that CD or MP3 said sometimes if it said too fast. When I faced this difficulty, I had to listen [to] it again and again. Third, when I just listened and [had] no pictures or articles to read, I didn't know what to do in class. I always [lost] my attention. When I faced this difficulty, I had to take some notes about what the teachers just said during the class. It would help me concentrate my attention on what the teacher is saying during the class. [Student B44, Reflective Assignment 2]

When students were aware of the strategies they could use, they were actually making progress (Hsu, 2005; Oxford, 1990, 2002; Yang, 1995).

In sum, through the metaphorical expressions, students expressed that ESP listening was necessary training that they had to experience. Students who used different metaphors faced different ESP listening difficulties and used different strategies. Furthermore, the biggest difficulties that students encountered were with the speaker. The speakers' fast speaking rate, pronunciation, and accent confused the students the most. As for strategies, the participants tended to use metacognitive strategies most, and that meant students would try to manage their own ESP learning process.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Knowing students' cognitive concepts can help teachers organize and develop a suitable curriculum. Recently, student-centered teaching methodology has become popular. Like the old Chinese sayings and the teaching philosophy, *en tsi shri giao* (因材施教), which means teaching according to students' aptitude, teachers are usually encouraged to do so. Unlike in the previous educational setting, the focus now has shifted from the teachers to the students. Teachers are encouraged to understand each student's background, skills, and abilities in order to facilitate their teaching. The metaphor is a good tool to detect insights into students' learning process. Using the results of this study as a source of understanding, teachers can communicate with students, try to resolve students' problems with ESP listening, and introduce learning strategies to the students. Not only can the results of the study be an indicator, but the method can also be used in classrooms. Teachers will see how powerful the metaphor can be as a tool for communication. Furthermore, in 1988, the term "metaphorical competence" was first used. Ever since, it has been re-emphasized along with communicative competence (Littlemore & Low, 2006). Understanding and using metaphors is an important step in learning a second language.

Furthermore, based on the findings of students' learning concepts, difficulties, and strategies, teachers can further figure out what the possible problems students



might encounter and introduce more strategies that students can use in their listening tasks. Students' concepts are the basis for understanding their difficulties and strategies, and thus, creates a more comprehensive understanding. Any research on learning difficulties, strategies, and students' learning concepts should always include all three, thus the possible solutions to these difficulties will likely be more comprehensive.

The author also suggests that further studies can be developed to investigate relevant issues. For example, in this study, only the difference in each metaphor category was revealed. It might provide great help to the students if a systematic guideline were developed to explain difficulties and strategies in each metaphor category. In this way, the tool of the metaphor should be upgraded and be part of the standard aptitude and psychology tests. On the other hand, once the guidelines for metaphor as a tool to detect students' learning concepts is established, teachers can use it and have the ability to understand and explain the metaphors in the class.

Additionally, it is recommended to modify these questions in the reflective assignments, particularly to fit the situation of the class, so more metaphors can be generated from students' responses and thus provide more research data. Students had the inclination to choose the same question in each reflective assignment. Due to the different cultural and educational systems, the adapted questions and the method used in asking the questions in the reflective assignments should be changed from Levin and Wagner's (2006) research design, which the study followed. Some questions in the reflective assignments could be deleted or altered to fit the students' backgrounds and culture. In Levin and Wagner's study, they reported fruitful results for every question; yet, students' question choices in each assignment were quite the same. Take the Reflective Assignment 1, for instance, only one student chose Question 1; three other students chose Question 3. The rest of the students chose Question 2.

Enriching the content of Oxford's strategy system may also be necessary. Over time, many other strategies are explored but not included in Oxford's strategy system. It would be a blessing if future researchers can combine these new strategies systematically with Oxford's strategy system, thus teachers and students could use these strategies more easily.

Understanding one's own difficulties, strategies, and the associated metaphors of listening to the target language, is a key component of learning for students. Uncovering the links between the students' ways of thinking and their reflective statements of difficulties and strategies is a critical part of the effort to produce better teaching and learning systems for teachers. Metaphor is just one tool in the toolkit, but it has great potential to help teachers and students unlock the power of language.

This study is the first to probe into students' metaphors, difficulties, and strategies together. Hence, a more scientific and systematic method to examine, distinguish, and explain difficulties and strategies among students with different cognitive concepts is needed for future research in this area.

## THE AUTHOR

**Shu-Fei Hsieh** is a PhD student at the National Taiwan Normal University. Her research interests lie in foreign language listening strategy instruction. She has been invited as a keynote speaker at different conferences. She also has years of experience in instruction in the US and Taiwan. Email: sandymissesin@gmail.com

## REFERENCES

- Dwyer, R. (1993, April). *Redesigning an EAP curriculum: Problems, needs, solutions, and teacher development* [Paper presentation]. The 27th Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Atlanta, GA, United States.
- Fauconnier G. (1994). *Mental spaces*. Cambridge University Press.
- Feak, C. B., & Salehzadeh, J. (2001). Challenges and issues in developing an EAP video listening placement assessment: A view from one program. *English for Specific Purposes, 20*, 477–493.
- Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (1997). The teaching of academic listening comprehension and the question of authenticity. *English for Specific Purposes, 16*(1), 27–46.
- Green, M. C., & Evans, V. (2006). *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Gillard, P. (Ed.). (2003). *Cambridge advanced learners dictionary* (6th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Hasan, A. S. (2000). Learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 13*(2), 137–153.
- Hsu, H. T. (2005). *Investigating listening problems and strategy use: A qualitative study of four Taiwanese EFL college learners* [Unpublished master's thesis]. National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
- Huang, S. Y. (1997). The ESP component in English programs for non-English majors at universities in Taiwan. In *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China* (pp. 367–378). Crane.
- Huang, S. H. (2005). *Assessing the relationship between referential understanding and academic reading comprehension among EFL college students* [Unpublished master's thesis]. National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Yunlin, Taiwan.
- Kirsch, C. (2018). Dynamic interplay of language policies, beliefs, and pedagogy in a preschool in Luxembourg. *Language and Education, 32*(5), 444–461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2018.1487452>
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (2nd ed.; pp. 202–251). Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Levin, T., & Wagner, T. (2006). In their own words: Understanding student conceptions of writing through their spontaneous metaphors in the science classroom. *Instructional Science, 34*, 227–278.
- Littlemore, J., & Low, G. (2006). Metaphoric competence, second language learning, and communicative language ability. *Applied Linguistics, 27*(2), 268–294.
- Murphy, J. M. (1996). Integrating listening and reading instruction in English for academic purposes (EAP) programs. *English for Specific Purposes, 15*(2), 105–120.
- Nushi, M., & Orouji, F. (2020). Investigating EFL teachers' views on listening difficulties among their learners: The case of Iranian context. *SAGE Open, 10*(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244020917393>
- Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*.

- Heinle & Heinle.
- Oxford, R. L. (2002). Language learning strategies in a nutshell: Update and ESL suggestions. *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*, 4(3), 124–132.
- Sy, B. (2003). The language learning styles and strategies of Chinese EFL students. *Selected Papers from the Twelfth International Symposium on English Teaching* (pp. 521–531). Crane.
- Thomas, L., & Beauchamp, C. (2011). Understanding new teachers' professional identities through metaphor. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(4), 762–769. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.12.007>
- Yang, N. D. (1995, March 26 – April 1). *Effective awareness-raising in language learning strategy training* [Paper presentation]. The 29th Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Long Beach, CA, United States.

## APPENDIX A

### Reflective Assignment 1

**Instructions:** Based on your *listening* experience from the homework you finish in your textbook, you can choose ONE of the following to write about.

#### Topics

1. Is there any relationship between your listening and your thinking? If so, how is thinking reflected in your listening?  
你認為聽力跟你的想法之間有任何關係嗎?
2. Suppose you were a supervisor from the MOE and you had to evaluate the quality of the textbook so you could recommend it to teachers. Please list at least two advantages and two shortcomings of the MP3 part and your overall opinion of the MP3 part.  
想像你是教育部的督學，你要審查你用的教科書好壞，才可以向上級回報。請就聽力的作業列出好壞至少各兩點，並告知你是否推薦老師用這本教科書。
3. Suppose you are Mathew. You need to provide a step-by-step guideline for students to accomplish the listening assignment. Choose one task and describe how you accomplish the task. Then, share what you feel while you try to accomplish the reflective assignment or the listening task.  
你是 Mathew 老師，你必須要詳細的告訴學生該怎麼完成作業。請從眾多的聽力作業中選一篇，一步一步說明應該要怎麼完成，並分享你在完成課本上的聽力作業或是這個寫作作業時有什麼感想。

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Reflective Assignment 2**

1. What difficulties did you face while listening to the lecture or homework part?  
Please give some examples.  
你上課或是寫功課在聽的時候有沒有遇到什麼樣的困難呢？請舉例
2. Complete the sentence “Listening is like..... because.....”  
依此句子寫成一篇作文：“聽力就像.....，因為.....”
3. You can choose one task in the listening assignments in the textbook and describe how you felt while listening to the MP3 and how you intended to accomplish the task.  
在這麼多聽力練習作業中，選一篇來寫有關於你在聽 MP3 或是這完成作業的時候，你有什麼感覺？

## APPENDIX C

### Reflective Assignment 3

1. Based on the experience of previous reflective assignments, why did you select the topic you chose?  
根據已往的經驗，你是如何挑選出一題 reflective assignment 來寫呢？
2. Of the four skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – which do you think is the most difficult? Please give some examples.  
聽說讀寫，你認為哪一樣最難？請舉實際例子。
3. When you sit in class and listen to the lecture, what kind of feelings do you have? Do you think of anything while you are listening? Try to think of a song, a movie, or a TV show to describe your feelings.  
當你坐在教室時聽課時，你有什麼感覺？你在聽的時候有想什麼嗎？想辦法用一首歌或是一部電影、電視節目來描述。
4. Select any topics for listening comprehension, and use metaphors to describe them.  
你也可以自訂有關聽力的題目，並以譬喻法描述。

## APPENDIX D

### Reflective Assignment 4

1. Compare this listening process, preparation, or anything you can think of with your previous listening tasks.  
跟之前比起來，說說在你聽的過程、準備方式或是其他任何有關聽力方面有何不同。
2. Please comment on **a specific** personal midterm presentation that you listened to. (If you have more than one presentation in mind, you can write more than one commentary, but make sure that you only write about one person's presentation at one time, please.)  
請就一位同學的期中報告，給一些意見。如果你想寫超過一位也可以，不過要確定你一次只描述一位同學期中報告，不要同時寫很多人!謝謝!
3. Imagine you were now 40 years old. You wanted to describe your feelings about the presentation that happened in your fifth grade when you were in college. What would you say? What did you think or how did you feel when you listened to your practice for the midterm presentation?  
想像你現在已經四十歲，你想要回頭跟專五時候的你說說你為期中報告練習的時候，你聽到自己說英文時的感覺。

## APPENDIX E

### Reflective Assignment 5

1. If you were the president of the university and you needed to inform the teacher what the students' evaluation of him was, what would you say? Please write a letter to the teacher and tell him what students thought about the types of listening tasks he had set and what their relevance to business English was? How would the MP3 and the English in the classroom help students prepare for their future business careers?

假如你是校長，現在要期末評鑑。你要寫信給馬速老師，告訴他你認為在課堂上馬速給的指導和教材對商業英文聽力的關聯性為何，以及你認為教材和課堂中給的東西是對學生畢業後投身商業英文領域的幫助為何。

2. Write a letter to your best friend that you haven't seen in 10 years. Describe what the lecture was and how you felt while listening to it.

寫一封信給你從小到大但是十年沒見面的麻吉，聊聊當你覺得在聽課時就像什麼，以及你有什麼感覺或想法？為什麼？

3. Complete the sentence "Listening to a story / a plan / a lecture / a business skill / in the business English class is ....."

用以下句子完成寫作：在商業英文課堂上聽故事/計畫/講課/商業技巧 是.....



## **APPENDIX F**

### **Hasan's Listening Difficulties Statements**

1. Pre-listening to information about the text improves my listening comprehension.
2. I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.
3. I listen to every detail to get the main idea of the spoken text.
4. I can interpret the meaning of a long-spoken text.
5. Unfamiliar words do not interfere with my listening comprehension.
6. Unfamiliar grammatical structures do not interfere with my listening comprehension.
7. I can predict what speakers are going to say from the title of the spoken text.
8. I can do listening activities in pair work.
9. I can do listening activities in group work.
10. After my teacher stops the tape, I can predict what will come next.
11. I can hold a discussion after listening to the spoken text.
12. I can write a summary of the spoken text.
13. I can understand natural speech that is full of hesitation and pauses.
14. I can understand the meaning of words that are not pronounced clearly.
15. I can understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.
16. I can understand well when speakers speak fast.
17. I can understand well when speakers speak with different accents.
18. Visual clues help me understand the spoken text (pictures, diagrams, charts, video, etc.).
19. I can get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.
20. I am not easily influenced by unclear sounds resulting from poor classroom conditions or outside noise.
21. I am not nervous or worried when I don't understand the spoken text.
22. I can understand a recorded text spoken by someone other than my teacher reading aloud.
23. I can understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.
24. I can answer questions which require answers other than a short answer (e.g., why or how questions).

## APPENDIX G

### Oxford's (1990) Strategy System

- Memory Strategies**
- A1: Grouping
  - A2: Associating/elaboration
  - A3: Placing new words into a context
  - B1: Using imagery
  - B2: Semantic mapping
  - B3: Using keywords
  - B4: Representing sounds in memory
  - C1: Structured reviewing
  - D1: Using physical response or sensation
  - D2: Using mechanical techniques
- Cognitive Strategies**
- A1: Repeating
  - A2: Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems
  - A3: Recognizing and using formulas and patterns
  - A4: Recombining
  - A5: Practicing naturalistically
  - B1: Getting the idea quickly
  - B2: Using resources for receiving and sending messages
  - C1: Reasoning deductively
  - C2: Analyzing expressions
  - C3: Analyzing contrastively (across languages)
  - C4: Translating
  - C5: Transferring
  - D1: Taking notes
  - D2: Summarizing
  - D3: Highlighting
- Compensation Strategies**
- A1: Using linguistic clues (observe body language)
  - A2: Using other clues (read lips)
  - B1: Switching to the mother tongue
  - B2: Getting help
  - B3: Using mime or gesture
  - B4: Avoiding communication partially or totally
  - B5: Selecting the topic
  - B6: Adjusting or approximating the message
  - B7: Coining words
  - B8: Using a circumlocution or synonym

- Metacognitive Strategies**
- A1: Overviewing and linking with already known material
  - A2: Paying attention
  - A3: Delaying speech production to focus on listening
  - B1: Finding out about language learning
  - B2: Organizing
  - B3: Setting goals and objectives
  - B4: Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing)
  - B5: Planning for a language task
  - B6: Seeking practice opportunities
  - C1: Self-monitoring
  - C2: Self-evaluation
- Affective Strategies**
- A1: Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
  - A2: Using music
  - A3: Using laughter
  - B1: Making positive statements
  - B2: Taking risks wisely
  - B3: Rewarding yourself
  - C1: Listening to your body
  - C2: Using a checklist
  - C3: Writing a language learning diary
  - C4: Discussing your feelings with someone else
  - A1: Asking for clarification or verification
  - A2: Asking for correction
  - B1: Cooperating with peers
  - B2: Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
  - C1: Developing cultural understanding
  - C2: Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings
- Social Strategies**
- A1: Asking for clarification or verification
  - A2: Asking for correction
  - B1: Cooperating with peers
  - B2: Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
  - C1: Developing cultural understanding
  - C2: Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings



## Guiding Beginning Academic Writers Toward Effectively Integrating Source Texts

---

Mary Eddy U and Jeremy Phillips

*Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao SAR, China*

Due to student needs in EMI higher education, EAP is being required at lower English proficiency levels. Systematically developing general language proficiency before introducing EAP is not feasible when students need EAP to successfully complete EMI content courses. Two key skills for EAP are critical reading and effective writing. This research explores the effectiveness of an integrated source reading and writing approach to developing students' academic writing. Teachers ( $N = 6$ ) at a tourism and hospitality institute in Macau were interviewed on their perceptions after one term using integrated reading and writing tasks to teach academic literacy. Results indicated that some teachers felt source texts helped students develop the content and lexical complexity of their essays, but patchwriting was apparent. General academic skill development problems with citation format, cohesion, and reading comprehension were more apparent among lower English proficiency students. Suggestions are provided for using integrated reading and writing tasks to teach EAP.

### INTRODUCTION

The need to study, write, and publish in English has reached far beyond the inner circle (Kachru, 1982) of English-speaking countries. English is the global academic lingua franca. English for academic purposes (EAP) skills are necessary for students at the growing number of EMI higher education institutions worldwide. Currently almost one in five English-taught programs worldwide is offered outside Canada, Australia, the UK, and the USA. In May 2021, the British Council identified 27,874 English as a medium of instruction (EMI) tertiary programs outside the “big four English speaking countries, an increase of 77% compared to January 2017” (Neghina & Agnew, 2021, p. 14).

In the past, English language learners were expected to achieve a certain level of general English language proficiency before being introduced to EAP. Graddol (2006), for example, benchmarked CEFR C1 (IELTS 6.5) as the threshold level for academic study in English. For higher education, a B2 (upper-intermediate) level or higher English level is generally required for academic study in English-speaking countries. This allows students to focus on developing grammar, vocabulary, and the four skills before being expected to learn academic or technical vocabulary, genre specific writing structures, and citation formats. However, as the net to accept students into EMI institutions widens, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries, students who enter university often need

to learn EAP despite starting with lower English proficiency levels. While challenging for the language learner, EAP skills are necessary for students to be successful in their academic courses.

In the past, universities have tried various approaches to the challenge of developing both general language skills and EAP abilities. Systematic general English textbooks are used in some contexts with EAP skills being added on in class. EAP textbooks have also been developed, which may focus separately on different academic skills, such as listening to a lecture, taking notes, and writing essays. However, the majority of such textbooks are designed to polish the abilities of students who already have a strong English language foundation.

A recent trend in both teaching and learning has been to integrate skills rather than teaching and assessing them separately. This approach can also be used for EAP, for example, integrating source-text reading with academic writing including citations. However, this approach requires further research into its effectiveness, particularly for students of mixed levels. The current study aims to clarify the effectiveness of integrated reading and writing academic tasks among students of mixed English ability levels by exploring teachers' perceptions after the first term of implementing this approach.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Writing from sources effectively is essential to almost any kind of academic practice. Effective source use and the ability to read for writing when completing assignments are key writing components in most genres commonly used in tertiary education. Similarly, the ability to appropriately select and correctly integrate the writing of others is a non-negotiable prerequisite for entering the discourse communities (Swales, 1990) of disciplines at a university.

However, due to lower levels of English proficiency, English language learners face additional challenges compared to native English-speaking apprentice academic writers. They may be more intimidated or confused while undertaking source-based writing because of the unfamiliar complexities and challenges of intertextuality. The temptation to slip into indiscriminate, and thus ineffective, source use tends to be stronger with less proficient English users (Pecorari, 2013). Even student writers who can resist over-reliance on input reading may, due to poor paraphrasing or limited experience with academic writing, produce *patchwriting*. Howard (1993) coined this term for “copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym substitutes” (p. 233), characterising such patchiness as inept but a less transgressive form of intertextuality than deliberate plagiarism (Howard, 1993, 1995). Resulting from a combination of weak paraphrasing skills and limited awareness of the purpose of support from sources, patchwriting, however, problematically blurs text taken from input reading together with the student's own writing. Pecorari (2013) broadened the category of patchwriting to include any form of textual plagiarism that occurs without a deliberate intention to falsify the text reuse. She cites a further distinction between “global patchwriting,” which pervades a learner's entire text resulting from an inability to incorporate ideas from sources, and “localized patchwriting,” which is section specific transgressive

or ineffective reproduction of specific word choices or sentence patterns from the original (Abasi & Akbari, 2008, as cited in Pecorari & Petric, 2014).

Ideas about the problematic nature of plagiarism have been questioned both within ELT (Chandrasoma et al., 2004; Pennycook, 1996; Scollon, 2007) and in the broader academic sphere (Barris, 2019; Howard, 1995; Spivey, 1990). Scholars have questioned originality as an absolute and defended text appropriation by novice writers and language learners as a learning mechanism. Textual borrowing is seen as a step towards greater independence and more effective intertextuality. Experience with learner writing has made English language teachers sympathetic to this argument. Text appropriation, including patchwriting (Hirvela & Du, 2013), is an understandable developmental tactic, while problematic.

Yet the perception of copying as an academic crime persists in institutional English-medium education and learner text appropriation is considered a misstep. Pecorari (2008) laid the responsibility for learner plagiarism partly at the feet of educators providing poor guidance in this area, rather than the wrongdoing of beginning academic writers. English language teachers are often on the front line of this problem. Serving as gatekeepers to the academic writing discourse community, EAP instructors try to instill this understanding in learner writers who may be unaware that inappropriate source use is taboo. In some cases, learners may be reticent toward using an authoritative voice when writing about ideas from published writers for cultural reasons. Technology has been developed to produce text artificially and to detect borrowed words but not to develop the cognitive basis for effective L2 intertextuality among learner writers. This grows out of experience applying their writing skills in different contexts (Du & Liu, 2021; Yung & Fong, 2019).

One solution is to avoid source-based writing at the developmental stages to remove the option for learner writers to “rely on the language of their sources” (Pecorari, 2013, p. 113) in tasks designed for learning writing skills. Learning to write happens in tandem with learning language, but this dual process is separated entirely from learning skills-related intertextuality. The justification for this approach is that learners should develop their own language resources first. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS), for example, separated the reading and writing sections in 1995, seeking to avoid any content or thematic overlap between the exam sections because some writers “drew heavily on the written content of the reading texts. ... In some cases cultural background meant that candidates were confused about whether to articulate their personal point of view or to reflect the more authoritative view expressed in the reading text” (Cambridge ESOL, 2004, p. 15). On a mass scale the reading input was interfering with the construct validity of the writing test, which was primarily meant to produce a sample of the exam candidate’s own prose. Thus, an independent essay was adopted with topics and frameworks tailored so that writers could fulfill the task from their own knowledge base. Conversely, an integrated essay with a writing task that requires incorporation of reading or listening input is still used on the TOEFL.

Aside from research evidence supporting the teaching of reading and writing integration as a skill (Abrams, 2019; Cho & Brutt-Griffler, 2015), the logic that learners should master the foundations of academic writing and the subtleties of the target language before taking on writing tasks that require sources and

citation is sound but unrealistic. Many contemporary learners are in a hurry to develop EAP skills regardless of their current English level because of external needs such as course or publication requirements. Secondly, academic writing is genre specific. Mastering a genre by reading numerous models and examples of that genre is the experience of most apprentice academic writers. Reading texts on a writing topic can provide both subject-specific input to be integrated into the writer's existing knowledge base (Spivey, 1990) and exemplars of the text types to be produced. In a tertiary context a building-block approach separating second language writing and academic writing, which includes source use, is inauthentic and can cause problems when learners are confronted with the demands of source-use for the first time in a professional faculty (Yung & Fong, 2019).

Additionally, with the spread of hand-held computing devices and ubiquitous internet (at least in the developed world), it is impractical, except under exam conditions, to prevent input reading being used in a writing topic because information, both good and inferior quality, is universally accessible. However, leaving learners to search topical English language sources on their own is not always an efficient strategy. Aside from the obvious disadvantages of time spent searching and the potential for loss of topic focus, Hirvela and Du (2013) found in their investigation of paraphrasing that learners tend to founder in their reading when confronted with texts far above their comprehension level, halting any writing that is expected to result. To avoid such problems, it may be a better practice for teachers to select and tailor the reading input for reading-writing tasks. This can reduce the already high cognitive challenge of selecting and integrating information because learners do not have to first select the source texts. Preselecting for relevance and lexically simplifying multiple input texts can scaffold the integration process by aiding comprehension (Cheong et al., 2019) and increasing the likelihood of intertextual synthesis.

The use of source texts by ELL writers has been studied by Plakans and Gebriel (2012) who found a kind of level-based arch, with lower proficiency learners relying more on input texts for language, middle proficiency learners borrowing less from the input readings in their writing but also making less use of the ideas from the input reading, and higher proficiency students able to adapt ideas from sources without reusing language. This echoes findings from Spivey and King (1989) who saw a similar pattern of emerging academic awareness in L1 writers working from multiple input sources in the 6th, 8th, and 10th grades. Advancement as a reader-writer in both studies meant more effective source use at the level of concepts, synthesis of sources, and coherence in the texts produced.

The academic discourse goal in scaffolded reading for writing is constructive intertextuality. This internal, invisible process is made visible in the written output, where effective or less effective intertextual integration is demonstrated in the writer's successful or unsuccessful development of an argument supported by sources along with citations. Sources could be used appropriately as support or inappropriately as what Du and Liu (2021) call "sources as decorations" (p. 11) added to a text they do not really cohere with, to meet genre expectations as the learner writer perceives them. Selecting relevant information for composition from within a reading text and successfully synthesizing information from multiple texts to produce something original are two of the three mental demands of intertextual writing identified by Cheong et al. (2019). The other is organizing and connecting



information. Similarly, Grabe and Zhang (2013) identified synthesizing information and comparing viewpoints (along with paraphrasing) as common tasks integrating reading and writing at universities. Identifiable problems, such as patchwriting and ineffective source use, as well as on-going challenges like effective paraphrasing, do not belie the advantages of combining reading and writing as a classroom approach for EAP (Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Hirvela 2016). Integrating information from input reading into written texts constructively is a challenge for L2 writers because it is a recursive, multi-step process. First the reader-writer must comprehend the input text(s), which therefore must be within their reading threshold level (Grabe & Stoller, 2002), a large component of which is lexical comprehension (Nation, 1990). Text-type aspects can also impede comprehension as learners must gain experience steering through academic genres they may not have read previously even in their first language (Bitchener, 2017). After comprehending, the reader-writer must select the relevant information (Hirvela & Du, 2013). Post selection, the reader-writer must integrate the information from the new reading with other sources read previously and with their own conceptions (Wette, 2017). This is where the integrated writing process can constructively begin and where the skill of critical literacy comes into play, linking reading and writing.

To make this kind of integration possible with lower-proficiency learners, who often struggle to meet the demands of EAP (Ye, 2020), the process of reading for writing needs to be scaffolded. Scaffolding here refers to task and text scaffolding, where the input readings have been pre-selected for relevance to the writing task and systematically level adjusted lexically and syntactically to make them accessible. This kind of text input designed for writing reduces the barriers to text engagement identified above – barriers such as poor source text selection, stopping entirely when faced with a text beyond the threshold reading level, unfamiliar genre formats, difficulties finding relevant information in a long text, and cognitive load. Though inauthentic, it is an academic training task that enables reading for writing skills to be built early in the language learning process making it more likely that learners will become independent writers later (Grabe & Zhang, 2013). Moreover, it allows learner engagement with source-based writing at the discourse level (incorporating ideas, synthesizing) while simultaneously developing source use skills at the sentence level (paraphrasing, quotation use, citation requirements).

### **Research Questions**

- RQ1. How does the “integrated reading + writing task” format affect the writing of beginning academic writers?
- RQ2. What areas of academic reading and writing in need of further development are most apparent?

### **METHOD**

The current descriptive study aimed to better understand the nature of beginning academic writers’ challenges in the critical reading + writing process

through the lens of their teachers' perceptions. Qualitative research methods were used to allow teachers to share their perceptions and opinions about the topic without being constrained by researcher opinions.

The participants were English lecturers ( $N = 6$ ) at a tourism and hospitality training-focused institute in Macau, including both native and non-native speakers with varying years of EAP teaching experience. They were interviewed on their perceptions after completing one term using integrated reading and writing tasks to teach academic literacy. Participation in the study was voluntary and not incentivized, although participants were told that their perspectives would be considered when adjusting for the following time the course was taught. The participants were given the option to answer the questions about the topic via oral interviews with the authors, or through providing written responses to the interview questions. Participants signed informed consent, and those who chose oral interviews all consented to having the interview audio recorded.

Twelve open interview questions were designed based on the research questions. The questions covered source use, citations, text planning, writing fluency, and classroom approaches to teaching writing integrating sources. Richards and Schmitt's (2002) definition of fluency as "the ability to produce written and/or spoken texts with ease ... [and] the ability to communicate ideas effectively" (p. 204) was referred to. Follow-up questions were asked to encourage participants to clarify and elaborate.

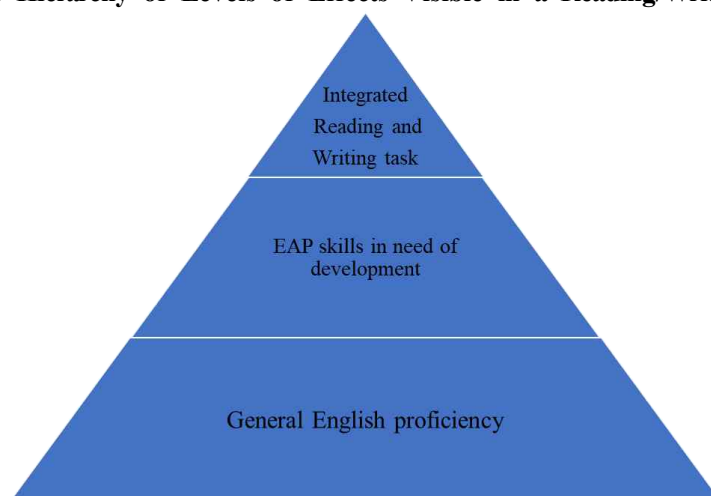
## **Data Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the interview scripts and written responses to the interview questions were handled using the same procedures for data analysis. The participants' responses were coded separately by the two researchers using open coding, without relying on pre-set theoretical codes (Maxwell, 2012). The separate sets of coding were then compared, and differences resolved through discussion. The two authors also conducted axial coding separately, and then compared and resolved differences through discussion. Quotes from the participants were included to exemplify the themes identified.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The effects of three overarching levels of challenge were identified from the data, which were further subdivided into specific aspects (see Figure 1).

Teachers perceived the effect of the reading input to be closely related to students' general English proficiency levels. In general, learners who were more proficient in English were able to harness the benefits of input readings to produce higher-quality writing; in contrast, those with lower English proficiency experienced more negative effects. As Interviewee 3 explained, "For high English proficiency students, the input readings are helpful. However, weak students just look and then copy them without much consideration." This confirms Cho and Brutt-Griffler's (2015) finding that stronger students produced better writing with source texts.

**FIGURE 1. Hierarchy of Levels of Effects Visible in a Reading/Writing Task**

### Effects of the Integrated Task

Table 1 clarifies problems and benefits teachers identified in students' writing that might not have been apparent without the controlled, reading-writing integrated task format.

**TABLE 1. Positive and Negative Effects of the Integrated Task Format**

Positive Effects	No. of Teachers Who Mentioned	Negative Effects	No. of Teachers Who Mentioned
1. Input readings provide students with ideas and content.	6	1. Patchwriting and ineffective quoting.	5
8. Input readings provide useful vocabulary for students' writing.	3	9. Input readings restrict students' writing.	4
10. Input readings model academic style and structures.	2	10. Integrated task has more steps, and thus students lose marks in more ways.	3

The teachers all felt that the source texts helped some of the students develop their writing. The source texts' main benefit was to provide more content and expert ideas. As Interviewee 5 pointed out, "I would say with inserted sources, students' writing felt more convincing and mature ... students seemed to be able to write more substantially." This supports Cheong et al.'s (2019) finding that using vetted source texts helped reduce the cognitive load on students while providing relevant content. Abrams (2019) and Cho and Brutt-Griffler (2015) also argued that having input readings led to better-quality written texts but did not clarify in what way.

This study clarifies some additional benefits of source texts. Some teachers felt that source texts provided students with more complex vocabulary on the topic, and even modeled academic writing structure to prime the students for their own

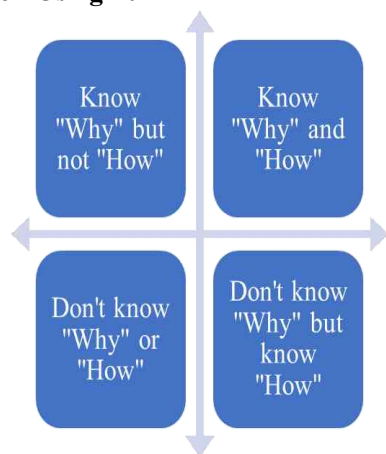
writing. “Those who understand the reading to some extent, they may be able to then use some of the language in their writing,” Interviewee 4 noted. Interviewee 1 explained:

I think some of them can actually use the paragraph structure [from the readings]. Some of them can see “Okay, the topic sentence is right here; the supporting is right here, and ahh in the end, that’s what I need to do.” So, they can catch the paragraph structure somehow and apply it to their own writing.

However, most of the teachers also felt requiring reading and citations from the source texts integrated into students’ writing provoked problems. For example, Interviewee 6 pointed out, “For those who struggled with citing information, they could find their writing was restricted with the additional requirement.” Requiring integration from sources also added more steps to the writing process, and thus more chances for students to get confused or to lose marks on their assessments.

The most seen challenge was that of patchwriting. Howard (1993) introduced this concept, where learner writing and text reused from the source blur together problematically. In this study, the types of patchwriting described included over-quoting, token citations, ineffective quoting, accidental plagiarism, and others. Interviewee 4 said of students with weaker English proficiency, “Many were just basically borrowing sentence after sentence from the text.” However, teachers’ interpretations of the reasons for students’ patchwriting showed a more complex dynamic: one that depended not just on English proficiency but also on understanding the purpose and form of writing from sources (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2. Relationship Between Understanding Reasons for Intertextual Source Use and Form of Using It**



Not knowing the purpose of citations and writing with reference to sources led to much of the ineffective quoting in the teachers’ view. “They actually don’t get it, to use the quote to support the ideas. They feel like ‘I need to quote because I’m required to quote’” (Interviewee 1). As Interviewee 3 explained:

I hope the students can feel the importance of using effective information to make their article interesting and convincing rather than being forced to use

external resources just to meet teachers' requirements or knowing how to use APA format.

Meanwhile, some students appeared to also struggle with the technicalities of source format. "I've seen some that are not really quoting correctly either. So, I don't know if they are trying to paraphrase or if this is a direct quote that is not correct" (Interviewee 2).

While Plakans and Gebril (2012) analyzed students' patchwriting and felt the type and degree of patchwriting depended on English proficiency, from the teachers' perspective, patchwriting was apparent across all levels of English proficiency in this context. The patchwriting depended on understanding the purpose of citing sources and the technicalities of citation format, as well as their English proficiency. This supports Du and Liu's (2021) finding that Chinese students may insert citations as "decorative features" without understanding the purpose of writing based on sources in academia. This suggests that the role of the EAP teacher in this context is not just to teach the form of writing from sources but, more importantly, to develop in students an understanding of why this is done at all.

### General EAP Development Needs

Table 2 provides an overview of general academic writing skills and needs apparent from the teachers' perspective as students develop as academic writers. These challenges were not specific to this integrated task intervention and would thus be relevant regardless of the EAP approach being used.

**TABLE 2. EAP Development Needs of Beginning Academic Writers**

Need	No. of Teachers Who Mentioned
More writing practices.	6
Model texts to learn genres.	5
Learning citation format.	5
Training in ways to attain cohesion in source-based writing.	3
Training in paragraph- and essay-level structure of academic writing.	3

Overall, most teachers felt that in the classroom context, there was limited practice, a limited number of samples, and limited feedback and that more of all three would be helpful. As Interviewee 1 noted, "I think we need more time to actually explain and expose them to more samples on why you should use source readings and why it's beneficial to you when you write." Wette (2017) also recommended extensive practice to achieve "writing from sources" skills.

EAP skills such as academic paragraph structure and extended essay structure were seen as a second layer of challenge, beyond the English skills. Cohesion between source text and student writing was also a particular problem for many students, as Interviewee 2 pointed out:

A lot of times it felt that [the citation] was just thrown there as an individual sentence just sitting there without any connections to the previous or the next sentence. I mean as a teacher you know what they are trying to do, but if you are just looking at it individually like that, it just doesn't make sense.

These general development problems with cohesion and reading comprehension were more apparent among students of lower English proficiency.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The current study examined teachers' perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of using vetted source texts to support student essay writing. Overall, it was found that the reading + writing format improved the content and depth of ideas in the writing and was a successful introduction for students to the practice of writing from sources in academia. However, problems were evident with understanding why source use is needed, and with citation format, cohesion, and academic writing structure.

The following recommendations are provided for EAP teachers and materials designers. First, vetting texts for English proficiency and content does help with the reading-to-write process. However, the texts need to be vetted considering English proficiency of the students to maximize their benefit. Second, it is preferred to provide multiple short texts with multiple perspectives, so students do not feel they need to write in agreement with the text to get the teacher's approval. Thirdly, to help students avoid patchwriting, teachers should aim to ensure students understand why sources and citations are used in academic work. Finally, repeated short practices may be more effective for skill-building than fewer long practices.

The number of interviewees in this study was limited due to the small number of lecturers teaching the course, so some insights and perspectives on this topic may not have been identified. In addition, the study only examined teachers' perceptions. Future research should also include detailed analysis of student texts, to see the extent to which the identified issues arise and in what ways, as well as examination of students' perceptions.

## THE AUTHORS

**Mary Eddy U** is an English lecturer at IFTM in Macau. She has been teaching university EFL/EAP courses in Macau, China, for over a decade and assisted with materials development and course administration as well. She is interested in making learning and the class experience relevant, useful, and fun for students. Email: mary@iftm.edu.mo

**Jeremy Phillips** has a BA from the University of Toronto, a master's degree in ELT from the University of Reading, a CELTA, and a DELTA. He has taught in Canada, Korea, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Japan, and Macau. His research interests include academic English, teacher training, and materials development. Email: jeremyphillips@iftm.edu.mo

## REFERENCES

- Abrams, Z. I. (2019). The effects of integrated writing on linguistic complexity in L2 writing and task-complexity. *System*, 81, 110–112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.01.009>
- Barris, K. (2019) Using the low ground to get high: The pedagogic value of teaching plagiarism, *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 31(1), 62–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1013929X.2018.1547021>
- Bitchener, J. (2017). Creating effective arguments in different academic genres. In J. Bitchener, N. Storch, & R. Wette (Eds), *Teaching writing for academic purposes to multilingual students: Instructional approaches* (pp. 85–98). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315269665-6>
- Cambridge ESOL. (2004). IELTS: Some frequently asked questions. *Research Notes*, 18, 14–17.
- Chandrasoma, R., Thompson, C., & Pennycook, A. (2004). Beyond plagiarism: Transgressive and non-transgressive intertextuality. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 3, 171–194. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlieo303\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlieo303_1)
- Cheong, C. M., Zhu, X., Li, G. Y., & Wen, H. (2019). Effects of intertextual processing on L2 integrated writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 44, 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2019.03.004>
- Cho, H., & Brutt-Griffler, J. (2015). Integrated reading and writing: A case of Korean English language learners. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(2), 242–261.
- Du, Q., & Liu, Y. (2021). Foregrounding learner voice: Chinese undergraduate students' understanding of paraphrasing and source use conventions for English research paper writing. *Language Teaching Research*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211027032>
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading*. Pearson.
- Grabe, W., & Zhang, C. (2013). Reading and writing together: A critical component of English for academic purposes teaching and learning. *TESOL Journal*, 4(1), 9–24. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.65>
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English next*. The British Council.
- Hirvela, A. (2016). Academic reading into writing. In K. Hyland & P. Shaw (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes* (pp. 127–137). Routledge.
- Hirvela, A., & Du, Q. (2013). “Why am I paraphrasing?”: Undergraduate ESL writers' engagement with source-based academic writing and reading. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12, 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2012.11.005>
- Howard, R. M. (1995). Plagiarisms, authorships, and the academic death penalty. *College English*, 57(7), 788–806. <https://doi.org/10.2307/378403>
- Howard, R. M. (1993). A plagiarism pentimento. *Journal of Teaching Writing*, 11(3), 233–246.
- Kachru, B. (1982). *The other tongue: English across cultures*. University of Illinois Press.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design*. SAGE.
- Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. Newbury House.
- Negina, C., & Agnew, M. (2021). *The changing landscape of English taught programs*. The British Council / Studyportals. <https://studyportals.com/intelligence/19347-2/>
- Pecorari, D. E. (2008). *Academic writing and plagiarism: A linguistic analysis*. Continuum.
- Pecorari, D. E. (2013). *Teaching to avoid plagiarism: How to promote good source use*. Open University Press.
- Pecorari, D., & Petrić, B. (2014). Plagiarism in second-language writing. *Language Teaching*, 47(3), 269–302. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000056>
- Pennycook, A. (1996). Borrowing others' words: Text, ownership, memory, and plagiarism. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(2), 201–230. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588141>
- Plakans, L., & Gebiril, A. (2013). Using multiple texts in an integrated writing assessment: Source text use as a predictor of score. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(3), 217–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2013.02.003>

- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics* (3rd ed.). Longman
- Scollon, R. O. N. (2007). As a matter of fact: The changing ideology of authorship and responsibility in discourse. *World Englishes*, 13, 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1994.tb00281.x>
- Spivey, N. N., & King, J. R. (1989). Readers as writers composing from sources. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24(1), 7–26. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.24.1.1>
- Spivey, N. N. (1990). Transforming texts: Constructive processes in reading and writing. *Written Communication*, 7(2), 256–287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088390007002004>
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wette, R. (2017). L2 Undergraduate students learning to write using sources. In J. Bitchener, N. Storch, & R. Wette (Eds.), *Teaching writing for academic purposes to multilingual students: Instructional approaches* (pp. 99–112). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315269665-7>
- Ye, Y. (2020). EAP for undergraduate science and engineering students in an EFL context: What should we teach? *Ampersand*, 7, Article 100065. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2020.100065>
- Yung, K. W. H., & Fong, N. (2019). Learning EAP at university: Perceptions of high-achieving first-year ESL undergraduates. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 73(3), 306–315. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccz019>



# The Effects of a Self-Study Program on Pre-Service Teachers' Pronunciation

---

Mai Matsunaga

*Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan*

This paper examines the results of a one-year self-study program where Japanese pre-service elementary school teachers conducted a self-study activity of their pronunciation skills. The participants were first-year university students in a teaching certificate program. They practiced pronunciation from an assigned textbook outside of class over the course of one year. In order to evaluate the change in the participants' English proficiency and teaching skills, a survey was conducted before and after the program. Comments in a free description section of the post-treatment survey suggested that most participants spent sufficient time practicing their pronunciation and consequently felt more confident with their pronunciation towards the end of the program. On the other hand, the majority of the participants mentioned that they felt the need for further self-study to improve their pronunciation in actual teaching situations and also to adjust their English "teacher talk" to the level of their students' proficiency.

## INTRODUCTION

### English Education in Japanese Elementary Schools

The new course of study for Japanese elementary schools, which was fully implemented in April 2020 (MEXT, 2017), requires third- and fourth-graders to take an English activity class once a week, for a total of 35 class hours a year. These classes focus on listening and speaking skills. Fifth- and sixth-graders have an English class as a subject twice a week, for a total of 70 class hours a year. These classes focus not only on listening and speaking skills but also on reading and writing skills. In addition, teachers in charge of teaching these English classes are mainly homeroom teachers with support from ALTs (assistant language teachers), or Japanese teachers with a license for teaching English at the secondary level. In addition, the ministry has offered elementary school teachers a course of lectures for obtaining a certificate for teaching English at the junior high school level.

There are three objectives to this newly introduced course of study (fifth- and sixth-graders): (a) to develop basic skills for communication in listening, reading, speaking, and writing through understanding differences between Japanese and a foreign language (English) in sounds, letters, vocabulary, expressions, sentence structures, and functions, and also through developing familiarity with reading

and writing, (b) to develop basic ability to communicate ideas and feelings with other people through listening and speaking, reading vocabulary and basic expressions learned previously in oral activities, and writing with attention paid to word order, and (c) to develop attitudes to independently communicate with other people using a foreign language (English), fostering better understanding of culture behind the language, and showing consideration to others. Moreover, this course of study (for the fifth- and sixth-graders) employs five categories of English skills, consisting of listening, reading, speaking (interaction), speaking (production), and writing, corresponding to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; Council of Europe, 2001).

### **Phonetics for Pre-Service Teachers**

English teaching in elementary schools in Japan mainly focuses on developing students' oral skills, and teachers are expected to conduct classes in English. Teaching classes in English requires not only a certain level of English speaking skills but also proper pronunciation to be a model for students. This can be acquired through studying and training in a phonetics course at a university. However, phonetics is not a required course in a teaching certificate program for elementary schools in Japan, and universities usually offer it as an elective course. Therefore, a majority of pre-service teachers become elementary school teachers without appropriate knowledge of English phonetics. This leads to a situation where in-service teachers do not have confidence in their pronunciation, and moreover, they do not have knowledge of teaching their students how to produce English sounds (Arimoto & Kochiyama, 2020; Habbick, 2017; Kaneko, 2016; Kashimoto, 2020; Miyakoshi, 2021).

In order to address this situation, researchers have suggested that a teaching certificate program for primary and secondary levels offer a required course in phonetics (Arimoto & Kochiyama, 2020; Kaneko, 2016; Kochiyama & Arimoto, 2016; Kochiyama et al., 2013). Moreover, Kochiyama et al. (2013) argued that a phonetics course needs to include the following three aspects: knowledge in phonetics, skills in producing proper English sounds, and skills in teaching pronunciation.

Considering the importance of teaching phonetics to pre-service teachers, some teacher trainers (university teachers) have incorporated phonetics into a required course offered in a teaching certificate program. For example, Habbick (2017), Kaneko (2016), and Kashimoto (2020) taught pre-service elementary school teachers the basics of phonetics as part of a required course by having them become familiar with phonics rules. Miyakoshi (2021), as a teacher trainer, also incorporated phonetics into a teaching methodology class in a teaching certificate program for elementary schools. She had 21 third-year university students in her methodology class practice pronunciation, focusing on the nine consonants (/l/, /r/, /ð/, /θ/, /s/, /v/, /f/, /t/, and /p/) Japanese students tend to have trouble with. She also had them practice classroom English expressions, and work on teaching activities, such as picture book reading, English songs, or English games. Based on the survey results completed by the students, she concluded that these training sessions helped the majority of the students (95%) gain confidence in teaching English in elementary schools.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Previous studies mentioned that the majority of university students in teaching certificate programs for elementary school education have only the limited knowledge and skills of English pronunciation due to the absence of required phonetics courses in the programs. Taking this into consideration, this study focused on a self-study program that dealt with pronunciation skills. The participants also had opportunities to use their pronunciation skills learned through the self-study in actual teaching situations in the course.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions, and research questions RQ2 and RQ3 will be explored in this paper.

- RQ1. After participating in a self-study program on improving pronunciation skills, how do the participants evaluate their improvement in their English proficiency and teaching skills?
- RQ2. After participating in the self-study program, what aspects of pronunciation skills do the participants think they still need to improve?
- RQ3. What kinds of English and teaching skills do the participants find necessary in regard to their future work as English teachers?

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants in the study were 52 first-year university students at a private university in Japan who were in teaching certificate programs for elementary school teachers and preschool teachers. The participants were from two classes (one for elementary school teaching majors, and the other for preschool teaching majors) of the same English course the author taught in 2021. The participants' profiles are summarized in Table 1. The current study was conducted as part of this English course.

**TABLE 1. Profiles of Participating Students**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	52 (24 elementary school teaching majors and 28 preschool teaching majors)
<b>Gender and Age</b>	6 male students and 46 female students. First-year university students (18-19 years old)
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	No experience (49 students, 94%)
<b>Outside University Experience</b>	Experience at tutoring school as a tutor (3 students, 6%)
<b>Experience Abroad</b>	English-speaking countries (9 students, 17%)

### Materials

#### Textbook

A textbook (Yamasaki, 2019) with a CD and downloadable audio on English pronunciation was selected for pre-service teachers to learn in this study. The

textbook is organized as follows. There were eight sections (a total of 86 units): (a) 10 sounds Japanese learners have trouble with (11 units), (b) vowel sounds (12 units), (c) diphthong sounds (5 units), (d) consonant sounds (24 units), (e) minimal pairs (8 units), (f) foreign words and incorrect Japanese English (14 units), (g) linking and reduction in English sounds (10 units), and (h) English prosody (stress and intonation; 2 units). Each unit in sections a to d had advice for proper pronunciation and approximately ten words and four sentences that included the target pronunciation points. The textbook was aimed at elementary school teachers, and example words and sentences are selected for classroom use at the elementary school level.

The participants were instructed to study four to five units per week for 20 weeks over a year (10 weeks each in the spring and fall semesters). In addition, the participants were instructed to memorize the sentences in each unit for quizzes conducted at the beginning of the next class. Each unit took approximately 10 minutes for the participants to study, depending on the difficulty of the target pronunciation in the unit, and therefore, the participants were supposed to study a minimum of 40 to 50 minutes a week.

### **Quizzes on the Textbook**

In order to follow up on the participants' self-study, a total of 20 short, oral review quizzes on the target sentences were conducted individually at the beginning of each class during the year. The participants were expected to memorize the weekly sentences (16 to 20 sentences). On each individual oral quiz, the instructor (the author) asked each participant to speak three sentences chosen randomly from the target sentences for the week. The participants were graded not only on their accuracy but also on their pronunciation and intonation. In addition to these 20 short quizzes, two comprehensive, oral review quizzes were conducted, one at the beginning of the fall semester and the other at the end of the fall semester. The former comprehensive review quiz consisted of five sentences, and the latter had 20 sentences from the units the participants had practiced in each semester. The former had only five sentences due to the time constraints of the class. All quizzes were meant to measure the participants' ability to put their knowledge into practice.

### **Survey**

In order to investigate the participants' perceived current and desired levels of English proficiency and teaching skills, a survey was administered. The survey consisted of three parts: (a) English proficiency, (b) teaching skills, and (c) free description (only for the post-treatment survey). The first part, English proficiency, was administered to ascertain how the participants assessed their own English proficiency and how they assessed the level of proficiency required for successful English teaching. To be more precise, the participants were asked to rate their English proficiency, using a scale from 1 to 6, in five domains (listening and speaking, grammar in speech, pronunciation, reading, and writing). In addition, the participants were asked to use the same scale to indicate the ideal levels in each domain that teachers must have to enable them to teach English. As for the second part, teaching skills, the participants were asked to rate their current teaching skills, using a scale from 1 to 4, in four domains (overall

teaching skills, ability to adjust to students' level of English, use of classroom English, and fluency in conducting activities in English). In addition, they were asked to use the same scale to indicate the ideal levels in each domain that teachers must have to enable them to teach English (see Matsunaga, 2016 for the domains and level descriptions for English proficiency and teaching skills). The last part of the survey was free description, and the participants were asked to write their opinions on the following four aspects: (a) evaluation of the self-study program, (b) aspects of pronunciation they need more practice on, (c) aspects of pronunciation in which they improved, and (d) future self-study activities to improve their English proficiency and teaching skills.

## **Procedure**

The self-study program in this study was conducted as part of an English course that was taught in the spring and fall semesters (14 classes in each semester, a total of 28 classes). The course was taught both online, using Zoom (<https://explore.zoom.us>) (24 classes), and face-to-face (4 classes) over the year due to the COVID-19 situations. The participants were given an explanation on the self-study program by the author in the first class (face-to-face). An explanation was given on the purpose of the research and self-study program, the targeted skills, what they were expected to complete, and how they were expected to conduct the self-study. After the explanation, they were given the textbook, and were instructed to conduct the self-study activity for 10 weeks in each semester (20 weeks in total over the year). Even though the self-study activity (the scores of quizzes) was included in the course content (accounted for 20% in the course grade, each semester), and therefore, the participants were expected to work on it, they were still offered the choice of not having the data from their surveys and quizzes compiled as part of the data for the study. Fortunately, all the participants agreed to be included in the study. Before the participants self-studied the target units of the week, the target sounds, words, and sentences in the textbook were briefly explained by the author and practiced together in class.

The survey was answered by the participants twice in class in person, at the beginning and the end of the self-study program, and was collected by the author. The first survey was paper-based, and the second survey had the same contents as the first one but was answered through Google Forms ([https://www.google.com/intl/ja\\_jp/forms/about/](https://www.google.com/intl/ja_jp/forms/about/)). Regarding the quizzes, the 20 short, oral review quizzes (three questions on each quiz) were administered individually by the author at the beginning of class (online), and the two comprehensive, oral quizzes were administered after each semester. To be precise on the two comprehensive review quizzes, the first one was administered individually by the author online. Because of the time constraints, only five sentences were tested with each participant. In the second comprehensive review quiz, administered in person, the participants worked in pairs, and asked and graded each other on a list of 20 questions (expressions) the author had prepared. The author prepared two lists of 20 questions from the same units covered in the fall semester so that the participants in a pair had different sets of questions. On both short and long tests, the participants were evaluated on each question by using three scales, 1 point for a correct response, 0.5 for a response that was not

correct but could be understood by elementary school students, and 0 for others. The quantitative data (the survey data and quiz scores) were processed using SPSS 19 (IBM), and the qualitative data (the textual data from the free description sections of the survey) were processed using the KH Coder (Higuchi, 2015). The KH Coder is a free application that analyzes textual data in a quantitative way.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Questions 2 & 3: Pronunciation Skills and Other Skills to Be Improved

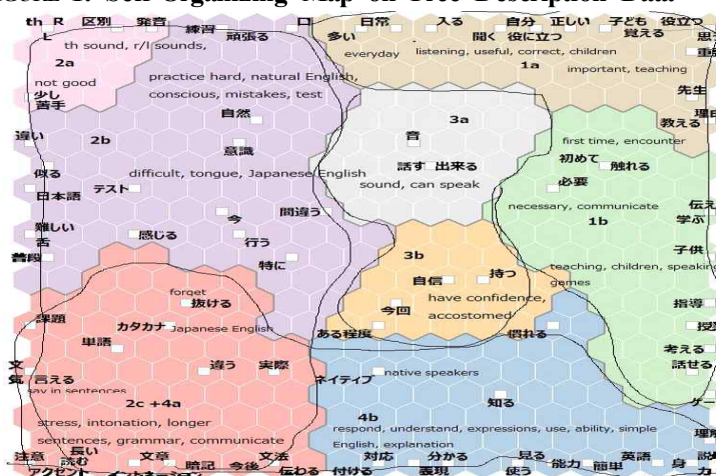
The participants' answers to the open-ended questions in the post-treatment survey were analyzed in order to understand the participants' ideas on the self-study program. The participants were asked four questions, and the questions were about (a) evaluation of the self-study program, (b) aspects of pronunciation skills they need more practice on, (c) improvement in their ability of using proper pronunciation, and (d) future self-study activities to improve their English proficiency and teaching skills. Fortunately, all the participants wrote answers to each question. The data were analyzed using a "self-organizing map" in KH Coder (Higuchi, 2015). Since all the data were in Japanese, it was analyzed as Japanese text data and the results were shown in Japanese in the self-organizing map. Then, an English translation of main words and phrases in the figure was added by the author. Due to limited space in the figure, not all of the main words were translated.

Figure 1 is called a "self-organizing map," which categorizes frequently used words into groups. The words in the same group are used in a similar context. Therefore, by looking at a self-organizing map, one can roughly grasp main contexts (i.e., topics or themes participants try to describe). In this data set, there was a total of 321 sentences (7,048 words), and only the 109 frequently used words that appeared more than five times are shown on the map. Figure 1 shows eight groups, and these eight groups can be narrowed down to four groups. The lines and group numbers describing these four groups were added by the author.

First, Group 1 (1a & 1b) describes the participants' evaluation of the self-study program. This group includes words such as *everyday*, *listening*, *useful*, *correct*, *memorize*, *important*, *teacher*, *teaching*, *first time*, *encounter*, *necessary*, *communicate*, *speaking*, and *games*. Based on these frequently used words, one could argue that the participants thought learning English pronunciation was useful and necessary for them to teach their students correct pronunciation. The participants also felt that they had to use proper pronunciation in conducting various activities, such as listening and speaking activities, and games. Therefore, it can be said that the participants had positive attitudes towards the self-study program on pronunciation skills. Second, Group 2 (2a, 2b, & 2c) describes aspects of English pronunciation that the participants still needed to improve. For example, Group 2 includes words and phrases such as */th/ sound*, */r/ & /l/ sounds*, *practice hard*, *natural English*, *conscious*, *mistakes*, *test*, *difficult*, *tongue*, *Japanese English* (English with a Japanese accent), *forget*, and *in sentences*.

Then, Group 2 describes the participants' struggle in using proper pronunciation. The participants seemed to struggle with /th/, /r/, and /l/ sounds, which Japanese learners often have trouble with, even after the self-study program. In addition, the participants tended to use appropriate pronunciation during their practice time or on review quizzes, but they tended to forget to use proper pronunciation and to use Japanese English instead when not conscious about it. Next, Group 3 (3a & 3b) describes the participants' evaluation of their improvement in using English pronunciation. This group includes words and phrases such as *sound*, *can speak*, *have confidence*, *accustomed*, and *to some extent*. Therefore, it can be said that the participants thought they developed confidence in using proper pronunciation in speaking through the self-study program. Finally, Group 4 (4a & 4b) describes English and teaching skills the participants wanted to improve for better teaching. Group 4 includes words and phrases such as *stress*, *intonation*, *longer sentences*, *memorization*, *grammar*, *communication*, *respond*, *understand*, *expressions*, *use*, *ability*, *simple English*, *explanation*, and *native speakers*. Therefore, it can be understood that the participants wanted to improve their prosody skills such as stress and intonation along with pronunciation skills to become closer to a native-speaker level. Moreover, the participants thought they wanted to learn to adjust their level of English to that of their students by using simple and easy expressions so that they could respond to their students' abrupt utterances and questions in the classroom. In addition, as can be seen in Figure 1, Groups 2c and 4a overlapped. As Group 2 dealt with the aspects of pronunciation that the participants still wanted to improve and as Group 4 dealt with the aspects of English and teaching skills that they wanted to improve for better teaching, it is natural that the items of these two groups overlapped. The overall analysis suggested that the participants found the self-study program in this study a good opportunity to learn useful and practical English pronunciation with the assigned textbook. Additionally, the participants realized that they needed to acquire oral English skills, pronunciation and prosody, and speaking skills with proper grammar, which would enable them to effectively teach English to young learners with a limited English ability.

FIGURE 1. Self-Organizing Map on Free Description Data



## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the current study, 52 first-year university students in a teaching certificate program conducted a weekly, 40–50 minute self-study activity of their pronunciation skills for an entire academic year. This self-study activity was conducted as part of an English course that the participants were taking, and the course was meant to equip them with English skills necessary to teach at the elementary school level.

The analysis of the participants' written answers in a post-treatment survey was conducted using the KH Coder (Higuchi, 2015). There were four questions in the post-survey, (a) evaluation of the self-study program, (b) aspects of pronunciation on which they needed more practice, (c) aspects of pronunciation in which they improved, and (d) future self-study activities to improve their English proficiency and teaching skills. The results suggest that the average participants felt more comfortable and confident using English pronunciation towards the end of the course (a & c). On the other hand, they felt they needed to practice more so they could even unconsciously use proper pronunciation anytime in class. In other words, many participants indicated that they could use proper pronunciation only when they were making a conscious effort to do so, but they forgot to use proper pronunciation when they were not making a conscious effort, especially in teaching situations. They also mentioned that they had not had an opportunity to learn how to pronounce English sounds properly and as a result, they had acquired a Japanese way of pronouncing English sounds (Japanese English). These comments suggested that the participants' struggled with unlearning their bad habits (i.e., the Japanese way of pronouncing English words).

In the same vein, the participants also mentioned that they had difficulty using appropriate pronunciation in sentences even though they could use proper pronunciation in words or short phrases (b). In terms of English proficiency, the majority of the participants wanted to improve their pronunciation in sentences and conversations, and the wanted to improve their speaking skills by using correct grammar. It is assumed that they became aware of the importance of these skills when they understood in the teaching activities in class that elementary school students learn English mostly by listening to English, and teachers have to be good models for their students (d). Likewise, many participants mentioned that they wanted to improve their speaking skills so that they could immediately respond in English to unexpected questions or comments from their students. It seems that the participants came to realize that they had to further improve their English by adjusting their level of English to that of their students so that their English could be understood by their students in class. For instance, in actual teaching activities in the course, the participants struggled to use vocabulary or grammar elementary school students could understand, and the participants also tended to focus on finishing their lesson plans within the allotted time period without paying enough attention to the learning of their students. However, through experiencing a number of teaching activities in the course, the participants seemed to gradually improve their skill in adjusting their English level (d). Therefore, overall results suggest that the participants found the self-study program to be an opportunity to reflect on what they improved on and



what they lacked in as a teacher.

The results also suggest that prospective teachers can develop a habit of studying necessary skills on their own, and instructors of a teaching certificate program, usually university teachers, should be responsible for guiding prospective teachers in establishing a good habit of self-study over a four-year period. Based on the results in this study, for instance, prospective teachers can begin with self-studying basic skills such as pronunciation and vocabulary in their first year. They can self-study classroom English expressions using proper pronunciation and vocabulary in their second year. Then, they can work on more advanced skills, such as speaking skills using correct grammar in their third year. In their fourth year, prospective teachers can put all the skills they learn through self-study programs into actual teaching practice. Furthermore, the author believes that teacher trainers have to intervene actively in their trainees' learning, for example, by practicing together, giving feedback on their progress, and giving review tests, in order to maximize the trainees' learning outcomes. In other words, a combination of self-study and direct instruction is essential for successful self-study programs.

Based on the results of this study, a pair of implications can be drawn about self-study programs. First, by experiencing self-study programs, learners will have a chance to reflect on what they need to improve as teachers and set objectives for their future learning. When learners have clear goals set in their learning, it is more probable that they will work hard to accomplish their goals. Second, self-study programs can help learners achieve the objectives of courses in teaching certificate programs by improving necessary English and teaching skills outside of class. The author hopes that this study offers valuable implications for future research on English ability, teaching skills, and self-study programs for pre-service elementary school teachers in Japan.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 20K00788.

## THE AUTHOR

**Mai Matsunaga** is a professor in the Institute of General Education at Kyoto Sangyo University in Kyoto, Japan. She received her master's degree in TESL from Saint Michael's College in the USA and her PhD in foreign language education from Kobe University in Hyogo, Japan. Her research interests include issues related to elementary school English education in Japan and teacher development. Email: mmatsunaga@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp

## REFERENCES

- Arimoto, J., & Kochiyama, M. (2020). Teachers' English pronunciation in Japanese primary schools: A pilot study. *Studies on Education*, 13, 53–60.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages:*

- Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Habbick, M. (2017). Teacher training for elementary school English education. *Journal of Center for Teacher Development and Educational Research, Daito Bunka University, 2*, 303–306.
- Higuchi, K. (2015). *KH Coder*. <http://khc.sourceforge.net>
- Kaneko, M. (2016). A report on the class of “English activity in elementary school” trying to increase the students’ self-confidence in English pronunciation. *Research Bulletin of Education, Education Major, Graduate School of Letters, Mukogawa Women’s University, 11*, 47–52.
- Kashimoto, H. (2020). Effects of phonics instruction for pre-service of elementary school teachers. *JES Journal, 20*, 164–178.
- Kochiyama, M., & Arimoto, J. (2016). Teachers’ attitudes toward teaching pronunciation in training workshops. *Studies on Education, 9*, 155–163.
- Kochiyama, M., Arimoto, J., & Nakanishi, N. (2013). English pronunciation teaching in teachers’ license courses. *Language Education and Technology, 50*, 119–130.
- Matsunaga, M. (2016). Competencies and self-study activities for Japanese elementary school English teachers. In *Selected papers from the 25th international symposium on English teaching, ETA- ROC (English Teachers’ Association Republic of China)*, 424–435.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). (2017). *A course of study for elementary schools*. [http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/shotou/new-cs/1383986.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/1383986.htm)
- Miyakoshi, H. (2021). Pronunciation practice, practice on classroom English, and teaching practice for university students in a teaching certificate program, change in their confidence towards teaching English in elementary schools. *Bulletin of Okazaki Women’s University, Okazaki Women’s Junior College, 54*, 121–128.
- Yamasaki, Y. (2019). *Most important English pronunciation in class*. J Research.

## Reading Anxiety and Reading Performance Among Vietnamese English-Major Students

---

Nguyen Le Bao Ngoc, Tran Thuy Hang, and Nguyen Hoang Phuong Mai  
*International University, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*

Reading appears to be a relatively uncomplicated process, causing language learners notably less stress when compared to other productive skills. Nevertheless, akin to other skill sets, experiencing anxiety may lead to subpar performance, and reading is no exception to this phenomenon. This study conducted an investigation involving 71 English-major students enrolled in the English Linguistics Program at International University, VNU-HCMC, Vietnam. These students were subject to a survey designed to assess their reading anxiety, employing the English Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI; Zoghi & Alivandivafa, 2014). Subsequently, they were administered a Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) reading test to evaluate their reading performance. The findings revealed that the students encountered a moderate level of reading anxiety. Additionally, the Pearson correlation test demonstrated a significant moderate negative relationship between reading anxiety and reading performance ( $r = -.362$ ). These findings suggest that feelings of anxiety may act as a hindrance to students' achievement of proficiency in reading.

### INTRODUCTION

Emotions among EFL learners in language acquisition, particularly concerning skill-specific learning, have garnered substantial attention in recent decades. Nonetheless, of the four primary English macro-skills, reading has seemingly received the least consideration from language educators and researchers. It is only in more recent times that the emotions of L2 readers have become a subject of heightened interest (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Students arrive at reading classes bearing varying emotional states, and these positive or negative emotions translate into either catalysts or obstacles affecting motivation and reading performance (Chen et al., 2022; Hamedi et al., 2020; Mardianti et al., 2021). The cultivation and sustenance of “positive-broadening emotional conditions” among EFL readers in the classroom have been underscored for the favorable impact they exert on learners (McIntyre & Scotia, 2016, p. 210). Conversely, acknowledging and mitigating students' unfavorable sentiments toward English reading is equally crucial, as these emotions can exert a detrimental influence on the learning experience (Guimba & Alico, 2015; Jafarigozar & Behrooznia, 2012). Among the negative affective factors, anxiety emerges as the most prominent and elicits substantial scrutiny from the EFL research community. The term “foreign language reading anxiety” (FLRA) was initially introduced by Saito et al. (1999), and since then, a significant body of research on FLRA has provided valuable

insights into the realm of English reading instruction.

In the context of EFL learning in Vietnam, it is presumptively accurate that the English teaching system in this country has been significantly influenced by the grammar-translation method. Vietnamese secondary and high school students often allocate more time and effort to the study of grammar and reading comprehension to achieve favorable results in their end-of-class tests than to the development of oral communication skills (Hoang, 2008). Nonetheless, reading continues to present a considerable challenge for Vietnamese students, as indicated in Ha Le's (2021) study, which highlighted the numerous difficulties encountered by Vietnamese freshmen when engaging with English textbooks.

Addressing the difficulty of English reading is becoming increasingly urgent due to the growing number of students enrolling in English-speaking courses, stemming from the increased adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in universities across Vietnam. Numerous studies have explored reading strategies in Vietnamese university contexts (Dinh & Vu, 2022; Do & Phan, 2021; Nguyen, 2018). However, university students' reading anxiety has not garnered significant attention. Furthermore, the existing body of research predominantly focuses on non-English majors, leaving a notable gap in the investigation of similar concerns among university students pursuing English as their major field of study. Consequently, this study seeks to delve into the experience of reading anxiety among English-major students. A comprehensive examination was conducted to determine whether English linguistics students exhibit any degree of reading anxiety and to explore potential associations between reading anxiety and students' reading proficiency.

With these objectives in mind, the study aims to address the following questions:

- RQ1. Do Vietnamese English-major students experience reading anxiety?
- RQ2. Is there a correlation between the level of reading anxiety experienced by Vietnamese English-major students and their reading performance?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Reading and Reading Performance**

Reading, a cerebral and visual process employed to decipher meaning, is considered one of the most critical skills required for comprehending new information (Grabe & Stoller, 2001). Mastery of reading is indicative of one's intellectual capacity, and in the realm of foreign language acquisition, reading comprehension assumes an even greater significance as it serves as a vital mechanism for expanding vocabulary (Xie & Yeung, 2022). Consequently, reading plays an instrumental role in enhancing learners' performance within the educational environment (Oyeleye & Odunayo, 2020). Reading performance, in this context, is characterized by the grades that symbolize learners' academic accomplishments in reading courses (Oyeleye & Odunayo, 2020). As such, the performance of readers is acknowledged as a pivotal factor in achieving success within any educational framework.

## **Foreign Language Anxiety**

Anxiety, as articulated by Spielberger (1983), denotes personal sentiments of tension and apprehension accompanied by autonomic nervous system activation. This negative emotional state has been identified as a primary obstacle hindering L2 learners in their pursuit of foreign language proficiency (Badrasawi et al., 2020; Qrquez & Rashid, 2017). Foreign language anxiety (FLA), described as “a situation-specific and unique type of anxiety closely related to the acquisition of a foreign language” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125), is a prevalent experience among foreign language learners. Consequently, Horwitz et al. first introduced the term “foreign language anxiety,” encompassing a complex amalgamation of self-awareness, emotions, and behaviors associated with the process of acquiring a foreign language within a classroom setting. Numerous studies have been conducted to explore the connection between FLA and L2 acquisition, with the aim of devising strategies to mitigate its detrimental effects on learners’ performance (Badrasawi et al., 2020; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1990).

## **Foreign Language Reading Anxiety**

Since FLA was identified as a context-specific construct (Qrquez & Rashid, 2017), a considerable amount of attention from researchers and scholars has been directed towards a specific variant of foreign language anxiety, enabling them to gain insights into the interplay between FLA and specific skills, including speaking, listening, writing, and reading. While the focus of several researchers has gravitated towards FLA in relation to three skills: speaking, listening, and writing (Badrasawi et al., 2020; Cheng, et al., 1999; Cubukcu, 2007; Serraj & Bt. Noordin, 2013; Young, 1990), reading, in contrast, has received relatively less attention. However, some findings have exposed that reading, in fact, provokes substantial anxiety among learners (Vande Berg, 1993), and reading anxiety significantly differs from FLA. Consequently, Saito (1999) introduced the concept of “foreign language reading anxiety” (FLRA), signifying the negative emotions experienced during reading tasks in a target language with distinct writing systems. Since then, a substantial body of research has been dedicated to investigating FLRA (Huang, 2012; Hwang & Bae, 2022; Piccolo et al., 2016).

## **FLRA Instruments**

To gauge foreign language learners’ anxiety and its impact on language acquisition, researchers have devised various questionnaires and instruments. In 1986, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), comprising 33 questions and employing a 5-point Likert scale, was introduced by Horwitz et al. (1986). Subsequently, another instrument, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), was introduced to measure FLRA levels for the learning of three foreign languages (Saito et al., 1999). Unfortunately, these assessments failed to pinpoint the exact reasons for learners’ negative emotional responses to reading tasks (Saito et al., 1999). Given the disparities between English and French phonology, which may be disorienting for many learners, Zoghi (2012) introduced the English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) and

subsequently validated it (Zoghi & Alivandivafa, 2014). The EFLRAI consists of 27 questions divided into three main categories: (a) top-down reading anxiety, (b) bottom-up reading anxiety, and (c) classroom reading anxiety. Top-down reading anxiety (TRA) encompasses readers' background and cultural knowledge, bottom-up reading anxiety (BRA) relates to the vocabulary and grammar levels and complexity in the texts, while classroom reading anxiety (CRA) primarily pertains to the teaching methods employed by instructors in reading classes. Unlike the FLCAS, the 27 questions in the EFLRAI are responded to using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

## Previous Studies

Numerous researchers have evaluated anxiety levels in foreign language reading classes and the correlation between FLRA and reading performance in diverse contexts (Miao & Vibulphol, 2021; Mohd. Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010; Oktaviani & Zainil, 2021). The findings consistently indicate that learners indeed grapple with reading anxiety, and higher levels of anxiety correspond to lower reading scores.

A study involving 34 male students in Iran who were learning English as a second language revealed no significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension test scores (Javanbakaht & Hadian, 2014). It is worth noting that the relatively small sample size in this study would not permit generalization. In 2012, another study in Iran, encompassing 112 EFL learners, established a substantial relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension, with females exhibiting higher levels of anxiety in test situations compared to males (Jafarigohar & Behrooznia, 2012). Mardianti et al. (2021) also employed the EFLRAI to examine 50 first-year students in governmental science and identified that these students experienced a moderate level of reading anxiety. Additionally, they observed a negative correlation between reading anxiety and performance, implying that heightened anxiety levels were associated with diminished performance among students.

Nevertheless, this particular area of research has not received significant attention from foreign language researchers in the Vietnamese context. Moreover, the aforementioned studies predominantly concentrated on reading anxiety among non-English major students who may possess inadequate vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies. Given the scarcity of research on FLRA in Vietnam, the objective of this study is to bridge the gap in the existing literature by investigating reading anxiety and exploring the interplay between reading anxiety and reading performance among English-major students in a Vietnamese university that employs English as the primary language of instruction.

## METHOD

### Study Design

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitatively, the English Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) was administered to

assess students' anxiety levels while reading. Subsequently, a follow-up interview was conducted to delve deeper into the factors contributing to this negative emotional state. On the quantitative front, the researchers computed the means of the reading test results to evaluate students' performance. Furthermore, a Pearson correlation test was utilized to discern any correlation between reading anxiety levels and students' test scores.

## **Participants**

This study involved 71 linguistics students from two Reading 2 classes at International University, Vietnam National University, HCMC. These students possessed a C1 level of English proficiency, as mandated by the course requirements.

## **Procedures**

In Weeks 4 and 5 of the course, the authors, who also led these two reading classes, introduced the study's objectives to the students. Subsequently, the students were tasked with completing a EFLRAI questionnaire, which consisted of 27 Likert-scale items (see Appendix). In Week 6, the students were administered a reading test, allowing 75 minutes for completion, mirroring the time allocation for a standardized Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) test.

The collected data was then entered into an Excel spreadsheet, and Minitab 19 was employed for data analysis. The authors computed the means and standard deviation for the 27 questions of the EFLRAI as well as the reading test. A correlation test was then run to determine whether there was a positive or negative correlation between anxiety levels and reading performance. Additionally, the responses from the interview were transcribed for comprehensive analysis.

## **Materials**

To measure reading anxiety levels, the authors employed the English Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI). This questionnaire was deemed suitable for assessing tertiary-level students.

To further investigate the factors contributing to students' anxiety, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with 20 students who had previously participated in the EFLRAI and volunteered for the interview.

In addition, a reading proficiency test was administered in the classroom. This test adhered to the CAE standard, aligning with the students' proficiency level. The authors utilized Reading Test 1 from the book *Certificate in Advanced English Book 2*, comprising four sections with 34 reading questions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 presents the levels of reading anxiety inventory (RAI) among the linguistics students.

**TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics for Students' Reading Anxiety Level**

Variable	Mean	SE Mean	StDev	Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Maximum
RAI	70.54	1.23	10.34	47.00	65.00	70.00	76.00	100.00

The results indicated that the majority of students experienced low to moderate levels of anxiety. The mean score for this anxiety level was 70.54 out of 108 ( $SD = 10.34$ ). However, it is worth noting that within the same class, students exhibited varying degrees of negative emotions. While some students approached the maximum score of 100, a few scored below 50. Nonetheless, these findings affirm that students encountered significant challenges while engaging in reading tasks. This provides a response to the first research question, suggesting that Vietnamese English-major students did, indeed, experience a moderate level of reading anxiety.

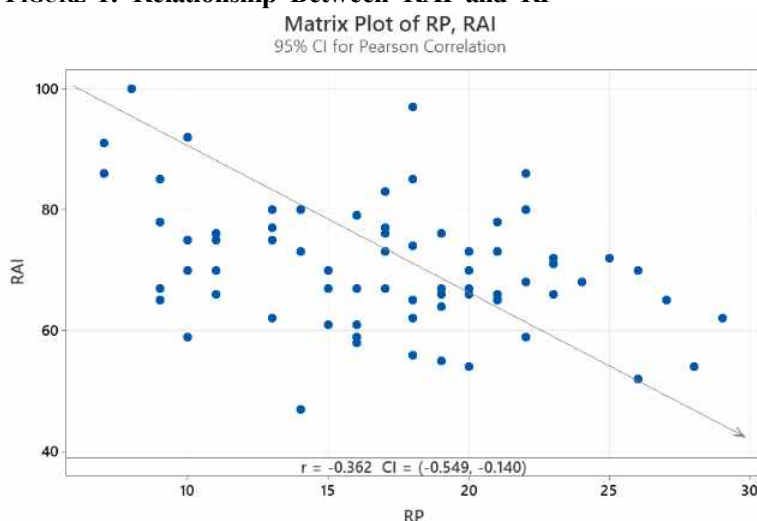
The results pertaining to students' reading performance (RP) can be found in Table 2. The mean score was 17.113 ( $SD = 5.328$ ), with most students achieving scores just below the average.

**TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics for Students' Reading Performance**

Mean	SE Mean	StDev	Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Maximum
17.113	0.632	5.328	7.000	13.000	18.000	21.000	29.000

Finally, a correlation test was conducted, revealing a moderate negative relationship between reading anxiety levels and reading performance ( $r = -0.362$ ). The Pearson  $r$  typically falls within the range of  $-1 < r < 1$ . This negative correlation addresses the second research question, suggesting that heightened anxiety levels corresponded to diminished performance on the reading test. This negative relationship is further illustrated in Figure 1. The matrix plot clearly demonstrates that as RAI increased, RP decreased.

**FIGURE 1: Relationship Between RAI and RP**





In response to the interview questions, students acknowledged feeling nervous and anxious during the reading test. One student expressed, “I think first I’m quite curious for the words, new words that I, like, I don’t like reading comprehension because I feel like it’s, I don’t know, I just feel like a burden about it. Yes, I am kind of nervous when I can’t answer a question.” The primary cause attributed to this feeling was their lack of vocabulary and background knowledge for the reading task, corresponding to TRA in the EFLRAI questionnaire. Students also associated anxiety with their reading ability, as one student confessed, “I think reading ability because you don’t know, you can’t know all the words and the context – the vocabulary, and how to do the test.” These interview responses corroborate the findings in Table 1, highlighting that a substantial proportion of students experienced nervousness and anxiety during reading. Notably, when asked about strategies to address this issue, most students expressed a reliance on their teachers. One student articulated a desire for the teacher’s guidance, stating, “What the teacher can do is to suggest the method that I could do better in my reading, yeah, to just suggest tricks or something.”

## **IMPLICATIONS**

This study has yielded intriguing results. While previous research in the field predominantly focused on non-English-major students, this study has confirmed that even English-major students experience a moderate level of reading anxiety. The primary source of these issues stems from their vocabulary limitations and background knowledge deficits. Notably, the study has found a negative relationship between RAI and RP, implying that educators should not underestimate the importance of teaching vocabulary and providing students with necessary background information. Efforts should be made to alleviate students’ anxiety, enhancing their enjoyment of reading tasks and academic performance. Furthermore, the interviews highlight students’ trust in their teachers, indicating that educators should consider adapting their lesson plans to emphasize appropriate and effective reading strategies.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Despite the global attention on foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), this field of study has been relatively overlooked in Vietnam. This study sought to determine the level and impact of FLRA on English-major students at a university in Vietnam. The results obtained from the questionnaire and reading test indicate that the surveyed students experience a moderate level of reading anxiety, with a negative correlation observed between RLRA levels and reading performance. This suggests that heightened anxiety results in lower scores on reading tests. Importantly, the interviews underscore the pivotal role of reading teachers in mitigating this anxiety by pre-teaching essential vocabulary and providing background information before tasks.

However, the interpretation of these research findings should be approached cautiously due to certain limitations. The sample size was relatively small,

comprising only 71 students from two Reading 2 classes at a Vietnamese university, all at the C1 level. Furthermore, relying on a single reading test may not offer a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between FLRA and reading performance. To enhance the accuracy and reliability of the findings, future studies should involve a larger and more diverse sample of English-major students, alongside incorporating multiple reading tasks on a regular basis to draw more precise conclusions about the correlation between FLRA and reading comprehension.

This study significantly contributes to our understanding of the level of reading anxiety among English-major students in Vietnam, a group typically regarded as confident and competent in reading compared to non-English-major students. Furthermore, this research holds important implications for language teachers, as it informs them about students' levels of reading anxiety, the relationship between FLRA and reading performance, and the perceived role of teachers in reading classes. With this knowledge, teachers can be more motivated to select and implement suitable and effective strategies to mitigate their students' reading anxiety. Further research into instructional strategies and techniques to help English-major students overcome FLRA will be imperative and valuable for both EFL instructors and learners.

## THE AUTHORS

**Ngoc Nguyen** holds a master's degree in applied linguistics from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. She has a strong interest in linguistics, particularly semantics and pragmatics. With several years of teaching experience in academic English, phonetics and phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax, she has also conducted numerous studies related to enhancing students' motivation and performance in skills classes. Currently, she works as a full-time lecturer at International University, Vietnam National University HCMC. Email: nlnbngoc@hcmiu.edu.vn

**Tran Thuy Hang** is a full-time lecturer at International University, Vietnam National University HCMC. She earned a master's degree in TEFL from Southern New Hampshire University, USA, in 2011. With 16 years of experience teaching EFL and EAP, her research interests encompass language teaching and learning theories and teaching methodologies. Email: hangtt@hcmiu.edu.vn

**Nguyen Hoang Phuong Mai** currently serves as a lecturer at International University, Vietnam National University HCMC. She holds a master's degree in TESOL from the University of Queensland, Australia. With over a decade of experience teaching English to Vietnamese students at all levels, she is particularly interested in researching the affective filter in second language acquisition and innovative approaches in language teaching, aiming to continuously improve her teaching quality. Email: nhpmai@hcmiu.edu.vn

## REFERENCES

- Badrasawi, K. J., Solihu, A., & Tunku Ahmad, T. B. (2020). Second language speaking anxiety among Malaysian postgraduate students at a faculty of education. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 8(2), 54–61. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1254844.pdf>

- Chen, S., Du, H., Wang, S., & Yang, L. (2022). Understanding EFL reading anxiety in relation to learning motivation, attitudes, and strategies for Chinese and Spanish undergraduates. *System*, 108, Article 102842. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102842>
- Cubukcu, F. (2007). Foreign language anxiety. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies*, 1(2), 133–142.
- Do, M. H., & Phan, L. T. H. (2021). Metacognitive awareness of reading strategies on second language Vietnamese undergraduates. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(1), 90–112. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.7>
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2020). *Teaching and researching reading*. Routledge.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2001). Reading for academic purpose: Guidelines for ESL/EFL teachers. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 187–203). Heinle & Heinle.
- Guimba, W. D., & Alico, J. C. (2015). Reading anxiety and comprehension of Grade 8 Filipino learners. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Special Volume*, 44–59.
- Ha Le, V. (2021, July). Common difficulties of reading comprehension experienced by Vietnamese students. *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Education and Multimedia Technology (ICEMT '21)*. (pp. 306–310). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3481056.3481073>
- Hamedi, S. M., Pishghadam, R., & Fadardi, J. S. (2019). The contribution of reading emotions to reading comprehension: The mediating effect of reading engagement using a structural equation modeling approach. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 19(2), 211–238. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-019-09256-3>
- Hoang, V. V. (2008). The current situation and issues of the teaching of English in Vietnam. *VNU Scientific Journal – Foreign Language*, 3(4), 22–37.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132.
- Huang, Q. (2012). Study on correlation of foreign language anxiety and English reading anxiety. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(7), 1520–1525. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.2.7.1520-1525>
- Hwang, I., & Bae, J. (2022). Foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension of Korean secondary EFL students. *Secondary English Education*, 15(4), 35–58. <https://doi.org/10.20487/kasee.15.4.202211.35>
- Jafarigohar, M., & Behrooznia, S. (2012). The effect of anxiety on reading comprehension among distance EFL learners. *International Education Studies*, 5(2), 159–174. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v5n2p159>
- Javanbakhht, N., & Hadian, M. (2014). The effects of test anxiety on learners' reading test performance. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 775–783. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.481>
- MacIntyre, P., & Gregersen, T. (2012). Emotions that facilitate language learning: The positive-broadening power of the imagination. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2(2), 193–213. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2012.2.2.4>
- Mohd. Zin, Z., & Rafik-Galea, S. (2010). Anxiety and academic reading performance among Malay ESL learners. *Journal of PanPacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 41–58.
- Ngoc, D. T., & Nhung, V. T. (2022). Metacognitive reading strategies used by English-majors at a university in Vietnam. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 38(5). <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4872>
- Nguyen, T. T. B. (2018). Reading strategies used by Vietnamese EFL and ESL university students. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 34(2). <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4250>
- Oktavian, S., & Zainil, Y. (2021). Using EFLRAI to spot reading anxiety on Junior High School 1 Bukittinggi students. *Journal of English Language Teaching* (Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia), 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v10i2.112445>

- Oyeleye, A. O., & Odunayo, O. O. (2020). Reading anxiety as correlate of students' performance in Introduction to Library Studies in Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Lagos State, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3771/>
- Piccolo, L. R., Giacomoni, C. H., Julio-Costa, A., Oliveira, S., Zbornik, J., Haase, V. G., & Salles, J. F. (2016). Reading anxiety in L1: Reviewing the concept. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 45(4), 537-543. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-016-0822-x>
- Qrgez, M., & Rashid, R. (2017). Reading comprehension difficulties among EFL learners: The case of first- and second-year students at Yarmouk University in Jordan. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(3), 421-431. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no3.27>
- Saito, Y., Garza, T. J., & Horwitz, E. K. (1999). Foreign language reading anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(2), 202-218.
- Serraj, S., & Bt. Noordin, N. (2013). Relationship among Iranian EFL students' foreign language anxiety, foreign language listening anxiety, and their listening comprehension. *English Language Teaching*, 6(5). <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n5p1>
- Spielberger, C. D. (1983). *Manual for the state-trait anxiety inventory (Form Y)*. Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Vande Berg, C. K. (1993). Managing learner anxiety in literature courses. *French Review*, 67, 27-36
- Wijayati, P. H., Mardianti, N., & Murtadho, N. (2021). The correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension in ESP context. *International Journal of Language Education*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v5i2.15440>
- Young, D. J. (1990). An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23(6), 539-553.
- Zoghi, M., & Alivandivafa, M. (2014). EFL reading anxiety inventory (EFLRAI). *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 32(4), 318-329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282913513686>

## APPENDIX

### EFL Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI)

This questionnaire does not intend to gauge your EFL reading ability. Nor is it a test that you can score high or low. In fact, this questionnaire helps us help you i.e. by knowing about your true responses, we will be able to find out when you undergo anxiety while reading in English. This may enable us to be well-prepared in your future English classes. Thus, your cooperation can certainly make a big difference. Thanks for your time in advance.

Gender:            Male                    Female  
 Current Proficiency in English:                    Poor                    Fair                    Good  
 Excellent

**Directions:** Statements 1–27 refer to how you feel about reading in English. Please read all of the statements and tick the option that describes you by indicating whether you (1) totally disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, or (4) totally agree.

1. **I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
2. **It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
3. **I get upset when I lack the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
4. **I worry when I cannot get the gist of the text although no new vocabulary items or grammatical points exist in the text.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
5. **When I cannot recognize minor ideas (details) of the text is worrying to me.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
6. **I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
7. **It bothers me when I cannot express my opinions or feelings about the text.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
8. **I feel uneasy when I cannot figure out meanings of unknown words.**  
 (1) totally disagree    (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
9. **It bothers me when I encounter a lot of words whose meanings are unclear.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
10. **I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a word that I feel I have seen before.**  
 (1) totally disagree            (2) somewhat disagree            (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree

- 11. It bothers me when I feel unable to look up a word in the dictionary.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 12. I get confused when the word that I know has a different meaning in the sentence.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 13. I get upset when I come across idioms that are unfamiliar to me.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 14. It makes me feel uneasy when an unfamiliar word is made up of several parts or syllables.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 15. I feel worried when the unknown word is difficult to pronounce.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 16. I am nervous when a certain sentence is long and has a complex structure.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 17. When a certain sentence is grammatically unfamiliar is worrying to me.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 18. It bothers me when a passive voice is used in a sentence.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 19. I feel upset when the tense of a certain sentence is unclear to me.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 20. I worry when I am unable to recognize different parts of speech such as adjectives, adverbs, or connective words.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 21. I get confused when what I know about a grammatical point does not make any sense.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 22. It bothers me when the instructor calls on me to read out.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 23. It worries me when the instructor calls on me to translate a piece of an English text into our first language.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 24. When the instructor asks me reading comprehension questions is worrying to me.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 25. It upsets me when the instructor chooses uninteresting texts to read in class.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree
- 26. It makes me feel uneasy when the instructor corrects my pronunciation or translation mistakes.**  
 (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree

**27. I am nervous when the instructor uses English as a medium of instruction and hardly ever makes use of our first language.**

- (1) totally disagree       (2) somewhat disagree       (3) somewhat agree  
 (4) totally agree

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.  
We appreciate your comments.

**EFLRAI, ©M. Zoghi, 2012**





## Shared Development: Promoting Shared Lesson Plans to Enhance Professional Development

---

Nomintuul Byambatsogt, Davaanyam Damdin,  
Tamir Myagmarsuren, and Chuluuntumur Damdin  
*Shared Goal Professional Learning Community, Khanbogd, Mongolia*

This action research aims to examine the impact of shared lesson plans on teachers' professional development. The term "shared lesson plans" refers to collaborative lesson planning, which allows teachers to apply the same lesson plans to their teaching practices regardless of their differences. The research was conducted among eleven English teachers in two schools in a rural area of Mongolia over 48 weeks. Data were collected through interviews, group chat discussions, and students' feedback for the teachers. The data were thematically analyzed. The research results show that all eleven teachers benefited from the shared lesson plans in terms of their teaching methods, as well as their professional, academic, and personal growth, in accordance with the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky. The findings suggest that novice and reluctant teachers should receive more mentoring and support throughout the implementation of shared lesson plans.

### INTRODUCTION

Mongolia is a landlocked country. The introduction of English into secondary schools occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Cohen, 2004; Damdin, 2021; Forseth & Forseth, 1996). English became a compulsory subject in 1996, as reported by Cohen (2004). At that time, there was an urgent need for English teachers, resulting in the retraining of over 800 Russian language teachers to teach English (Forseth & Forseth, 1996). Subsequently, the Institute of Teachers' Professional Development (ITPD) provided training for in-service secondary school teachers, including professional development for English teachers after one, five, and ten years of teaching.

According to a survey conducted by Janchiv and Kang (2018), which involved 146 secondary school English teachers, it was found that the ITPD program did not meet the satisfaction levels of EFL language teachers. This dissatisfaction can be primarily attributed to the program's exclusive focus on pedagogical courses for language teaching methodologies and skills. Consequently, the authors proposed that the program should incorporate content courses specifically tailored to improve the language proficiency of EFL teachers. Such a comprehensive approach would ensure that the program encompasses both teacher development and professional development.

In 2022, the Foreign Language Center of the National Institute for Educational Research launched a nationwide program called English for All. As

part of this program, English teachers participated in intensive summer training sessions held in the centers in all provinces. Additionally, selected teachers were offered online and hybrid courses for conducting teacher development workshops. Within the program, two initiatives were implemented during the academic year 2022–2023. The first initiative, known as “Welcome,” involved extracurricular English classes, while the second initiative, referred to as “Mentor Student,” focused on peer teaching. These initiatives were implemented in approximately 70 public schools.

Given the growing significance of English language usage in the globalized world, English teacher training remains a crucial concern in Mongolia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To ensure that students are well prepared for the 21st-century workforce, teachers must become “high-level knowledge workers” who consistently engage in professional learning (Schleicher, 2012, p. 11). Studies have indicated that effective teacher professional development (PD) programs should incorporate collaboration, a focus on student learning in teachers’ daily practice, and longer-term initiatives. Engaging teachers in professional learning communities (PLCs) is seen as a promising approach to deliver professional development and promote school improvement (Stoll, 2015). PLCs consist of teachers, and occasionally school leaders, who collaborate with the goal of enhancing their students’ education (Barr & Askell-Williams, 2021). When teachers collaborate within PLCs, it has the potential to result in enhanced learning for both teachers and students.

Enhancing educational systems often necessitates a shift in focus from improvement within individual schools to improvement between schools and even beyond them, as noted by Chapman (2014). Networks of schools have the potential to mobilize a broader range of resources and expertise compared to single schools. They can provide opportunities for self-reflection and collective reflection on teaching practices and promote more dynamic forms of professional learning (Lieberman, 2000; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996). The establishment of PLCs between schools could further enhance teachers’ professional growth and, consequently, student achievement. Scholars, school leaders, and policymakers have increasingly recognized the value of “networked” PLCs that foster collaboration and knowledge exchange within and across school systems (Prenger et al., 2017).

As outlined in the Government of Mongolia’s master plan for 2020–2024, the Skilled Teacher program is designed to facilitate the continuous professional development of teachers by establishing and supporting PLCs within educational institutions. In order to foster the development of PLCs in Mongolia, teacher-leaders play a crucial role in leading these teams. PLCs are relatively new initiatives in Mongolia. English teachers from two different schools in a small town formed a PLC in 2021. They collaborated and worked together to enhance their teaching productivity and promote a culture of continuous learning by using shared lesson plans. This study is based on that PLC.

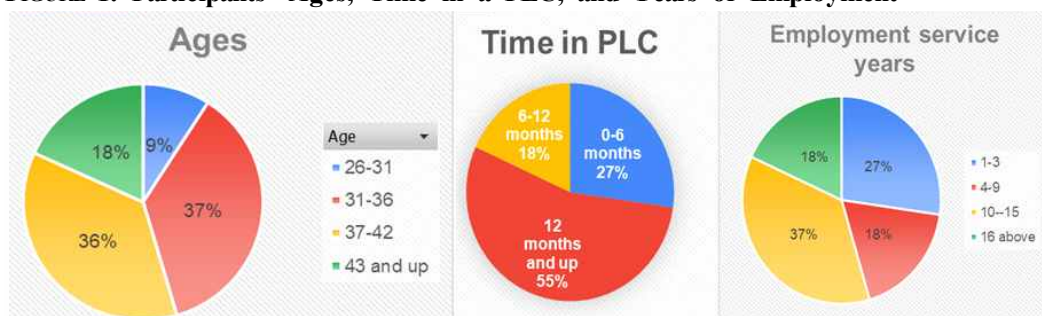
The research questions set for this study are the following:

- RQ1. What are the benefits of shared lesson plans?  
 RQ2. What are the changes in teachers' beliefs and practices?

## RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This study was conducted among 11 English teachers in two schools in KB Soum, which is located 750 kilometers away from the capital city of Mongolia, for a duration of 58 weeks. Regarding the participants, three teachers were founders of a Shared Goal Professional Development Community (PLC) and graduated from a Master of Education program in Australia. The Shared Goal PLC was established in October 2021, and all participants joined the community voluntarily. The majority of the participants (55%) have been part of the Shared Goal PLC for more than twelve months, while 18% have been involved for less than a year, and 27% for less than six months. In terms of age, the majority of the participants are middle-aged, and 73% of them have more than five years of work experience (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Participants' Ages, Time in a PLC, and Years of Employment



## METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative action research was conducted within the context of our Shared Goal PLC. Educational action research is an approach to research that focuses on improving educational practices and outcomes through systematic inquiry and reflection (Zeichner, 2013). Data collection involved pre-, mid-, and post-interviews conducted by the founders of the PLC. Additionally, data and observations were gathered from the Facebook group chat conversations and Shared Goal PLC meetings, which took place on a weekly basis. As for student feedback, individualized feedback discussions and written feedback were sought at the end of each term, and data from student feedback were collected over the course of six terms. Pre- and post-interviews were specifically conducted for students who exhibited slower or reluctant learning tendencies in English subjects. The collected data underwent thematic analysis, which allowed researchers to uncover rich, in-depth insights from qualitative data that can be applied to various types of textual data, including interviews, focus group discussions, responses to open-ended survey questions, and other forms of qualitative data.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Pre-Implementation of the Shared Lesson Planning**

All the teachers revealed the same experience regarding their professional and personal growth. Initially, the teachers shared that their chance to improve themselves was limited with official annual (first, fifth, and tenth) training, which tended to be held in a traditional way, and there was no mentoring for new teachers, resulting in confusion and self-doubt. The teachers commented on their continuous professional development:

I never had a chance to develop myself professionally. We, English teachers, worked independently, which means we did our lesson planning alone. That created pressure and confusion about whether we did well or not. [Teacher T]

I develop myself professionally using online environments, other than this, I do not do anything else. Moreover, a foreign teacher used to offer us some professional sessions, but he left after 2 months due to COVID-19. [Teacher B]

I try to grow professionally as much as possible by reading books, surfing the internet, and attending paid sessions. Occasionally, I observe other teachers' lessons and have some takeaways in terms of new teaching ideas, group work ideas, and lesson handout ideas. I also try and want to collaborate with other English teachers. [Teacher BT]

The above insights tend to show that the teachers are in need of continuous professional development as they lack collaboration within the school and community, rely on other sources such as the internet and paid sessions, and want more permanent opportunities to grow professionally. Moreover, all the teachers shared their desire that they wanted to improve professionally and be part of a professional learning community.

### **During the Implementation of the Shared Lesson Plans**

It was reported that all the teachers found Shared Lesson Planning to be a significant and enduring opportunity for both professional and personal growth. Several teachers shared the following in their interviews and on the Facebook group chat:

Through Shared Lesson Plans, I was allowed to have quality me-time in which I have learner-centered continuous professional development and self-growth sessions. Also, when it is my turn to do the lesson planning, I do research and put effort to make the lessons engaging and effective. [Teacher E]

I have been a teacher for only 2 months but I never had any doubts or difficulties as I have been mentored effectively by my co-teachers of the Shared Goal PLC. I also learn so much just by applying the lesson plans which are written by my colleagues. I have now this big self-confidence to teach any content to any age group. [Teacher S]

It has been such a great journey where I have been developing so much. I used to teach good and attentive students and tended to ignore those who are non-active boys, and these boys tended to accept their future as not learning English. But, now I realized and started teaching and reaching every student no matter they are good at English or not. My students now love English. [Teacher T]

It is evident from the interviews that the teachers learned significantly from each other through Shared Lesson Planning. As Vygotsky argued in his socio-cultural learning theory, utilizing the zone of proximal development, there exists a gap between what individuals can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with the assistance of others (Harasim, 2012). He posited that interactions with peers or more advanced individuals can effectively help students attain more challenging goals, as these social interactions provide valuable guidance, tools, and motivation (Harasim, 2012). Within the Shared Goal PLC, the members serve as mentors to one another, and through Shared Lesson Planning, they guide and facilitate each other's teaching and learning practices, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation. The provided interview quotes illustrate that the teachers ventured beyond their comfort zones and achieved previously unimaginable results. One teacher shared her newfound ability to undertake tasks she had never before envisioned.

Conversely, the interviews also revealed that three out of the eleven teachers initially found it challenging to join the Shared Goal PLC due to reluctance to change. Establishing rapport took time, and the implementation of formal mentorship programs was necessary. Two of the teachers lacked self-confidence and underestimated their abilities, leading them to perceive the PLC as pressuring. They expressed the need for more time to effectively engage in Shared Lesson Planning.

### **Post-Implementation**

It was revealed that all the teachers experienced significant growth in terms of their professional and personal development through Shared Lesson Planning. One of the teachers, who initially encountered challenges related to bonding and self-confidence, expressed the following:

I have grown enormously and I have improved my teaching methodology by overcoming my teaching boundaries despite having an 18-year of teaching experience. I have also gotten better at my speaking skills which I had needed to make progress, in particular. I would like to be part of the PLC in the future regardless of my new career. [Cried]. [Teacher B]

One of the lead teachers of the Shared Goal PLC divulged the following:

I was a lonely teacher who nearly gave up on teaching due to my low self-confidence. But, my PLC has helped me realize the worth of working collaboratively and developing continuously, and I have gained my confidence back to teach my students in an innovative way using the shared lesson plans. I have also realized that from a growing teacher, a growing student is made, and from a confident teacher, a confident student is made. [Teacher T]

Moreover, each teacher received concrete written and verbal feedback from students. Students shared that their teachers had all become their favorite instructors, exemplifying student-centered teaching and learning, and incorporating task-based, game-based, communicative, and critical pedagogy.

Two of the teachers disclosed that they had decided to change schools, relocating from the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, to Khanbogd, to join the Shared Goal PLC due to its effective Shared Lesson Plans practices.

The findings from the interviews and observations in the group chat demonstrate that the process of learning and growth is achieved through social interactions and collaborative work, aligning with the socio-cultural theory of learning (Harasim, 2012). In other words, learning is not solely constructed through individual efforts or cooperation but rather through collaboration with others, including peers and students (Brown et al., 2014; Harasim, 2012). Therefore, Shared Lesson Plans enabled teachers to actively collaborate and interact with each other, thereby enhancing their professional development.

## CONCLUSIONS

It has been a year and a half since the 11 teachers began collaborating in the two schools. The research questions of this study yielded the following results.

Through Shared Lesson Planning, each teacher has learned teamwork skills from one another, various teaching methods, diverse lesson plan ideas, and most importantly, how teacher development directly impacts learner achievement. The lesson plans have become highly productive, interactive, and student-centered. The teachers have recognized that collaborative lesson planning offers numerous advantages, including the development of their own teaching methodologies, learning from peers, and saving time typically spent on paperwork.

During this period, the teachers have undergone significant changes in their attitudes and beliefs. Their teaching philosophy has evolved, and they now hold deep respect for one another, adhere to punctuality, and enhance their engagement with their work. They have gained a deeper understanding of their students and have adopted more engaging teaching methods. Recognizing that every student has a unique learning style, they have shifted their approach to cater to a broader range of students, not just the high-achieving ones.

Furthermore, the teachers regularly receive written and verbal feedback from their students at the end of each term. The results indicate that many comments express how, through English lessons, the students have discovered themselves, developed a love for English, and learned to express themselves effectively to others. This positive impact has also attracted self-motivated and skilled teachers to join the school's workforce.

The initiation of the volunteer mentor teacher-led PLC and the voluntary participation of teachers have fostered intrinsic motivation, a significant factor in working toward a shared goal as a team. Consequently, the passion and persistence of mentor teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability of the PLC. As a result, the mentor teachers have been a tremendous source of inspiration for the other teachers, and one of them has already assumed the role of lead teacher in the PLC. Additionally, the voluntarily established PLC has the

potential to serve as a platform for sharing and showcasing professional growth, thus contributing to a pool of skilled and motivated teachers in the schools.

In conclusion, this action research demonstrates that content and happy teachers lead to content and successful students, resulting in a more productive learning process. The teachers have transitioned from perceiving their work as a mere obligation to embracing PLC meetings as intellectual investments in their own professional development. This shift in perspective has allowed them to approach their work with greater happiness and satisfaction. Moreover, the transformation and improvement of our classrooms have added to their overall sense of contentment in their work.

## IMPLICATIONS

In the context of this action research, practical implications lead to the following recommendations: Firstly, there is a need for potential and intrinsically motivated mentor teachers to assist novice and reluctant teachers at the beginning of Shared Lesson Planning. Secondly, it is advisable to establish external support and motivation from the school administration, enabling the teacher-initiated, volunteer mentor program to be implemented even more effectively.

## THE AUTHORS

**Nomintuul Byambatsogt** has been working as an English teacher at the First School of Khanbogd since October 2021 and teaches 12- to 18-year-old students (about 107). She is one of the founders and leaders of her Shared Goal Professional Learning Community for English teachers of both the First and Second Schools of Khanbogd. This community aims to promote teamwork, lifelong learning, and sharing, make differences in students' and teachers' lives through language, and train teachers. Nomintuul graduated from the University of the Humanities as an English teacher in Mongolia and received her master's degree from the University of Queensland (Australia) in the field of educational leadership. Email: nomintuul.byambatsogt@gmail.com

**Davaanyam Damdin** is a part-time English teacher and a school counselor at the First School of Khanbogd. She has a master's degree of educational studies from the University of Queensland in Australia. She is one of the founders of the Shared Goal PLC. Email: ddavaaka@gmail.com

**Tamir Myagmarsuren** is an English teacher at the First School of Khanbogd in Mongolia with 12 years of experience. She has a great desire to educate local students on the same level as urban students and to develop their personal development along with their academic achievements. She is one of the leading members of the Shared Goal PLC. Email: tamir.m@khanbogd1.edu.mn

**Chuluuntumur Damdin** is an English teacher of the Second School of Khanbogd. She holds master's degrees from La Trobe University in Melbourne and Curtin University in Perth, Australia. She is also one of the founders of the Shared Goal PLC. Email: dchuluuntumor@gmail.com

## REFERENCES

- Barr, S., & Askill-Williams, H. (2020) Changes in teachers' epistemic cognition about self-regulated learning as they engaged in a researcher-facilitated professional learning community, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(2), 187–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2019.1599098>
- Brown, P. C., Roediger, H. L., & McDaniel, M. A. (2014). *Make it stick: The science of successful learning*. Harvard University Press.
- Chapman, C. (2014). From within- to between- and beyond- school improvement: A case of rethinking roles and relationships? *ICSEI Monograph Series, No. 3*, Available from: <https://www.icsei.net/index.php?id=1677>
- Cohen, R. (2004). The current status of English education in Mongolia. *Asian EFL Journal*, 6(4), 1–29.
- Damdin, C. (2021). *An autoethnographic study of a Mongolian English teacher's journey in applying a task-based approach to an online English writing class for adult learners* [Master's thesis, Curtin University]. Curtin University Espace. <https://espace.curtin.edu.au/handle/20.500.11937/86775>
- Forseth, C., & Forseth, R. (1996). English “isolation” in Mongolia: An English only camp. *TESOL Journal*, 5(3), 10–13.
- Janchiv, P., Kang, S. (2018). Identifying the professional development needs of EFL secondary school teachers: A case study in Mongolia. *Studies in Linguistics*, 49, 463–486. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17002/sil.49.201810.463>
- Harasim, L. M. (2012). *Learning theory and online technologies*. Routledge.
- Lieberman, A. (2000). Networks as learning communities: Shaping the future of teacher development. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(3), 221–227.
- Lieberman, A., & Grolnick, M. (1996). Networks and reform in American education. *Teachers College Record*, 98(1). 7–45.
- Prenger, R., Poortman, C. L., & Handelzalts, A. (2017). Factors influencing teachers' professional development in networked professional learning communities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.014>
- Prenger, R., Poortman, C. L., & Handelzalts, A. (2016, January 6–10). *Effects and influencing factors of networked PLCs: Impact and challenges of networked PLCs* [Paper presentation]. ICSEI Conference 2016, Glasgow, Scotland.
- Schleicher, A. (2012). *Preparing teachers and developing school leaders for the 21st century: Lessons from around the world*. OECD Publishing.
- Stoll, L. (2015). Using evidence, learning and the role of professional learning communities. In C. Brown (Ed.), *Leading evidence use in schools*. IOE Press.
- Zeichner, K. (2013). Educational action research. In J. Wearmouth, T. Glynn, R. C. Richmond, & M. Berryman (Eds.), *Inclusion and behaviour management in schools* (pp. 123–142). David Fulton Publishers.



## English Language Teacher Education Programs in the Indonesian Context

---

Emmi Naja,

*The University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, United Kingdom*

Studies have noted the insufficient quality of English teachers in the Indonesian context (Ibrahim, 2016; Lie et al., 2019; Prasodjo et al., 2020; Wulyani, 2019) and in the global context (Poonpon, 2021; Young et al., 2014). This is often attributed to the preparation of teachers in the English Language Teacher Education Programs (ELTEPs) as the formal English teacher preparation. Thus, this study aims to explore internal stakeholders' perspectives toward the preparation of English teachers in ELTEPs at four ELTEPs. The data in this study gathered from interviewing teacher educators, the head of ELTEPs, and graduates, and from conducting a focus group with pre-service teachers. Using thematic analysis, this study found an urgent call to reform ELTEPs, especially in the courses offered and teaching practicum for better English teacher preparation. As such, this study adds to the limited literature on ELTEPs in the Indonesian context, informs ELTEP design, and ultimately, contributes to the quality of English teachers.

### INTRODUCTION

English teacher quality becomes an issue in many countries with the English as a foreign language (EFL) context. Previous studies reported English teachers' insufficient English ability and pedagogy. In the Korean context, for example, Butler (2004) reported that many primary and high school English teachers felt they had insufficient English to teach effectively in English. Young et al. (2014) observed and found that many NNESTs (non-native English-speaking teachers) may have limited proficiency in English and that they have to rely on their first language (L1) when teaching their students. Similarly, in Thailand, Poonpon (2021) reported that in 2018, 75% of English teacher proficiency was ranked at the A2 level (i.e., elementary level), which indicates their insufficient English proficiency as English teachers. In addition to the lack of English ability, English teachers in the EFL context countries also face problems related to teaching English pedagogy. In the Thai context, Poonpon's (2021) study also found a lack of English teachers' pedagogy in Thailand, especially, in terms of their creativity to develop teaching materials, game-based learning approaches, and 21st century teaching management. A similar problem was also found in the Vietnamese context. Nguyen (2021) found a lack of English teacher pedagogy for teaching English, especially in terms of using ICT for teaching English.

Similar phenomenon also occurs in the Indonesian context as one of the countries with an EFL context. Regarding the insufficiency in English ability,

Lengkanawati (2005) investigated English teachers' proficiency level in West Java province using the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)-equivalent test and found English teachers' average TOEFL scores are between 290 and 467. In a more current study, Lie et al. (2019) examined English teachers' English proficiency in Indonesia from 149 secondary schools across five regions (Palembang, Yogyakarta-Sleman, Surabaya, Ruteng, and Maluku) through an English proficiency test. This study shows more than 90% of the teachers scored in the 20 to 78 range.

Similar to English proficiency level, English teachers in Indonesia lack pedagogical knowledge of teaching English. A qualitative study undertaken by Ibrahim (2016) found that English teachers still applied a teacher-centric approach such as applying textbook-oriented teaching, purely lecturing, and skipping less-structured activities. Another previous study also noted that English teachers in Indonesia are less familiar with the use of technology for teaching English (Prasojo et al., 2020) due to a lack of training and facilities as well as social support from their leaders and peers.

The results of these prior studies pointing to an insufficient quality of English teachers in the EFL countries' context demonstrate an urgent need for enhancing English teachers' quality in the Indonesian and global contexts. Therefore, this study aims to examine the preparation of English teachers at English Language Teacher Education Programs (ELTEPs) where English teachers are prepared formally as effective English teachers from the perspective of internal stakeholders. To address this aim, this study developed this research question:

RQ1. How do internal stakeholders perceive the preparation of English teachers in ELTEP in the Indonesian context?

The result of this study contributes some recommendations about the preparation of English teachers at ELTEPs in the Indonesian context and other countries with similar contexts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

To prepare qualified teachers, teacher education, including ELTEPs, should consider four stages: recruiting, preparing, induction, and supporting (Hammond, 2017). However, this review of the literature discusses the preparing stage only, as this study focuses on the preparation of English teachers in ELTEPs.

### **The Dominant of English Courses in ELTEPs**

There is a consensus within the literature that English teachers are required to be significantly proficient in English to deliver effective teaching English (Richards, 2017). English language proficiency refers to someone's ability to use English for communication purposes (Renandya et al, 2018), which can be assessed from five performance indicators: accuracy, fluency, complexity, appropriacy, and capacity (Richards, 2017). In the case of teaching English, English proficiency is required for English teachers as content knowledge, which

means the knowledge they teach to students. For these reasons, having sufficient English proficiency is crucial for English teachers. Thus, ELTEPs must prepare students for English teacher proficiency, and one of the ways is by offering adequate English courses for pre-service teachers in this program. Therefore, the ELTEP curriculum is usually predominantly English courses (Richards, 2017) to facilitate pre-service teachers to be proficient in English once they graduate from ELTEPs.

To achieve this aim, ELTEPs in many countries allocate a large number of course credits to English courses. In Vietnam, for example, an ELTEP focuses on supporting student English proficiency by allocating 40% of total credits to English courses or subject matter knowledge (Nguyen, 2013). Similar to the ELTEP curriculum in Vietnam, a dominance of subject knowledge courses appears in ELTEPs in the Turkish context where 48% of total credits are allocated to content knowledge, 34% to pedagogical knowledge, and 18% to general culture (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019). The dominance of English courses allocated in ELTEPs in both countries suggests that ELTEPs in non-English-speaking countries require a focus on the preparation of pre-service teacher English proficiency. This argument supports the curriculum dimension proposed by Richards (2017) that noted that in the context of ESL/EFL where English is not a first language, ELTEP curricula should emphasize the preparation of pre-service teachers' English proficiency as content knowledge in teaching English. This is because there is a possibility that pre-service teacher candidates in these contexts do not have sufficient English ability because of the status of English, which is not their first language.

While the curricula of ELTEPs in the Vietnamese and Turkish contexts emphasize supporting pre-service teachers' English proficiency, a slight difference appears in the ELTEP curriculum in the Indonesian context. Sulistiyo et al. (2019) found that this ELTEP allocates 32% for English courses, yet, compared to ELTEPs in Vietnam this proposition is under expectations. However, Sulistiyo et al.'s (2019) study failed to explore factors beyond the dimension of credit course proportion for English courses in ELTEPs.

### **The Integration of English as a Lingua Franca Awareness in ELTEPs**

Focusing more on preparing pre-service teachers' English proficiency is not the only issue of previous ELTEP curriculum development research. Another issue that appears in previous studies related to English teacher preparation in ELTEPs is a call for the integration of English as a lingua franca (ELF). "ELF" refers to the use of English as a bridge dynamic for communication and interaction among people with multicultural backgrounds. ELF aims to facilitate people with different first languages to communicate and interact with each other using English (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, 2006).

The integration of ELF awareness in ELTEPs benefits pre-service teachers and their future in teaching English, especially in developing their confidence to communicate in English (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020). ELF awareness leads to the understanding of various accents of English spoken by people around the world. This understanding improves their confidence in speaking English because they don't need to worry that they have non-native-like English accents, and it is fine to speak English with their local accent.

Due to the benefits of ELF awareness for English learners, ELTEPs in the global context have integrated ELF awareness. The dramatic integration of ELF awareness into ELTEPs appears in Japan where a major reform occurred in an ELTEP. D'Angelo (2019) in his article describes this massive reform of ELTEP into the Department of World Englishes (DWE) at Chukyo University, Japan, in 2002. This department is the successor to the former Department of English Language and Literature. The goal of this school is to develop "educated Japanese English," which is the type of English that would be more effective in international business and academic settings. Japan is not the only country where English teacher preparation integrates the ELF concept for facilitating pre-service teachers' ELF awareness development. In Italy, for example, the Roma Tre University offers a transdisciplinary module, *From English to Englishes*, for pre-service teachers in ELTEP. This course aims to equip pre-service teachers with the opportunity to develop an awareness of the current trend in teaching English and of its impact on teaching English (Bayyurt, 2018).

Unlike ELTEPs curricula in other countries, ELTEPs in the Indonesian context seem less focused on equipping pre-service teachers with ELF awareness. Sakhiyya et al. (2018) suggested the need for placing great emphasis on the ELTEP curriculum in Indonesia in language proficiency preparation that integrates with the ELF paradigm to respond to the diverse Indonesian socio-cultural realities. This study also argued for the need of matching the ELTEP curricula with the ELF paradigm due to various accents in distinctive regions of Indonesia. This different accent could influence their English-speaking accent. With ELF awareness, pre-service teachers could introduce various English accents across countries and also within the Indonesian region in their future teaching. This could help students to understand making-meaning communication (Jenkins, 2006). Similar findings from a study conducted by Widayati and Hayati (2018) highlighted that ELTEPs in Indonesia have not prepared pre-service teachers in ELF awareness. This study analyzed ten syllabi of the Cultural Understanding course from ten state ELTEPs in Indonesia. The result of this study showed that those ten syllabi predominantly introduced pre-service teachers to inner circle countries' cultures, especially American and British culture. This fact is contrary to the ELF concept that positions English as a communication tool for people in a multicultural context (Jenkins, 2006). The weak integration of ELF in ELTEPs in Indonesian could negatively impact pre-service teachers' ELF awareness.

### **Promoting Reflective Practice in ELTEPs**

Teacher education programs, including ELTEPs, require preparing pre-service teachers as reflective practitioners to enhance their future teaching. Dewey (1933) argued that reflective teaching practice becomes a crucial component in teacher education because it assists teachers in developing their understanding of their teaching style, methods, and techniques; and in identifying how effectively they teach. When pre-service teachers can successfully do reflective practice, it will assist them in shifting their thinking from general ideas of teaching or pedagogy to more concrete ones, including the classroom environment (Maaranen & Stenberg, 2017).

Various strategies can be applied to promote reflective practice. Cirocki and

Widodo (2019) employ mainly five strategies of reflective practice: writing reflective journals/diaries, peer observation of teaching, lesson study, action research, and reflecting with digital technologies. More specifically, “peer observation” refers to a partnership between two or more teachers who observe each other and provide constructive feedback and collaborative reflection (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Previous studies have stated that peer observation enables teachers to discuss and reflect on their best practices in teaching and problem-solving (Jones & Gallen, 2016). Additionally, Cirocki and Widodo (2019) have argued that this dialogic space encourages teachers to enhance instructional practice, enhance commitment in teaching, improve critical awareness of student learning experience, and improve skills in giving and receiving feedback. In this case, feedback might come from peers, teacher educators, and self-reflection (Hendriwanto, 2021), yet Erdemir and Yeşilçınar (2021) recommend self-reflection feedback that can be equally useful as teacher educator feedback. This is because self-reflection feedback allows pre-service teachers to raise awareness, develop critical viewpoints, and increase motivation.

Another strategy to promote pre-service teachers’ reflective ability is a lesson study that refers to teacher learning activities through a systematic cycle. This cycle includes planning the lesson, implementation of the lesson plan and observation, revising the lesson plan after evaluation of the lesson, applying the revised lesson plan, and reapplying the reflective cycle as needed (Bruce & Ladky, 2011). This lesson study aims to support student learning by identifying problems in a class, planning a lesson to solve the problems in the class, delivering a lesson, and reflecting on how effective the planning of the lesson was (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Much of the current literature highlights the implementation of lesson study in both microteaching courses and the teaching practicum to promote reflective teaching for pre-service teachers in microteaching courses (Nguyen, 2020) and in the teaching practicum (Aykan & Dursun, 2020). Another study (Utami et al., 2016) noted that lesson study facilitates pre-service teachers to gain positive feedback and lessons learned from their teaching practice that also promote their reflective practice ability.

Even though ELTEPs in Indonesia apply lesson study in these two courses to promote reflective practice for pre-service teachers (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019), studies identify pre-service teachers’ level of reflective practice as still needing to be improved. A study conducted by Riyanti (2020) found that pre-service teachers’ reflective levels are still at the descriptive level. This means that pre-service teachers are only able to describe the matters and not able to analyze the reasons behind those problems or how to solve them. The results of these previous studies raise questions as to what factors cause the unsatisfactoriness of pre-service teachers’ level of reflection.

## **METHOD**

As previously mentioned, this study aims to gain an understanding of the preparation of pre-service teachers in ELTEPs; thus, this study is designed as a qualitative case study that offers an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2018). Creswell (2014) argued that qualitative

research is concerned with exploring individuals' opinions, experiences, and feelings about the topic being studied. Further, to gain an in-depth understanding of English teacher preparation in ELTEPs, this study involves multiple sources of data from various groups of participants (Creswell, 2014).

This study involves four types of ELTEPs internal stakeholders from the four common types of ELTEPs in Indonesia at private and state ELTEPs under the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) supervision. This study comprises 65 internal stakeholders from those four ELTEPs by interviewing four heads of ELTEPs, 10 teacher educators, 10 graduates, and conducting a focus group with 41 pre-service teachers. The internal stakeholder of ELTEPs considers as the knowledgeable people in this research topic because they have a direct impact on the future of the organization (Bryson, 2004). Further, the involvement of various internal stakeholders aims to seek various insights from diverse participants to reach data thick description in this study Creswell (2014).

This study applied thematic analysis, a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in the data (Savin-Baden & Major 2013), and adopted the six steps in this approach recommended by Creswell (2014): (a) organize and prepare the data for analysis, (b) read or look at all the data, (c) start coding all of the data based on the emerging themes, (d) generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis, (e) advance how the description and themes will be presented in a qualitative narrative, and (f) making an interpretation. This data analysis resulted in two key main findings for this study, and each of the theme is discussed in the next section.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Courses Offered**

Participants in this study noted three issues regarding courses offered by ELTEPs regarding the offering of various general courses and the absence of English as a lingua franca-awareness courses. The first issue related to offering general courses. Two graduates (GD1 and GA4) and three pre-service teachers (STB1, STB5, and STB4) noted that general courses, such as religion, basic psychology, and Arabic, do not directly support their development as English teachers and do not meet their expectations. Offering such a variety of general courses could reduce the number of credit courses allocated for English and pedagogy courses and thereby reducing pre-service teacher opportunities to practice and develop their English and teaching ability during their preparation in ELTEPs. This finding aligns with Sulistyono et. al., (2019), who found that an Indonesian ELTEP only allocated 32% of its total program credits to English courses and allocated the rest of its credits to pedagogy and general courses. In fact, ELTEPs in English as a second and foreign language contexts must be dominated by English courses (Richard, 2018). The findings of this study report a difference in the design of ELTEPs in other countries. For example, an ELTEP in Vietnam allocated 40% of its total course credits to content knowledge or English skills courses (Nguyen, 2013), while an ELTEP in Turkey allocated 48% of its

course credits to content knowledge or English skills courses (Öztürk & Aydin, 2018). This current study adds to Sulisty et. al., (2019) by reporting that the cause of ELTEPs allocating fewer course credits to English courses as opposed to ELTEPs in other countries is that they offer a larger variety of general courses that reduce the course credits for English and pedagogy courses.

The second issue regarding courses offered is less support of English as a lingua franca (ELF) awareness for pre-service teachers. Two participants (GA4 and HC) noted that ELTEPs do not offer an ELF-awareness course for pre-service teachers. On the other hand, they noted that ELF awareness is crucial for English teachers in the EFL context to obtain an understanding of various spoken-English versions and improve their confidence in speaking English with their own accent. This finding supports previous studies in the Indonesian context by Sakhiyya et.al. (2018), who argued that ELTEPs curricula lacked the ability to respond to the ELF framework. A possible reason for this absence of ELF awareness in ELTEPs is the ingrained view of native-speakerism in countries where English is taught in an EFL context. Students' perception is that good English is only that spoken with a native-like accent. As a result, they lack confidence in speaking English with their own accent. However, the absence or lack of ELF-awareness instruction in ELTEPs is in contrast with several studies that notice the significance and benefits of ELF in current teaching contexts. Sifakis (2019) revealed the significance of integrating ELF awareness into ELTEPs to prepare pre-service English teachers to become teachers who are able to accept varieties of English and challenge the established role of native-speakerism. Further, ELF awareness also benefits pre-service English teachers' future teaching in that it allows them to transfer this awareness to their students to increase students' confidence of speaking English (Jenkins, 2006).

### **Teaching Practice Courses**

In the Indonesian context, "teaching practice courses" refers to a microteaching course or courses and a teaching practicum designed to facilitate the teaching of teaching practices in pre-service teachers. However, participants view this teaching practice as doing very little to promote pre-service teachers' ability to reflect on their teaching. The low level of support in teaching reflective practice in ELTEPs contradicts Collin et al. (2013) and Erdemir and Yeşilçınar (2021), who have argued that initial teacher education is central in developing reflective teaching skills in novice teachers and pre-service teachers through evaluating their themselves and their peers. In the microteaching course, two graduates (GD3 and GB2) and one teacher educator (TED2) conveyed that they obtained feedback from peers and teacher educators, but they did not have a chance to engage in self-reflection feedback in their coursework.

This finding contradicts Erdemir and Yeşilçınar (2021), who argued that this type of feedback is even more essential in promoting reflective practice than peer feedback. Self-reflection feedback through video recording allows pre-service teachers to watch their teaching and identify their strengths and weakness in more detail because they can watch their videos repeatedly. This allows pre-service teachers to focus on themselves, the way they teach, and the mistakes they may have made in their teaching (Farrell, 2015). This type of self-reflection

possibly assists pre-service teachers in developing their reflective practice knowledge and skills that could be applied to bettering their future teaching. Therefore, missing this kind of feedback indicates that teaching practice courses do little to promote reflective teaching practice for pre-service teachers. This type of self-reflection would quite possibly assist pre-service teachers in developing their reflective practice knowledge and skills that would be applicable to the betterment of their future teaching.

In addition to the lack of reflective practice training in the microteaching course, little promotion of teaching reflection also appears in the teaching practicum. Two pre-service teachers (STA1-4 and STA1-6) noticed an incomplete lesson study cycle applied in the teaching practicum. They noted the application of three stages: plan, see, and do. Similarly, one teacher educator (TEC1) and one head of ELTEP (HA) alluded to the same issue in the teaching practicum: They added that an incomplete lesson study cycle occurs due to limited time allocated for the teaching practicum, which is usually around four to six weeks.

The findings related to an incomplete cycle of lesson study applied in the teaching practicum contradicts Myers (2012) who argues that the cyclical nature of lesson study allows pre-service teachers to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, and the areas that need development for better future teaching. ELTEPs seem to adapt Duddley's (2014) lesson study model, which involves the three stages mentioned above, rather than another lesson study model that contains five stages (Stepanek et al., 2007). These models of lesson study suggest involving re-teaching followed by re-reflection that allow in-service teachers or pre-service teachers to see the effectiveness of the first reflection. However, the best model of lesson study is unclear from the available literature. Applying lesson study with only three stages in one cycle seems incomplete because it gives pre-service teachers no opportunity to discover whether the solution they proposed in the reflection (the third stage) is effective or not. This results in an incomplete understanding of lesson study and the essence of teaching the reflection process for pre-service teachers. As a result, the application of this incomplete lesson study cycle by pre-service teachers to their future teaching is likely to be less effective in reflecting on lessons taught.

The findings of this study regarding the lack of teaching reflection in ELTEPs in the Indonesian context connects to a previous study that noted pre-service teachers' unsatisfactory level of teaching reflection ability, within the range of dialogic reflection (Riyanti, 2020). Further, the findings of this current study expand Riyanti's study that this unsatisfactory level of pre-service teachers' teaching reflection ability could be because of less support in ELTEPs for the development of pre-service teachers' teaching reflection ability.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study highlight three key findings for the better preparation of English teachers in the Indonesian context and global contexts similar to the Indonesian context. This study concludes that there is a need to reform the ELTEPs for better English teacher preparation, especially in two areas: (a) in the courses offered in ELTEPs that less promote pre-service teacher development in



English proficiency and ELF awareness and (b) in teaching practices in ELTEPs that provide less support for pre-service teacher development as reflective practice practitioners due to the absence of self-reflection feedback and incomplete application of the reflective practice cycle to their lessons. Based on these findings, this study proposes the following recommendations for the enhancement of English pre-service teacher preparation in ELTEPs:

- ELTEPs should review their curricula to reduce general courses and allocate more credits to English and pedagogy courses that are more beneficial in enhancing pre-service teacher English teaching ability. This means that ELTEPs should provide more opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn and practice English teaching knowledge and skills.
- ELTEPs should offer ELF awareness for pre-service teachers by applying strategies such as offering an intensive ELF-awareness course (Deniz et al., 2020) or integrating ELF awareness into other courses (Zacharias, 2019). These strategies enable pre-service teachers to gain ELF awareness and understanding that could improve their confidence in speaking English with their own accent and transfer that ELF awareness to their future students.
- ELTEPs should provide more support for the development of pre-service teacher reflective practice. Teacher educators must provide feedback from various sources in microteaching courses, including feedback from teacher educators and peers, and especially, self-reflection feedback through video recordings of practice teaching episodes that can be considered effective feedback for promoting teaching reflection.

## THE AUTHOR

**Emmi Naja** is a PhD candidate in the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom. She is also a teacher educator at the Islamic University of Tulungagung in Indonesia. Her research interests are English teacher education, curriculum development, and teaching English in the EFL/ESL context. Email: e.naja.18@abdn.ac.uk // najaemmi@gmail.com

## REFERENCES

- Bayyurt, Y. (2018). Issues of intelligibility in world Englishes and EIL contexts. *World Englishes*, 37(3), 407–415.
- Boonsuk, Y., & Ambele, E. A. (2020). Who “owns English” in our changing world? Exploring the perception of Thai university students in Thailand. *Asian Englishes*, 22(3), 297–308.
- Bruce, C. D., & Ladky, M. S. (2011). What’s going on backstage? Revealing the work of lesson study with mathematics teachers. In L. Hart, A. Alston, & A. Murata (Eds.), *Lesson study research and practice in mathematics education* (pp. 243–249). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9941-9\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9941-9_19).
- Butler, Y. G. (2004). What level of English proficiency do elementary school teachers need to attain to teach EFL? Case studies from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(2), 245–278.
- Cirocki, A., & Widodo, H. (2019). Reflective practice in English language teaching in

- Indonesia: shared practices from two teacher educators.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (4th ed.). SAGE.
- D'Angelo, J., Fang, F., & Widodo, H.P. (2019). From learners to users: Reframing a Japanese university curriculum towards a World Englishes Enterprise-informed English as a medium of instruction model. *Critical perspectives on Global Englishes in Asia: Language policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment* (pp. 123–140). De Gruyter.
- Deniz, E. B., Özkan, Y., & Bayyurt, Y. (2020). ELF-awareness in pre-service English language teacher education: A case study from Turkey. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 35(2), 270–284.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dudley, P. (2014). *Lesson study: A handbook*.  
<https://lessonstudy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/new-handbook-revisedMay14.pdf>
- Erdemir, N., & Yeşilçınar, S. (2021). Reflective practices in micro teaching from the perspective of preservice teachers: Teacher feedback, peer feedback, and self-reflection. *Reflective Practice*, 22(6), 766–781.
- Farrell, T. S. (2015). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. Bloomsbury.
- Hendriwanto. (2021). A reflective teaching practicum as a platform for stimulating pre-service teachers' professional development. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 47(4), 624–626.
- Ibrahim, B. (2016). Pedagogical content knowledge for teaching English. *English Education Journal*, 7(2), 155–167.
- Jenkins, J. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching world Englishes and English as a lingua franca. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 157–181.
- Jones, M. H., & Gallen, A. M. (2016). Peer observation, feedback, and reflection for development of practice in synchronous online teaching. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 53(6), 616–626.
- Lengkanawati, N. (2005). EFL teachers' competence in the context of English curriculum 2004: Implications for EFL teacher education. *TEFLIN Journal*, 16(1), 79–92.
- Lie, A., & Tamah, S. M. (2019). English proficiency of secondary school teachers in Indonesia. *English Proficiency of Secondary School Teachers in Indonesia*, 7(2), 86–100.
- Maaranen, K., & Stenberg, K. (2017). Portraying reflection: The contents of student teachers' reflection on personal practical theories and practicum experience. *Reflective Practice*, 18(5), 699–712.
- Nguyen, M. H. (2013). The curriculum for English language teacher education in Australian and Vietnamese universities. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(11), 33–53.
- Nguyen, T. T. L. (2020). Promoting Thai pre-service English teachers' reflective ability through microteaching lesson study. *Asian EFL Journal*, 27(5.2), 213–236.
- Öztürk, G., & Aydin, B. (2019). English language teacher education in Turkey: Why do we fail and what policy reforms are needed? *Anadolu Journal of Educational Sciences International*, 9(1), 181–213.
- Poonpon, K. (2021). Professional development needs of in-service English language teachers in Thailand. *ThaiTESOL Journal*, 34(2), 1–25.
- Prasojo, L. D., Habibi, A., Mukminin, A., & Yaakob, M. F. M. (2020). Domains of technological pedagogical and content knowledge: Factor analysis of Indonesian in-service EFL teachers. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(4), 593–608.
- Renandya, W. A., Hamied, F. A., & Nurkamto, J. (2018). English language proficiency in Indonesia: Issues and prospects. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 15(3), 618–629.
- Richards, J. C. (2017). Teaching English through English: Proficiency, pedagogy, and

- performance. *RELC Journal*, 48(1), 7–30.
- Riyanti, D. (2020). Students' reflections in teaching practicum: A case study of EFL pre-service teachers. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 10(2), 268–289.
- Sakhiyya, Z., Agustien, H. I., & Pratama, H. (2018). The reconceptualisation of knowledge base in the pre-service teacher education curriculum: Towards ELF pedagogy. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 49–56.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Sifakis, N. C. (2019). ELF awareness in English language teaching: Principles and processes. *Applied Linguistics*, 40(2), 288–306.
- Stepanek, J., Appel, G., Leong, M., Mangan, M. T., & Mitchell, M. (2006). *Leading lesson study: A practical guide for teachers and facilitators*. Corwin Press.
- Sulistiyo, U., Wiryotinoyo, M., & Wulan, R. (2019). Examining an English as a Foreign Language Teacher Education Program (EFLTEP)'s curriculum: A case study in an Indonesian university. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 8(4), 1323–1333.
- Young, S. (2014). EFL learners' beliefs about native and non-native English-speaking teachers: Perceived strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(6), 563–579. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.889141>
- Utami, I. W. P., & Nafi'ah, U. (2016). A model of microteaching lesson study implementation in the prospective history teacher education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(27), 10–14.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.
- Zacharias, N. T. (2019). The ghost of nativespeakerism: The case of teacher classroom introductions in transnational contexts. *TESOL Journal*, 10(4), Article e499.



## Limited-Term Contracts and Foreign Language Teachers' Integration into Japanese Institutions

---

Bladimie Germain

*Reitaku University, Kashiwa, Chiba, Japan*

At a time when universities are experiencing a steep decline in enrollment rates, staff retention, integration and commitment play an important role in the institution's sustainability. This study aims to explore the effects of limited-term contracts (LTCs) on foreign language teachers' (FLT) willingness to integrate on work-related and sociocultural levels. This study adopts a qualitative approach using questionnaires and interviews that focus exclusively on FLTs on LTCs at a university in Japan. Key findings are that LTCs do have a direct impact on the FLTs' willingness to integrate within their institutions at a peer and institutional level as previously highlighted by Chen (2022), Fuisting (2017), Cotter and Sato (2017), and Sato et al. (2015). However, there are limited effects at the classroom level. Additionally, findings suggest that there is a relationship between sociocultural integration outside of work and willingness to integrate at the work-related level.

### INTRODUCTION

In response to globalization and economic stagnation, Japan was forced to abandon its previously hard-fought language and cultural homogeneity, with previous contractual restrictions on foreign language teachers (FLTs) undergoing several changes. The limit of one year per institution was revised to five consecutive years in 2012, then to ten consecutive years in 2014, after which tenure must be offered (Sato et al., 2015). These efforts by the Japanese government and institutions increased foreign staff by 3.54% (7,565) between 1983 and 2019 (Chen, 2022). However, many view themselves as poster-people for their university to demonstrate internationalization rather than as valued faculty (Brotherhood et al., 2020; Chen, 2022; Chen & Huang, 2022; Selmer & Lauring, 2011). Additionally, the FLT workforce in Japan is predominantly restricted to limited-term contracts (LTCs), and many fail to advance beyond the five-year mark. This prompted research interests in determining the effects of LTCs on the various stakeholders in institutions. However, much of the research primarily focuses on the FLTs as opposed to visiting foreign language teachers (VFLTs). Therefore, this paper aims to add to the discussion of the use of LTCs for FLTs, by including VFLTs. Although the experience of FLTs and VFLTs may be different, valuable lessons can be learned to contribute to the understanding of LTCs and FLTs, as the experiences may not be too dissimilar.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### LTCs, Institutions, and FLTs

LTCs are often advertised as a three- to five-year contract, however, these are often one-year renewable contracts that can be renewed for up to three or five years. Making contract termination possible even after one year. Such job instability could have negative implications on various aspects of FLTs' experiences, the quality of teaching, and the institution (Burrows, 2007).

Cotter and Sato (2017) highlighted various advantages and disadvantages of LTCs on FLTs and their institutions. Regarding institutional benefits, LTC FLTs provide increased class coverage compared to tenured staff, provide and promote a globalized image of the institution, allow for limited responsibility in long-term disputes, and offer new ideas and approaches from previous experiences gained at other institutions. However, it is also argued that FLTs may not be able to make any changes at a program or curriculum level due to exclusion from the decision-making process in Japanese universities (Chen, 2022; Fuisting, 2017). Consequently, the knowledge learned from incoming FLTs may be confined to the classroom level and restricted to among FLTs. Moreover, when FLTs leave, they also take with them knowledge of the institution leading to “knowledge loss” (Sato et al., 2015). Additionally, FLTs may be reluctant to share their knowledge with institutions due to a lack of connection to future success. However, LTCs offer FLTs increased flexibility and other work-related benefits in the short-term, such as research support through a research budget, health insurance, and a pension.

The demerits of LTCs on institutions extend beyond knowledge loss and include negative effects on teamwork, program development, quality of teaching, and increased hiring costs of new FLTs among others (Burrows, 2007; Chen, 2022; Cotter & Sato, 2017; Nyambok & Hongo, 2022; Song, 2017). The knowledge FLTs take with them when they leave encompasses both explicit and tacit (i.e., invaluable lived experiences, which are difficult to transfer), which as Song (2017) stated could inform the institutions' decision-making. Moreover, intensified competition and qualification requirements for FLTs may cause them to focus on research to secure tenured positions or another LTC, potentially impacting the quality of teaching (Burrows, 2007; Skea, 2021). Additionally, jobs posted are often under the guise of “lecturerships”; however, it is noted that these roles often focus heavily on teaching, rather than research (Skea, 2021). Additionally, these jobs may even boast of research allowances; however, when it comes to structural support for research this is often lacking. This therefore puts the “lecturer” in a predicament as they often have to decide whether to (a) focus on teaching to give students quality education, (b) focus on research in order to improve employability after the contract term ends, or (c) unsuccessfully do both. These conflicting demands can cause the LTC FLTs to experience an identity crisis (Skea, 2021).

Furthermore, the LTCs and the lack of integration of the FLTs could negatively impact their perceptions of their professional identity, job security, and willingness to collaborate (Chen, 2022; Cotter & Sato, 2017; Fuisting, 2017). Other areas that may pose challenges for FLTs are limited autonomy and professional development opportunities (Chen & Huang, 2022; Corley & Sabharwal, 2007;

Selmer & Lauring, 2011; van der Wende, 2015). It seems that there is a lack of benefit to using LTCs for both institutions and FLT's; however, their prevalent use by Japanese universities cannot be overstated.

## **Integration**

As this research focuses on integration, it is therefore important to clarify the meaning of integration. Due to the nature of VFLT's, it is important to consider migrational integration. The integration of VFLT's can be considered to be two-fold: (a) adaptation into their new society and culture and (b) adaptation into their new workplace. Moreover, due to LTCs, normal FLT's may relocate to different places in Japan, experiencing a form of integration not dissimilar to visiting lecturers and migrants. Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas (2016) defined integration as the process by which a migrant settles and interacts in their new environment. Bommers (2004, 2012) and Boswell and D'Amato (2012) argued that the process of integration happens at different subsystems of society, not society as a whole. Esser (2004, as cited in Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas, 2016) agreed by defining integration as the process by which individuals become incorporated into pre-existing social systems. Moreover, Berry's (2011) conceptualization of integration is fitting to describe the phenomenon experienced by FLT's on LTCs. However, this framework is limited to societies that are multicultural and, thus, is not wholly applicable due to the homogeneous nature of Japanese society. However, Castagone and Salis's (2015) WORK-INT framework, which was originally designed to understand the integration of migrant nurses in European countries, provides a comprehensive framework to understand the integration of migrant workers into the workplace. The WORK-INT model encompasses three main dimensions: the structural, the relational, and the individual. Firstly, the structural dimension evaluates integration at a macro level and micro level. The macro level considers policies and measures at a national level that affect integration. Whereas the micro level considers policies at an institutional or workplace level that may impact the way in which migrant workers are able to integrate into their institutions. Given that research centers around the effect of LTCs, this could be said to be the structural dimension at both the macro and micro level. Secondly, the relational dimension considers relationships within the workplace, such as vertical relationships (superiors to subordinates), and horizontal relationships (colleagues at the same level). Lastly, the individual dimension focuses on the individual's perception of their well-being, opportunities, and satisfaction in the workplace. Additionally, Ager and Strang (2008) stated that the responsibility for integration is of the various stakeholders, thus making the WORK-INT model apt to discuss this process.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Context**

This research is situated at a private university in Japan that hosts a small group of visiting foreign language teachers annually. These VFLT's are usually

hired directly from partner universities from various countries around the world. In any given year, there could be a VFLT from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Hungary, Belarus, the United States, New Zealand, and Taiwan, among others. However, this research focuses exclusively on non-Asia-Pacific VFLTs. Huang et al., (2019) have highlighted distinct differences in integration between Asia-Pacific foreign faculty and non-Asia-Pacific faculty, with the Asia-Pacific foreign faculty better acclimatizing to Japan than the non-Asia-Pacific faculty. Thus, it felt necessary to focus on non-Asia-Pacific VFLTs to better understand their integration experiences. Additionally, it is worth noting that these VFLTs were provided with free accommodations, with most living on the same estate.

### **Research Framework and Data Collection**

This study adopts the WORK-INT model outlined above to address the following questions:

- RQ1. How do LTCs hinder or enhance VFLTs perception of relational integration (a) at a vertical (Japanese staff to VFLT) and (b) at a horizontal level (VFLT to VFLT)?
- RQ2. How do LTCs hinder or enhance VFLTs perception at the individual dimension?

Although the structural dimension is important, it will not be extensively discussed in this paper.

This research employed a qualitative approach using questionnaires, which facilitated semi-structured interviews. This method has been deemed best fit for exploring complex personal experiences (Busetto et al., 2020). Moreover, a qualitative approach was also appropriate for various other reasons: the exploratory nature, the anticipated small sample size, the need for emic perspectives to better understand the hows and whys, and the natural setting in which data is obtained, to name a few (Brown, 2014).

### **Research Design and Question**

The author made a concerted effort to contact former teachers who had previously worked at the university, utilizing university administration, personal contacts, and snowball sampling. The questionnaire was completed by 16 teachers who had worked at the university between 2004 and 2022. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: (a) biographical data, (b) affinity to the institution as a whole (vertical dimension), (c) affinity to departmental colleagues (horizontal dimension), and (d) understanding of their individual roles (individual dimension). The survey was anonymous unless participants chose to disclose their name and email address at the end to be contacted for interviews. The participants also had the option of maintaining their anonymity by completing the survey and then contacting the author separately to express their willingness to be interviewed. The results were then manually coded to facilitate the construction of the interview questions. These interviews were conducted online through Zoom, lasted 30–40 minutes each, and participants were invited to elaborate and ask questions



at the end of the interview process. The interviews were then transcribed using Notta and edited for inaccuracies. Lastly, the results of the interviews were manually coded for data analysis, and then analyzed under the WORK-INT framework.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Structural Dimension

At the structural dimension, one participant noted that it was clear that the university adopted a “here today, gone tomorrow” approach to the management of the VFLTs. This meant that individuals felt limited in their ability to fully integrate into the institution: “Largely as a result of the three-year contract policy, I feel, the institution adopts a ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ approach towards [VFLT] lecturers. It is difficult to feel ‘connected and included’ under such circumstances” [QP14]. One of the ways in which the “here today, gone tomorrow” approach was manifested was in the lack of ability to implement any structural change or make contributions in decision-making, which was also noted by Fuisting (2017) and Chen (2022) in their research: “I am mostly informed about decisions, I do not feel involved in them. I do not even know the whole institutional structure and have not been acquainted with anything outside my department” [QP7].

As noted above, FLTAs also referenced the lack of understanding in the university’s organizational structure and its impact on their integration, particularly when it came to understanding the chain of command or conflict resolution. This also echoes the sentiment of “here today, gone tomorrow” as one participant (IP4) highlighted that due to the lack of organizational understanding, they were not able to take an issue they had further. Cotter and Sato (2017) also spoke on how the institutions’ view of LTCs makes for limiting disputes in the long term. Therefore, it may be that, rather than dealing with these issues, universities try to ignore them until the end of the contracted period. As one interview participant related,

There was, like there was, like, a point where another, like, lecturer got, like, very aggressive at me, and she, like, screamed at me one day, and then I chatted to [Person T] about it and then [Person Y]. Then afterwards, nothing really, I think, happened afterwards. It was just kind of left the way it was and there was no elaboration. ... It’s just kind of okay, we’re not going to talk about it. That just didn’t happen. [IP4]

Another sentiment that hindered integration, echoed by Chen (2022) and Fuisting (2017), was the perceived use of FLTAs as promotional opportunities for globalization rather than as assets to academically contribute to the institution:

You were asked to teach, share, create a positive environment, improve the program. However, when you tried to do this, you would always face some walls. So, at the end, you wondered what your role was. At the end, I felt like I was just a marketing tool. [QP5]

Furthermore, the lack of opportunity to engage in the decision-making process appeared to hinder some participants from being concerned with acknowledging the wider goals of the institution. Another interview participant recounted,

University-wide support in terms of their broad strategies or goals. I don't pay too much attention to those. I don't feel like they're all that relevant to me. It's more the group of people that I know and that I work with each day. They're the ones that I want to feel supported by. [IP2]

Thus, the VFLT's lack of inclusion in the decision-making process negatively impacted their willingness to align with the wider goals and aims of the institution.

### The Relational Dimension

Table 1 outlines the number of years participants remained in their position and whether they were acquainted with any individuals within the university prior to joining, as well as the nature of their relationship. The table reveals that individuals who were not acquainted before joining the university were less likely to complete the full three years of their contract. Although, it is not clear whether this affected integration or not, it seems that prior knowledge and a relationship with individuals in the institution could lead to individuals completing their contract. Therefore, this may be an area for further exploration.

**TABLE 1. Participant Details**

Participant	Years in Position	Year	Acquainted Before Assuming Post (relationship type)
QP9	5 years+	2009–2015	Yes (former colleague)
QP2	5 years+	2016–2021	No (N/A)
QP1	4 years	2016–2021	Yes (friendship)
QP3	4 years	2009–2015	No (N/A)
QP11	3 years	2009–2015	Yes (friendship)
QP8	3 years	2009–2015	Yes (fellow graduate student)
QP14	3 years	2009–2015	Yes (former colleague)
QP5	3 years	2016–2021	Yes (friendship)
QP4	3 years	2009–2015	No (N/A)
QP10	3 years	2016–2021	No (N/A)
QP12	3 years	2016–2021	No (N/A)
QP7	2 years	2016–2021	No (N/A)
QP13	2 years	Pre-2009	No (N/A)
QP15	2 years	Pre-2009	No (N/A)
QP16	2 years	2009–2015	No (N/A)
QP6	1 year	2016–2021	No (N/A)

*Note.* QP = Questionnaire participant.

### **Vertical Integration**

Although vertical integration is typically used to describe the relationship of a senior staff and a subordinate, in the context of Japan, it seems appropriate to apply this to the relationship between FLT's and the Japanese academic staff. This is mainly due to the context of foreign language faculty in Japan being culturally inferior to their native counterparts, in both knowledge of the institution and norms of the culture as a whole, which sometimes create a hierarchy regardless of the job title.

While not directly linked to LTCs, one of the most common hindrances to integration was deemed to be language and cultural barriers. In addition to a language and cultural barrier, a common factor that affected the integration of VFLT's appeared to be time. However, in the questionnaire, one participant noted that they did not feel that this was wholly due to the contract but rather the constraints of time itself. However, it could be argued that the constraints of time may have been felt due to the nature of the contract. Another participant noted that the LTC put a "damper on the possibility of future relationships" as they deemed it unlikely that the relationship would continue after leaving the position:

The limited-term contract does put a damper on developing relations with the local faculty and staff. You know you will probably never see any of the people after a couple years, and developing true friendships with Japanese people isn't easy. It's easier to communicate with [VFLT's] via email after leaving [institution]. [QP13]

However, some participants stated that three to five years was more than enough time to form meaningful relationships, and that contract type or length should not hinder integration.

Furthermore, many participants also reported that the reason for lack of integration with Japanese faculty was due to a lack of interaction, the location of the FLT's offices, and the lack of social events. The FLT's offices were located away from the center of the campus, whereas the tenured professors were in the center. One individual noted that this led to a bubble mentality. However, others highlighted that the isolation felt may be a common pattern regardless of department or even country: "But probably if you're in the university teaching physics or whatever, you're within the physics department, you feel a community, and you probably don't feel any more connected than I did. Maybe they did, I don't know" [IP2].

One participants also explicitly stated that they would have been more proactive in integrating and forming relationships if they were contracted long-term: "Had I been on a full-time contract with an intention to stay long-term at the University then I would've made more of an attempt" [QP2].

### **Horizontal Integration**

The horizontal relational dimension is the relationship between VFLT's. This particularly focuses on how LTCs may impact integration and in turn impact areas such as knowledge-sharing and teamwork. In the questionnaire, all the participants strongly agreed or agreed to the ability to form relationships with other VFLT's. With one somewhat agreeing due to time constraints. However, the VFLT's also noted that due to their living arrangements, and lack of alternative

limited social groups, integration among the VFLTs was a default:

We lived in the same area and socialised a lot together. We were each other's 'family' while having this amazing, shared experience working at [institution] and living in [estate]. In addition, we made special connections with our officemates because we spent so much time together. [QP11]

Surprisingly, despite noting that much of the social interaction in and out of the workplace was with other FLTs, the participants felt that the university could have done more to foster social interaction and integration among the VFLTs.

I wished [institution] had organized a day or even just afternoon for team building at the start of each semester where [VFLTs] could have shared an experience outside of the office structure such as going to Mount Takao or participating in a Japanese experience (tea ceremony, kimono, hanami...). [QP5]

However, the dangers of having limited social opportunities and interactions outside of the working environment and cohort was noted by one of the participants: "To a certain extent, yes. But I believe that too many of those opportunities would have affected the work relationship among [FLTs] (I knew of/witnessed some examples during my stay for whom it did, in a negative way)" [QP12].

In summary, the living arrangements of VFLTs minimized the threat to social integration at the horizontal relational level posed by their LTCs. However, when it came to collaborations and knowledge-sharing, it became evident that this was not without issue. "Even when trying to create an environment (meetings, personal feedback...) where it was possible and safe, it felt like collaborating and sharing for most [VFLTs] was like pulling out teeth without anaesthesia" [QP5].

In fact, during the study, all the participants who participated in this study demonstrated willingness to collaborate with other FLTs, but at the same time, acknowledged that others within their cohort were reluctant to do so. It is likely that those who were interested in collaborating and knowledge-sharing were more likely to participate in this research. However, it is worth noting that among the participants, only one stated that their LTC had an effect on their willingness to collaborate and share ideas, and another remained indifferent. The other participants stated that it was not a factor in their decision to participate in knowledge-sharing:

The length of my contract never affected my desire to collaborate or improve in any way I could. I saw this time as a learning opportunity and therefore wanted to do as much as possible. There were some ways it limited me, and that was mainly in implementing long-term changes to curriculums. [QP1]

However, although the participants were willing to engage in knowledge-sharing, they also noted that they sometimes received pushback from team members and the institution: "Yes, but new proposals were not always welcomed by...who? [Department X]? can't remember" [QP9]. Additionally, some FLTs also perceived that others had a sense of ownership over materials, which led to a lack of sharing: "FLTs had a strong sense of ownership / property of materials so

often did not share even though there was a system to do so” [QP5]. However, the most important time constraint felt was that “the fact that [institution] strictly limited [FLTs] to three-year contracts meant that courses could not be further developed nor long-term student outcomes monitored. A continual turnover of teaching staff can also be detrimental to student learning, I feel” [QP14].

### **The Individual Dimension**

The individual dimension analyzes factors that relate to the individual VFLT’s perception of their well-being and satisfaction of their integration into the workplace, and thus is subjective by nature (Castagone & Salis, 2015). Participants often showed a conflicting view of their professional identity:

It’s a funny role, isn’t it? Like, I have it on my LinkedIn as “lecturer,” but I’m just like I don’t know if I’d call it that, because the lecturer means something different here [Europe], so. Yeah, that is a good question. What is it actually, compared to the nature you’re basically just kind of like a foreign language teacher? [IP4]

Others also noted that they were performing a role by ensuring that the various future requirements were fulfilled, a result of the pressures of LTCs but also academia as a whole: “I’m probably a little bit cynical about some of that stuff because I think you’re playing a bit of a role. Oh, you’re published, check, done an article this year, check. It’s a little bit like that in academia” [IP5].

One of the participants also noted that they viewed themselves differently from the Western lecturer view and wanted to embody the Japanese meaning of *sensei*. This suggests that LTCs may in part offer VFLTs the ability to interpret their role themselves and create their own identity. As noted by one interviewee,

So, I wanted to embody the Sensei role more than the lecturer role, because I think in Japanese kind of cultures, the Sensei is very I don’t even know what... there’s kind of like a parental aspect to it in a way, because the Sensei from junior high school onwards, they are very responsible for their students. [IP7]

Moreover, a common sentiment shared by VFLTs was that they were fortunate to be in their current position with the benefit of research, as this was something that they deemed not possible in Europe or the U.S. They often recognized that in Japan, their status as a lecturer or professor afforded them higher social standing and respect that they would not have otherwise gotten in their home countries. For example,

They [lecturer jobs] don’t come up all the time. And then ... they’re going to go into is so underpaid and so on? Undervalued in the [European country] and [European country] whereas in Japan, I also worked in [Asian country] as well, it’s valued a lot higher and it’s just a completely different nature. [IP4]

Additionally, some even noted that many VFLTs were limited in their skill set regarding what they could offer the university, so they understood universities’ reluctance to offer anything beyond LTCs.

We are kind of, I don't know, glorified English language teachers who couldn't supervise master's degrees, couldn't supervise PhDs, couldn't do a lot of the stuff that you would like or even expect someone to be able to do who is on a full-time contract. [IP2]

Thus, the ability of the VFLT to fully integrate was limited beyond LTCs. At the individual dimension, it appears that there was a more complex phenomenon that goes beyond integration and may instead be what Lewis et al. (2016) refer to as *academic belonging*: the personal perception of individuals' view of their merit, approval and validity within their academic setting. Furthermore, an interesting observation was that participants sometimes referenced how their attempts to integrate outside of work led them to make connections with others more familiar with Japanese culture, to fill the gap in their cultural knowledge, and inform them of their students and, finally, their teaching:

I heard some stories or some experiences of ALTs in the job or foreign people in Japan, and I think I understood my classes better, I understood my students better because I started to gain more knowledge on this culture. [IP6]

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to discuss (a) how LTCs hinder or enhance VFLT's perception of relational integration at a vertical (Japanese staff to VFLT) and horizontal level (VFLT to VFLT) and (b) how LTCs hinder or enhance VFLT's perception at the individual dimension.

LTCs seem to impact integration across various dimensions, particularly in structural, vertical, and individual aspects, with less effect on the horizontal dimension. At the structural level, the temporal nature of LTCs meant that universities did not include VFLTs in decision-making, leading to individuals not valuing or caring about the university's wider goals. This could be detrimental to the university if at the classroom level, the values of the teacher do not reflect those of the institution. Therefore, universities should take active measures to include VFLTs to some extent in the decision-making process, especially at curriculum or departmental level to better foster integration. Additionally, more efforts at onboarding should be made to allow for a smoother transition and integration of VFLTs to help them better understand the organizational structure and culture of their new institution. Abbas et al., (2018) defines onboarding as the process of integrating new members into an organization by communicating its goals, the culture, and the environment to allow them to integrate more effectively. Furthermore, onboarding may allow institutions to avoid neglecting VFLT issues, as they are better equipped to use the appropriate channels to report issues.

Although most of the participants in this study viewed that three to five years was enough time to form relationships with Japanese staff, it seems that more effort would have been made if the contracted length was longer, affecting the vertical dimension. Hence, institutions should make more use of the 10-year limit of contact before tenure is offered. Although not guaranteed, it may provide VFLTs and Japanese faculty with opportunities to collaborate on research and

projects, strengthening the efficacy of the institution.

However, in the horizontal dimension, neither LTCs nor time seemed to be a significant factor in VFLT-to-VFLT integration. This finding supports the idea of integration occurring at subsystems, as outlined by Boswell and D'Amato (2012). In fact, integration of the FLTs seemed to be mainly enhanced by the limited social groups that were available and due to the separation of the VFLTs from the Japanese faculty, which resulted in frequent interactions amongst them. However, their LTCs may have impacted the knowledge- and material-sharing. However, this is an area that warrants further exploration as a conclusion cannot be drawn from this current study.

How do LTCs hinder or enhance VFLTs' perception at the individual dimension? The study does demonstrate some evidence that LTCs may play a part in FLTs' professional identity being affected at the individual dimension. As Skea (2021) outlined, the role of FLTs at university is often conflicting between being an academic and teaching, which could lead to an identity crisis. However, this was countered by the perception that Japan offers a lot better opportunities for FLTs compared to their home countries. Thus, despite the conflict within their role, many viewed themselves as fortunate to hold their position at their university. Therefore, although participants felt integrated in their institution, there was evidence of a lack of academic belonging, which highlights a difference between integration and belonging, an aspect that requires further exploration for better understanding.

## LIMITATIONS

Although the WORK-INT framework provides a fairly holistic approach to understanding integration, more research needs to be done to consider the various dimensions and how they intersect and influence each other. Additionally, due to the framework being for the workplace, sociocultural factors and how they might affect workplace integration may be overlooked. However, the WORK-INT framework provided a solid basis for analyzing the VFLTs integration into the workplace.

## THE AUTHOR

**Bladimie Germain** is an English language lecturer at the Center for English Communication at Reitaku University, Japan. He has a keen interest in a CLIL-based approach to language teaching and researching communities of practice in order to understand knowledge construction. He would like to sincerely thank all the participants for their contributions to this study. Email: [bgermain@reitaku-u.ac.jp](mailto:bgermain@reitaku-u.ac.jp)

## REFERENCES

- Abbas, W. F., Ismail, S. H., Haron, H., & Hariri, W. N. A. W. (2018). Enterprise integration of employee onboarding process using Zachman framework. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, 7(4.31), 46–51.
- Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(2), 166–191. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016>
- Berry J. W. (2011). Integration and multiculturalism: Ways towards social solidarity. *Papers on Social Representations*, 20(1), 2.1–2.21.
- Bommes, M. (2004). Migration in modern society. In C. Boswell & G. D'Amato (Eds.), *Immigration and social systems: Collected essays of Michael Bommes* (pp. 20–35). Amsterdam University Press.
- Bommes, M. (2012). Transnationalism or assimilation? In C. Boswell & G. D'Amato (Eds.), *Immigration and social systems: Collected essays of Michael Bommes* (pp. 107–124). Amsterdam University Press.
- Boswell, C., & D'Amato, G. (2012). Introduction. In C. Boswell & G. D'Amato (Eds.), *Immigration and social systems: Collected essays of Michael Bommes* (pp. 11–18). Amsterdam University Press.
- Brotherhood, T., Hammond, C. D., & Kim, Y. (2020). Towards an actor-centered typology of internationalization: A study of junior international faculty in Japanese universities. *Higher Education*, 79(3), 497–514. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00420-5>
- Brown, J. D. (2014). *Mixed methods research for TESOL*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Burrows, C. (2007). Opinion and perspective. The effect of limited-term contracts on teaching standards at tertiary-level education in Japan. *OnCUE Journal*, 1(1), 64–73. <http://jaltcue.org/files/OnCUE/OCJ1-1articles/2007OCJ1-1-Burrows-p64-p73.pdf>.
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2(14). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>
- Castagnone, E., & Salis, E. (2015). *Workplace integration of migrant health workers in Europe: Comparative report on five European countries*. FIERI.
- Chen, L. (2022). How do international faculty at Japanese universities view their integration? *Higher Education*, 84(4), 845–862. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00803-7>
- Chen, L., & Huang, F. (2022). *The integration experiences of international academics at Japanese universities* [Working Paper No. 80]. Centre for Global Higher Education.
- Corley, E. A., & Sabharwal, M. (2007). Foreign-born academic scientists and engineers: Producing more and getting less than their U.S.-born peers? *Research in Higher Education*, 48(8), 909–941.
- Cotter, M. J., & Sato, K. J. M. (2017). Perceived merits and demerits of limited term contracts in Japanese universities: An overview. *Research Bulletin of English Teaching*, 13, 81–92. JACET.
- Fuisting, B. (2017). Professional identity among limited-term contract university EFL teachers in JALT. In P. Clements, A. Krause, & H. Brown (Eds.), *Transformation in language education*. JALT.
- Huang, F., Daizen, T., & Kim, Y. (2019). Challenges facing international faculty at Japanese universities: Main findings from the 2017 national survey. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 71, Article 102103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2019.102103>
- Lewis, K. L., Stout, J. G., Pollock, S. J., Finkelstein, N. D., & Ito, T. A. (2016). Fitting in or opting out: A review of key social psychological factors influencing a sense of belonging for women in physics. *Physical Review Physics Education Research*, 12, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.12.020110>
- Nyambok, G. A., & Hongo, H. O. (2022). Staff turnover and knowledge loss: A case study of the University of Nairobi Library. *Regional Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 7(1),14–36.



- Penninx, R., & Garcés-Mascreñas, B. (2016). The concept of integration as an analytical tool and as a policy concept. In B. Garcés-Mascreñas & R. Penninx (Eds.), *Integration processes and policies in Europe*. Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-21674-4\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-21674-4_2)
- Sato, K. J. M., Cotter, M., Skelton, W., & Schinckel, P. (2015). Investigating the impact of Japanese labour laws on limited term contracts for foreign language teachers at Japanese universities. *Journal of the Society of Humanities*, 98, 135–159. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/120005688555>
- Selmer, J., & Luring, J. (2011). Expatriate academics: Job factors and work outcomes. *International Journal of Manpower*, 32(2), 194–210. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437721111130206>
- Skea, C. (2021) Emerging neoliberal academic identities: Looking beyond *Homo economicus*. *Studies in Philosophy Education*, 40, 399–414. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-021-09768-7>
- Song, J. (2017). *The impact of employee turnover on knowledge creation and firm performance: A possible extension of the SECI model in the Chinese context* [Doctoral dissertation, Hokkaido University]. Hokkaido University.
- van der Wende, M. (2015). International academic mobility: Towards a concentration of the minds in Europe. *European Review*, 23(1), 70–88. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798714000799>



---

## **Action Research Papers**

---



## Collaboration in Times of Anxiety

---

Maria Lisak

*Chosun University, Gwangju, Korea*

Korean university students rebuild connections in face-to-face (f2f) team assignments. When there is no escape from people, how can everyone participate comfortably despite students describing anxiety about working with real people instead of Zoom screens? Late 2022 saw institutionally encouraged face-to-face classes return as the learning norm. However, learners expressed high levels of anxiety regarding face-to-face classes. To cope with this, the teacher-practitioner conducted regular check-ins regarding student reported anxiety about learning. Thinking of the face-to-face classroom as a “new” learning environment, the teacher-researcher walks through collaborative scaffolding to help learners engage despite discomfort and nervousness. This article shares how the teacher-researcher re-worked Hmelo-Silver, Chernobilsky, and Jordan’s (2008) collaborative learning processes in new learning environments into their physical classroom after two years of online Zoom classrooms.

### INTRODUCTION

나 무서워 (na museowo). “I’m scared.”

When there is no escape from people, how can everyone participate comfortably despite students describing anxiety about working with real people instead of Zoom screens?

The presentation related to this article was given at KOTESOL International Conference 2023 for the theme of *Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students*. This article is an extension of the presentation, acting as a literature review of Hmelo-Silver et al.’s (2008) inspirational article and an initial analysis of my implementation of collaborative, blended learning practices. I analyze how Korean university students rebuild connections in face-to-face team assignments despite anxiety about working with real people again instead of making online Zoom exchanges. The lesson plans for this are not included in this iteration of the study. While I conducted regular check-ins regarding student-reported anxiety about learning, this study about collaborative learning processes in new learning environments helped me re-imagine my discourse about my pedagogy, re-labeling some individual work as collaborative after reading and analyzing Hmelo-Silver et al. (2008). Thinking of the face-to-face classroom as a “new” learning environment, I walk through my initial re-orientation to collaborative scaffolding using Hmelo-Silver et al.’s study.

This motivating study, EFL teaching models, and trauma-sensitive teaching practices will be woven together in a future article to showcase lesson plans and map how these three instructional models can be integrated into English language learning for content areas in trying times.

Since I am a constructivist, my practice, method, and analysis might help others. This work helped me to see the holes in my pedagogy, increase transparency about my teaching and reduce bias in my grading. The significance of this study is how I deviate from the inspirational study and use it to analyze and articulate my own teaching practice. This is a thick description of the early stages of my inquiry as I worked through the study as both a conceptual framework and method to analyze my teaching.

### **Problem Statement**

My Korean university students needed to build, or rather rebuild, connections in face-to-face spaces. My classroom learners reported high levels of stress about re-engaging in “normal” classroom environments. To address this, I often checked with students regarding anxiety about learning in class and depended on pre-established lessons regarding group and team work to lessen their stress levels. In preparation for the theme of the conference, I researched collaboration theories and found a study that helped to re-assess my pedagogy surrounding the collaborative scaffolding efforts I regularly used. The inspirational study prompted me to “flip the script” about what is old and what is new. Thinking of the face-to-face classroom as a “new” learning environment compared to the Covid Zoom years online, I walk through the collaborative steps, tools, and modalities I’ve used to help learners engage despite discomfort and nervousness.

### **CONTEXT**

While fall 2022 was face-to-face, I was teaching many of the same learners I had been teaching online during Covid. For some background history, spring and fall of 2020 was entirely online. Spring and fall of 2021 were hybrid. My hybrid classes were simultaneous face-to-face with some students while others were online through Zoom. I was at the podium with the Zoom room projected onto the classroom screen. I also used my phone as a personal log in so that I could walk around the room to share what students were saying so the face-to-face students did not have to log into Zoom except for Zoom room assignments. In spring of 2022, I let my students vote, month by month, on how to conduct class – face-to-face only, hybrid, or online only. Of my four courses, two were hybrid and two were online only. In fall of 2022, my university mandated that classes be face-to-face, except for extraordinary circumstances. I teach four sections of a non-English major. In fall of 2022, I had ninety-one Korean university students enrolled in mandatory content courses for their major. The content is taught in English only.

## **DETAILED PROBLEM**

Even before Covid, students were sometimes reluctant to work in groups due to shyness or introversion. Additionally, students were hesitant to work with others who were not previously introduced to them in some kind of social situation (like MT, “membership training,” or student orientation). Other problems about working in groups before Covid revolved around students only wanting to work with friends, so cliques were a problem. Other times a student might be ostracized because of reasons invisible to me at the time but reported to me after class: jealousy, hurt feelings, falling outs, perceived status differences. An additional problem regularly emerged regarding men sitting together with men and women sitting with women in the class, making natural group formation by proximity problematic because of gender separation. The last problem around working in groups was age, which is an important cultural classifier in Korean Confucian culture. Sometimes students from different cohorts are in the classroom. With military service often interrupting male students' university experience, there are often students who study without the in-take group they were annually accepted into. So scaffolding collaboration is something that is hard-coded already into my classroom management techniques.

However, during Covid, learners were especially not expressive even when asked privately or in Korean. These types of silences were hard to read and took a lot of energy to coax learners to be agents of their own learning as well as triangulate the meaning of the silences through online interactions and data collection in many modalities. Upon returning to the classroom, most students had already studied at least one, if not three, previous courses with me. It is this previous experience with me, I think, that allowed them to speak honestly about their fears with me. Often learners would text message me, or ask to talk privately on Zoom regarding concerns about class, activities, homework, and how they were (or were not) coping with various issues of school and health. I feel very privileged that so many students felt comfortable reaching out to me, a foreign professor, to share about their circumstances so we could find solutions to their concerns. It was the regularity of these interactions that prompted me to do regular wellness check-ins with all of my learners.

Before each class, I would ask students if they were ready to engage and what that engagement would look like. I would share my hopes and expectations. Then we would negotiate for English-only, translanguaging, the fluid and dynamic practice of using multiple languages resources to make meaning, or even Korean-only time to prepare for an activity. Additionally, I would ask if they felt comfortable speaking at all, and if not, how they would like to show their participation in that class. Most often learners would want some Korean-only time and then be prepared for English speaking activities. However, some students took several weeks before English language production was a regular deliverable in the classroom. The student, the class, and myself were informed of the student's decision of how they would (or would not) participate in English speaking. These boundaries were communicated and protected as non-negotiable by me, the teacher. But over time, learners were regularly encouraged to take more risks. One of the ways learners were tracking their language production was with weekly journals of written and spoken work. These journals were frequently referred to to

remind learners to “level up” their language production in some way, usually in some measurable way, from a low-stakes measurement like time spent speaking in English or a more high-stakes activity that related to our major, like acting as a group leader or representative in charge of keeping the group on task in English.

In these communications and situated learning scenarios, collaboration was a significant element of many of the class management and instructional design techniques to center the learner for a rich engagement in English. This conference gave me a chance to revisit my practice and analyze it for the steps, tools, and modalities of the collaboration process I was fostering. As an action research project, I took the conference theme topic as a chance to research about what is collaboration and see if I could update some of my fossilized teaching practices.

## INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTED

In planning my fall semester my goal was to re-introduce homework, something that I had eliminated during Covid. Additionally, our course is a three-credit-hour per week course. In those three face-to-face hours, I wanted to continue to scaffold my students into returning to what I consider the norm for a university class – three class hours of production and performance with nine hours of homework (lectures, research, writing, making). My compromise was to have one high-stakes performance hour in class focused on speaking in English with two more passive hours spent on lectures and writing revisions. There would be only one hour of homework balancing research and writing with perhaps a bit of listening. Instead of having the high-stakes presentations of lengths between 3–7 minutes of the past, I began mini-presentations of 30 seconds to 2 minutes. I shifted what were group-to-class spoken reports as a completion task for discussion groups to a more “privileged” place as a “presentation.” I also planned a follow up group activity requiring more than simply sharing homework responses. See Figure 1 for the weekly schedule.

**FIGURE 1. Weekly Homework and Classwork**

<b>Weekly Hours</b>	<b>Homework (1 hour)</b>	<b>Classwork Hour 1 (50 minutes)</b>	<b>Classwork Hour 2 (50 minutes)</b>	<b>Classwork Hour 3 (50 minutes)</b>
Actions	Research and Writing: A specifically assigned topic on welfare management.	Activity 1: Think-Pair-Share Activity 2: Makesomehing using research and homework responses	Present Activity 2’s creation, and teacher feedback about homework, group work, presentations.	Revise homework, group work, and Activity 2 into a new artifact. Either summarizes or extends this week’s topic and exchanges.
Modalities	Internet and Google Forms.	F2F groups; notebooks. Teacher collects audio, video, or pictures as evidence of work performed and to give feedback.	Computer and projector if needed. If there is no time for teacher feedback, it is given in a video and posted to the class website for learners to review at their convenience.	Could be individual or collaborative. Usually handwritten or drawn in class. Occasionally, Google Forms to collect answers.



Before reading around about collaboration in Hmelo-Silver et al. (2008), I felt that only one hour of classwork (Activity 1 and Activity 2) were collaborative, with an occasional collaborative activity in the third hour as a written or drawn group collaboration activity. I did not consider the homework, the presentations, or the revisions as collaborative.

I read a lot about collaboration and found a lot of dead ends, lack of rigor, and business-speak. I found two definitions that argued meanings for cooperation and collaboration that were the same and opposite – very confusing. Collaborative advocacy seemed like a similar fit to my teaching practices, but there were significant gaps between my teaching and this method. Finally I came upon the work of Hmelo-Silver et al. (2008). In this study the steps, tools, and modes really helped me to understand the shifts I had made when returning to face-to-face learning. I decided to analyze my classroom return as a “new learning environment” to think about how I was (or wasn’t) fostering collaboration. Before I started to think about my language learning pedagogy or my equity-centered practices, I needed to check my lessons against another model that showed what is successful and what is not successful for collaborative learning spaces. As I read through Hmelo-Silver et al.’s work, I was basically taking notes about my own pedagogical framework, which riffed off of Hmelo-Silver et al.’s collaboration process, standard language practice models like CBL, and trauma-informed pedagogical choices. I finally found a great resource to help me analyze my teaching.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In my conference presentation I focused on highlighting what I had learned from Hmelo-Silver et al.’s (2008) study. I shared the significance of the study and the steps, tools and modes, but was unable timewise to share about the study’s coding practices, which I found helpful for connecting my collaborative goals with my language teaching goals and equity-focused goals. I shared how Hmelo-Silver et al.’s collaborative learning processes in new learning environments were relevant to my physical classroom after two years of online Zoom classrooms.

This study focused on understanding complex computer-mediated, problem-based, learning environments. It used sociocultural theory as a framework emphasizing social context and tool-mediated learning. The study examined discourse and collaborative knowledge building beyond individual speech acts. Using CORDTRA diagrams as well as frequency analysis, successful and unsuccessful groups in the STELLAR learning environment were studied. Resource usage and metacognitive engagement influenced outcomes. These analyses are helpful to inform new learning environments and intervention strategies.

### **Aligning Concepts, Frames, and Theories**

The first area of overlap between my teaching and the study’s regarded the underlying frames of critical sociocultural theory (Lewis et al., 2020), which highlights situated learning. Sociocultural theory offers a conceptual frame for comprehending the intercultural contexts of my classroom’s learning space by

highlighting the significance of social interactions and the tools we use. My learners are learning their major in English but with Koreans in Korea. These circumstances require me as the teacher to incorporate all of these assets to buoy learning. By embracing and leveraging their sociocultural resources, the process of learning enhances efficacy.

One of the results from Hmelo-Silver et al.'s (2008) inspirational study was that a significant source of variations lies in students' resource utilization and their involvement in diverse forms of metacognitive discussions and knowledge transformation activities, which can occasionally have negative consequences for the group. While I want to include my students' funds of knowledge (González et al., 2006), this inclusiveness is not a norm carried over from their mainstream experience of education in South Korea. I need to explain and model for learners to bring in what they already know and not be embarrassed about what they don't know but can share and learn from others. Some of my learners don't have the confidence to bring in their learning background as a resource. Others don't know how to talk about the process of their thinking and learning, as if learning is only about getting the "right" answer and that is a kind of alchemy or magic that simply happens if you study hard, that it is not a series of several attempts to look at problems from multiple perspectives. I can see where and when learners anchor to faulty machine translations or misinterpretations from a peer in class. All learners are meaning-making, but misunderstandings arise when not questioning the source material and translations as one of the metacognitive practices they should be working through. Finding lessons that introduce collaborative meaning-making helps all learners develop their metalinguistic and knowledge transformation practices

I have followed the learning theory of constructivism, an educational theory that posits learners actively construct knowledge by connecting new information or experiences to their existing understanding through active engagement and social interactions, since my early days of teaching at the university level. Adults come to class with many different experiences. These experiences can help build and connect to new ideas encountered in the classroom or formal curriculum. Many learning environments can be categorized as constructivist, emphasizing the collaborative involvement of learners in addressing real-world problems (Gijbels et al., 2006). In our class we often take real-world problems from our major study and apply proven solutions, but we also do a lot of creative solutions using social media and technology as emerging solutions that need more discussion about their implications.

One of the ways that my context differs from that of the study is, of course, English. English is the medium of the class but is not the common language of the learners; rather, a second or third language. However, the toolbox we use for meaning-making is not just the English language. It is also Korean language, as well as body language (i.e., eye contact, gestures, facial expressions), and also videos, graphics, and pictures are semiotic tools employed. With learning that is socially situated (Palincsar, 1998) and emphasizes the criticality of tools in meaning-making (Cole, 1996), I have an opportunity to look at my learners' work, as well as the variety of tools we use for meaning-making, for collaborative practices mediating our learning.

Part of the complexity of my context includes translanguaging practices and

using a variety of technology tools, such as the machine translators Papago and Google Translate. The Hmelo-Silver et al. (2008) study looks at the learning environment as an activity system (Engeström 1999). To comprehend my classroom as an activity system, it is necessary to examine the cultural tools employed, such as the language utilized in communication and the specific models embodied by English language teaching and critical pedagogy. My learners have better tools than ever before, but I still need them to think about how to use them ethically as well as be able to document their path using these tools to help them make meaning in English.

Prior to the fall of 2022, student feedback mentioned that during Zoom discussions people could not participate actively or at all, and this was a problem regarding fairness and relationship building. In a Hmelo-Silver (2003) study, online activity patterns changed over time as students moved from parallel lurking to active participation. This navigation of activity types is important in our move to face-to-face classrooms. In our face-to-face classroom, lurking is something more noticeable and needs to be addressed as a powerful silence. I have written in the Detailed Problem section of this paper about how I dealt with learners who wanted to lurk and how we incorporated special interventions to move towards more active participation.

These were some of the initial overlaps between Hmelo-Silver et al.'s study and my approach to scaffolding collaboration in my content-based language course.

## **ANALYSIS**

In this section, I take two of Hmelo-Silver et al.'s (2008) modalities and show how mine are aligned (see Figure 2). I talk about individual tools and collaborative modalities.

### **Individual Tools**

The study pointed out the individual tools learners used. These individual tools included a personal notebook that the students used for problem analysis, research notes, group product explanations, and learning reflections. The collaborative tools included the STELLAR whiteboard and a standard electronic discussion board with threaded discussion and voting functions. The whiteboard served as a space for brainstorming, writing, feedback, and questions to group members as well as to faculty teachers.

In my class, learners' individual tools were homework Google Forms, internet research, and notes (electronic or written or printed) that were all conducted outside of our face-to-face class. The collaborative tools in my context are in-class activities (think-pair-share, group discussion, project-based learning). Prior to reading the Hmelo-Silver et al. study, I thought of presentations as individual. After reviewing the study I felt that the learners' presentations were actually collaborative.

## Collaborative Modalities

Collaborative modalities in the Hmelo-Silver et al. (2008) paper labeled the presentation as collaborative, as it was a group presentation. While often my learners presented individually, the work they presented was a collaborative effort and script. Before every presentation, learners worked with their group. The activity was either a think-pair-share activity, where the presenter then gave a summary of the group’s individual homework findings, or it was a presentation based on a generative prompt providing a solution or analysis about the week’s topic. Prior to reading the study, I emphasized the individual nature of the presentation as every student would have to present at least once over a time period. However, after reading the study and looking at the collaborative descriptions of the activity steps and modalities, I felt that I needed to re-label my learners’ presentations as collaborative and not individual.

This change, as well as looking at the assigned student–teacher meetings as conversations, shifted the amount of lesson time in class towards a more significant amount of time as collaborative. During the semester, I teach 45 lessons in the course. My initial plan was to have a third focused on group or partner work. But after reading the study and reviewing the completed lessons, the percentage of classes that were collaborative in nature went from 38% for group and partner work to 44% if I included presentations as part of the collaborative work.

**FIGURE 2. Comparison to Hmelo-Silver et al.’s Collaborative Steps and Modalities**

Activity Step	STELLAR (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2008)		My Post-Covid Organization (Fall 2022)		
	Description	Modality	Homework or Classwork	Description	Modality
1	Study Video Case	Individual	Homework	Research	Individual: online
2	Proposals in Online Notebook	Individual	Homework	Writing	Individual: online
3	View Proposals	Collaborative	Class Share: Speaking and Listening	Share to class, group, or partner	Collaborative: f2f
4	Concept Redesign	Collaborative f2f	Class Interact	New task with group	High Collaborative: f2f
5	Conduct/Share Research	Collaborative	Class/Teacher	Present	Collaborative: f2f
6	Collaborative Lesson Design and Group Presentation to Class	Collaborative online Collaborative f2f	Class	Revise writing; extend	Individual or Collaborative: f2f
7	Explain and Justify Product	Individual	Homework or Class	Teacher feedback (read/listen)	Individual: online or f2f
8	Reflection	Individual	—	—	—

While this relabeling does not seem like a big shift, it has helped me realign my teaching pedagogy to see performative tasks as collaboratively initiated. This

shift is especially important because without the collaborative scripts and interaction, many learners would have opted out of presenting at all. The teamwork helped address some of the presentation anxiety as well as depending on relationships as a support instead of a challenge became a visible response to working through anxious moments.

## SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

This qualitative study is a practitioner inquiry evaluating my teaching practices for the collaboration process, its steps and the tools and modalities incorporated into the lesson plans implemented to help students with their discomfort about working in face-to-face classrooms again. This paper is a mini-analysis of my instructional plans using Hmelo-Silver et al.'s collaboration plan for a shift from face-to-face to online, as a new environment. I feel that looking at my own classes as a “new environment” helped me to define collaboration more broadly with class presentations as a type of collaboration as well as labeling student-teacher meetings as collaborative conversations

This paper is followed up with future presentations at the Seoul National University ICER conference this October and at JALT2023 in November. In the October presentation, lesson plans outlining the specifics of trauma-sensitive practices will be shared, emphasizing the community healing aspects of equity-centered practices and social justice pedagogy. The related paper looks at the meaning-making encouraged in the embodiment of activities that foreground healing and question toxic positivity as a response to anxiety.

In the JALT presentation, this literature review and the lesson plans to be presented at the October conference create foundations to outline my collaboration approach as an activity system combining my Hmelo-Silver et al.-inspired collaboration process, ELT pedagogy, and trauma sensitive practices.

These next two studies revolve around how Hmelo-Silver et al.'s (2008) study influenced my analysis of my ELT pedagogy for its cognitive indicators of engagement. By looking at the situated practice and constructivist frame of my teaching, I show how I coded my learners' responses as well as my instructional models for language engagement with learners who struggle in face-to-face contexts.

## THE AUTHOR

**Maria Lisak** creates safe environments to encourage and support learners for risk-taking and growth. Currently at Chosun University in South Korea, her career spans 27 years. She has diplomas and certificates in business, technology, education, and meditation. She is a lifetime member with KOTESOL and AsiaTEFL. Her research interests include funds of knowledge, cosmopolitan literacies, and autoethnography. Email: koreamaria@gmail.com

## REFERENCES

- Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. Harvard University Press.
- Engeström, Y. (1999). Activity theory and individual and social transformation. *Perspectives on Activity Theory*, 19(38), 19–30.
- Gijbels, D., Van de Watering, G., Dochy, F., & Van Den Bossche, P. (2006). New learning environments and constructivism: The students' perspective. *Instructional Science*, 34, 213–226.
- González, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2006). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Routledge.
- Hmelo-Silver, C. E., Chernobilsky, E., & Jordan, R. (2008). Understanding collaborative learning processes in new learning environments. *Instructional Science*, 36(5), 409–430.
- Hmelo-Silver, C. E. (2003). Analyzing collaborative knowledge construction: Multiple methods for integrated understanding. *Computers and Education*, 41(4), 397–420.
- Lewis, C., Enciso, P. E., & Moje, E. B. (Eds.). (2020). *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power*. Routledge.
- Palincsar, A. S. (1998). Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49(1), 345–375.

---

## **Techniques and Approaches**

---





## Advancing Global Education in EFL Classrooms

---

Alexis Busso and Aida Corpuz

*Tokyo International University, Saitama, Japan*

Global Education (GE), a pedagogical approach introduced by Fisher and Hicks (1985), presents an effective means for students to engage in meaningful discussions about pertinent issues, simultaneously encouraging a critical examination of their worldview. By challenging students to critically and creatively engage with news, current events, and domestic and global issues, they are provided with various opportunities to develop their “knowledge, attitudes, and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world” (Fisher & Hicks, 1985). Additionally, through the implementation of various culminating summative assessments and project-based tasks, educators provide the guidance, facilitation, and content scaffolding to support the complex higher-order cognitive and academic skills required to navigate through the complexities of GE. This paper provides a foundational framework of GE and different methods of application to engage students and educators in practical, reflective, and responsible collaboration about global citizenship.

### INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and as students continue to confront global issues, teaching students to engage in sociocultural exchanges and navigate these challenges becomes essential. Language educators who acknowledge the importance of fostering life skills such as critical thinking, empathy cultivation, and informed decision-making and who aim to empower students are embracing Global Education (GE). GE takes learning beyond language goals, and expands it to “the idea of communication between peoples on equal footing, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, with focus on promoting humanitarian values and social justice” (Hollenback, 2018, p. 8). GE offers foreign language teachers a framework to address relevant issues and teach students how to actively participate in society as responsible global citizens.

GE is a pedagogical framework designed to integrate global issues topics into materials development, create activities that hold relevance beyond the classroom, and teach students about world citizenship (Cates, 2013). In our own teaching context, Tokyo International University (TIU), the growing interest in incorporating GE into language classrooms is evident. In 2020, TIU offered three new courses to Japanese students: Current Topics, Contemporary Global Issues and Japan, and Media & Communication. By offering more courses that align with GE principles, TIU demonstrates an understanding of the importance of preparing students for an ever-changing interconnected world.

Drawing on our own experiences in developing these courses at TIU, we will offer insight into ways that teachers can adapt GE into their own teaching contexts. This paper opens with the fundamental elements of a GE pedagogy, encompassing its definition, goals, and components. Next, we delve into the collaborative nature of a GE framework, emphasizing its capacity to foster collaboration among both students and teachers. Then, we share various collaborative activities, specifically focusing on debates, student-led discussions, and poster projects. To facilitate practical application, we guide readers through a model scaffolded activity. The remaining segment of the paper concludes with a discussion on the constraints associated with the implementation of GE.

## GLOBAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

With the shift from traditional forms of language teaching towards communicative language teaching, educators have the responsibility to prepare students to be able to interact and share knowledge about world problems (Erfani, 2012). While linguistic competence is undoubtedly crucial, numerous language experts contend that learners must also possess the capacity to apply cognitive strategies effectively, while simultaneously demonstrating an appreciation for sociocultural differences (Littlewood, 1981; McIntyre, 1996). Dyer and Bushell (1996) argued that “global education knowledge is not simply an understanding of each world issue in a list of discrete issues but an awareness of the interconnections among these issues.” Likewise, according to Fisher and Hicks (1985), global education is characterized as “education which promotes the knowledge, attitudes, and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world” (p. 8). These definitions highlight how essential a GE pedagogy is in equipping students with the necessary skills to prosper after university.

Cates (2022) posited that a GE framework should revolve around four key components: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and action (see Table 1). The topics and learning objectives for global citizenship education, published by UNESCO (2015), further narrows these components into three: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral. The cognitive category, as reflected in the Knowledge section of Table 1, focuses on students’ understanding of the interconnectedness of the world. Likewise, the socio-emotional category aligns with Attitudes, emphasizing solidarity and a shared sense of humanity. Lastly, the behavior category resembles Action, where both teachers and students apply what they learn to how they engage with others. These core dimensions guide educators in developing global citizenship in their EFL classrooms.

**TABLE 1. Components of a GE Framework**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Action</b>
Knowledge about the world, people, and its problems.	Communication skills. Critical thinking. Problem-solving. Informed decision-making. Multiple perspectives.	Foster respect for differences. Global awareness. Appreciation for diversity. Empathy. Curiosity.	Inspire students to challenge their opinions. Participate in local, national, and international community.

From Cates (2022) p. 76.

In summary, the application of a GE framework demonstrates a compelling rationale within an EFL context. It serves as a catalyst for cultivating intercultural competence, promoting self-reflection, and enhancing English language skills. Moreover, GE nurtures the development of higher-order thinking skills, including analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing. Instead of passively accepting information at its surface level, students are taught to actively engage in the process of questioning, negotiation, and evaluation of their ideas (Omidvar & Sukumar, 2013). Additionally, by exposing students to diverse perspectives, GE fosters empathy, respect, and a genuine appreciation for cultural differences. It empowers students to work towards creating a more equitable and harmonious world (UNESCO, 2015). The use of authentic materials and the integration of real-world problem-solving into lesson plans and activities contribute to meaningful learning.

## **COLLABORATION**

In alignment with the 30th Korea TESOL International Conference theme of “Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors, and Students,” we demonstrate the distinct roles entailed within both teacher-to-teacher collaboration and student-to-student collaboration.

### **Teacher-to-Teacher Collaboration**

Collaboration among teachers to promote GE involves meeting frequently to review student progress, aligning activities and materials, and establishing shared learning outcomes. Teachers should collaborate together on unit projects to carefully design materials that offer students the opportunity to not only cooperate within their own class but also across other classes. Additionally, it is crucial to support a common understanding of the content by pre-teaching vocabulary associated with the theme and supplementing instructional materials. Lastly, because GE requires extensive preparation, collaborating with other instructors can help to alleviate the workload by exchanging ideas and sharing instructional activities.

### **Student-to-Student Collaboration**

Student-to-student collaboration enables individuals to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in their language abilities. It involves managing a range of communicative competence skills that are fundamental outside of the classroom, such as negotiating, problem-solving, inferring, and task management (Ariffin, 2021). Furthermore, student-to-student collaboration encourages students to take ownership of their learning, thus promoting autonomous learning. Students can choose how they want to contribute to group work by taking on a specific role, such as in the case of debates (as outlined below), or they can be assigned one by their teacher or their peers. When they are not collaborating in small groups, students can engage with the class, assuming the role of active audience members who take notes and pose follow-up questions. In short, collaborating with peers not only allows students to reflect on their language goals, but it also helps to

develop fundamental skills by working with their peers towards accomplishing a shared outcome.

## **ACTIVITIES**

When it comes to designing collaborative projects, instructors have a variety of options. Below are descriptions of three activities that reflect the components of a GE framework. These activities can be modified to suit different proficiency levels and teaching contexts.

### **Debates**

Debates offer students the opportunity to cultivate skills such as effective communication, persuasive language, and the utilization of rhetorical concepts like ethos, pathos, and logos. Furthermore, debates help in developing students' speaking confidence, improving retention of the content, and promoting organizational and critical thinking. Before beginning a debate project, the teacher and students examine current news and vote on a relevant and engaging issue. Then, the teacher spends two weeks covering the format and structural components of a Lincoln–Douglas debate, which includes the opening statements, cross-examinations, rebuttals, and closing statements. Once students grasp the flow and objectives of each part of the debate, they collaborate using a shared Google document to outline and assign speaking roles, conduct research, and organize their group's argument. Additionally, the students work together to predict the opposing team's arguments and to prepare questions and responses for the rebuttal. On the day of the debate, the two classes convene and actively participate in the debate. Throughout the debate process, each class uses the same Google document where they completed their outline and research. Students take notes, where in real-time, they have to respond to the opposing team's arguments and questions while polishing their own argument. Finally, the teachers conclude the lesson with a whole class reflection on the overall process. (For a description of one such debate, see Busso, 2023).

### **Student-Led Discussions**

Student-led discussion (SLD) is a research-based group presentation task that incorporates complex critical thinking, collaboration, planning, facilitation, and lesson development using current topics and news. It has been implemented into several different courses to scaffold research and academic writing skills into a highly collaborative autonomous group task. The objective of the SLD is for students to not only research and present on the selected topic, but more importantly to become knowledgeable and credible sources of information on their chosen topic. The final goal is for students to assume the role of teacher and lead in explicit teaching of the topic and to facilitate learning through group discussions and whole class activities. There are several working stages of the SLD that are guided and facilitated by the teacher over the whole course of the SLD project.

**Research and Synthesis Stage:** This includes selecting a general topic (i.e., women's rights, climate crisis, AI), researching for relevant, current, and credible news articles that are synthesized to align with the general topic, and identifying the arguments and supporting details of the news article. In doing so, a specific topic focus emerges, which then becomes the main SLD topic. To expand on this further, students then have the option to explore how the main topic is relevant within different contexts in order to strengthen their arguments.

**Lesson Planning Stage:** Once the topic and supporting information has been researched and identified, students can begin to plan the layout of the SLD. Students design a lesson using a lesson plan template that has pre-determined lesson requirements (i.e., warm up, introduction, article summary and arguments, class activity, conclusion). They then create a PowerPoint and an engaging lesson activity that requires the entire group to engage in a critical-thinking activity about the topic. The activity can include, but is not limited to, ideas that incorporate games, role-plays, debates, using worksheets, or creating mind-maps. The goal of the class activity is to provide the class with additional scaffolding to understand the topic.

To prepare the class for the SLD, the presenting group creates an article reading quiz, which is administered one class day prior to the presentation, to ensure that all students are front-loaded with the article information and are participative during the SLD.

## **Poster Projects**

Poster projects are collaborative critical-thinking activities that allow students to deliver and articulate GE learning using a creative medium. Similar to poster presentations, the objective of poster projects is to showcase research, problem-solving, writing, and creative skills within a practical context. In addition, poster projects allow students to present information creatively, which allows for different learning styles, such as tactile and artistic approaches. Poster projects support the scaffolding of research and the synthesizing of topics, by identifying and defining conventions of cause-effect and problem-solution within a given area. Furthermore, by utilizing creative skills to design the posters either digitally or with traditional art materials, such as crayons and markers, students are given the autonomy to synthesize and deliver the information in personalized and meaningful ways that demonstrate their understanding and interpretation of the topic. Finally, the culminating activity is a gallery walk presentation that provides students with the valuable experience of engaging in one-on-one public speaking as presenters and using questioning skills when serving as the audience.

## **APPLICATION AND PRACTICE**

A GE approach aligns with diverse teaching methods, including content-based instruction (CBI), task-based language teaching (TBLT), and project-based learning (PBL). These pedagogical approaches share a focus on student-centered learning, the use of authentic materials, and cross-cultural communication skills within real-world contexts. Whether teachers focus on specific content areas or employ

projects as summative assessments, a GE framework corresponds with these teaching methods, promoting awareness on socio-political issues, and empowering students to engage both in local and global societies (Sun, 2023). To initiate the process of designing their own GE lesson, educators should consider the following driving questions:

1. What kinds of global topics can be incorporated into your curriculum, course, or lesson?
2. What culminating activity would best showcase students' achievements?
3. What scaffolding activities are necessary to effectively support the completion of the culminating activity?
4. What skills should students demonstrate, practice, and acquire?

Firstly, teachers should select an umbrella theme. This theme can be negotiated with the students, related to current news, or chosen from the four overarching GE themes (Cates, 2022). Next, teachers should choose three distinct topics that align with this theme, providing a greater level of specificity. In the subsequent stage, teachers design a project or culminating task that effectively demonstrates students' comprehension of the material and the chosen topic. Finally, a minimum of two scaffolding tasks or activities should be crafted to facilitate skill acquisition and progression toward completing the final culminating assessment.

In a model lesson sample, the first step, choosing an umbrella theme, could be human rights, with an emphasis on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). For this lesson, a recommended task is to create an informative infographic walk-through. To support learners in completing this task, scaffolding activities are introduced. These scaffolding activities include familiarizing students with digital applications such as Canva, Adobe Express, and Google Docs, conducting extensive research, and synthesizing the gathered information using a mind map. Another valuable scaffolding task involves guiding participants through a close reading exercise centered around the UDHR, further reinforcing their understanding of human rights concepts.

## **LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES**

Drawing from our own teaching experiences, we broadly classify the challenges and limitations of implementing a GE framework into two key categories: student-related factors, and teacher- and university-related factors.

### **Student-Related Challenges**

Student-related challenges include proficiency levels and grappling with multifaceted perspectives. Considering the complexities involved in understanding global concepts, a high level of vocabulary and comprehension is crucial. Moreover, when exploring global issues, students must learn how to navigate through cultural disparities, different values, belief systems, and a wide range of political perspectives. Such exploration may give rise to concerns regarding

unintentional offense towards others. As a result, fostering cultural sensitivity and promoting respectful dialogue in the classroom is essential in addressing these potential challenges.

### **Teacher- and University-Related Challenges**

On the contrary, challenges associated with the teacher and university category consists of a lack of institutional support, limited resources and training opportunities for instructors, and the need for a fundamental pedagogical shift. English language teachers often face constraints, such as meeting specific standardized requirements and teaching to high-stakes exams. Furthermore, implementing a GE framework requires extensive preparation, planning, and scaffolding, making it challenging to provide comprehensive coverage of a topic within a semester. Finally, the fear of promoting certain values to students is a valid concern that educators must navigate. This is especially relevant in cross-cultural contexts where foreign instructors seek to maintain the cultural values of their students rather than impose their own (Dyer & Bushell, 1996). Regardless of a teacher's personal viewpoint and biases, student assessment remains consistent in evaluating their proficiency in using the target language (McIntyre, 1996). Ongoing collaboration among teachers, sharing best practices and resources, and receiving support from administrators will help to mitigate these challenges.

## **CONCLUSION**

Integrating GE in the classroom serves as a powerful tool to develop global awareness and to form connections on social, environmental, and geopolitical issues from a personal, local, national, and international perspective (Yoon et al., 2018). Through fostering multicultural awareness, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting self-reflection, while enhancing English language proficiency, GE equips students with the necessary skills to comprehend, engage with, and contribute to the complexities of living in an interconnected and changing world.

## **THE AUTHORS**

**Alexis Busso** has an MA in language teaching from the University of Oregon. Her research interests revolve around gamification, pragmatics, process-based learning, intercultural communication, and blended learning. Alexis has taught children and adults in Colombia and the U.S. Currently, she is a lecturer at Tokyo International University, where she passionately works towards empowering students to achieve their language goals. Email: [abusso@tiu.ac.jp](mailto:abusso@tiu.ac.jp)

**Aida Corpuz** is a U.S. licensed educator with teaching experience in grades K–12, tertiary, and adult education. Her background includes a dual MEd in curriculum and instruction and in organizational leadership from Concordia University. Aida has had the opportunity to teach globally in South Korea and Morocco, and currently instructs at Tokyo International University. Her research interests include project-based learning,

communicative competence, oral and public speaking proficiency, and intercultural communication. It is her goal to continue to support students in discovering their purpose and place in the world. Email: acorpuz@tiu.ac.jp

## REFERENCES

- Ariffin, A. (2021). Effects of student collaboration on ESL learners' vocabulary development. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 17(1), 177–191.
- Busso, A. (2023). Global education as a catalyst for collaboration in EFL classrooms. *Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter*, 127(July 2023), 10–12. JALT.
- Cates, K. (2013). Global education. In M. Byram & A. Hu (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning* (2nd ed.; pp. 277–280). Routledge.
- Cates, K. (2022). Global education as a cross-curricular approach to language teaching for democracy. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 10(3), 75–96. <https://doi.org/10.30466/ijltr.2022.121227>
- Cates, K. (2022). A global education approach to ELT materials. *JACET Journal*, 66, 1–19.
- Dyer, B., & Bushell, B. (1996). World issues or a global perspective? *Language Teacher – Kyoto – JALT*, 20, 10–19.
- Erfani, S. M. (2012). The rationale for introducing “global issues” in English textbook development. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(11). Article 2412.
- Fisher, S., & Hicks, D. (1985). *World studies 8–13: A teacher's handbook*. Oliver & Boyd.
- Hollenback, M. (2019). The necessity of global citizenship education in the EFL classroom. 神戸外大論叢 [Kobe-gai dai ronso: *The Kobe City University Journal*], 71(1), 73–82.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- McIntyre, D. (1996). Global issues in EFL: Why and how. *JALT Journal*, 18(1), 117–131.
- Omidvar, R., & Sukumar, B. (2013). The effects of global education in the English language conversation classroom. *English Language Teaching*, 6(7), 151–157.
- Sun, L. (2023). Cultivating critical global citizens through secondary EFL education: A case study of mainland China. *Literacy*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12314>
- UNESCO. (2015). *Global citizenship education: Topics and learning objectives*.
- Yoon, B., Yol, Ö., Haag, C., & Simpson, A. (2018). Critical global literacies: A new instructional framework in the global era. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 62(2), 205–214.



# Lights, Camera, Interaction: Developing Confidence and Motivation Through Filmmaking Projects

---

Brett Davies

*Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan*

In recent years, the number of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) classes has increased dramatically in universities across Asia. While the approach is intended to increase student independence, my observations at a private university in Japan suggested that classes were often lecture-based and teacher-centered. Learner interviews revealed further problems: Many students' independent research was performed in their L1, and some struggled with understanding and discussing new concepts in English. This led to the development of a CLIL-based class, in which groups of learners collaborated on creating short movies. This paper will outline some elements of the course at this university, from learning basic story and screenwriting to pre-production, and finally to making a five-minute film. Questionnaire responses show that the students gained motivation throughout the course, their confidence improved, and their vocabulary production increased markedly. These findings have implications for wider use of collaborative CLIL activities to improve L2 motivation and competence.

## INTRODUCTION: CLIL IN JAPAN AND ELSEWHERE

In recent years, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has become an increasingly common method of English instruction and learning. Described as “an educational approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach content subjects for mainstream students” (Nikula et al., 2013, p. 71), the aim of CLIL is for students to learn a non-language subject through their L2; so, for example, a class of students in Spain might learn mathematics or history in the English language. Seen as an alternative to communicative language teaching, as well as to more traditional approaches such as the grammar-translation method, its goal is to improve linguistic competence via authentic language use rather than via explicit language instruction. Certainly, CLIL has been shown in some studies to develop overall production, especially orally (Martinez Agudo, 2019). However, there is still some debate as to its full efficacy. Bruton (2013) argued that there is a lack of empirical evidence supporting the benefits of CLIL, even as it is used increasingly more widely in European secondary schools; Coyle (2007, 2018), meanwhile, admitted that for all its perceived advantages and flexibility, CLIL is approached very differently depending on the context. The literature, then, has not yet been successful in describing and defining the method adequately, let alone evaluating its effectiveness.

While especially prominent in European secondary and tertiary education, CLIL has gained increasing currency in recent years in other contexts. In Japan, for example, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has in the past decade advocated for students to be able to reason and communicate more fully in English. MEXT's Top Global University Project was established in 2014 to "help students develop the ability to act globally" (para. 1), by, among other initiatives, providing content classes in the English language (MEXT, 2023). In fact, two of the nine goals of the Top Global University program refer to CLIL-related targets: to "increase the number of subjects taught in foreign languages" as well as growing "the number of students enrolled in degree courses conducted in foreign languages only." The decision of MEXT to focus on foreign-language skills in content-class situations has led to a trickle-down effect in which even those universities not selected for the Top Global project are still developing more content-based language courses. There are currently over 150 university departments or programs in Japan that employ the word *global* in their title, indicating some attempt to offer CLIL-style classes, even in, for example, business or economics faculties. These developments in Japan have largely been viewed in the literature as positive, with Michael Davies (2017, p. 203) stating that CLIL "provides a clear framework; it utilizes authentic material; it can be implemented flexibly; and it nurtures global human resources." Additionally, Ohmori (2014, p. 48) argued that CLIL – in the form of L2 discussions and debates, among other activities – improves the students' cross-cultural understanding and develops the "skills and attitudes" necessary in a globalized society.

However, for all the positivity in much of the literature, and the apparent enthusiasm of education ministries around the world to encourage CLIL for its secondary and tertiary learners, teachers themselves often receive little or no support in precisely how to implement the method in the classroom. With the approach still not categorically proven to be successful for all learners, action research seems an appropriate means to (a) provide a model of CLIL for other educators to follow or adapt and (b) contribute to a wider discussion, employing specific examples of CLIL activities and measuring their levels of effectiveness.

## **METHOD AND CONTEXT**

This case study will outline the rationale, design, and implementation of a specific CLIL course. Through an ethnographic approach, incorporating first-hand observations, student and teacher interviews, and questionnaire results, the aim is to demonstrate the potential of one particular approach to CLIL. As action research in a specific context, this paper is not claiming to be a definitive analysis of CLIL. Rather, it is hoped, then, that the investigation will encourage other researcher-educators to examine and record their own experiences in conducting CLIL classes, thus helping to develop a larger body of research that might more fully reveal the potential advantages or shortcomings, as well as providing a starting point for other educators and curriculum developers when designing and implementing future content-based language courses.

The context for this study is a "global" business department in a private

women's university in Tokyo. In the second grade, students would be required to study for one semester in the United States; therefore, it was imperative that, during their first year, their English level would develop to a level at which they could understand basic business classes taught in their L2. The students all took the TOEIC test during the first month of their first year, and the average score was 470 (out of 990). In classes, I observed that the majority of students were a "high-beginner" level, able to understand basic instructions and speak if encouraged, but not confident or fluent users of the language.

This situation led the department to develop CLIL classes in order to prepare the students for the demands of studying abroad. Initially, the language classes remained as previous: communicative "Business English" lessons, plus classes for TOEIC preparation. Concurrently, business professors were asked to perform their lectures in English – effectively CLIL classes. However, this situation led to discomfort for some professors, most of whom were Japanese and did not necessarily feel confident in their own English ability. There was concern from students (in questionnaires), too, that their knowledge of business was suffering as a result. Therefore, the curriculum committee decided to allow business professors to teach in Japanese; instead, converting those courses taught by specialist English teachers into content classes. The language professors were given relative freedom in choosing the content, based upon their own interests, as well as the potential interest to students. These one-semester courses included, for instance, classes on American history, American literature, and manga.

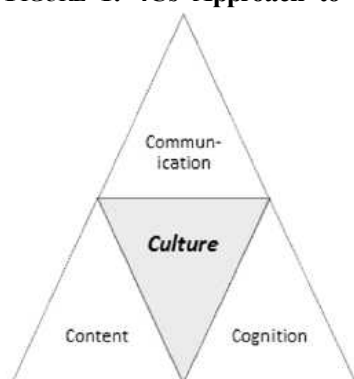
The rather scatter-gun approach provided for an uneven curriculum, and mostly negative results in teacher and student interviews. Teachers did not always respond positively to the need to teach content subjects (some of which they had not taught formally before), and the results were not encouraging. Comments from professors included "The vocab is too difficult for many students to understand or use," "I started by using CLIL but soon realized that the class didn't understand," "I can't give sufficient information in the students' L2," and "In discussions, students would use L1 anyway." Students, too, expressed dissatisfaction with the new system. Over 70% of the comments in questionnaires were negative, including "My English isn't good. I can't concentrate for a long time," "Teacher just talks... Boring," "Textbook reading is too long," and "I don't understand many words."

Through interviews, I was able to establish three major areas of concern from the students: a lack of sufficient vocabulary in order to understand and communicate ideas effectively, low confidence leading to less active participation compared to more traditional language classes, and – as a result of the other two issues – an overall decrease in motivation to join classes and to use English. There appeared to be a decrease in student interaction, too, as they often became passive listeners to the professors' lectures; additionally, some students said that they tended to perform out-of-class research in their L1 and then rely upon translation software, rather negating the notion that CLIL fosters a more communicative L2 environment for learners.

These initial results were clearly a concern, all the more so as a few months later, the students would be taking classes overseas with American professors, most of whom did not speak Japanese. Intervention was required, and this initially meant a reappraisal of precisely what CLIL was and how to approach it.

Coyle’s “4Cs” approach to CLIL acted as a useful framework here (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. 4Cs Approach to CLIL**

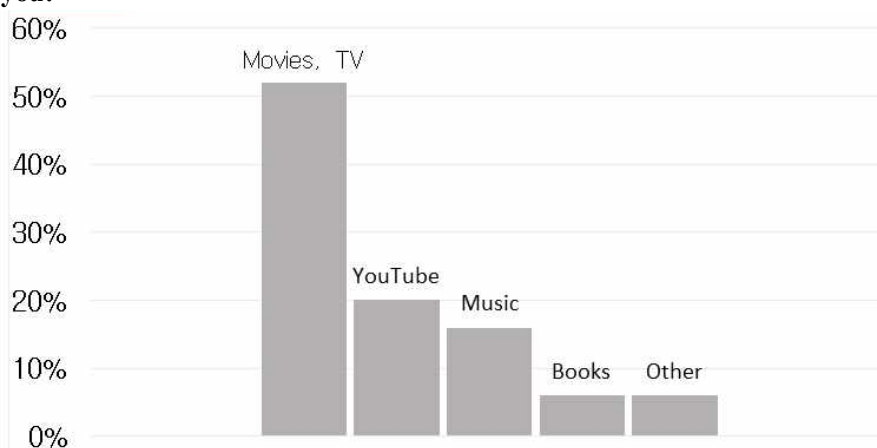


*Note.* Adapted from Coyle (2012, p. 29).

The placement of culture at the center of the pyramid is pertinent, with any CLIL course developed around the cultures – both of the target language and of the students’ home country. The previous attempts at CLIL had, for the most part, been born out of the teacher’s interest, and of a desire to impart their knowledge about that topic. To give an example from one of the initial CLIL courses offered by a professor interested in history, the American Revolution may be a relevant subject to some students, particularly as they were about to live in the US, but most did not have the same investment that the teacher had. This contributed to a lack of engagement with the content, affecting both cognition and communication, as students were unable to express opinions on a topic with which they were not familiar.

With Coyle’s central tenet of culture in mind, I surveyed the first-year students with this question: Which aspect of international culture is most interesting for you? The results, reproduced in Figure 2, demonstrate a marked interest in movies and television – more than double any other aspect of culture.

**FIGURE 2. Student Survey: Which aspect of international culture is most interesting for you?**



If including the closely related questionnaire response of “YouTube,” then over 70% of students expressed some interest in the moving image. Clearly, a course based on this general field would be of interest to a large number of students. To return to Coyle’s 4Cs framework, if the cultural aspect is of interest and the content engaging, then this might lead to increased cognition and communication. However, observation of previous CLIL lecture-style classes showed that participation was not always guaranteed. The results of the survey, coupled with Coyle’s investigations, led me to develop a syllabus that would incorporate movies alongside active learning, in the hope of encouraging communication and cognition, and I conducted further research with which to underpin the design of a new course.

Performance in language learning has been well-established as a useful means for developing communicative language use. Reed and Seong (2013), for example, outlined a course that employed drama activities in order to develop EFL. They found that a course incorporating improvisation exercises, guided role plays, and active student reflection could improve the learners’ communicative skills in English. In particular, Reed and Seong stated that the approach reduced inhibitions, leading to increased motivation and greater spontaneity in using the language. In turn, these improvements led to the overall enhancement of speaking and listening skills. My investigations into creative language classes also led me to Ike and Nishi’s (2014) work on creative writing. I trialed their “extremely short stories” method in one class period, and the results were promising. In this activity, students write a 50-word story in a limited time, the emphasis on expression and imagination rather than grammar. My brief replication showed that, like in Ike and Nishi’s findings, students appeared motivated to express ideas in this short form of writing, free of the constraints of a more overtly academic exercise. However, the class was still very text-bound, and, while Ike and Nishi demonstrated that the activity could improve students’ writing skills, I noted that the class was focused on the page rather than on each other, albeit on text generated by students rather than from a book.

These investigations, though, persuaded me of the potential of a creative class involving writing, performance, and movies. Furthermore, it was clear that an active and collaborative approach was required in order to avoid the problem of students relying upon their L1 – or translation applications – in their out-of-class research and assignments. Coupled with my own interest in cinema, these findings led to the design of the Film in English course.

## **THE FILM IN ENGLISH CLASS**

This study outlines a once-a-week, 90-minute class over a 14-week university semester, in the second half of the first year. The syllabus followed this pattern, broken down into five stages:

1. Discuss “story”; learn about screenplays (3 weeks)
2. Develop and outline a story; write the screenplay (3 weeks)
3. Make the movie (4 weeks)
4. Edit the movie (2 weeks)
5. Final presentations of films; reflection (2 weeks)

## Stage 1: Story and Screenplay

From week four onward, the students would work in groups, with the goal of fostering a truly collaborative classroom atmosphere and, it was hoped, to encourage “authentic” discussion in English. However, initially, in Stage 1, I provided them with storytelling models before facilitating activities designed to stimulate imaginative narratives. Specifically, I showed the students a variety of short films made by Pixar. These movies – such as *Piper* (Barillaro, 2016) and *Bao* (Shi, 2018) – are each no longer than ten minutes, yet they effectively convey emotional and surprising story arcs with well-defined three-act structures; in simple terms, they each have a beginning, a middle, and end. With these as examples, students then described their own favorite movies in simple structural terms, before composing their own “extremely short stories” (Ike & Nishi, 2014) with three acts: a set-up, a development, and a pay-off.

Other activities in this learning and practicing stage, included Mash-Up, in which students thought of character types (using an adjective and a noun, e.g., “noisy businessman”) and wrote them on separate cards; then on other cards, they wrote the names of a place, an object, and a genre, respectively. These cards were then shuffled and redistributed around the class at random so that, for example, one student received cards for “shy girl” and “active grandmother,” at “Shibuya Crossing,” with a “pineapple,” in the “horror” genre. Using these prompts, students outlined their own brief stories and shared them with classmates. While intended as an activity to inspire creativity before beginning to develop their own movie scripts, the exercise actually generated some of the stories upon which the students’ later films would be based. An unintended but important development at this early stage was the realization that the *oral* telling of stories appeared to invigorate much more interaction between students than, for example, the extremely short stories writing task alone.

One more skill that was actively taught in the early weeks was how to construct a screenplay. We used Fade In, a “professional screenwriting software” package that is used by working Hollywood screenwriters, and importantly, is free to download in its basic form. While the screenplay is a technical document, its advantage comes in its simplicity, in which full sentences are not always used; the emphasis is on the message rather than grammatical perfection. In addition, screenplays have a lot of white space on the page, which makes them appear less intimidating than if, say, students are asked to write a standard prose story. As shown in Figure 3, the scene headings and character dialogue headings are in uppercase, while the scene description is in more conventional – but sparse – prose, and the dialogue is indented clearly.

**FIGURE 3. Screenplay Sample**

```

EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE MANOR HOUSE - DAWN

The grounds of a New England manor. Pre-dawn misty.

INT. MANOR - PANTRY / LIVING ROOM / FOYER / HALLWAY - DAWN

INSIDE THE MANOR

Unlit and still. Gothic with a theme of antique games,
arcane puzzles and decorative weapons.

First floor: A drawing room, living room, kitchen. The
detritus of a party. Stray champagne flutes.

INT. THROMBEY ESTATE - 2ND FLOOR - DAWN

Follow one housekeeper named FRAN carrying a tray of coffee
up a flight of stairs.

Second floor: a hallway, doors all closed. The house has
not woken up, and Fran steps lightly. Up a much narrower
creaky flight of steep stairs.

INT. THROMBEY ESTATE - 3RD FLOOR MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Third floor: the master bedroom suite.

```

*Note.* From the screenplay for *Knives Out*, Rian Johnson (2019), available at [scriptlab.com](http://scriptlab.com).

Students practiced with the form in numerous ways: first, by retroactively writing a page of script for a film scene that we watched together; then, by recording a conversation with a partner and transcribing it in screenplay form. Finally, students wrote a page of screenplay based on the outline that they had written in the Mash-Up activity. By performing these tasks, students were soon able to become competent users of the software and the screenplay form. This is an example of a CLIL task in which students are gaining knowledge and experience of an authentic skill. Even though they are unlikely to become professional screenwriters in the future, the fact that they were becoming familiar with a program used by working writers was something that would receive positive feedback in the end-of-course interviews.

**Stage 2: Write the Script**

Once students had a basic grasp of story structure and screenplays, it was time to begin creating their own movies. In groups of four, the students worked together to write screenplays of four to five pages. This stage took three weeks, and, while there was occasional use of L1 during the negotiations within groups, it was apparent that students were using English in active, authentic interactions, and much more volubly than in more text-bound classes, in the ways that Reed and Seong (2014) noted in their drama-based activities. Later questionnaires revealed, also, that the task element aided in increasing motivation, as the whole group were working toward a clear goal: to produce a script that they would have to shoot in three weeks' time.

### **Stage 3: Make the Movie**

This four-week stage was the one in which students had the most freedom, with permission to use the classroom or the rest of the campus, or even to go off-campus and shoot “on location,” within the class period or as homework. While the groups were allowed to plan their time independently, I suggested spending at least one 90-minute session in the classroom, in order to plan and rehearse, and all groups did this. In hindsight, I should have factored in a specific pre-production stage of at least two class periods, as this part of the course was the most fraught, especially in those groups in which students were less familiar with one another, resulting in more reticence during this planning period. However, as students began filming (using their smartphone cameras), it was clear to see that they were focused on the task, although this was also the part of the course when the use of L1 increased most dramatically. Again, a longer pre-production stage may have prevented this, as L1 use tended to be most prevalent when groups were short on time.

### **Stage 4: Edit the Movie**

All students were back in the classroom for the two-week editing stage, in which the groups cut the footage and added any narration or music. Students used their phone’s proprietary editing apps, as well as Video Up for iPhone, or InShot Editor for Android. Each of these allows free and user-friendly editing, with the capability to add sound. In most cases, students could finish editing within one class period, so in the future, this is a stage that could be shortened in order to allow for more pre-production preparation time.

### **Stage 5: Watch the Movies**

With the short films completed, the final two periods were spent watching the films as a class as well as reflecting and discussing. This provided the opportunity for students to enjoy their classmates’ work, reflect on what they had learned, and consider future improvements to the course. Furthermore, the fact that there would be this “public” viewing in front of the class was something that questionnaire responses commented upon: “We had to make it good for the classmates,” “I was nervous but exciting when people watched.”

Certainly, the students appeared invigorated and engaged by watching the other groups’ films, and it was a positive note on which to end the course. However, in order to gain a deeper insight into the students’ feelings about this CLIL class, it is useful to examine the questionnaire results – before and after the course.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

At the beginning of this investigation, survey results had indicated three major issues resulting in negative student experiences in CLIL classes: low confidence, low motivation, and a lack of sufficient vocabulary. In order to measure any changes over the semester, I designed a short survey using a Likert scale that



measured the learners' perceptions of their English skills and motivation. This was conducted during the first class of the course, and then after the final class.

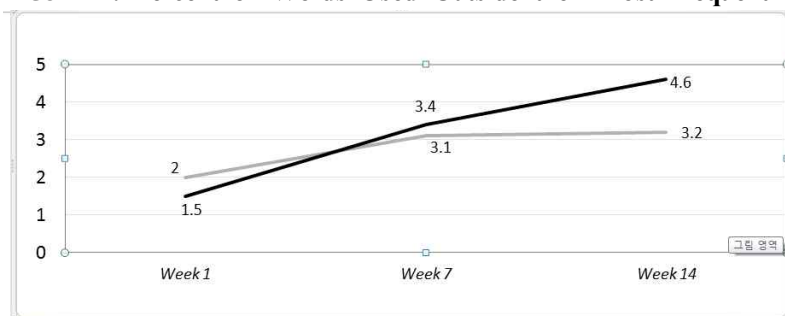
To ascertain the students' confidence levels, students were asked to rate their feelings about the phrase "I am a competent user of English." At the beginning of semester, only four out of 20 students (20%) agreed, with none strongly agreeing; conversely, 13 out of 20 (65%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. In other words, nearly two-thirds of students regarded themselves as "not competent" in using the target language only a few months before they would study business content classes in the United States. However, by the end of the course, 11 (55%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were "competent users," while only five disagreed (25%) and none strongly disagreed. This shows a marked improvement in levels of confidence.

Concerning motivation, I used the same Likert scale for the statement "I am motivated to study in this class." In week one, the class was split evenly, with seven students agreeing to some extent, and seven disagreeing, with six neutral. By the end of the course, though, 15 (75%) said that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were motivated to study in the Film in English course, and only two (10%) disagreed. This suggested a pronounced increase in motivation over the 14-week semester. The results were corroborated by the nearly perfect attendance record of all students throughout the semester.

Finally, to measure vocabulary, I set a short writing task in Weeks 1, 7, and 14, in which students were asked to write approximately 100 words on "My feelings about my English this semester." I then measured the percent of words used by the students that fell outside the "most frequent 1000 words," as identified by Mark Davies (2023). While understanding that an individual's use of less common words is not necessarily proof of a wider vocabulary, Jimenéz Catalán and Agustín Llach (2017) drew on a variety of research to posit that "infrequent and advanced words are indicators of lexical richness and language proficiency" (p. 88). Therefore, if the members of the class are shown to use a wider vocabulary at the end of the course compared to the start, then this is a strong indicator of improved linguistic ability.

I compared the participants' results with a control group of similar level students (based on TOEIC scores) taking another CLIL class on international business. The results, shown in Figure 4, demonstrate that the percent of less common words used by the Film in English course students increased more than three-fold between Weeks 1 and 14. Conversely, there was a markedly lower rise among students in the control group.

**FIGURE 4. Percent of Words Used Outside the "Most Frequent 1000"**



Note. Black line = Film in English course students; gray line = control group.

These results suggest that the active vocabulary of students in the class was expanding more rapidly than others in the same year in school. According to Jimenéz Catalán and Agustín Llach (2017), such an increase in lexical production correlates closely with communicative competence and overall language level. These data, showing the Film in English students improving more rapidly than their peers taking a different kind of CLIL class, are especially interesting. The syllabus of the control group's class was lecture-based, designed around a business textbook aimed at American high school students. The teacher was an English professor with a business background, and he reported high levels of motivation in class and positive questionnaire results at the end of term. However, the fact that the students' vocabulary production did not increase as much as that of the film class students is certainly noteworthy. The findings tend to confirm previous research (discussed in the Introduction) that posits CLIL's flexibility as both a strength and a weakness: It is difficult to fully evaluate the relative success of CLIL as a whole, if approaches to the method, and results between different types of CLIL classes, can be so diverse. Certainly, based on this investigation, it may be the project aspect of the CLIL course that had the most profound effect, rather than the use of CLIL itself.

The findings of this investigation, then, while positive, elicit further questions: Is it the CLIL aspect that led to the students' improved language production, or is it the task element that motivated students to speak more? And precisely why, with relatively little input (compared to a lecture-based course), did the students' vocabulary appear to increase so dramatically? Was it the creative element; the peer-learning environment; or the enjoyment aspect, with the majority of students expressing satisfaction with the class? These questions will provide the basis for my future investigations into CLIL and task-based language learning.

This action research project was admittedly small, based on one class in a specific context. However, it is my hope that the findings here might encourage other teacher-researchers to attempt similar projects and record their own results. CLIL is becoming an increasingly widely used approach to language teaching at all age levels throughout the world, even as it has not yet been completely proven as an effective method. It is imperative, then, that CLIL is examined forensically and thoroughly, and only through the combined efforts of studies such as this one can the full value of CLIL – still in its infancy when compared to other methodologies in EFL – be evaluated definitively.

## THE AUTHOR

**Brett Davies** is an associate professor of English in the School of Global Japanese Studies at Meiji University, Tokyo. He completed his master's degree in TESOL at Aston University, Birmingham, and his PhD in film studies at De Montfort University, Leicester. He has published extensively in both linguistics and cinema studies. His research interests include the use of creative writing in ESL, developing learner autonomy through the use of authentic materials, content-based learning in ESL, and film and screenplay theory. Email: [davies@meiji.ac.jp](mailto:davies@meiji.ac.jp)

## REFERENCES

- Barillaro, A. (Director). (2016). *Piper* [Film]. Pixar/Disney.
- Bruton, A. (2013). CLIL: Some of the reasons why ... and why not. *System*, 41(3), 587–597. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.07.001>
- Coyle, D. (2007). Content and language integrated learning: Towards a connected research agenda for CLIL pedagogies. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10, 543–562. <https://doi.org/10.2167/beb459.0>
- Coyle, D. (2012). Content and language integrated learning: Language using, learning gains. In M. Gonzalez Davies & A. Taronna (Eds.), *New trends in early language learning* (pp. 26–35). Cambridge Scholars.
- Coyle, D. (2018). The place of CLIL in (bilingual) education. *Theory into Practice*, 57, 166–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2018.1459096>
- Davies, M. (2023). *Word frequency data*. <https://www.wordfrequency.info/free.asp?s=y>
- Davies, M. J. (2017). The case for increasing CLIL in Japanese universities. *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture*, 28(3), 195–205. [https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/lcs/kiyou/pdf\\_28-3/RitsIILCS\\_28.3pp195-205DAVIES.pdf](https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/lcs/kiyou/pdf_28-3/RitsIILCS_28.3pp195-205DAVIES.pdf)
- Ike, S., & Nishi, M. (2014). Creative writing in ELT: Extremely short stories. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2013 Conference proceedings* (pp. 491–503). JALT
- Jiménez Catalán, R. M., & Agustín Llach, M. P. (2017). CLIL or time? Lexical profiles of CLIL and non-CLIL EFL learners. *System*, 66, 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.03.016>
- Johnson, R. (2019). *Knives out*. [Screenplay]. Lionsgate Films. <https://thescriptlab.com/wp-content/uploads/scripts/knivesout-final.pdf>
- Martinez Agudo, J. (2019). Which instructional programme (EFL or CLIL) results in better oral communicative competence? Updated empirical evidence from a monolingual context. *Linguistics and Education*, 51, 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2019.04.008>
- MEXT. (2023). Top global university project. *Top Global University Japan*, <https://tgu.mext.go.jp/en/about/index.html>
- Nikula, T., Dalton-Puffer, C., & Linares Garcia, A. (2013). CLIL classroom discourse: Research from Europe. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 1(1), 70–100. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jicb.1.1.04nik>
- Ohmori, A. (2014). Exploring the potential of CLIL in Japanese universities: An innovation for the development of effective teaching and global awareness. *The Journal of Rikkyo University Language Center*, 32, 39–51.
- Reed, J., & Seong, M. (2013). Suggestions for an effective drama-based EFL course at a Korean university. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 17(2), 91–106. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1014785.pdf>
- Shi, D. (Director). (2018). *Bao* [Film]. Pixar/Disney.



# Using Google Forms for Learners' Self-Assessment to Enhance Learning and Foster Autonomy

---

Kara Mac Donald and Unsoon Won

*Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California, USA*

Learners' self-assessment encompasses a true learner-centered approach and underscores the importance of involving learners in assessing their performance to develop proficiency and foster autonomy. In monitoring their learning strategies, skill development, study habits, and motivation, learners are positioned to understand which areas need attention. Using online self-assessment with Google Forms is a fast and simple way for learners to monitor their learning and is easily incorporated into instruction with little preparation. Additionally, self-assessment develops learners' critical thinking, as it involves evaluating the quality of their thinking and actions. The development of autonomy, along with critical thinking, positively enhances learners' motivation and achievement. This article shares how EFL learner self-assessment using Google Forms can be incorporated into instruction to increase collaboration among instructors and students.

## INTRODUCTION

The field of English language teaching (ELT) not only aims to develop students' language proficiency and intercultural competence, but as with any academic discipline, it strives to produce autonomous, self-guided learners with critical thinking skills, who can evaluate and analyze not only target language sociocultural content and practices, but who can also critically assess and evaluate their language learning processes. Current foreign language (FL) educational approaches emphasize the need for active engagement of students in their own learning, fostering learner responsibility, developing meta-cognitive skills, and promoting participation in a collaborative learning model (Barkley, 2010; Chi, 2009). Self-assessment is an essential component of students' active engagement in their own learning, and research has confirmed the value of students' involvement in self-assessment, as it builds autonomy and reflective and critical thinking skills, and improves motivation and performance (Andrade & Brookhart, 2019; Ndoye, 2017).

The authors share their practice as pre-service and in-service teacher trainers in promoting faculty use of online self-assessments with their higher education FL learners. The article first discusses principles of adult learners and why the use of self-assessment attends to many of such learner characteristics. Next, the benefits of using Google Forms for learner self-assessment to enhance learning and foster autonomy are shared. Then, the steps in identifying what aspects to assess, and

the process of developing and using learner self-assessment are described. The teacher's role and responsibilities are also described, as well as how learners' self-assessments can inform classroom instruction. With the theoretical foundations and practical application for online self-assessment addressed, the authors share how collaboration among teachers and students enhances learning outcomes and the development of student autonomy in their instructional context. They then draw on parallels between their higher education context and characteristics of adult learners and offer implications for the Korean ELT context.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Adult Learners and Self-Assessment**

Knowles' (1984) principles of adult learning are founded on andragogy, the science and practice of teaching adults, which identify characteristics among adult learners. These are a preference for self-directed learning, an ability to draw on life experience to assist with learning, a willingness to learn when transitioning into new roles, a focus on immediately applying new knowledge to real-life situations and problems, and a tendency to be internally motivated rather than externally motivated. In working with higher education FL teachers in pre-service and in-service teacher training courses, the authors have not only assisted teachers to incorporate these principles into their FL classroom instruction but also into academic support for learners outside the classroom to achieve their language learning goals. In support of this, the authors have offered workshops and presentations to FL teachers on how to utilize online learner self-assessment to better support learning outcomes and to increase collaboration among instructors and students.

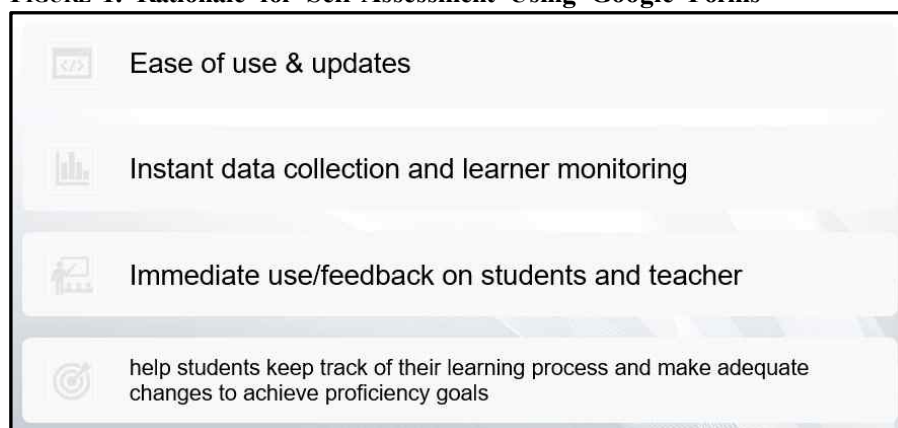
Andrade (2017) conducted an examination of younger students' perceptions of self-assessment finding that they can lack an understanding of its purpose and impact on their learning, but when utilized with adult learners, such as FL learners in higher education, the value and function of its use is more understood and better informs the learning process (Ratminingsih et al., 2018). Self-assessment prompts learners to take more responsibility for their learning, increases their critical thinking, and fosters self-regulated learning in achieving their set goals. Adult learners already possess a preference for self-directed learning and an ability to draw on life experience to assist with addressing learning challenges. Additionally, adult learners are more receptive to self-assessment when they are involved in developing their assessment criteria (Wang, 2017). So, involving them in determining which type of questions and aspects of their learning that they want to focus on meets their underlying needs. Also, when assessment is solely provided in a summative manner, adult learners can find it less meaningful as they prefer to be more actively involved in their learning process such that they make choices relevant to their learning objectives (Knowles, 1984). Adult learners are goal-oriented (Knowles, 1984) and desire clearly identified learning outcomes. Therefore, they also want to direct their learning goals with the guidance of a mentor/teacher. As FL educators, it is key to facilitate the process of our adult learners' goal setting, as well as their ability

to monitor their progress and be afforded opportunities to assume responsibility for their own choices. They value being proactive in making decisions and in contributing to the process.

### **Rationale for Self-Assessment Using Google Forms**

Adult learning highlights practicality and applying new knowledge to real-life situations and problems (Knowles, 1984), and Google Forms is a fast and simple way for learners to monitor their learning that directly informs their learning, study strategies, and approaches. The instant data collection allows learners to monitor their learning over time at self-determined intervals. The results are available for learners and the teacher immediately, and it helps learners to keep track of their learning process and make adequate changes to achieve their proficiency goals (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. Rationale for Self-Assessment Using Google Forms**



## **LEARNER SELF-ASSESSMENT AS INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE**

### **What to Assess: Process of Developing and Using Learner Self-Assessment**

**Step 1:** Determine the desired type of assessment focus area related to students' learning needs. You can choose to focus on solely one area or a combination of several. The principal focus-areas for student self-assessment are the learning process, lesson objectives, skill development, study habits, and learning strategies. Yet there are others, depending on the needs and interests of students.

**Step 2:** Once the area of focus has been identified, the next step is to generate questions. Common question types are student self-perception of the learning process, grade records, and student reflection on progress, student reporting on affective factors, and identifying reasons for changes in undesirable emotional shifts impacting learning performance (see Figure 2). Yet there are others, again depending on the needs and interests of students.

**FIGURE 2. Sample Self-Assessment Question on Self-Perception in the Learning Process**

I can predict unknown words in context.

Confidently with accuracy

Somewhat confidently with varying accuracy

Not very confidently with limited accuracy

**Step 3:** Once the self-assessment questions are developed, teachers can determine the frequency (i.e., daily, weekly, by chapter/unit, monthly, etc.) of when students will respond to the online self-assessment, after determining the rationale for that frequency. Also, teachers need to determine how the collection of the data at the chosen intervals will be used to best inform instructional practices for student success.

**Step 4:** Once a meaningful set of student self-assessment data is obtained, the input results can be reviewed and discussed with individual students or through email communication with noteworthy points can be shared with each student. If teachers feel such an approach would overburden them and not be feasibly practical, students can be asked to self-select another student to pair up with to complete the same process. Ultimately, the objective of collecting student self-assessment data is to have it not only inform individual learners, but also for teachers to utilize the data for classroom instruction and learning purposes. So, regardless of a teacher’s approach, the outcome of the self-assessment data review needs to result in a learning plan.

As adult learners, students can take responsibility and create their own learning plan with a set date for review to re-assess their progress through another round of online self-assessments (see Figure 3). Effective academic feedback to a self-developed learning plan does not need to be consuming, it simply needs to effectively assist learners in articulating learning difficulties and acquire recommended resources as well as provide the help needed for students to achieve their goals.

**FIGURE 3. Sample Learning Plan Based on Student Self-Assessment**

- **Vocabulary:** Retention of seldom used vocabulary - adopt review (7-3-2-1) techniques.
- 8. **Grammar:** Seldom-used grammar points in each chapter; consequently, I often forget in quick translations; I write a paragraph on the topic using newly learned grammar points and vocabulary daily.
- 9. **Listening:** Often fail to recognize known words and dwell too long on unknown words; I tend to focus on irrelevant information; practice listening to the passages all the way daily and compare my summaries including supporting details with the transcripts; identify the words I missed.
- 10. **Reading:** I focus too much on unknown words and often struggle to deduce simple meanings from context; Changing my focus to known words and find contextual clues from various sources like other words or phrases in a text that help me guess its meaning; maybe synonyms or repetition of the same word, or restatements, etc. I will try to identify the key words related to the main idea and highlight/underline or take notes of those clues.



## **The Teachers' Role and Responsibility**

As students complete their regular online self-assessments and are gaining awareness of what is working and what is not working, teachers are also receiving the input from reflective assessments that they can easily glance at in Google Forms. Recent research studies find successful students are more aware of their meta-cognition and thus use their cognitive skills and strategies to increase the probability of desirable outcomes, while all other factors remain similar among all students (Halpern, 2014). In this regard, it is critical for teachers to model adequate learning strategies in daily instruction and help learners to identify proper means to accomplish their task toward learning outcomes. Through learners' self-assessments, they are identifying learning needs periodically to recognize the underlying causes of their learning difficulties, but they may not always have informed and effective remedies familiar to them.

To that end, incorporating strategy-based instruction in the classroom is indispensable to support even adult learners' current performance and establish a shared understanding of common patterns of learning issues. Although adult learners enjoy self-directing their learning as they detect their learning difficulties and error patterns, they may at times need assistance in identifying the root causes, and appropriate learning and study strategies.

Through classroom instruction, teachers can assist students to (a) be more aware of what kinds of strategies are available, (b) understand how to organize and use strategies systematically, and (c) how to transfer the strategies to new language learning. The following process can be incorporated into classroom instruction to accomplish these three goals: (a) strategy preparation, (b) strategy awareness raising, (c) strategy training, (d) strategy practice, and (e) strategy personalization.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Authors' Context and Instructional Practice**

#### **Teaching Context**

The authors are pre-service and in-service teacher trainers of FL instructors at an FL post-secondary institute, offering associate and bachelor's degrees. As faculty development trainers, we support novice and veteran instructors with workshops that foster their ability to provide culturally based language instruction, highlighting the need for effective reciprocal collaboration among students and teachers to promote a flexible curriculum within a transformative pedagogical framework. Transformative pedagogy (Cranton, 2006; Dirky et al., 2006) involves critical dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders in developing the capacity to accept responsibility for making evidence-informed decisions for instructional adaptations. A critical component of this approach is the emphasis on the development of students as autonomous lifelong learners equipped with essential linguistic, cultural, professional, and leadership skills for the 21st century.

### **Instructional Practices**

Since assisting students to develop autonomy is a critical part of the institute's goal, the authors believe that a fundamental starting point in this development process is for students to understand and monitor their learning process, skill development, motivation, study habits, and learning strategies. Learning about themselves and engaging in their language learning process helps students to determine in which areas they are strong and those that need further attention in a timely manner. Therefore, as faculty development trainers we continually offer means to foster student autonomy by providing faculty support and training.

Post-virtual teaching, the authors began to reflect on how available technology applications could be leveraged in the face-to-face environment to develop students' autonomy in taking responsibility for their language learning and how this could be incorporated into our role as faculty trainers. We informally inquired with faculty about an interest in the use of online self-assessment and found many were receptive. We have provided presentations and workshops and promoted exchanges among faculty through participating in panel sessions within the institute and published a piece in one of the institute's academic journals (Won & Mac Donald, 2022). An interest to leverage technology in small ways on return to the face-to-face context was well received. It is assumed that faculty's easy embrace of an ancillary tool as part of instructional practice was because they were already so adept at innovatively using technology to make the classroom more dynamic and improve the effectiveness of instruction.

### **Reflections**

To make learning happen in the classroom, as teachers we often disregard the active role of students to guide our instruction. Furthermore, to make teacher feedback on student learning worthwhile, it is critical to gather student input on their perceptions of learning progress and how effective the instruction was. As reflective practitioners, self-assessment data from adult learners especially shared with their teachers enable us to reflect on our teaching practices and identify areas for improvement. Without student input on their learning process and level of confidence as they progress, teachers have little information about how well students have learned and felt about their learning experience, and resort solely to their own judgment.

In this regard, we have adopted self-reflection/assessment with experienced faculty who attended in-service programs. For example, we have used a pre-survey of their beliefs and practices in proficiency-oriented teaching approaches and conducted a self-assessment survey at the end of the workshop to gauge their level of confidence on the topics or concepts introduced during the workshop. The data from faculty self-assessment helps us evaluate not only how the workshop would enhance the teachers' skills and understanding of the concepts introduced in the course, but also how well the course might help them engage in their self-examination and critical discussions through a series of reflective tools and practices. At the same time, we as teacher trainers engage in analysis of facilitation skills and course content to determine if they contribute to supporting teachers' professional development based on self-assessment data and our reflections. The reflective process of examining our performances and teachers' learning experience helps educators expand knowledge and share best practices in

FL teaching by means of self-assessment, peer feedback, and critical discussions for continuous professional development.

### **Implications for the Korean ELT Context**

In the Korean ELT context, Korean students are encouraged to take in as much content as possible and evidence of learning is guided by achieving good tests results in a short period of time. Such approaches often do not address the needs of individual learners regarding pace of learning, learning process, and effective study skills and strategies. When a results-oriented approach and the content-focused study are not aligned with students' readiness, proficiency level, and study skills, students are not equipped with the necessary learning skills for achieving their proficiency goals and competence to sustain and enhance their proficiency in the long run. Therefore, incorporation of self-assessment on meta-cognition and learning progress during the course can enable Korean students to develop self-monitoring skills and adequate learning strategies that work best for their learning needs and preferences. To promote learner autonomy, training students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning process help students take more control of their learning and gradually enhance their level of confidence and motivation.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Learners' self-assessment encompasses a true learner-centered approach and underscores the importance of involving learners in assessing their performance to develop proficiency and foster autonomy. In monitoring their learning strategies, skill development, study habits, and motivation, learners are positioned to understand which areas need attention. In doing so, learners develop critical thinking and autonomy, and this permits teachers to assess the quality of their thinking and self-planned actions. The development of autonomy, along with critical thinking, positively enhances learners' motivation and achievement. Through leveraging one technology application teachers can enhance collaboration through exchanges lead by students based on student-generated data.

### **THE AUTHORS**

**Kara Mac Donald** is a professor at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA, USA, and conducts pre-service and in-service teacher training workshops. She received a master's degree in applied linguistics, TESOL/LOTE and a doctorate in applied linguistics from the University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. Her interests lie in academic research writing, language and identity, and NNEST and social-justice issues and advocacy. Email: kmacd@rocketmail.com

**Unsoon Won** is an associate professor at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA, USA, and works in the design and delivery of pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. She holds three masters' degrees in teaching foreign language, organizational leadership and e-learning, and human resources management earned in the U.S. Her

interests lie in diagnostic assessment, instructional design, technology integration, and learner development. Email: [unsoon.won@dliflc.edu](mailto:unsoon.won@dliflc.edu)

## REFERENCES

- Andrade, H., & Brookhart, S. (2019). Classroom assessment as the co-regulation of learning, *Assessment in Education Principles Policy and Practice*, 27(3) 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2019.1571992>
- Barkley, E. (2010). *Student engagement techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. Jossey-Bass.
- Chi, M. T. H. (2009). Active-constructive-interactive: A conceptual framework for differentiating learning activities. *Topics in Cognitive Science*, 1, 73–105.
- Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Dirkx, J. M., Mezirow, J., Cranton, P. (2006). Musings and reflections on the meaning, context, and process of transformative learning: A dialogue between John M. Dirkx and Jack Mezirow. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 4(2): 123–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344606287503>
- Halpern, D. F. (2014). *Critical thinking across the curriculum: A brief edition of thought and knowledge*. Routledge.
- Knowles, M. (1984). *The adult learner: A neglected species* (3rd ed.). Gulf.
- Ndoye, A. (2017). Peer/self assessment and student learning, *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 29(2) 255–269. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309464014\\_Peer\\_self-assessment\\_and\\_student\\_learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309464014_Peer_self-assessment_and_student_learning)
- Ratminingsih, N. M., Marhaeni, A. A. I. N., & Vigayanti, L. P. D. (2018). Self-assessment: The effect on students' independence and writing competence. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(3), 277–290. [10.12973/iji.2018.11320a](https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.11320a)
- Wang, W. (2017). Using rubrics in student self-assessment: student perceptions in the English as a foreign language writing context. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42, 1280–1292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2016.1261993>
- Won, U., & Mac Donald, K. (2022). Using self-assessment with MS form to foster autonomous learners. *Dialog on Language Instruction*, 32, 87–91. Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center.

# Using Story-Based Activities to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Linguistic Skills

---

Andrew S. Nelson

*Yachay Tech University, Urcuquí, Ecuador*

Language teachers not only have the responsibility to help students develop skills in a foreign language but also the opportunity to help students develop additional skills that will improve their chances for success in their academic, professional, and personal lives. One such additional skill is emotional intelligence (EI), which is necessary for effective collaboration and is an important contributor to students' academic, personal, and professional success. This article proposes story-based communicative activities as a method to develop both EI and linguistic skills. Story-based activities are motivating for students, and they help teachers create a safe environment with plenty of scaffolding to help students discuss emotional content.

## INTRODUCTION

Language teachers aim to help students develop their ability to communicate in the target language; however, some believe that teachers should also help students develop additional skills, such as critical thinking skills, collaboration skills, or emotional intelligence. In fact, “Researchers in the field of second-language acquisition have repeatedly stressed the need for instruction that addresses not only the social language needs of these students but also the academic, cognitive, and language development that is critical to success in schools” (Hickman et al., 2004, p. 720). The desire to develop these additional skills has even led to changes in educational policy. These additional competencies have been shown to reinforce students' ability to meet the subject-specific learning outcomes of a course as well as help them succeed in their personal and professional lives. Teachers and students have much to gain and little to lose by working to develop these additional competencies.

### Emotional Intelligence and Collaboration

Two important additional skills that teachers can help students develop are emotional intelligence and collaboration. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to correctly identify and comprehend emotions in oneself and others, and to respond to those emotions or control them in an appropriate way (MacCann et al., 2019, p. 151). MacCann et al. (2019) have also shown that EI has been associated with academic success: “It is not enough to be smart and hardworking – to have the added edge for success, students must also be able to understand and manage emotions” (p. 174). Another important skill is collaboration, a

competency in which EI plays a key role (MacCann, 2019, p. 153). Like EI, collaboration, or “cooperative learning,” has been shown to cause “higher achievement, greater retention, more positive feelings by the students about each other and the subject matter, and stronger academic self-esteem compared to competitive and individualistic learning” (Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 29). Collaboration is a useful skill for students in their academic, personal, and professional lives. Thus, EI and collaboration are important skills for teachers to help students develop.

Many students present difficulties with EI, which can appear in the language classroom as students’ reluctance to communicate about their emotions. Students with low EI may have difficulty expressing emotional content in their native language, so the added difficulty of expressing those topics in a foreign language may make it even more difficult for these students to communicate and to work on developing their EI.

## **STORY-BASED COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, COLLABORATION, AND LINGUISTIC SKILLS**

It is necessary, then, for teachers to employ learning activities that can simultaneously develop language skills and additional competencies. Activities based on stories, specifically fables, folktales, and fairytales, can effectively meet this dual objective: They can develop linguistic skills and EI, especially the ability to understand and talk about emotions by giving students the necessary tools to express their feelings and creating a safe environment in which they can do so.

A typical story-based activity might involve reading short stories and discussing the emotional content and students’ reactions to it. For example, the teacher can ask students to discuss the perspectives, intentions, and goals of the characters, and this analysis can prompt students to reflect on their own experiences and feelings. This type of discussion can promote EI skills by sparking the growth of empathy and the understanding of one’s own emotions. However, the success of the discussion will depend on how interesting the characters are and what situations they are placed in. On a linguistic level, teachers might, for example, lead students to notice language in the story, especially those structures that can be used to discuss emotional topics.

### **Story-Based Activities Can Develop Emotional Intelligence**

Story-based activities can also support students’ development of EI by creating a non-threatening situation in which to discuss their emotions. For example, some people may view talking about themselves as inappropriate or terrifying. However, discussing the emotions of characters can be a safer way to discuss topics of an emotional nature without the discomfort of directly talking about oneself. This opportunity to take the focus off the self can mitigate initial fears and may help some students become comfortable enough to talk about their own feelings.

Furthermore, a safe speaking situation can be created because students will share the knowledge of the story and the experience of reading it. This common ground can help students feel safe by preventing certain uncomfortable feelings,

such as the feeling of not being able to think of anything to talk about or not feeling comfortable sharing a thought. For example, if a teacher asked students to talk about any embarrassing moment, students might feel awkward if they cannot remember an embarrassing incident or if the embarrassing moment they think of is too personal to share. However, if a teacher asks students to discuss an embarrassing moment from a story, this discussion might be less awkward for students. Furthermore, by discussing a story that all the students have read, even if the students are asked to share something from their own lives in that context, they may have an easier time accessing memories because they have been thinking of associated topics as they read.

Story-based lessons can also help students avoid awkward feelings caused by having different experiences than the other students, which may cause them to not participate fully in discussions or understand certain topics. Such might be the case in multicultural classes or in those with a diverse range of ages. In these cases, the story can serve as common ground that can spark discussion among students. Fables are especially apt to create this common ground because “they are relatively free of cultural and linguistic bias” (Nippold & Marr, 2022, p. 788). Therefore, regardless of the students’ backgrounds, they can enjoy the stories, relate to them, and successfully discuss them.

Another way that stories can develop students’ EI is by helping them see the world from a different point of view, which can increase their empathy. According to Gomez (2010), stories can be used to help students “become familiarized with other cultures and social contexts different from their own” (p. 36).

### **Story-Based Activities Can Develop Linguistic Skills**

Story-based activities can also be used to help students develop language skills. First, stories can be used to develop grammatical and lexical knowledge. In fact, Bhatti et al. (2022) showed that using short stories to teach vocabulary can be both effective and enjoyable. The teacher could help students notice lexical and grammatical structures present in the text and provide direct instruction as needed. Second, students’ language skills can be developed through the process of teacher monitoring and language feedback. The teacher should listen to students’ conversations and provide correction. For example, when my students were discussing a story, I noticed that they struggled to use the full infinitive and gerund forms correctly. I taught students that many adjectives, especially those that express emotion like *afraid*, *disappointed*, or *eager* are followed by a full infinitive. Then, I guided students to talk about their emotions using the structure.

Developing linguistic ability also feeds into the development of EI, especially if the language points help students to communicate about emotions. This focus on language can provide the necessary scaffolding and therefore confidence that students need to discuss emotions, which will increase their willingness to participate and thus the gains that they make.

## **Story-Based Lessons Are Motivating**

Finally, the use of story-based activities can create a positive classroom atmosphere and learning experience that reinforces the development of linguistic skills and EI. This happens in part because story-based activities are interesting for students. According to Saydakhmetova (2020), “Teachers should work according to the needs and interests of the pupils and ... find new and interesting methods ... to make lessons engaging” (p. 75). These efforts directly relate to the likelihood of success that students will have in the classroom. Furthermore, when lessons are interesting, student attendance will improve and students will be happy to be in class (Saydakhmetova, 2020, p. 76).

The use of story-based lessons also helps to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom by providing an opportunity for students to have some of their emotional needs met, especially the need to feel “encouraged, listened to, and ... valued,” which is one of the most meaningful ways teachers can contribute to their students’ academic success” (Jakhongir, 2022, p. 19). Helping students discuss emotions helps them get these needs met. Furthermore, students “need to have instructors who care about their performance in class as well as their well-being; all students benefit from teachers’ social support” (Faulkner et al., 2021, p. 94). Story-based lessons provide an opportunity for students to get this social support from teachers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Teaching varies across the world with respect to students’ backgrounds, teachers’ beliefs, and institutional requirements. However, language classes should help students develop not only linguistically but also academically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Story-based communicative activities are an option to develop language skills along with EI by helping students develop their abilities to discuss emotions. In turn, EI improves collaboration, and both skills can reinforce personal, professional, and academic success.

## **THE AUTHOR**

**Andrew Nelson** is an English teacher from Nashotah, Wisconsin, USA. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance and a Master of Arts in TESOL, both from the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. During his graduate studies, he worked as an English tutor, an English for specific purposes consultant (agriculture), and an English teacher in Taipei, Taiwan, and in Bożkowie, Poland. He has extensive experience teaching adults and teaching at the university level. He has been teaching at Yachay Tech University (Ecuador) since August 2017, where he employs a teaching philosophy that includes helping students become self-directed learners. Email: nelson.composition@gmail.com



**REFERENCES**

- Bhatti, M. S., Iqbal, A., Rafique, Z., Noreen, S., & Tabassum, F. (2022). Short stories as an innovative EFL teaching technique to improve Pakistani elementary students' English vocabulary. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 12(2), 405–420.
- Faulkner, S. L., Watson, W. K., Pollino, M. A., & Shetterly, J. R. (2021). “Treat me like a person, rather than another number”: University student perceptions of inclusive classroom practices. *Communication Education*, 70(1), 92–111.
- Gomez, A. B. (2010). How to use tales for the teaching of vocabulary and grammar in a primary education English class. *Revista española de lingüística aplicada*, 23, 31–52.
- Hickman, P., Pollard-Durodola, S., & Vaughn, S. (2004). Storybook reading: Improving vocabulary and comprehension for English-language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(8), 720–730.
- Jakhongir, T. (2022). Ways of creating a supportive classroom environment in FLT classes. *Central Asian Journal of Literature, Philosophy, and Culture*, 3(12), 189–191.
- Johnson, R. T., & Johnson, D. W. (2008). Active learning: Cooperation in the classroom. *The Annual Report of Educational Psychology in Japan*, 47, 29–30.
- MacCann, C., Jiang, Y., Brown, L. E., Double, K. S., Bucich, M., & Minbashian, A. (2019). Emotional intelligence predicts academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(2), 150–186.
- Nippold, M. A., & Marr, E. (2022). Philosophy for adolescents: Using fables to support critical thinking and advanced language skills. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 53(3), 786–802.
- Saydakhmetova, D. (2020). Teaching Russian as a foreign language through stories. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences*, 8(5), 75–78.



# The Use of Internet-Based Paraphrasers in Developing Written Language Complexity

---

Ngoc-Ha Nguyen

*National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan*

L2 essay writing depends heavily on resources such as inputs from prewriting tasks, teachers, or dictionaries. The availability of internet-based paraphrasers recently has offered learners a rich resource in terms of structures and vocabulary. The study explores how these tools help learners develop lexical and structural complexity in their written language. In total, ten senior English majors from a college were allocated into two groups to write a 200-to-250-word essay every week during a course of six weeks. One group was instructed to use Wordtune – an AI-powered paraphraser to revise their essays in the following week. The result from quantitative data showed no significant difference in lexical diversity while structural complexity of the group with Wordtune slightly increased slightly over time. Qualitative data from a week-by-week timescale also showed how learners utilized and internalized the structures from the tool. Overall, the participants all felt positive about the tool.

## INTRODUCTION

When writing an essay, EFL learners experience different processes such as planning, drafting, and reviewing. With good preparation from prewriting tasks, learners can have ideas and inputs and then transfer their thoughts into words. Writing an essay requires learners to use not only their cognitive skills but also their linguistic resources such as vocabulary, grammar, and structures. Then learners have to use these rules to compile ideas with the right organization.

The quality of a good essay is influenced by three aspects: complexity, fluency, and accuracy, which have been widely accepted by scholars in writing research. According to Bui and Skehan (2018), complexity measures how elaborate a learner's language is by looking at the advanced language that they use. Complexity is typically measured with structural complexity and lexical complexity. Structural complexity is calculated as the mean length of T-units in words while lexical complexity is based on lexical diversity, lexical sophistication, and lexical density, using the VocD measure in writing research. Accuracy refers to the extent to which a learner follows the rules in the target language. Another feature that impacts the quality of the essay is its complexity which involves smoothness and ease of expression.

Many learners have difficulty in writing because they lack some linguistic knowledge, such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and semantics. Most of the time, they depend on resources, such as dictionaries, translation apps, corpora of

collocations, and most of the time they turn to their teachers for help. Nowadays, with state-of-the-art technology, learners are assisted with some auto-correction functions as seen in the very popular app, Google Docs, and other AI-powered grammar checkers. Therefore, once learners use online platforms to write, they no longer need to worry about their accuracy because grammatical errors are automatically identified and even auto-corrected for them. Moreover, learning writing seems to be more convenient than ever because learners can seek assistance from collocation dictionaries, and translation and paraphrasing services. Using these online services, learners can compose their thoughts and revise them in different ways because these technologies can offer them a wide variety of choices.

There have been a lot of internet-based paraphrasers developed with artificial intelligence, such as Quillbot, Paraphraser, Editpad, Ref-n-Write, and Wordtune. Most of these tools function as grammar checkers while offering users with an alternative to their original idea without changing their meaning by altering the structure of sentences and replacing words with synonyms. They can paraphrase a piece of writing and create alternate versions for specific words, phrases, sentences, or even whole paragraphs. The free versions include limited functions, such as standard or fluency, while premium packages offer rewrites in formal, informal, expand, or shortened versions. These alternatives are also correct grammar when the original sentences include some mistakes. Among these tools, Wordtune provides different options for one original idea. Moreover, it also highlights grammatical and spelling errors of the original version in a separate section so users can easily notice them. It is supposed that with different options of paraphrasing, the learners need to process them before selecting the most suitable one to improve their writing. This process requires learner's linguistic knowledge and critical thinking to make the right decision.

Shi et al. (2018) suggested that paraphrasing is a process syntactically restructuring, interpreting, and recounting relevant information to the new text. While paraphrasing is considered by many researchers an important skill in L2 essay writing, the effects of paraphrasing tools in writing have not been fully investigated. This study aimed to fill the gap by investigating how the Wordtune paraphrasing tool helps develop learners' complexity in their essays. First, as stated above, the user has to consider different rephrases to select the right option. Second, problematic words are underlined for the users while alternatives are given in another section. These two features can draw learners' attention to both structural and lexical features of their writing.

The study focused on how learners use this paraphrasing tool in the post-writing task to revise their essays. Post-task activities require learners to work with the language that has been made salient and develop it in some way. In fact, corrective feedback is considered a vital part in teaching L2 writing and while responding to learner-generated language, the feedback draws learners' attention to specific treatments made especially for them (Bui & Skehan, 2018). Wordtune, with a similar mechanism for corrective feedback, makes explicit notice on the learners' language and therefore, exploit readiness on the part of the learner and foster acquisition processes at the right time.

While many studies have looked at complexity development in writing as static systems, there are many factors interacting with learners during this

development process, such as topics, interest, background knowledge, cognitive self, motivation, and other learning experience. For each writing topic, learners bring their own individual differences to the learning context and, in turn, have different learning outcomes. As a result, the development of language should be analyzed from a dynamic system perspective. Yu and Lowie (2019) also saw the development of L2 complexity as a dynamic, non-linear, and self-organizing process. They found that at the group level, there was a general development of complexity and accuracy, but at the individual level, the developmental patterns were non-linear and dynamic with high degrees of variability, and individual language development was influenced by the initial states. Crossley and McNamara (2014) found a syntactic complexity development in L2 learners over a semester. Moreover, the development of their writing quality aligned with their spoken discourse.

Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) viewed language learning as a complex system that consists of different subsystems interacting with each other and is open to outside influences. There are three key aspects in this system: stability and variability, context, and interacting levels and scales. In the first aspect, the high variability in student's knowledge or skill may suggest a developmental stage in their interlanguage. When it reaches stability, it means their interlanguage is stable until the new developmental stage comes. The second aspect of the system includes both internal context, such as physical conditions and cognitive ability, and external context, such as social, cultural, pedagogical, and political environment. They are interdependent and interact with each other during the process of language learning. The third aspect of the system requires the appropriate interacting level and specific timescales on which data are collected. This study explored how the use of Wordtune – an internet-based paraphraser helps students improve their complexity in essay writing during the course of six weeks. The three research questions are the following:

- RQ1. Are there any differences in the LDVocD scores and mean length per T-unit after six weeks?
- RQ2. How does the Wordtune paraphrasing tool help develop learners' lexical diversity and structural complexity at the individual level on a week-by-week timescale?
- RQ3. What are the EFL learners' perceptions of Wordtune?

## **METHOD**

To fill the gap in the literature on the effect of paraphrasing tools in writing using a dynamic approach, the study was designed with ten English-major students from a college in Vietnam. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to show the effects of the tool, that is, how this tool influenced the development of learners' complexity in written language over time. Moreover, the learners' perspectives of the tool were explored in the study to give a comprehensive picture including both cognitive and affective aspects of learners.

## **Participants**

The study was conducted in a college in Vietnam. Ten senior English-major students joined this elective writing course. They are from 21 to 24 years old. Two of them were males while eight are females. Up to the time of conducting this research, they had been studying English for twelve years. In Vietnam, students do not start learning English until they get to the third grade in elementary school. This college is located in a coastal city in a central province of Vietnam, which is known for its tourism development with magnificent beaches. Most students in the study were interested in working in the tourism industry upon graduation.

In Vietnam, English essay writing is only taught in colleges for English-major students. Those who want to develop writing skills for personal interests or to study abroad have to undertake such study at a foreign language center. The participants of the study received four formal writing courses in their first two years of college. Despite receiving two years of writing training, most participants were not able to write effectively for many reasons. First, they didn't have enough L2 oral and written input. For example, many courses were taught in their native language instead of English. Thus, when writing, students had difficulty finding the right expressions. Second, the time of training was not long enough for them to develop appropriate language use, tone, or style in different writing genres. Therefore, many students were reluctant to write English essays, or they had high anxiety regarding writing in English.

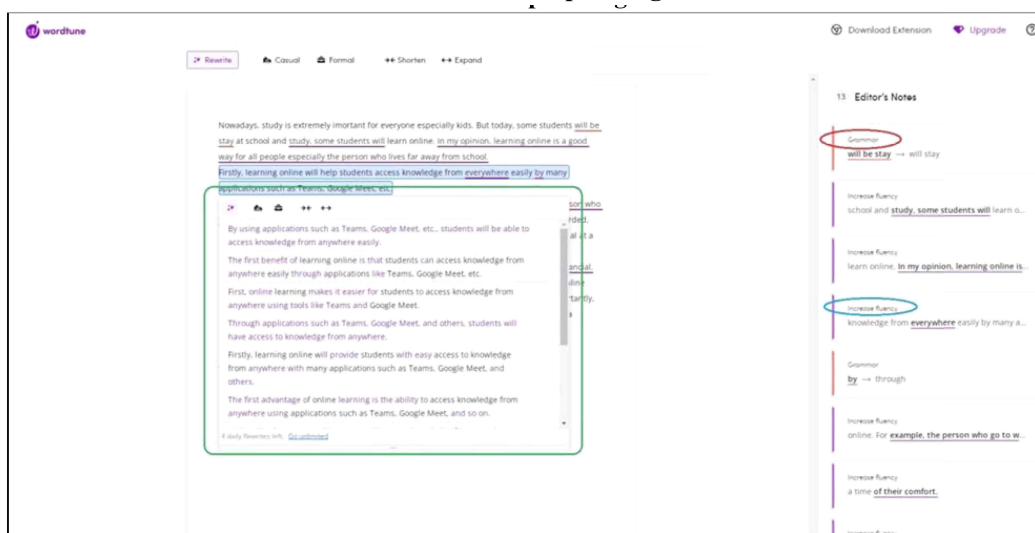
This course was elective and additional to the main course, English for Job Interviews. The course was taught online by the researcher simultaneously with the main physical course. Each online meeting consisted of one hour, with 30 minutes for instruction and 30 minutes for essay writing. The instruction focused on writing techniques and prewriting tasks, such as brainstorming, outlining, and reading for background knowledge. Essay revision tasks were also done during each meeting.

## **Instruments**

### **Wordtune Paraphrasing Tool**

Wordtune is an AI-based paraphrasing tool developed by AI21 Labs, founded in 2018 by AI experts. The tool offers two main functions: rewriting and grammar check. In paraphrasing functions, there are different modes, such as rewrite in general (with many different options), formal, casual, expand, and shorten. Users need to sign up for Wordtune to use its free version with up to ten rewrites possible per day. The grammar checker appears on the right side of the interface (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. The Interface of the Wordtune Paraphrasing Tool



### Data Analysis Tools

Structural complexity is measured by the mean length of the T-unit (MLT) in words. The study used Lextutor ([www.lextutor.ca](http://www.lextutor.ca)) as an analyzing tool to calculate this. This tool, with a sentence extracting function, was created by Tom Cobb of the University of Montreal, Quebec. The tool can calculate the number of words in each independent clause and all of its dependent clauses.

Lexical diversity is calculated by the VocD measure. The study employed Coh-Metrix 3.0 to identify this measure. The tool was developed by Graesser et al. (2004) to measure the cohesion and readability of the text based on lexical items, part-of-speech classifiers, syntactic and semantic analysis, and other components that are widely used in computational linguistics. This lexical analyzing tool is used in a number of studies (Crossley & McNamara, 2014; Yoon & Polio, 2017).

The study only used the VocD measure in this tool to determine the density of vocabulary by counting the appearance of a word once in the whole essay.

### Procedure

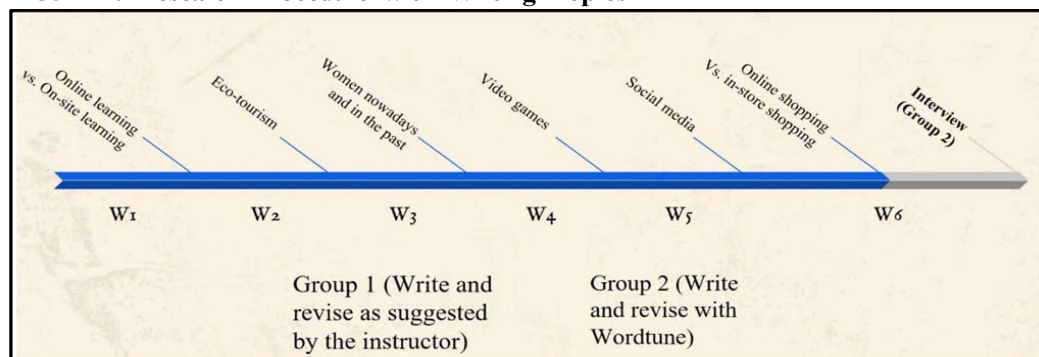
The participants were randomly divided into two groups of five. One group followed regular instructions while the other used Wordtune in their essay revision. Every week they were assigned a writing topic. After reading the instructions online, they wrote their essay for 30 minutes and handed in their work through Google Drive. In the following meeting, the instructor provided them with feedback, and they were asked to revise their own essays. The first group revised the essay by themselves while the second group used Wordtune to improve their sentence structures and word choice.

The course lasted six weeks. There were six topics, all of which were argumentative essays. This type of essay can be challenging because the structures in this writing genre are different from the typical story structure of narratives. In narratives, students are required to utilize more relevant prior knowledge and complex sentence patterns to express their arguments (Wolfe & Woodwyk, 2010). As

such, students' essays could show different structures and levels of lexical diversity.

After the final essays were completed, the participants were invited to complete a questionnaire delivered online, and after that had they had an additional online meeting with the author. The procedure followed in the study is shown in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2. Research Procedure with Writing Topics**



## RESULTS

This study aimed at exploring the effects of Wordtune, an internet-based paraphraser, on learner's structural complexity and lexical diversity in their essay writing at both the group and individual level. The dynamic systems theory was employed to gain a deeper understanding of learner's written language development. The first research question was "Are there any differences in the LDVocD scores and mean length per T-unit after six weeks?" The differences between the LDVocD scores and mean length per T-unit from Week 1 and Week 6 are shown in Table 1. A slight increase in lexical diversity of the students' essays was seen in the two groups over six weeks. However, a paired-sample *t*-test confirmed that there was no significant difference between the LDVocD scores of Week 1 ( $M = 83.57$ ) and Week 6 ( $M = 88.54$ ) in Group 1,  $p = 0.30$ . A similar result was found in Group 2. There was also no significant difference between the LDVocD scores of week 1 ( $M = 83.51$ ) and week 6 ( $M = 87.68$ ),  $p = 0.42$ .

**TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics Comparing Week 1 and Week 6 LDVocD Scores in the Two Groups (Paired-Sample *t* Test)**

	Group 1		Group 2 (with Wordtune)	
	Week 1	Week 6	Week 1	Week 6
Mean	83.57	88.54	83.51	87.68
Variance	229.51	280.11	354.95	830.29
Observations	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
<i>df</i>	4.00		4.00	
$P(T \leq t)$ one-tail	0.30*		0.42*	
<i>t</i> Critical one-tail	2.13		2.13	

Note. \* $p > .05$ , not significant.



Table 2 shows the differences between the length per T-unit in the two groups over the six weeks. The length per T-unit in Group 1 decreased slightly from  $M = 20.88$  to  $M = 18.23$ . However, this difference was not significant ( $p = 0.14$ ). In contrast, an increase in the mean score was seen in Group 2. A paired-sample  $t$  test confirmed that there was a significant difference between the scores of length per T-unit in Week 1 ( $M = 15.61$ ) and Week 6 ( $M = 17.47$ ) in Group 2,  $p = 0.04$ .

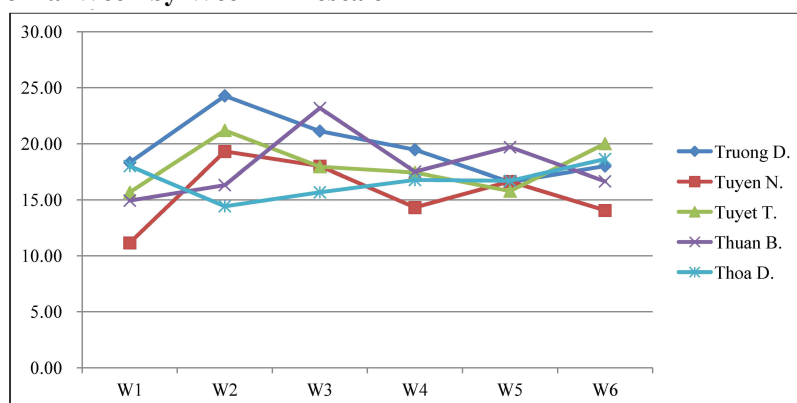
**TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics Comparing Length per T-Unit Scores in the Two Groups (Paired-Sample  $t$  Test)**

	Group 1		Group 2 (with Wordtune)	
	Week 1	Week 6	Week 1	Week 6
Mean	20.88	18.23	15.61	17.47
Variance	11.27	8.91	8.32	5.08
Observations	5	5	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0		0	
$df$	4		4	
$t$ Stat	1.29		-2.26	
$P(T \leq t)$ one-tail	0.14		0.04*	
$t$ Critical one-tail	2.13		2.13	

Note. \* $p < .05$ , significant.

The second research question was “How does the Wordtune paraphrasing tool help develop learners’ lexical diversity and structural complexity at the individual level on a week-by-week timescale?” In Research Question 1, the lexical diversity of the two groups did not significantly differ over time. However, the structural complexity in Group 2 did develop after six week. A closer look into the qualitative data of the participants provides insights into how their structural complexity changed (see Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3. The Dynamic Patterns of Structural Complexity for the Individual Participants on a Week-by-Week Timescale**



As the data shows, although the mean length per T-unit increased, this development did not occur in a linear fashion. The score of each individual differs. Three out of five performed best in Week 2, where they were required to write

about ecotourism, while the topic about video games in Week 4 seemed to be tricky for most of them. They got back their momentum in Week 5 and wrote longer clauses as their scores were slightly higher.

The final research question was “What are the EFL learners’ perceptions of Wordtune?” The responses from the participants were coded and are summarized in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. The Summary of Participants’ Responses on Their Perceptions of Wordtune**

Items	Agree	Disagree
The grammar check function is useful.	5	0
I can learn more vocabulary from the tools.	5	0
It is easy for me to use the tool to revise my essay with better structures.	3	2
The interface design of Wordtune is easy to use.	4	1
It’s easier to use Wordtune with computers than with smart phones.	5	0
In general, the tool is useful.	5	0

All of the Groupe 2 participants thought that the tool was useful for them in essay writing in terms of grammar checking, vocabulary and sentence structure. They all agreed that computers could give them easier access to the tool than smart phones. Three of them thought that using the tool could help them revise their essay easier and with better structures. Two of them claimed that they spent more time considering options that are very similar before coming up with their own structures. The interface design of Wordtune was preferred by four participants while one said that they had to register and log in to use the account, which sometimes caused frustration.

## DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at evaluating the developmental patterns of the L2 written language with regards to their vocabulary diversity and structural complexity. The results showed that the students developed their structural complexity, while there was no difference in their lexical diversity over the course of six weeks. These findings confirmed the results in Crossley and McNamara’s (2014) study and partially echoed the results in Yu & Lowie (2019) that both structural complexity and lexical diversity improve over time. The fluctuation of lexical diversity in different weeks can be explained by the fact that with different topics, the learners had different background knowledge and vocabulary to express in their essays. In terms of structural complexity, the results show an overall increase in the length of sentences, which means that the learners had to use more subordinate clauses to write. However, the process-oriented analysis showed that the developmental patterns of the learners was not linear, as they performed better in some topics. Take Week 2’s topic, Ecotourism, for example.

As mentioned above, the college is located in a coastal province of Vietnam where the main source of income comes from tourism. In order to find a job in this area, students were supposed to have better specialized knowledge and

language about this field. Moreover, the English department of this college also provided more specialized courses in English for tourism. The topic in Week 4, video games, on the other hand, seemed to be more challenging for them. This might have been because most of the participants were females who had little interest in this topic. Moreover, the scores in Weeks 4, 5, and 6 were similar for most of the participants. This can also be interpreted as resulting from the topics of these weeks being similar – about online activities. It can also be inferred that the use of this tool can help learners accumulate vocabulary and structures in a certain domain if the topics are about a particular field for several weeks. It can also be seen that structural complexity can develop faster than lexical diversity. This might be because the number of structures is limited, so learners can reuse the same structures in different essays, while they need to have different vocabulary for different topics.

A closer look into the performance of one participant, Thuan B., offers an in-depth analysis of this dynamic pattern. The structural development of this participant was shown in figure 4.

**FIGURE 4. The Dynamic Patterns of Structural Complexity of Thuan B.**

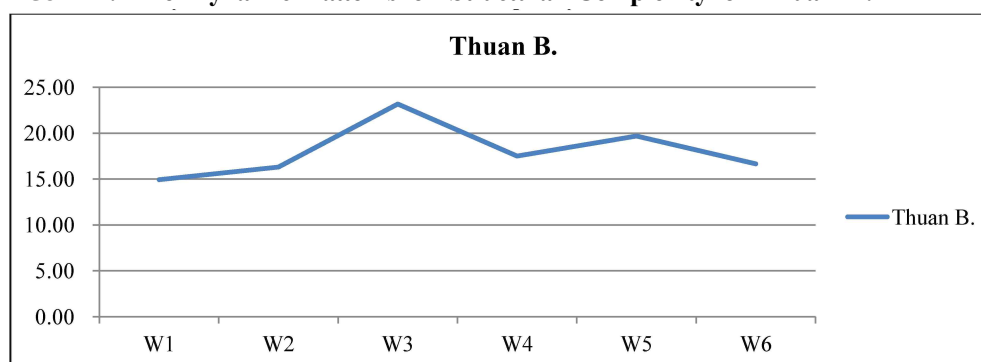
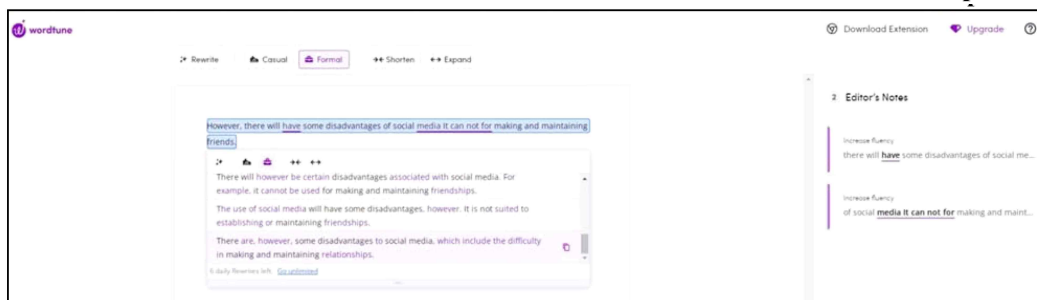


Figure 4 shows that, overall, the learner’s structural complexity improved slightly over time. In Week 1, one participant wrote sentences such as “In my opinion, learning online is a good way for all people especially the person who lives far away from school,” or “Distance learning is extremely good way for all people especially who are working.” Expressions like “... for all people especially the person who ...” are unnecessarily lengthy. Having used Wordtune, she revised her sentences like “In my opinion, learning online is a good way for all people, especially those who live far away from school,” and “Distance learning is an extremely good way for all people, especially those who are working.” The learner implicitly learned this structure and applied it in her last essay. She wrote, “In conclusion, online shopping is very suitable for those who are always busy.”

Another example is the use of relative pronouns to combine sentences. Thuan wrote, “However, there will have some disadvantages of social media. It can not for making and maintaining friends.” The instructor advised her to combine the sentences together, and she used the tool to see how it could be done. The tool suggested different structures in terms of style as shown in Figure 5. After thoughtful consideration, she revised it to “However, there are some disadvantages of social media which includes making and maintaining friends.” The learner also

applied this in the sixth essay in which she wrote, “There are more websites or apps that they use for shopping such as Shopee, Tiki, and so on.”

**FIGURE 5. The Interface of Wordtune When Learner Looked for a Suitable Expression**



The process mentioned above shows that the learner has internalized the rules of grammar, i.e., the use of the empty subject “there” and relative pronouns, to form more complex structures. This dynamic process requires explicit and consistent corrective feedback from the instructors and taking notice of them from the learner. The two examples showed that when the instructor drew her attention to the same structures several times, the learner noticed. In fact, it was not until the third time that she applied the rules by herself. Hence, incorporation of teacher feedback is critical in this process. This confirmed Larsen-Freeman and Cameron’s (2008) theory about the dynamic nature of language learning. Before the new stage of development, the learner’s interlanguage system becomes more stable. In other words, the degree of variability in their structural complexity is lower, as seen in the score from Week 4 to Week 6. Therefore, enough time should be allotted to see how learners implicitly acquire and internalize the new structures and gradually develop their written language complexity.

Writing not only requires background knowledge, it also involves linguistic ability. With the support of this paraphrasing tool, learners can reduce their cognitive load in their writing process. This paraphrasing tool can help reduce the anxiety of writing experienced in learners. It provides linguistic resources such as vocabulary and similar structures at the right time and suits their needs. Vocabulary was considered by all of the participants as the most powerful function of this paraphraser. The tool suggested different part of speech, antonyms and synonyms. Particularly, Tuyen N. said, “This tool helps me in terms of detecting grammatical mistakes clearly and accurately. It helps me know many new words and structures.” Another participant, Truong D., also mentioned that he benefited from the vocabulary from the tool. He stated, “Wordtune is very easy to use. It provides me with a lot of rewrite options but I still have to read carefully and compare with my original idea to select the right one. I can also improve my vocabulary by using it.” Another function of Wordtune is to provide different rewrite options. The participants also deemed this to be a useful function but also thought that it sometimes might take more time to select the right structure to follow. One participant, Thuan B. responded, “The tool can help me find synonyms and antonyms easily. But it doesn’t give me a variety of paraphrases (of different writing styles). The options provided are pretty similar.”

In spite of some difficulties while using it, in general, the learners showed their positive attitude towards this tool in writing.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study collected essays from ten participants over six weeks. Five of them were guided to use Wordtune to revise their essays. The findings suggest that learners tended to improve their structural complexity before lexical diversity. When using similar structures for different essays, the tools provided learners with accurate use and options in terms of styles or formality. Therefore, learners could pick up and extend these structures faster. The dynamic path of a learner's structural complexity was a result of the interactions between different aspects, such as the topic, motivation, background knowledge, and personal interest in the tool. The tool, as a whole, provided all the participants in the Wordtune group with a positive learning experience in their writing and could be a linguistically resourceful online tool. Most importantly, it was shown to be effective in enhancing learners' writing skills in both vocabulary and structures.

There were several limitations of this study that could be addressed in future research. First of all, the sample size was too small for the results to be generalized. With only ten participants, the quantitative data were not powerful enough to prove the effectiveness of Wordtune. Secondly, the time of the study was only six weeks, which is too short to show development in learners' written language. Another limitation of the current study is the use of Lextutor. The tool calculated the length per T-unit by counting the sentence length while it would better be done based on the number of words per clause. Finally, the class was conducted online where learners were able to use online resources. Although learners were required to use their own language to write after prewriting activities, it is impossible to control the use of grammar checkers on Google Docs, translation tools, or other free applications. Future study should also control the writing mode to give more accurate results. With the findings presented in this study, the author hopes to provide in-depth analysis on the use of this state-of-the-art AI technology, contributing to the current body of research useful insights into the dynamic process of L2 written language development.

## THE AUTHOR

**Ngoc-Ha Nguyen** is a PhD student in the English Department at National Taiwan Normal University. She has over ten years of experience in teaching English to EFL learners in Vietnam and Taiwan. She has interests in studying individual differences and English essay writing. Email: 80821007l@gapps.ntnu.edu.tw

## REFERENCES

- Bui, G., & Skehan, P. (2018). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency. *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (pp. 1-7). Wiley.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelto046>

- Crossley, S. A., & McNamara, D. S. (2014). Does writing development equal writing quality? A computational investigation of syntactic complexity in L2 learners. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 26*, 66–79.
- Graesser, A. C., McNamara, D. S., Louwerse, M., & Cai, Z. (2004). Coh-Metrix: Analysis of text on cohesion and language. *Behavior Research Methods Instruments and Computers, 36*(2), 193–202.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Cameron, L. (2008). Research methodology on language development from a complex systems perspective. *The Modern Language Journal, 92*(2), 200–213.
- Shi, L., Fazel, I., & Kowkabi, N. (2018). Paraphrasing to transform knowledge in advanced graduate student writing. *English for Specific Purposes, 51*, 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2018.03.001>
- Wolfe, M. B. W., & Woodwyk, J. M. (2010). Processing and memory of information presented in narrative or expository texts. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(3), 341–362. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000709910x485700>
- Yoon, H., & Polio, C. (2017). The linguistic development of students of English as a second language in two written genres. *TESOL Quarterly, 51*(2), 275–301.
- Yu, H., & Lowie, W. (2019). Dynamic paths of complexity and accuracy in second language speech: A longitudinal case study of Chinese learners. *Applied Linguistics, 41*(6), 855–877.

## **Our Collaborative Journey as Learning Advisors**

---

Prateek Sharma and Thomas Ashton

*Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan*

In this paper, the authors have shared their experiences of developing as teacher-advisors through participating in a five-level advising course. Through their collaboration at the university's dormitory program, they were able to enhance the student experience and help them achieve their goals. In order to encourage reflection and promote learner autonomy in the dormitory, they decided to make changes to the format of the overall dormitory program. In doing so, the authors could reflect on their two-year journey of running the program and how the collaborative experience of one semester helped them to put the theory of advising in language learning into practice. This paper presents the details of the project, its result, and some wider implications for fellow educators and advisors.

### **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

Kanda Academic English Residence, known as KAER, is a dormitory where students from either the English Department or the International Communication Department live with foreign faculty members who teach at Kanda University of International Studies (Chiba, Japan) with the goal of studying abroad in the English-speaking world. The aim is to acquire language skills to help students prepare for experiences to either study abroad and live abroad, as well as social and human skills, through daily group life and cross-cultural understanding. KAER is a student dormitory unique to Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) that fosters "true global human resources" (KUIS, 1987). Kanda University of Foreign Studies has an international dormitory that is directly managed and operated by the university so that everyone who lives away from their parents can lead a fulfilling university life.

Students who reside in dormitories have a higher expectation of improving interpersonal relationships and enriching their university experience. However, sometimes in reality, there exists the problem that the affection between them is indifferent. More often than not, students are satisfied with the overall life experience of dormitory life; however, they may not always be satisfied with the facilities and rules and regulations. To improve student experiences and promote the development of the students, it is necessary to develop an organic dormitory interpersonal network and establish a more flexible dormitory organizational structure and institutional norms in which students can participate. Furthermore, in order to address student needs and expectations, perpetual and honest feedback is required.

Thomas Ashton and Prateek Sharma have been teaching various courses at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) since April of 2020. In addition to this, they have been working with the University's dormitory, called KAER, as supervisors (SVs). It is a female-only dormitory with 16 resident students who are regular students at KUIS, and also enrolled in the dormitory program to hone their English ability and prepare for studying abroad. The SVs met with all 16 students twice a week for a 15-minute journal-orientated session. SVs had already shared a journal writing template at the beginning of the year, and students were expected to fill it out weekly before the sessions. The majority of students used their college iPads to type into the journals. During the 2020–2021 academic year at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sessions were fully online. In the 2021–2022 academic year, and in accordance with University policy, the sessions adhered to a 50–50 balance between online and face-to-face sessions. In practice, this meant that journal sessions were held at the dormitory on a fortnightly basis, and in the intervening weeks were conducted online.

While working with the dormitory, both authors have also been involved in the Learning Advising course program run in tandem with Kanda University and managed by Jo Mynard and Satoko Kato from the Self-Learning Access Centre (SALC). It was during this professional development course that both authors acquired a more in-depth knowledge base about learner autonomy, learner identity, beliefs about language learning, and reflection on learning. “Reflection with others is more challenging and offers opportunities to discover different perspectives compared with self-reflection. To make the reflective dialogue even more powerful, it needs to be structured ‘intentionally’” (Kato & Mynard, 2016, p. 6).

It was this latter point in particular that motivated the authors to revise the previous journal writing log, with a focus on making the journal template more focused, time effective, and relevant to students' lives. From this point onward, the writing style was switched to first-person, and the researchers will acknowledge themselves with the pronouns, *we*, *our*, and *us*.

## **RESEARCH MOTIVATION**

Students began losing motivation to improve their language ability due to several factors, including cancellation of study abroad programs due to the pandemic, exhausting online lessons, virtual dormitory activities, and lack of human interaction. We continued our online meetings with students; however, the attendance began dropping and at the year-end, we received poor feedback from students. Their feedback lacked enthusiasm and any reflection. This was when we decided to use our training from the Learning Advising program to improve our journal sessions.

## **THE FOUR STAGES IN ADVISING**

Kato and Mynard (2016) designed a four-stage learning trajectory for new advisors. Successful language advisors experience these four stages as they



progress on the path of advising.

### **Getting Started**

This is the first stage, where a teacher begins to experience the shift in the direction of the idea of “control.” We decided to focus on a more student-led session by changing the journal template. While maintaining elements of the previous journal template, we streamlined the journal’s contents (see Appendix) into five specific categories: university experience, dormitory life, personal experiences, academics, and other goals. Each of these categories contained two to three reflective questions. These questions were different for each category. Furthermore, we encouraged students to think of one optional additional reflective question based on the category they had chosen (see Appendix). Students were advised to focus on the category for the following 21 days. Students filled out these journals at the end of the week and met with us the following week to share their reflections.

During these meetings, we used the advising strategies we had learned in the advising program and ensured that students, and not us, led these sessions. This was the first shift from our role as supervisors or teachers into advisors. Both of us maintained a diary where we took notes about the highlights of each session, our role as advisors, and reporting any changes in our methodology of advising.

### **Going Deeper**

In about a month, while most students had already achieved some of their targeted goals, questioning students about their choices and strategies to achieve them became normal. This questioning was deliberate to understand what choices informed their goals. Sometimes, these powerful “why” and “how” questions even discouraged the students; however, other times, they led to *aha moments*. Aha moments often come suddenly and are experienced when learners begin to connect a fragmented sense of awareness and turn it into a powerful awareness (Kato & Mynard, 2016).

This was interesting because students’ aha moments often became our own aha moments, instilling our confidence in our questioning technique.

### **Becoming Aware**

As we progressed through the advising course, we began to understand our role as advisors even more clearly. At this stage, we found ourselves conducting two dialogues: one internal and one with the students. We began to notice how the knowledge from the advising course began informing our advising. Additionally, we began seeing each other’s role in this journey, which marked the beginning of our critical friendship. At this time, one of the authors began reading extensively on critical friendships, and thus, this project became more valuable to us. Our advising sessions became more meaningful as we enjoyed questioning and challenging students on their goals and reflection.

## Transformation

For an advisor, this is an ongoing stage. Our internal dialogues became more meaningful, and we even began to self-advise. By the end of the semester, we had developed our own individual style of advising. We met regularly and looked at each other's notes. It was interesting to see how our individual style of advising was supporting students' diverse goals.

## RESULTS

A semester-end feedback form was administered to students in order to investigate their thoughts on the changes made to the sessions. This feedback form contained both subjective and Likert-scale-type questions for students to express their thoughts.

On a five-point Likert scale, out of 16 students enrolled in the program, 11 chose *strongly agree*, indicating that the new journal template was better than the old one (see Table 1). Some of the comments from students confirmed that they enjoyed working with the specific set of questions that focused on five important areas.

**TABLE 1. Participants' Impressions of the New Journal Template**

Attitudinal Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
This journal is better than the old journal.	0	0	1	4	11

Furthermore, 14 out of 16 students confirmed that the new advising format helped them achieve their short-term goals. Some of their comments were "I rarely used university facilities. After focusing on University Experience, I got a courage to use them, and I could use five different university facilities. So, I'm really satisfied with my experience" and "I want to talk with SV more, make new goals and achieve them. I am so motivated."

## IMPLICATIONS: A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

These results were reassuring; we transformed our methodology through our rigorous training. This change began to inform our journal sessions, thus enabling students to achieve their learning outcomes. Researchers have written about the value of collaboration between content and language teaching faculty for supporting the linguistic needs of Japanese students in global citizen-type courses at their university (Brown, 2017). This is exactly what we strove to achieve at the dormitory: to assist our students in becoming global citizens and prepare them better for studying and living abroad. Creating an autonomous environment at a Japanese university dormitory in the middle of a pandemic is no easy feat, and without successful collaboration, we may not have overcome some of the challenges that presented themselves.

When we collated our notes and had deeper dialogues, we identified three key strategies that helped this collaboration to work successfully. These strategies were (a) getting the basics right, (b) developing critical friendships, and (c) practicing some form of grounding exercises. We are sharing our recipe for positive collaborative practice in the hope that it will be useful to fellow educational practitioners.

### **Getting the Basics Right**

Agbanyim (2015) outlined five important principles in his book to facilitate healthy collaboration in the workplace. These strategies are (a) trust and transparency are essential from the start, (b) respect must be mutual and balanced, (c) willingness and encouragement similarly need to be demonstrated throughout, (d) a collaborative culture through empowerment must be cultivated, and (e) effective and clear communication must be consistent, with channels of communication always open.

Open and trusting dialogue from the start and shared mutual interests helped to overcome any potential conflicts. In addition, a consistent collaboration between professional educators and dormitory supervisors was critical in order to encourage reflection and promote learner autonomy in the dormitory. We invited diverse professional educators to address topics within their areas of expertise, which helped raise awareness in our students. The topics ranged from academia to culture and politics. As a result of our clear mutual communication, the traditional journal template was adapted to a more focused and inclusive journal format. Additionally, the format of the journal sessions transformed from a more supervisor-led approach to a more autonomous reflection dialogue-based approach.

### **Critical Friendship**

Costa (2007) defines a critical friend as “a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers a critique of a person’s work as a friend” (p. 124). Schuck and Russell (2005) asserted that a critical friend acts as a sounding board, asks challenging questions, supports the reframing of events, and joins in the professional learning experience.

On our collaborative journey, it was imperative to confront challenges together, and that, alongside strong collaborative practices and consistency (self-motivated or motivated) throughout the research project, developed an organic critical friendship. Even prior to the research project, we had started to focus on reducing uncertainty and building trust in our work duties and collaborative practice (Newton, 2017). Student feedback led us to believe that the journal sessions had failed to serve their purpose and, thus, needed major changes. So, there was an agreement! We began brainstorming and questioning each other about what worked and what did not in each other’s sessions. There was healthy criticism, which was mostly constructive. In addition, we drew on our experience of attending the advising course. As a result, we decided to prepare a list of tools and strategies from the advising program that could possibly be implemented in our context. We took notes of what worked and discussed them weekly.

We became each other's support systems when problems arose, sometimes as a result of experiencing burnout or misapplying the skills from the advising course.

## **A Grounded Exercise**

One of the key skills that supported this critical friendship was our shared interest in the practice of mindfulness. We strongly believe that a successful collaboration can truly benefit from some form of grounded activity that helps the collaborating parties to keep their expectations in check.

Chaskalson (2014) suggested that mindfulness is “the quality of awareness that comes from paying attention to yourself, others, and the world around you” (p. 6). Numerous studies have suggested that mindfulness improves mood, reduces anxiety, and stimulates positive emotions. Mindfulness formed the backbone of this critical friendship and avoided situations that could have led to accidents or fallouts.

Furthermore, practicing a few minutes of mindfulness breathing right before advising sessions or our one-on-one discussions with each other led us to see the sessions, our role, and student perspective more objectively. Clarity received from these mindfulness sessions helped inform the choices we made in our advising sessions.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This paper reports on a successful collaboration between two lecturers, also employed as supervisors in an English-speaking female-only dormitory. When we noticed the pandemic had impacted the motivation of our dormitory students, and our regular journal session format was not adding any value to students' motivation or their goals, we decided to shift our approach. Through participating in RILAE's advising program, we experienced the four stages mentioned in Kato and Mynard's (2016) learning trajectory for advisors. As we progressed through these different stages, we began applying the skills in our dormitory program, thereby changing the journal template and transforming journal sessions into student-led advising sessions. This change helped students achieve their short-term goals. The three strategies that led to our successful collaboration are getting the basics right, our critical friendship, and our shared interest in mindfulness. We hope that this experience will not only resonate with many but that it will also contribute to better collaborative practices and foster a collaborative culture.

## **THE AUTHORS**

**Prateek Sharma** is from New Delhi, India. He holds a master's degree in TESOL and has taught English in India and Japan for ten years. He currently chairs the Intercultural Communication in Language Education Special Interest Group (SIG) under the JALT umbrella. His research interests include inter- and intracultural competence, mindfulness in education, advising, action research, peer reflection, and teacher wellbeing: Email: sharma-p@kanda.kuis.ac.jp

**Thomas Ashton** is from Cambridge, England. He has worked in a number of countries, including Japan, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Argentina, and the United Kingdom. His current research interests include learner autonomy, assessment, and action research. From 2020 to 2022, Thomas worked as a dormitory supervisor alongside his primary duties as a lecturer of the English Department (ELI) at Kanda University: Email: ashton-t@kanda.kuis.ac.jp

## REFERENCES

- Agbanyim, I. J. (2015). *The five principles of collaboration: Applying trust, respect, willingness, empowerment, and effective communication to human relationship* [E-book]. Scribd.
- Brown, H. (2017). Cooperation and collaboration in undergraduate EMI: Adapting EAP to the emergence of blended academic norms and practices in a Japanese University. In J. Valcke & R. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Integrating content and language in higher education: Perspectives on professional practice* (pp. 151–166). Peter Lang.
- Chaskalson, M. (2014). *Mindfulness in eight weeks: The revolutionary 8 week plan to clear your mind and calm your life*. HarperCollins UK.
- Costa, A. L. (2007). *The school as a home for the mind: Creating mindful curriculum, instruction, and dialogue*. Corwin Press.
- Kato, S., & Mynard, J. (2015). *Reflective dialogue: Advising in language learning*. Routledge.
- KUIS. (1987). *Overview*. <https://www.kandagaigo.ac.jp/kuis/english/overview/>
- Schuck, S., & Russell, T. (2005). Self-study, critical friendship, and the complexities of teacher education. *Studying Teacher Education*, 1(2), 107–121.

## APPENDIX

### KAER Weekly Reflection Journal

Name:

Date of Submission:

Place ★ in the cell to scale your motivation flow this week!

<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Hyper</b>            ↑  <b>Motivation</b>            ↓  <b>Low</b> </p>	100%					
	80%					
	60%					
	40%					
	20%					
	0%					
	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>University Experience</b>	<b>Dormitory Life</b>	<b>Personal Relationships</b>	<b>Academics</b>	<b>Other Goals</b>

#### Instructions

1. Out of the following 5 aspects, **choose any 3** each week, reflect and answer the questions in that section.
2. **Focus on 1** of those aspects **for at least 21 days** (3 consecutive weeks) and continue writing your thoughts in the weekly journal
3. Please avoid writing 1-word answers. Each of your reflective answers should be **20-30 words**. **Include a question of your choice** in the area you focus on for 21 days. Also, write a reflective answer, or use that question to reflect with your SV during the journal sessions.
4. You will be given feedback on the quality of your written responses.
5. You are welcome to write on additional topics of your choice (optional) in the space provided at the end of this journal.
6. Please fill out this journal over the **weekend**.

**Aspect 1**

**University Experience** (using KUIS facilities and services, such as the library, SALC, etc.)

What KUIS facilities have you used this week? How was the experience?

Which of those facilities did you use for the first time or first time in a long time?

**Reflection Question and Response:**

**Aspect 2**

**Dormitory Life** (includes everything you do as part of KAER)

How do you think this week/ last week's KAER programs have helped you?

What steps have you taken to improve time management and attend events/make deadlines?

What have you done differently this week?

**Reflection Question and Response:**

**Aspect 3**

**Personal Relationships** (includes your friends, love interests, and family)

Have you connected with any new people (this could include someone you have not spoken with for a long time)?

What challenges do you face while connecting with people? How do you think you can improve?

**Reflection Question and Response:**

**Aspect 4**

**Academics** (includes all your academic and study abroad goals)

What have you achieved this week in terms of academic goals? How?

What have you achieved this week in terms of study abroad goals? How?

**Reflection Question and Response:**

**Aspect 5**

**Other Goals** (Part-time job, hobbies, fitness, etc.)

What other goals have you dedicated time to this week? (What percentage of your time? Example: 25% dedicated to a part-time job.)

Have you managed to keep a good work-life balance this week? (Use percentages again to analyze. Example: 40% Studies / 30% Part-time job / 30% Hobbies.)

**Reflection Question and Response:**

**Optional Writing Space**

**Topic:**

**Feedback from Your SV:**



## Providing Authentic Communication Through a Discovery Experience

---

Junko Chujo

*Tokyo City University, Yokohama, Japan*

This study examines a pedagogically designed experience-based project aimed at fostering Japanese university English learners' interest by providing an authentic communication experience from the everyday English classroom. The project began when an instructor brought a box from overseas into the classroom. The validity and effectiveness of the project were examined through an ethnographic research approach to record and descriptively represent students' reactions in the context of the designed project. The incremental discovery activities tied to language development helped to expand the students' views toward the English-speaking world outside of the classroom. The project and the research method contribute one idea for practitioners and material designers who wish to incorporate authentic communication in the EFL classroom.

### INTRODUCTION

This study examined a pedagogical project aimed at igniting Japanese university English learners' willingness to communicate internationally by providing an authentic communication experience from the everyday English classroom. The target learners were first-year students in a small university in the Hokuriku area of Japan. The majority had graduated from the local high school and had entered the university majoring in law with the goal of becoming public servants or working for private companies in their community after graduation. The start of the project dated back to a time when the university administration was attempting to launch a two-week overseas study program and conducted a questionnaire upon students' entrance into the university. Out of 90 participants (including the second-year students), only one student showed interest in the program. While financial concerns may have played a part, the lack of interest in studying overseas was an eye-opening surprise to the administrators and the newly assigned English instructor.

A semester of communication with the students in English class further confirmed that while they were acquiring an intermediate level of written English ability, they were very introverted when it came to communicating in English or turning their thoughts to people and experiences outside of their world. In their minds, English was still just a subject they needed to study in school. Students thought of foreign countries as being far away and unrelated to their everyday life.

The instructor felt the urge to pique students' interest in the English language,

help them realize their relation to the world around them and their everyday life, and encourage their affective growth toward English and English communication with dissimilar others. The instructor analyzed their needs closely and made the pedagogical decision to design and develop an in-class experience-based project to encourage the learners' affective growth by providing them with an opportunity to gain exposure to other parts of the world through the authentic use of English. To realize this aim, the instructor made the most of the resources available in an EFL setting by providing authentic international communication that does not require large monetary and human resources and that can be simply practiced in the classroom.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

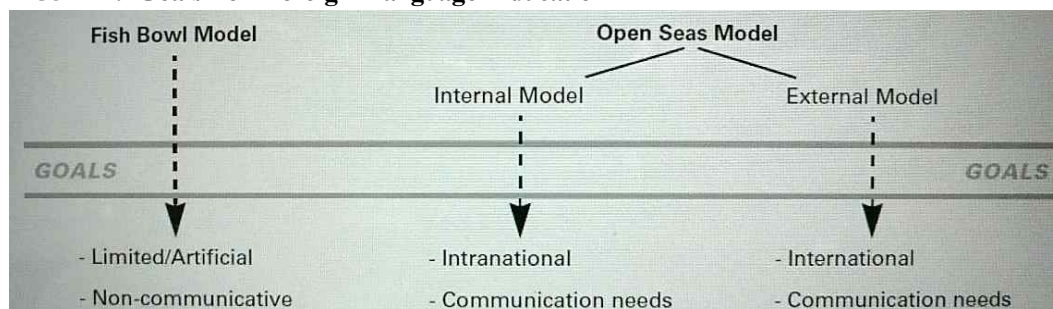
English language proficiency has become increasingly important for communicating with people who are native English speakers and also with people whose L1 is neither English nor Japanese. However, when exposed to real-life English-speaking situations, Japanese students frequently encounter difficulties with simple conversation.

As Butler and Iino (2005) state, it is often said by language educators and researchers in Japan that the Japanese English education system has failed students. There have been a number of theories advanced to explain the poor command of English among Japanese people. Probably the most discussed aspect is the effect of the Japanese university entrance examinations on English education in Japan. Yoshida (2003) claims that one of the biggest drawbacks of the entrance examinations for English education is that they interfere with building the communicative aspect of English proficiency. This is because, as Bailey (1999) notes, the exams emphasize translation skills, and so, as Rapley (2010) states, the grammar-translation method persists as the core method of English instruction in Japan. In other words, teachers and students have to prioritize grammar and reading comprehension as topics of instruction in order to improve exam scores.

To encourage advancement and a change in English education in Japan, Yoshida (2002, p. 201) proposes a metaphor casting traditional Japanese English education as the "Fish Bowl Model," in which learners are goldfish swimming in a fishbowl. In this environment, the goal is to gain enough "correct" knowledge of English to pass tests and college entrance exams, not to engage in real-world English communication. This model presupposes limited and artificial circumstances rather than aiming to help students attain the skills needed for communication, and they never grow beyond a size appropriate to the "fishbowl." In contrast to the Fish Bowl Model, Yoshida sketches an "Open Seas Model," in which learners are fish swimming in the open sea and pursuing learning to achieve their own unique personal goals. In the Open Seas Model, crucially, the interlocutors are not only native English speakers, but people from all around the world – "fish" from all the world's "oceans." The pedagogical aim within this model is to acquire the English ability required to coexist with other speakers and to communicate in a variety of situations and environments, within or outside of Japan. Yoshida (2002) further subdivides the Open Seas Model into "internal" and "external"

models to reflect this distinction (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. Goals for Foreign Language Education**



Note. From Yoshida, 2002, p. 201.

These models have clear implications for how the goals of Japanese English education should be set. Yoshida (2002) claims that

[Current] Japanese goals are neutral and non-committal, not specifying any clear direction as to why it is so important to learn foreign languages. What must be done in Japan, therefore, is to develop more concrete goals detailing the needs of the Japanese to learn foreign languages, especially English. (p. 200)

The objective within this study was for the instructional approach developed to be beneficial to students by focusing on what has been a missed opportunity in their past six years of English language experience: the basis for actual international communication is to have balanced and usable English skills. In the process, while the three learning domains (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective) set out by Bloom (1956) are important and need to be addressed for instruction to be effective, this study placed a special focus on the affective domain. The affective domain “includes objectives which describe changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations and adequate adjustment” (Bloom, 1956, p. 7). Furthermore, “[we] do know that factors or combinations of factors having to do with attitudes, motivation, and level of anxiety are central to the affective domain” (Richard-Amarto, 2010, p. 153). Therefore, “the affective domain includes several variables that can either enhance second language learning or hinder it, depending on the context in which they are operating, whether they are positive or negative, the degree to which they are present, and the combinations in which they are found” (Richard-Amarto, 2010, p. 153). Material design and development that takes students’ affective variables into consideration is important for successful second language development. The affective domain is believed to be very important in education and training (Heinich et al., 1993, p. 104). Thus, not only are skills important for English education but so is fostering the affective domain of the students.

## **METHODS**

The author designed the project for a target group of seven students. They were taking one English class per week and had been learning English in school for over six years. The duration of the project lasted for four out of the fifteen 90-minute class sessions. The instruction was held in a traditional simple Japanese classroom with a blackboard, a clock, a teacher's desk and chair, and students' desks and chairs.

The validity and effectiveness of the project for the target students were examined through the ethnographic research approach to detect and record students' natural voices and reactions when engaging in the designed project. "The process of doing qualitative research can be characterized as a dialogue or interplay between researchers and their subjects" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 7). This paper aims to capture and evaluate what occurred during the project, specifically those items that would be missed through a quantitative research approach. The small size of the target group was suitable for this type of research. The instructor was able to closely observe every utterance and reaction that the students made for each step of the project. The project and collected data will be described in narrative form, and the instructor's observations, analysis, and insights will be presented for each step of the project.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

The project was implemented as part of a communication course with a special focus on pronunciation instruction using the coursebook *Now I Got It! A Fun Guide to English Pronunciation* (2017, Sanshusha) written by the instructor (J. Chujo). The instructor used ties from what they were studying in the coursebook to develop a project. Students had been practicing oral communication skills with a special focus on pronunciation for one semester using this coursebook. The coursebook section that ties to this project is the part where the protagonist, a Japanese student, travels alone to Boston, USA, on her first international trip, and among a variety of new experiences, one day attends a major league baseball game with an international traveler she met at a hostel. The coursebook dialogue is presented in the Appendix.

The project was designed in building-block style, and it consists of eight steps. The project started with the instructor making the following announcement to the students one week before the project began: "Next week, I will bring a gift for you, and we are going to start a project." The instructor's strategy was to stimulate their interest in the project with the announcement about a gift and the one-week advance notice.

### **Step 1. Discovery Activity 1: Inspect the Box**

On the first day of the project, the instructor came into the class with a box. "Where do you think this package is from?" she asked and put the box on a desk to let the students look and guess. All the students stood up and curiously gathered around the box right away. They kept staring at the box without getting

close enough to read the information written on it. The instructor observed that they were not sure what to do at the moment and also that they were modest and careful to not be too aggressive. The instructor gently led them, “Maybe you can get information from the outside of the box. Go ahead and look.” The face of the box had the sender’s information, a postage label, and a customs form sticker. Students moved close enough to read the words. One student called out, “France!” The instructor was surprised and exclaimed, “What!” It was a very unexpected response. Given the instructor’s surprised reaction, students quickly noted that France was incorrect and rethought the answer. They scanned the information from the label of the box and read the sender’s first name, “Frances.” They soon came up with the correct information, finding that the sender’s address was in the USA.

The students’ next mission was to find out what was in the box. “What’s inside? Hmm.” They were thinking but had difficulty guessing, since they were only thinking and not looking at the surface of the box. The instructor had to give a hint: “It is something connected to what you learned last month, and it says what the contents are on the box.” They continued reading the labels of the box, and happily one student noticed something and went to get a coursebook from his desk. He flipped through the pages and then pointed out the words “Cracker Jacks.” “It is here!” he exclaimed. Some students recalled the song that they practiced singing, “Take me out to the ball game ... buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack,” and were excited, but others were still wondering and not getting the connection. They did not understand that the snack they learned and sang about in the coursebook was probably in the box.

With the instructor’s guidance, the students were able to obtain all the information from the box that had had been targeted. Then, the instructor let them open the box to find out what was inside. This was the exciting moment when the instructor was expecting to hear the students’ exclamations of excitement. When the box was opened, one student pulled out the item with a puzzled expression and mumbled, “Uh□they are bundled.” Other students were also puzzled as they inspected the items in their classmate’s hand. Three Cracker Jack boxes were taped together. They had never seen products sold in that manner in Japan and were not sure what to do. This was again an unexpected reaction from the students. What first caught their attention was surprising, but they exhibited a genuine reaction to their first contact with the item.

## **Step 2. Discovery Activity 2: Who Sent the Box?**

The students’ next mission was to find out about the person who sent the box. The instructor designed a letter-writing activity for this step to express gratitude and discover information about the sender. “Who is Frances?” was the theme of the activity. First, the instructor asked each student to come up with three questions. Then, one student led the class, gathered the questions, and wrote the questions on the blackboard. They categorized them and divided them by the number of the students in order to assign each student questions to include in their letter. They then translated the questions into English. Students preferred to brainstorm in Japanese, so the teacher allowed the process to happen naturally. The questions were about the sender’s family, the place of purchase of

the product, etc., including a question about her blood type, which is a question often asked in Japan.

### **Step 3. Letter Writing Activity: How Much Does It Cost?**

The instructor began the letter-writing activity by asking the class, “How much do you think it will cost to send this letter to the USA?” while holding an international airmail sheet of paper and an envelope. The intent was to set the theme of international letter-writing in English for the class. Then the instructor asked each student to write on the board an estimated length of time for it to arrive in the USA, along with an estimated cost to send a letter. By looking at each other’s estimates, students realized that they had no clue. Their estimated price range was between US\$3.00 and US\$50.00. The length of time they guessed it would take to arrive was between 7 and 20 days. Their guesses at the postage cost gives an idea of the great distance students felt between their everyday life and that in foreign countries. There was one student who wrote his guess in dollars. He thought that if he was sending a letter to the USA, he needed to pay in US dollars.

Students then learned the English format for writing a letter and addressing an envelope, referring to the worksheet designed by the instructor. In their letters, they included their appreciation and their questions to the sender. On the worksheet, they rehearsed writing letters and addressing the envelope, but they still wanted to be careful; they wrote their final draft in pencil and then wrote over it with a pen and erased the penciling.

### **Step 4. Discovery Activity 3: Sending a Letter**

When the students were ready to send their letters, they were assigned to go to the post office. The instructor designed a section on the worksheet to glue a receipt and write a comment. The instructor needed to check whether they successfully sent the letter and when it was sent, so it was helpful to have them attach the receipt. When the instructor asked the students to estimate the cost and the number of days it would take to arrive in the USA, the instructor did not tell them the correct answer. She asked the students to find out the information when they mailed the letter at the post office. In order to keep the students from worrying about the cost, she did inform them that it would not cost as much as they guessed. The instructor made sure to tell them to send their letter by airmail. The instruction was conducted in English, so the instructor told the students to tell the post office clerk, “airmail, please.” The interaction following the instruction was interesting to watch. Since they were listening to English and writing an airmail letter in English to a foreign country, their language mode was English. They practiced saying “airmail, please” while handing the letter to their classmates. The instructor reminded them that the post office person would be a Japanese clerk, so they would need to say it in Japanese!

### **Step 5. Discovery 4: What Are Cracker Jacks?**

During the time students waited for a reply to their letter, their next mission was to find out more about Cracker Jacks by reading the information on the surface of the box and conducting an internet search. The instructor designed and distributed worksheets with a list of questions to guide the students to gather information and perform a close reading of authentic material. The students observed the box very carefully and quietly gathered information. The package was an abundant language and sociological (cultural) learning resource for the target students. They encountered words and phrases such as *prize*, *inside*, *allergy warning*, *ingredients*, *best by* (date), *time zone* (for the customer center hours), a state abbreviation (in the manufacturer's address), and *toll-free number* (1-800). In the internet search activity, students initially were hesitant to access unfamiliar foreign sites, which was unexpected. When the instructor asked the students why, they indicated that they were concerned about getting a computer virus from accessing unfamiliar foreign sites. Once the instructor said it would be okay and showed her screen on the projector, they were more comfortable and readily accessed the web to find out about Cracker Jacks, the company's history, and other snacks that they produce to see if they knew any of them and were able to relate them to their life. After 30 minutes, students shared their findings with their classmates and helped each other to complete the worksheet.

### **Step 6. Discovery 5: How Do They Look and Taste?**

In the coursebook, the information that students had about Cracker Jacks was that it is "caramel-coated popcorn," it costs about a dollar, it is sold in baseball parks in the USA, and the protagonist of the dialogue tasted it and found it "yummy." By this phase in the series of activities, they had gained information about the product and the language. Now it was time to open the package and taste it. When they opened the boxed package, it had a silver bag inside the cardboard box. The instructor passed out a sheet of paper for each student so they could scatter the contents and view them. They found peanuts mixed with caramel coated popcorn. Students commented that "it is like Japanese caramel corn; it also contains peanuts mixed in the snack." The instructor never thought about it, but it was true. Perhaps a sweet snack mixed with a small, salty item might be universal. Students enjoyed tasting the Cracker Jacks and talking about the experience. One student did not want to open the box. He wanted to keep it and eat it after lunch.

### **Step 7. Discovery 6: Receiving a Reply**

The replies to the students' letters arrived at their homes. They seemed proud and happy to have received a letter from overseas. It was interesting that none of the students opened their letter before bringing it to class. The instructor told them it was fine to open their letters, since they were addressed to them. They then very carefully opened their envelopes and took out their letters. They gazed at the hand-written letter with blue ink. The instructor provided a worksheet where they could write down their questions and the reply. They showed their

letters to each other and tried to understand what they said, helping each other in the process. Then the instructor provided post-it notes for each student and instructed them to write each answer to their questions on the post-it note. Then they put the post-it notes on a bigger sheet with “Who is Ms. Thomas?” written in the center. They were gathering and exchanging information from their letters. Students found out that Frances (the sender) had a long relationship with the instructor. The instructor met her during summer vacation in the state of Washington, USA, when she was 13 and stayed at her house for a month. When the students obtained this information from their letters with their English reading skills, they were very happy and asked the instructor, “Is that so?” They seemed very content and seemed happy to have solved the mystery.

### **Step 8. Summary Activity: Writing a Paragraph**

To summarize the project, students were assigned to write a 200-word paragraph about Ms. Thomas. They all used the same information that they gathered with their letters, but their paragraphs were each unique with a variety of differences in how they presented the information. It was the first time for them to write such a long paragraph in English, but since they already knew what to write, it did not take as much time or effort as the instructor had estimated.

Through these activities and tasks, the students were able to relate their everyday life to the rest of the world through the instructor, who they meet in their everyday life, thus stimulating their interest towards an international setting. Furthermore, their collaboration and cooperation in tracking and successfully completing the activity allowed them to build a bond with their peers.

## **STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

Here are some of the post-project comments from the participants. Students retrospectively looked back at their learning and experience and wrote down their impressions that were not verbalized or detected during the instruction: I showed off the snack to other students and ate it with my friend. / It was sweet. / It was like the one that I had at Disneyland. / It tasted good. / It tasted like a foreign country. / This was my first time writing a letter and sending it. / I was happy to receive the reply. / The hand-written English was different. / I felt real English was different. / The postage was very cheap. / I want to go abroad. / I liked the project. It was real. / I enjoyed the project. / I want to email. There were students who wrote about the new experience and some who wrote about how they felt. They related their experiences and expanded their perspectives toward foreign countries.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The designed project consisted of experience-based discovery tasks for students that began when the instructor brought a box into the classroom from overseas. It was observed that in each phase of the discovery process, students



actively engaged in English communication activities, such as reading authentic materials, accessing outside information, writing an airmail letter, receiving a response, and creating a presentation on what they learned about the sender.

The instructor's observation and description infers a great deal about the characteristics of the project and how each step of the activity affected the students. The instructor tried to reduce the learners' anxiety and provide a safe, relaxed, fun, and comfortable atmosphere. Most of the students' reactions were expected, but some of the spontaneous reactions were unexpected. The instructor was able to capture something that she did not anticipate and was better able to understand how learners were processing each of the elements of the project. It was valuable for the instructor to be able to closely observe this aspect of students' learning process. Hearing the students' voices in the process of engaging in the project revealed what a quantitative approach cannot show. The students' awareness of the international world was expanded by guessing the identity of the sender, guessing the contents of the box, and then eating a snack, Cracker Jacks, which were introduced in the coursebook, and gathering information from the authentic materials to obtain information written in English. Corresponding with a real person from another country allowed them to use their language skills and showed them how the international world is connected to their daily lives.

As an instructor and ethnographer who spends time with students, a needs analysis of the target students led the instructor to tailor the presented project for the target students. To ignite and raise the learners' international interest is the instructor's core pedagogical principle when designing and developing materials for use in teaching. To achieve this goal, the instructor designed and developed the project, carefully using her limited resources to gain the optimal participation possible from the target students. The instructor's pedagogical goal was employed at each step. In the process, she observed the students' traits and actions and guided their learning. Although students were rather shy in the beginning, they actively engaged in the step-by-step activity with their supportive peers. The authentic discovery- and experience-based project piqued their curiosity, held their attention, and ignited their interest in international communication. Once the project was launched, the instructor's role was to simply facilitate the students' learning when necessary. As a result of allowing students to experience the project in a natural manner, there were some unexpected responses from the students. In this sense, the project was a real-life interaction for the target students. The student response data was gathered for the future improvement of the project. It is the practitioner's privilege to be the one who knows their target students best and to be the one who can design and develop materials for their learners' for an optimal outcome. It is the author's hope that this project contributes one idea for practitioners who wish to incorporate authentic communication in their everyday lessons under the constraints of classroom learning. It is also hoped that this type of contribution can lead to further development in the field of material design and development for EFL.

## THE AUTHOR

**Junko Chujo**, PhD, is an associate professor at Tokyo City University. She has over 20 years of teaching experience that encompasses both private companies and universities in Japan. Her specialized field of study is the development of English pedagogical materials that can be implemented efficiently and effectively in Japanese university classes. Email: [jchujo@tcu.ac.jp](mailto:jchujo@tcu.ac.jp)

## REFERENCES

- Bailey, K. M. (1999). *Washback in language testing*. Educational Testing Service.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Butler, Y. G., & Iino, M. (2005). Current Japanese reforms in English language education: 2003 "Action Plan." *Language Policy*, 4, 25-45.
- Heinich, R., Molenda, M., & Russell, J. D. (1993). *Instructional media and the new technologies of instruction* (4th ed.). Wiley.
- Rapley, D. J. (2010). Learning to speak English: Japanese junior high school student views. *The Language Teacher*, 34(6), 33-40.
- Richard-Amarto, P. (2010). *Making It happen* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Yoshida, K. (2002). Fish bowl, open seas, and the teaching of English in Japan. In S. Baker (Ed.), *Language policy: Lessons from global models* (pp. 194-205). Monterey Institute of Internal Studies.
- Yoshida, K. (2003). Language education policy in Japan: The problem of espoused objectives versus practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(2), 290-292.





## Collaboration in Schools for Materials Preparation Using Google's G Suite

---

Michael Mielke

*Sapporo University, Sapporo, Japan*

Many teachers working in private language schools or in the public and private elementary, middle, and high schools have limited time for materials preparation. Some have access to shared resources that individuals have made and posted on various websites, which may or may not be behind paywalls. But even these resources never seem to match one's own particular teaching situation, or the materials may actually be quite flawed. A solution to this problem would be to collaborate with colleagues in your school or with others in a similar teaching environment using Goggle's G Suite. This paper will describe a real case of a collaborative effort of three teachers to make materials at a private children's English language school in Japan that enhanced our classrooms and matched perfectly with the vocabulary and targets in our textbooks.

### INTRODUCTION

At the time this project took place, I was working at a small, private language school in Sapporo, Japan. Like most schools of this size in Japan, our students ranged from 3 to 80 years old, and within the age range in each class, we had a variety of levels. For adult group classes, the students were divided into three levels. Usually, we would use two textbook series that consisted of three levels. We would have one of these series to switch to in case the students were not ready to move up to a new level but had completed the text. For children's group classes, we usually divided the children up by age and used 6-level textbook series such as English Time and Let's Go. For preschoolers, we had another 2- or 3-book series. For the children's classes, the school bought many resource materials, such as small and large card sets as well as photocopiable resources in teacher manuals for each textbook.

However, over time, those cards started to wear out, tear, and disappear. Sometimes the worksheets in the photocopiable materials, while adequate, were just not that interesting to use, as they lacked color or used fonts that did not match the printing styles that we used and practiced in class. The cards sold by the textbook companies were also just adequate. Often the small card packs were basically pairs for simple matching activities. While there are a lot of activities that can be done with even these simple tools, much more could be done if they had made a few simple design choices when the cards were produced. In addition, we just did not have enough sets of the cards and could not afford to buy more. Teachers were often teaching the same level groups in the same time blocks.

Finding resources online was sometimes helpful, but the good materials are often behind paywalls and require memberships to join. The materials from the free sites often have too much color, which makes them expensive for printing, or there are errors in grammar, vocabulary usage, or spelling.

The teachers I worked with were creative and had many ideas for making better materials but often had time to make just a few materials, usually worksheets, now and then. With so many textbooks and various levels of students, lesson planning didn't leave a lot of time for materials creation.

This led to the idea of this project of using an online platform to allow all of the teachers to collaborate when they had some free time and to be able to share the fruit of those labors with everyone. I chose the Oxford children's textbook series *English Time* as a test case, as it is a six-book series. Also, I wanted to make cards, as they would be the most flexible and useful resource to focus on, and they were also the most labor intensive to make. In addition, the vocabulary was almost the same as that used in the alternate textbook series, so we could use them for that series too, while we were making the cards for that series.

This paper will first briefly explain the rationale for focusing on games and specifically card games, then explain how we were able to prepare really useful sets of cards for every unit of every level of textbook in the *English Time* series in a period of less than six months, using the collaborative power of Google Docs.

## **USING GAMES AND CARD GAMES**

There are numerous advantages to incorporating games in a language classroom. One key benefit is that playing games creates a genuine need for the language (Liu & Chu, 2010; Paul, 2003; Wright et al., 1984). Games are goal-oriented and competitive. To succeed, you need to focus on the language necessary to reach the goal (Lukianenko, 2014). Games can tap into emotions and may create stronger connections to the language that is used (Wright et al., 1984). In addition, the environment created by the use of games may make students less hesitant to speak out and more fluent (Crookal, 1990; Yiltanlilar & Caganaga, 2015). Cards can be especially useful in language learning. They are visual. Students can see and associate an image with text to help to memorize vocabulary efficiently (Arias, 2003). Cards also make it quite easy to quickly review past vocabulary and introduce new vocabulary by adding or subtracting cards as necessary. Finally, cards allow a teacher to plan practice of the same vocabulary in many different ways because there are so many kinds of activities that can be played. The variety of activities makes practicing fun and motivating (Delezynska, 2012). All these benefits, and, if the cards have already been prepared beforehand, they are always at hand, ready to be used at a moment's notice.

To get the most benefit out of making use of games, and especially card games, you are going to have to make your own.

## **THE COLLABORATIVE POWER OF GOOGLE'S G SUITE**

Google Docs is a powerful, free suite of online applications and fifteen gigabytes of free storage space. Google's G Suite includes a word processor called Google Docs; presentation software called Google Slides; a spreadsheet called Google Sheets, graphics software called Google Drawings, and a particularly useful tool for making customized forms and online tests called Google Forms. In addition, if you use the G Suite applications to make your materials, it will not count against your storage amount. All of the files that you create can be shared with your co-workers and worked on from different computers in real time, or whenever you have free time. These files can be accessed and modified from nearly any device, including iPhones, iPads, Android devices, as well as computers running Mac iOS, Windows, and Linux. Anything you make could also be shared with students and used as online worksheets in real time, which was an especially useful tool for online teaching during the COVID pandemic. While we were able to make and share numerous materials, such as worksheets, game boards, and posters, for the purposes of this paper, I am going to focus on making cards as they are the most time- and labor-intensive teaching material to make, and I thought the most useful to demonstrate the power of the G Suite for collaboration in my workshop session at the 2023 Korea TESOL International Conference.

## **HOW TO MAKE SETS OF CARDS QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY**

If you follow these instructions for making activity cards, you will soon have a vast library of card sets that you will be able to use for years at a lower cost and, if done collaboratively, within a short amount of time.

### **Materials**

You will need paper and opaque tape that can cover the back of the card. Use regular A4 paper. Do not use thick paper. It is too expensive, wears out more quickly, and sometimes the copier/printer colors will not stick. The tape that I have found to work best is cheap craft-tape. A roll of five, 50 mm x 50 m costs about 9,100 Korean won, or one thousand Japanese yen. It is thin but opaque, easy to cut, and does not have an unpleasant odor. Each roll can make around five hundred cards. However, printer ink can be a little expensive, so printing out a color master sheet then using a color photocopying machine may save you some money. A laser printer can also save you a little bit in ink costs.

Cut with good quality scissors. Scissors that have long, sharp blades with a glue-resistant coating are best. If you are going to be making a lot of cards, a decent quality guillotine paper cutter can really speed things up.

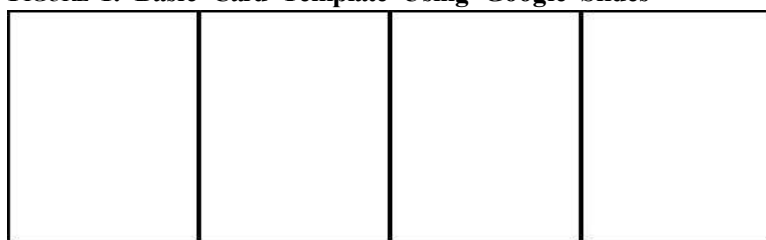
Do not bother with lamination. It is expensive, slow, and the lives of the cards are actually shorter than the paper-and-tape cards. In addition, the laminated cards will take up a lot of space compared to the paper-and-cards.

## METHOD

A lot of cards can be created quickly and easily if you share the workload and the finished products. Using Google Slides software works very well. First, create a template in G Suite using Google Slides and share it with whomever you like to work with. This will allow collaboration, and you can keep your cards a consistent size and quality. Because it is online, you will be able to make, edit, and print cards from anywhere – even from your smartphone.

After opening Google Slides, select Go to File → Page Setup → Set 21cm x 29.7cm to make an A4-size slide. Next, use the table function to make the card template. I recommend four-by-three to make twelve cards on one page. This sizing makes each card a little less than the width of your tape (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. Basic Card Template Using Google Slides**



Write the key words at the top and bottom of each card so that they are easy to read no matter which way the cards are being held (see Figure 2). If you are making the cards for a specific unit of a specific textbook, you should add that information to keep the cards organized.

Next, add your pictures. See the Appendix for a list of sites where you can get free-use images. After that, duplicate your slide so that you have four. Change the colors of the words on each slide. Changing the colors of the words will allow you to make different “suits.” Instead of hearts, diamonds, clubs, and spades, you can use four different colors. This will be important for adapting your vocabulary cards to well-known card games. In addition, having at least four sets of different color cards allows you to hand out the four sets to different students for introducing vocabulary and to quickly organize your cards. Copy the file of your cards so that you can save it as a template for making future cards! Now you are ready to print out your cards.

**FIGURE 2. Card Template with Pictures and some Different Functions**





Turn over the paper and line up the tape with the inside line so that the next piece will overlap a little (see Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3. How to Apply the Backing to Reduce Waste**



Finally, cut them out. The entire process takes less than 45 minutes to make a set of 48 cards of exactly what you want, and they can be used repeatedly for years. With two or more people working together, you can see that it would not take much time at all to produce beautiful and very functional materials. They are of a size that is easy to store on any bookshelf in cookie-box size boxes. In Figure 4, you can see cards for every unit of every textbook of the English Time series.

**FIGURE 4. Complete Set of Cards for the English Time Series**



## CONCLUSION

Making your own materials can be motivating not only for the students but also the teacher. By making use of the G Suite applications, you will be able to collaborate efficiently with your colleagues not only in your school but anywhere in the world. You will save time and money, and your classes will be more effective, energetic, and fun for you and your students.

## THE AUTHOR

**Michael Mielke** has over thirty years of language teaching experience. He has taught children's classes at private English schools and special events at kindergartens and elementary schools, and enjoys designing fun and motivating activities for practicing English for all ages and levels of students. Michael is currently a full-time lecturer at Sapporo University and holds a master's degree in applied linguistics. Email: [mielke@sapporo-u.ac.jp](mailto:mielke@sapporo-u.ac.jp)

## REFERENCES

- Arias, L. D. (2003). Memory? No way! *Folios*, 18, 115–120.
- Crookall, D., & Oxford, R. (1990). *Simulation, gaming, and language learning*. Newbury House.
- Liu, T., & Chu, Y. (2010). Using ubiquitous games in an English listening and speaking course: Impact on learning outcomes and motivation. *Computers and Education*, 55, 630–643. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.02.023>
- Lukianenko, V. (2014). The advantages of using games in foreign language teaching and learning. *The 9th International Theoretical and Practical Conference on Modern Trends and Innovations in Teaching Foreign Languages Conference Proceedings* (pp. 82–84). National Technical University of Ukraine, Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Faculty of Linguistics.  
[http://interconf.fl.kpi.ua/sites/default/files/zbirnik\\_tez\\_\\_13.03.14\\_-\\_kopiya333.pdf#page=82](http://interconf.fl.kpi.ua/sites/default/files/zbirnik_tez__13.03.14_-_kopiya333.pdf#page=82)
- Paul, D. (2003). *Teaching English to children in Asia*. Pearson Longman.
- Wright, A., Betteridge, D., & Buckby, M. (1984). *Games for language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yiltanlilar, A., & Caganaga, K. C. (2015). The role of using games in ELT: Teenagers. *International Journal of Innovative Education Research*, 3(3), 15–25. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281741564\\_THE\\_ROLE\\_OF\\_USING\\_GAMES\\_IN\\_ELT\\_TEENAGERS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281741564_THE_ROLE_OF_USING_GAMES_IN_ELT_TEENAGERS)

## **APPENDIX**

### **Free Image Resources**

Your own pictures

Student-created pictures

<https://www.pexels.com/>

<https://www.designrush.com>

<https://unsplash.com/>

<https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/en/>

<https://openclipart.org/>

Google Image Search



---

## **Workshop Reports**

---



## Cross-Cultural Awareness at Home: Activities for the Language Classroom

---

Caroline Hutchinson

*Nihon University College of Economics, Tokyo, Japan*

Intercultural competence necessitates acquiring knowledge about both unfamiliar cultures and values, and one's own. It implies an attitude of openness to difference, and the ability to recognize stereotypes. As language is inseparable from culture, teachers have both a responsibility and an opportunity to train students' intercultural competence. This paper describes four aspects of culture that I focus on in the classroom: personal culture, cultural products, cultural practices, and values. It introduces sample classroom activities for each, followed by an activity that encourages students to observe details in unfamiliar cultural situations and suspend judgment. It concludes by describing some benefits of this approach and reflecting on the roles of students and teacher.

### INTRODUCTION

This workshop arose from the somewhat strange position in which I found myself. I, a British teacher, was asked to design and teach an English-medium course on Japanese culture to predominantly Japanese students at a university in Japan. As a cultural outsider, it seemed inappropriate to lecture students about their own culture, especially given their differing levels of English. Instead, I adopted a task-based approach in which students are scaffolded to describe and comment on their own culture while learning and speculating about other cultures.

Language education has increasingly acknowledged the inseparability of culture and language, and has moved from training learners in the norms of "target cultures" to a pedagogy recognizing learner's own cultures and global cultural diversity. With my Japanese culture course, I aim to improve students' *intercultural communicative competence*, or "the ability to understand cultures, including your own, and use this understanding to communicate with people from other cultures successfully" ("Intercultural Communicative Competence," n.d., para. 1).

There are numerous intercultural communicative competence frameworks, but broadly speaking, they point to the importance of knowledge, skills, and attitudes: *knowledge* of one's own culture and others, and an understanding of the effects of cultural difference on interaction; *skills* to acquire knowledge about other cultures, relate them to one's own, and reflect on behavior; *attitudes* of curiosity, open-mindedness, and respect (see Deardorff, 2009, Part 1, for a summary of these frameworks). This approach places culture at the center of language learning, as a "fifth skill" as important as reading or speaking.

Employers are increasingly seeking “global citizens” who are able to interact confidently across borders, and thus if language teachers overlook culture in the classroom, they risk disadvantaging students in the future. In my teaching, I divide culture into four main aspects: personal culture, cultural products, cultural practices, and values or perspectives. I will introduce each below, followed by an activity teaching students to suspend judgment when encountering culturally ambiguous situations.

## **FOUR CULTURAL ASPECTS**

### **Personal Culture**

Personal or individual culture is the culture that is unique to each individual human. While we may share regional culture or national culture with a larger group, our experiences and preferences will differ. An understanding of this in students’ own lives can help them avoid stereotypical thinking about other cultures.

Exchanging information about personal experiences and preferences is also, of course, a common part of most language classrooms. Icebreakers and communicative activities can be exploited to increase students’ sense of self and others, and commonalities in their class group. Particularly valuable are activities that encourage students to identify similarities and differences with a small group, or survey activities that give students a sense of how common certain beliefs and preferences are in their own class.

### **Products**

Cultural products are the things that make up a culture. They may be tangible (such as food) or intangible (language, music, folktales). They are the most immediately visible aspects of a culture. They are also, at least in my classroom, the first thing that comes to learners’ minds when asked to give examples of Japanese or other cultures. In the language classroom, the tangible nature of these objects provides an opportunity to teach descriptive language, including phrases such as “it’s used for,” “it’s a kind of,” and “it’s made of.”

I begin by having students write hints about Japanese objects with which they should all be familiar; they then share these with other students, who try to guess the objects. This promotes fluency and confidence in using and listening to English. Once students are comfortable with these phrases, we move to the language of speculation – “it might be used for,” “it looks like a kind of,” and “it may be made of.” We explore photos of items in my family home in the UK, and I encourage students to speculate and ask questions. While focusing solely on cultural products would likely result in a superficial understanding of other cultures, I do feel that it helps raise student confidence and the sense of tangibly engaging with difference.



## Practices

Cultural practices involve the use of cultural products – in other words, the behaviors and patterns of interaction in a given culture. With extended time for observation in a different culture, outsiders will be able to observe many of these. As with products, students can begin by describing cultural practices at home. This often results naturally from the language taught above, in particular, “it’s used for.” Few Japanese students will describe a *genkan*, or entrance hall with raised step, without mentioning that “we take our shoes off here.”

The most salient examples may come not from unique festivals but from the differing cultural forms of universal practices such as greetings, dining, and school. One consciousness-raising activity I have found particularly valuable is Johnson and Rinvoluturi’s (2014) activity about attitudes to time. First, each student takes a questionnaire. They respond to time prompts that ask for a time or a period of time. For example, “They were invited to dinner with friends at 7 p.m. As they were polite, they arrived at the time their hosts expected they would.” Students then compare their answers with their classmates.

In a classroom where students largely share the same cultural background, the internet and tools such as Google Forms can be an invaluable way of bringing “someone else” in. I asked my friends in other countries to take the quiz (answers to the above prompt ranged from 30 minutes early to an hour late!). I share these results with my students, and we discuss what cross-cultural misunderstandings might arise from these differences. Having raised their awareness of differing cultural practices, I ask students to produce a guide to Japanese customs aimed at exchange students, encouraging them to put themselves in the shoes of visitors to Japan.

## Values and Perspectives

At the deepest cultural level, we find values and perspectives: an individual’s beliefs about right and wrong, and the correct way to behave in society. Examples include attitudes towards age, hierarchy, modesty, or rules. These are difficult to experience tangibly, and in many cases, values are so deeply ingrained that we are not really aware of our own. At the same time, values connect strongly to our sense of ethics and self, meaning that they can arouse the greatest strength of feeling or the strongest feelings of culture shock when challenged.

In order to sensitize students to different cultural values, I administer a questionnaire based on Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Hofstede devised a questionnaire on cultural values while working at IBM and used factor analysis to identify “dimensions” along which cultural preferences could be measured. Data has since been collected worldwide, and national averages are available for free on the Hofstede Insights website (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool>).

Students are presented with eight pairs of statements. They are asked to choose which ones they agree with more, which will produce a score for each of four dimensions. Naturally, the real questionnaire contains many more items, but my aim is for students to encounter, reflect on, and discuss these different values. We calculate a range and average score for each dimension for the whole class, allowing students to see the diversity of opinions within the class group and

giving us a point of comparison.

I then give a short lecture explaining each dimension and demonstrate different scores using some representative countries. To follow up, students create role plays in which a high scoring culture – a very hierarchical culture, for example – interacts with a very low-scoring culture; other students are asked to guess which dimension is being depicted. This helps students to see that differing behavior can result from differing cultural rules, not merely from ignorance of “correct” cultural rules.

## SUSPENDING JUDGMENT

Once students have been sensitized to different levels of culture, it is worth helping them to differentiate between those levels and to reflect on their own subjective reactions. “Describe, interpret, evaluate” is an activity drawn from intercultural communication pedagogy, originally developed by Bennett et al. (1977). Nam and Condon (2010) suggested that, particularly in the Korean context, the framework could be renamed “describe, analyze, evaluate,” in part because of the more positive acronym this produces. In the classic version of this exercise, students are presented with an unfamiliar and ambiguous object, such as a photograph of a different cultural context. They are asked to describe the image, and their responses are categorized by the instructor into three kinds.

A true *description* of a photo of students sleeping in a classroom, for instance, would be “around 20 students are sleeping with their heads on their desks in a classroom.” However, students will often begin by responding with logical *interpretations*, such as “they are tired,” or subjective *evaluations* such as “they are lazy.” By categorizing the statements, the teacher encourages students to make detailed factual observations of the kind that they will need to adapt to different cultural environments. It also teaches students to withhold value judgments and understand when they are making them. Further, it demonstrates the possibility and validity of multiple interpretations and evaluations.

Once students are familiar with the framework, I encourage them to apply it themselves in analyzing cross-cultural misunderstandings. Students can share their personal experiences, or work to understand depictions in film and popular culture. In order to reduce the amount of cultural guesswork involved, I advise starting with a relatively familiar example. In our course, we start with a clip from the movie *Mr. Baseball*, depicting an American trying (and largely failing) to negotiate Japanese dining etiquette.

## CONCLUSIONS

Culture can be both a source of motivating content and a means for stimulating student reflection. Through personalized discussions, students can gain knowledge of themselves and others, while encountering other cultures through the use of diverse teaching materials. Moving between familiar and unfamiliar examples, and between products, practices, and values, encourages students to make connections and sensitizes them to the complexities of intercultural

communication. Finally, by learning to suspend subjective judgment when presented with cultural objects and interactions, they can learn to avoid stereotyping or ascribing negative character.

Students should be given room to make their own sense of the materials provided, while the teacher's role should be to encourage logical reasoning and question over-hasty conclusions. The aim is not for students to "know" everything about their own and other cultures, but to build their knowledge, their ability to observe and learn in the future, and their interest in and respect for difference. Along with this comes the responsibility for the teacher to model an effective intercultural learner to the students, remaining open to their interpretations, and to learning about their own position within the classroom.

## THE AUTHOR

**Caroline Hutchinson** is an associate professor at Nihon University College of Economics, Tokyo, Japan. She holds an MA in Japanese studies and a Cambridge DELTA. She has previously taught in the UK, Hungary, and Vietnam. Her research interests include learner autonomy, English-medium instruction/CLIL, history, and culture in the classroom. Email: [hutchinson.caroline@nihon-u.ac.jp](mailto:hutchinson.caroline@nihon-u.ac.jp).

## REFERENCES

- Bennett, J. M., Bennett, M. J., & Stillings, K. (1977). *Description, interpretation, evaluation: Facilitators' guidelines*. University of Windsor.  
<https://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl/sites/uwindsor.ca.ctl/files/activity-for-intercultural-awareness-in-description-interpretation-evaluation.pdf>
- Deardorff, D. (2009). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. SAGE.  
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071872987>
- Intercultural communicative competence. (n.d.). British Council.  
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowning-subject/d-h/intercultural-communicative-competence>
- Johnson, G., & Rinvulcri, M. (2014). *Culture in our classrooms: Teaching language through cultural content*. Peaslake.
- Nam, K. A., & Condon, J. (2010). The D.I.E. is cast: The continuing evolution of intercultural communication's favourite classroom exercise. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(1), 81–87.  
[http://global.wfu.edu/files/2015/02/DAE-Article\\_NamCondon\\_IJIR\\_2010\\_v34.pdf](http://global.wfu.edu/files/2015/02/DAE-Article_NamCondon_IJIR_2010_v34.pdf)



## Developing Teacher–Student Collaboration Across Subjects in English in the Classroom

---

Queenie Kawabe

*Kawa Kawa Learning Studio, Fukuoka, Japan*

Many students are not motivated to learn English because they do not see its value or relevance to their lives or future endeavors. Although they have a firm grasp of grammar and a wide vocabulary, they only rarely practice their English. In Asia, the roadblock to encouraging English use outside the language classroom is building a teacher–student relationship so that students can relate to other subjects they have learned and apply their knowledge when communicating in English with people from around the world. How can educators develop a conducive environment to help students socialize in English outside the classroom? In this interactive workshop, the participants explore practical lesson ideas that can stimulate self-reflection on teaching practices through creative and critical thinking.

### INTRODUCTION

English is taught as a second language in schools throughout Asia due to its recognition as a global language of communication. However, the approach to teaching and learning English in Asia differs from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. One such challenge is students' diverse backgrounds and characteristics, which can manifest in varying levels of English knowledge and different sets of values. Another challenge arises from the language barrier between teachers and students, as they may not share the same native language. The final challenge lies in hierarchical structures and a strong emphasis on respect for authority within the classroom. Traditionally, a teacher assumes a central role while students passively listen, creating a potentially daunting learning environment. This can produce difficulties in developing a collaborative teacher–student relationship where students are invested in and feel empowered over their language learning.

Although many students exhibit strong grammar and vocabulary skills in Asia due to the exam-oriented education system, they often lack access to regular language practice or daily English use. Without this regular practice of using their grammar and vocabulary skills or participating in interactive activities in the classroom, students may have difficulty developing fluency, confidence, and the practical skills necessary for effective communication in English-speaking environments. They may also struggle to recognize the value or relevance of English to their future endeavors.

That said, teachers can assist and support students in using English acquired across subjects by establishing a conducive environment that enhances teacher–

student relationships and facilitates personalized instruction, thus supporting social-emotional development and building effective communication and understanding.

This paper will present five practical strategies to develop a conducive environment that improves teacher–student relationships in Asia. Additionally, it will provide a comprehensive lesson planning guide that teachers can use to aid their students in engaging in English language socialization across various subjects. To tackle classroom disparities among learners, the guide is designed to accommodate students’ diverse proficiency levels, individual needs, unique abilities, and specific learning objectives.

## **THE FIVE PRACTICAL STRATEGIES**

It is essential for teachers to be aware of their students’ as well as their own familiarity with the subject when planning a task and designing an activity based on a lesson. Start by writing down the students’ age range, educational level, and English ability across the classroom. This information helps teachers prepare better lessons and include a learning objective and task for students to accomplish during class or outside of it. Next, providing a subject-related title in English allows students to anticipate and understand the lesson’s content. Once the learning objective, the title, and the task have been determined, consider the type of activity that will be implemented in the classroom to develop a conducive environment for both teacher and students. When designing activities, consider that activities can vary in form, ranging from a single activity to a combination of multiple activities for student engagement. This can help students socialize across subjects in English outside the classroom.

### **Fostering Mutual Respect**

Fostering mutual respect between teachers and students is critical to building a positive relationship in the classroom. It lays the foundation for an environment where students feel acknowledged, valued, and supported while teachers gain the trust and respect of their students. This can be done by establishing clear expectations and guidelines for behavior and communication and modeling respectful behavior. By displaying the same behavior expected of students, teachers can set a positive example for them to follow, promoting mutual respect and creating an equitable, respectful classroom culture. Another means to foster respect is actively listening to students, hearing their opinions, and considering their interests in incorporating multicultural perspectives into the lesson.

### **Promoting English Practicality**

In Asia, English is taught as a second or foreign language. Despite students often having strong grammar or vocabulary competence, teachers should highlight the practicality of English use to motivate students, enhancing their language learning experience and providing them with valuable skills for global communication. One effective strategy is assigning tasks across subjects in English that require students to apply their knowledge of the subject and language skills

in real-life scenarios. This task encourages them to use English in practical ways. For instance, activities could include real-world examples like a field trip where students role-play as an English-speaking guide to practice English skills by asking questions, seeking information, and engaging in conversations related to the field trip's theme, such as visiting a museum or historical site. Furthermore, organizing debates and presentations for students to analyze information, express opinions, present arguments, and engage in discussions with peers creates interactive and dynamic learning environments. Both field trips and debates not only provide practical opportunities for students to apply their English skills, fostering fluency, expanding their vocabulary, and increasing cultural understanding of their future endeavors, but they also promote teamwork, collaboration, and active participation in the classroom.

### **Creating Transparency**

Promoting transparency in education is essential for effective communication within the teacher–student relationship. Transparency involves being honest and open with students about challenges and limitations. This can be done if teachers model transparency when talking about their own areas of growth and imperfection and show a willingness to learn alongside students. In addition, such openness creates a classroom environment where students feel comfortable asking questions, seeking clarification, and expressing their concerns in a way that values honesty. For instance, providing opportunities for students to choose a discussion topic to use their English can increase their engagement with language learning in the classroom.

### **Transforming Classrooms into Communities**

Transforming classrooms into communities is a powerful approach to fostering teacher–student collaboration, as in such an environment, students feel a sense of belonging and come together over their learning goals. With that being said, student engagement and shared decision-making can be promoted by sharing responsibility, creating opportunities to share identity within the classroom, and setting classroom rules with teachers. This allows students to feel connected to others, engaged in learning, and supported in their personal and academic growth.

### **Encouraging Shared Interests, Discussion, and Responsibility**

Encouraging shared interests, discussions, and responsibility among teachers and students is a valuable approach. This can be accomplished by providing opportunities for students to explore subjects or themes that resonate with their interests. Furthermore, actively engaging with topics of interest increases students' motivation and allows diverse perspectives and knowledge to emerge within the classroom. An example of a task that encourages shared responsibility is assigning collaborative tasks where students work with teachers to achieve a learning goal through teamwork, communication, and accountability. Students can also contribute their strengths and learn from their peers by sharing resources, encouraging student engagement, and boosting self-esteem.

## **Guide to Planning Across Subjects in English**

Teachers need to be aware of their students' current level of language understanding when lesson planning. Start by writing down the age range, educational level, and English ability of the students in the class. Doing so will help teachers to deliver better lesson preparation with a learning objective and a task in mind. Next, provide a subject-related title in English; this allows students to anticipate and understand the lesson's content. Once the learning objective, the title, and the task have been determined, consider the type of activity that will be implemented in the classroom to develop a conducive environment for both teacher and students. When designing activities, consider that activities can and should be diverse in form, ranging from a single activity to a combination of multiple activities to boost student engagement. Activities should also aim to help students socialize across subjects in English outside the classroom.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Developing teacher–student collaboration in Asia may seem challenging due to students' familiarity with hierarchical structures for authority within the classroom, the dominant presence of an exam-oriented education system, and the diverse backgrounds and characteristics between teachers and students. When integrating another subject with English language learning, teachers should consider using these five strategies to establish a conducive learning environment for students. By doing so, teachers increase student engagement and improve the level and quality of English learning, and they support students to comprehend the practicality of English in their future endeavors.

## **THE AUTHOR**

**Queenie Kawabe** is a quadrilingual language learning specialist and, since 2006, has gained years of diverse educational experience spanning various industries, from childhood development to senior programs across the Asia-Pacific region. She specializes in creating engaging English language learning experiences for young and mature learners and has been recognized with Best Teacher and Best English Lesson awards in Japan. She also trains and assists new language teachers in the classroom and through online classes. Her professional interests include hybrid pedagogy, reflective teaching, multiple intelligences, and technology in language teaching and learning. Email: [queenie@queeniekawabe.com](mailto:queenie@queeniekawabe.com)



---

## **Conference Overview**

---



**Presentations of**  
**The 30th Annual Korea TESOL**  
**International Conference – 2023**

***Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among  
Scholars, Instructors, and Students***

April 29–30, 2023; Seoul, Korea & Online

The 2023 Korea TESOL International Conference Committee gratefully recognizes the following individuals for providing thought-provoking talks, presenting research, conducting workshop sessions, and leading discussions of various types at the 30th Korea TESOL International Conference.

***Plenary/Featured/Invited Sessions***

Thomas S.C. Farrell	Advancing Collaboration Among Teachers Through Reflective Practice
Jack C. Richards	Collaborative Approaches to Teacher Development for Language Teachers
Gabriel Diaz Maggioli	Collaborative Scenarios and Teacher Growth
Thomas S.C. Farrell	Operationalizing Reflective Practice for Language Teachers
Jack C. Richards	English as an International Language: What It Is and What It Isn't
George Jacobs	Collaboration Among Educators: Multiple Authorship in
Chenghao Zhu	Language Education Articles
Boyoung Lee	Collaborating in the Context of Korean EFL
Francisca Maria Ivone	Technology-Enhanced Collaboration: Possibilities and Challenges in Language Teaching and Learning
Raichle Farrelly	Global Collaborations to Promote Language Learning and Teacher Development
Judy Yin	Collaborative Teaching and Learning in TEFL
Nikki Ashcraft	Laying the Foundation for Classroom Collaboration
Lindsay Herron	Collaborating on Cross-Cultural Connections: Promise, Pitfalls, and Cosmopolitan Potential
George Jacobs & Chenghao Zhu (with Meng Huat Chau, Jasper Roe, & Qingli Guo)	Walking the Talk and Walking with Students Together: Teacher Authenticity
Judy Yin	Using Drawings and Metaphors to Explore Teacher Identity
Nikki Ashcraft	Best Practices for Facilitating Asynchronous Online Discussions
Francisca Maria Ivone	Extensive Listening and Viewing in Listening Courses
Raichle Farrelly	Exploring World Englishes to Enhance Learners' Oral Skills

Jack C. Richards                      Jack C. Richards and Thomas S.C. Farrell in Conversation  
 Thomas S.C. Farrell

***Research Sessions***

Ankhzaya Batsuuri	A Comparative Study on English Curriculum Implemented in Mongolia and South Korea
K. Kurniawan	Designing Listening Module Based on Malay Local Genius for Indonesian Higher Education: The Power of Collaboration
Ricardo Ador Dionisio Mitchellene Rivo	Expansive Collaboration Towards the New and Enhanced Language Curriculum
Singhanat Nomnian Cheewin Wattanasin	“English Teaching Forum” Roadshow for Thai Primary School Teachers: A Collaborative Project
Thanis Tangkitjaroenkun	Lunching and Talking: An Attempt at Teacher Collaboration and Reflection at KMUTT
Clare Kaneko	Reading: Beyond Comprehension, and Encouraging Interaction with Texts
David Blasco	The Effects of Strategic Planning on Oral Tasks of Taiwanese College Learners
Yiu Nam Leung	Pedagogical Approaches to Studying Literature to Enhance EFL Learners’ Language Proficiency
Mani Ram Sharma	Library Use: Promoting Students' Learning
Mark Dressman	Across Three Languages: The Translingual Practices of Trilingual Basic Writers
Phil Nguyen	Starting Moodle LMS for Your Classroom
Prateek Sharma Thomas Ashton	Our Collaborative Journey as Advisors
JunkoChujo	Providing Authentic Communication Through a Discovery Experience
Jonathan Shachter Christopher Haswell	How Can We Learn What Academics Think About Their Peers’ Opinions?
Savika Varaporn	The Designing of English for MICE: Target Language Needed by the Industry
Nadia Rahman	The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on English Spoken Production and Spoken Interaction Among ESL University Students in Malaysia
Martin J. Murphy	Reading Out Loud: A Communicative Approach to Reading Skills
Phillip A. Bennett Haruka Ubukata	Basic Psychological Needs Observed in a Self-Directed Learning CLIL Course
Mable Chan	Research into Second Language Acquisition: Dissemination of Results and Impact
Yu Jung Han	Asset-Enriching Pedagogy for Interest-Driven Language Learning: Tapping into Students’ Fannishness
Christopher Binnie	Self-Directed Learning: Exploring the Continuous Professional Development of NESTs in South Korea

Budour Ibrahim Albeshr	Collaboration in Tertiary Educational Context and the Opportunities It Offers for Learning: A Mixed Methods Study
Haruka Kikuchi	Locally Routinized Categorization for Pretend Play: Microanalysis of Preschoolers' Interactive Book Reading
Bladimie Germain	Effects of Limited-Term Contracts on Foreign Language Teachers Integration into Japan
Cyril Reyes	A Report on the Impact of Emergency Remote Teaching on EFL Instruction in South Korea
Shaun Manning Jamie Kim	Kakao Open Chat to Support English-Medium Instruction Classes: A Useful Tool
Navinda Sujinpram	Genre-Based Approach and Data-Driven Learning for Teaching Business Email Writing
I-Cheng Wu Yulin Chen	Generating In-Depth Understanding of Classroom Motivation via Exploratory Practice
Stewart John Cooper	Oral Fluency as Affected by Increased Task Complexity and Task Format Type
Rafidah Abd Karim	ESL Malaysian University Students' Perceptions Toward Using Smartphones for English Learning
Yukie Saito	Exploring Students' Perceptions of English Language Learning Through Virtual Reality and Its Impact on Speaking Proficiency
Joe Greenwood	Succeed with Skills: An Academic Writing Diagnostic Program to Bridge Gaps in Higher Education
Benjamin Filer Niall Walsh	Reassessing Classroom Observation for University Teachers
Ivy Chan	Exploring Refugee Students' Funds of Knowledge for English Language Teaching
Tony Cripps	"What Next?": Reflecting on the Design and Efficacy of Pre-Service Teaching Workshops
Kuan-Chun Eleen Yu Jeng-yih Tim Hsu	A PBL-Infused Business Communication Course Bringing EFL College Students Closer to Workplace
Yu-hsun Sammi LI Jeng-yih Tim Hsu	Designing an Effective Business Communication Course for Workplace-Ready EFL College Students
Piotr Romanowski	English Medium Instruction in Polish Higher Education: What Do the Lecturers Say?
Tran Doan Thu Mai Hong Quan Nga Vo	Vietnamese Students' Perception of Pecha Kucha in English Public Speaking Classes
Shaun Manning	More or Less? Group Size in Collaborative Peer Review
Kara Ann Mac Donald	Using Google Forms for Learners' Self-Assessment to Enhance Learning and Foster Autonomy
Ju Chuan Huang	Preparing Primary School Teachers for CLIL: An Action Research Project
Mitchell Clark	Utilisation of Kahoot! in University Pathway Programs

Iain Maloney Jaime Morrish	Horizontal Collaboration: Intra-Departmental Integration as a Bedrock for SLA
Christine Anita Xavier	Teacher Empowerment Through Collaboration: Teaching Grammar as a Meaning-Making Resource
Jeffrey Baldwin Natasha Powell Yi-chen Chen	Graduate STEM Student Perspectives and Implementation of Machine Translators in South Korea
Eunice Tan	A Technology Enhanced Social-Cognitive Approach to Improve EFL Learners' Public Speaking
William Tiley	"This Is How THEY Write": Interdisciplinary Communication in a University Communication Course
Chang Chih-Hao	Standardized Language Tests: An Unexplored Tool for Teacher Development?
Chang Chih-Hao	The Impact of Overseas Internships on English Achievement: Evidence from Undergraduate Students in Japan
Chang Chih-Hao	Bilingual Education in a Globalized Age: An Ecological Perspective on Two Choson-juk Schools in China
Chang Chih-Hao	Effects of Parental Involvement on Students English Performance in Taiwan: Focusing on English Private Tutoring
Richard Miles	Developing Rhetorical Awareness: A Collaborative Approach to Learning
Kinsella Valies	Rubric Design and Development for University English Speaking Practice and Performance
Robert Remmerswaal	The Effect of COIL on Student Communication and Soft Skills
Sanae Oda-Sheehan	What Students Really Need to Learn: Integration of Pragmatics and Grammar Pedagogy
Emily Marzin	Let's Talk! Perspectives of a Tandem Language and Cultural Program
Nguyen Le Bao Ngoc Tran Thuy Hang Nguyen Hoang Phuong Mai	Reading Anxiety and Reading Performance Among Vietnamese English-Major Students
Brett Davies	Lights, Camera, Interaction: Developing the Four Skills Through Collaborative Filmmaking Projects
Dunja Radojkovic	EFL Teacher Development in Rural Armenia: A Collaborative Project
Niall Walsh	Reimagining the Language Classroom: Learner-Based Teaching
Andrew Nowlan	COIL: Replacement or Preparation for Actual Study Abroad?
TEO Shi Ling	Learning from Others Without Shame: Reflections on Collaborative Caring in Teaching Practice
Ben Rentler Izumi Koyama	Maximizing Communication: Promoting Translanguaging in a Multilingual Task-Based English/Japanese Project Course

Davis Shum	Student Preferences for L1/L2 Usage in a University Classroom
Lynsey Mori	SELVES: Social Emotional Learning Virtual Exchanges
Yuhsiang Kao	An Investigation into the Vocabulary Size of Taiwanese Junior High School Students
Jeng-yih Tim Hsu	
Daniela Trinks	Multicultural Education in South Korea: A Literature Review
Elsbeth Teagarden	
Tanguay-Koo	
Andre' Jacobs	
James Bury	Conducting, Collaborating, Sharing: Three Tenets of Practitioner-Research
Budour Ibrahim	Using Multimedia Glosses to Enhance Vocabulary Learning and Retention Among EFL Students
Albeshr	
Cristina Tat	Silver Linings: From Emergency Remote Teaching to EAP Resiliency
Sean Gay	
Maria Leonora	Assessing Pragmatic Competence of University ESL Students in Requesting and Apologizing
Guerrero	
Akie Fukushima	Novice Learners' Collaborative Work in Reflective Discussion Activities
Garrett DeHond	Practical Inquiry in Peer and Teacher Tandem Response
Stephenie Busbus	Learning Action Cells in Language Teaching
Ilyana Binti Jalaluddin	Utilizing MAVR in Learning English: An ESL Low Achievers Context
Kumar Shravan	Ramayana and Effective Communication
Shu-Fei Hsieh	ESP Listening Difficulties and Strategies: A Metaphorical Analysis
Makiko Kato	Investigation of Diverse Raters' Awareness and Strategy Use in Assessing Summaries
George MacLean	Accelerating Feedback and Transmitting It to Students Using Google Workspace
Ngoc Ha Nguyen	The Use of Internet-Based Paraphrasing Tools in Developing Written Language Complexity
Thi Manh Ha	Raising Awareness of Collocation in EFL Classrooms: A Mixed-Method Study
Asoko Nguyen	
Gutkovskii Aleksandr	Poetry-Based Instruction: Teachers' and Students' Perceptions
Hasmina D. Sarip	Fear of Public Speaking: The Truth Amongst ESL Learners
Christina Jung	The Translanguaging Practices of Emergent Korean-English Bilingual Children in Korea
Tyler Mitchell	The Impact of Gamified Instruction on Japanese English Language Learners' Motivation
Hsiao-Wen Hsu	Teachers' Perceptions of Critical Thinking Skills in the EFL Classroom
Chia-Yi Li	VoiceThread for Multimodal Collaboration and Affordances of EFL Speaking Communication

Christopher Samuel	Proposing Mixed Methods Research to Understand Study Abroad Experiences of Japanese Students
James Broadbridge	Teaching Notetaking for Academic Lectures: An Action Research Study
Yoko Kusumoto	
Mary Eddy U	Guiding Beginning Academic Writers Toward Effectively Integrating Source-Texts in Essays
Jeremy Phillips	
Steven Lim	Trial and Error: Learning to Teach with Computers in a 1:1 Program
Eun Jeong Park	Preservice Teachers' Flourishing and Teacher Resilience Through Online Mentoring
Amelia Yarwood	Negotiating English L2 Identities in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Contexts: Implications from a Systematic Review
Amelia Yarwood	From Language Learning History to Life Narrative
Kyongson Park	Internationalization at Home: Virtual Cultural Exchange Among Korean and US College Students
Mai Matsunaga	The Effects of a Self-Study Program on Pre-service Teachers' English Pronunciation
Yurika Ito	Connecting with English Teachers Online: Challenges in Teachers' Professional Social Media Use
Michael D. Smith	Towards a "Leaderful" Sustainable Development? An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of Japanese Education
Travis Past	
Leigh Yohei Bennett	Collaboration Between EAP and Content Teachers in English-Medium Instruction Contexts: Challenges, Perceptions, and Practices
David McCurrach	Zipfian Distribution and Corpus Frequency Data: Assessing Language Authenticity in English Textbooks and Strategies for Vocabulary Retention
Shzhchen Nancy Lee	Effects of Receiving Weekly Peer Feedback on L2 Speaking Development
Yutaka Fujieda	A Study on EFL Writers' Emotional Expressions and Perception
Nomintuul	Shared Development: Promoting Shared Lesson Plans to Enhance Professional Development
Byambatsogt	
Tamir Myagmarsuren	
Chuluuntumur Damdin	
Davaanyam Damdin	
Maria Lisak	Collab in Times of Anxiety

### ***Workshops***

Korng Sok	Using Google Classroom to Tackle Students' Problems with Writing Skills in EFL Classroom
Garrett DeHond	Guiding Students to Constructing Better Arguments
Michael Mielke	Using Google Docs for Collaboration in Schools on Material Preparation
Gabriel Macedonio Ledezma	BrainPOP Jr. 101: Aiding Students with Collaboration and Digital Literacy



Queenie Kawabe	Developing Teacher–Student Collaboration Across Subjects in English in the Classroom
Sohee Linda Lee	Advancing Tech Access: Demystifying Technology Jargon
Jennifer Miyake-Trapp	Through Explicit, Interactive Activities
Caroline Hutchinson	Cross-Cultural Awareness at Home: Activities for the Language Classroom
Alexandra Sacramento	Flipping for the Future: Revamping the Post-Pandemic Classroom with Flipped Learning
Becky Sanchez	
Mark Dressman	Teaching English in the Digital Age 101: Learner-Driven Strategies from IDLE Research
Patricia Ninniss	Speedy Conversations and Extensive Speaking for English Fluency in University EFL
Eric Reynolds	
Daniel Cicone	
Tamara Jones	A Pronunciation Toolkit for English Instructors
Tamara Jones	Fun and Games for Bottom-Up Listening
Kimberly Noriko Durinick	Using Blended Learning to Create Student-Led Conversation Courses
Amanda Sheffield	
May Barbree	Integrating Collaboration into Reflective Teaching Practice
Christopher Hascall	Bringing English Vowels to Life: Vowel Instruction for Korean Learners of English
Aida Corpuz	ADOQ: A Practical Formulaic Sequencing Strategy for Improving Oral Fluency
Gunther Breaux	Conversation Based Learning: Use Partners, Not Grammar
Stephanie Ptak	
Daniel Sipes	Mental Health and the Intersections of a Korean University EFL Classroom
Nicholas Medley	Extra! Extra! Creating an English for Journalism Course Using the 4Cs Framework
Roger Fusselman	Sharing Your Strengths: Make and Deliver a Conference Presentation
Matt Saunders	Training Summarization: Much More Than a Test-Taking Skill
Misato Saunders	
Dafi Jenkins	Motivating Young Learners to Write
Daniel Bailey	Chat GPT in TESOL: Friend or Foe?
Marcel Daniels	Exchanging Experiences to Build Understanding: Dialogue Journal Use In Service Learning
Yu Jung Han	Exploring Artificial Intelligence (GPT-4) in TESOL: How the Field Should Be Ready
Jocelyn Wright	Teacher as Designer: Reflective Practice Through a Lens
Lisa Casaus	
Frederic Bernal Lim	Haiku Poems for Syllabic and Phonetic Awareness
Alexis Busso	Advancing Global Education (GE) in EFL Classrooms
Aida Corpuz	

Daniel Dusza	Tech-Integrated Communicative Language Teaching: A Collaborative Writing Project
Marina Goto	
Sandra Houghton	A Teaching Framework for Supporting Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency in EMI Classrooms
Kelly Pattison	
Jennifer Miyake-Trapp	Student Agency 101: Practical Tools to Empower Learners with Voice and Choice
Sohee Linda Lee	
Dr. Ally Zhou	Bridging Research and Practice: Professional Development on Teaching Writing in Secondary Schools
Nora Saheer	Enhancing Students' Success Using PBL in a Singapore University's Writing Course
Ivy Chan	
Justin McKibben	Bringing Back Face to Face Conferences: Dynamic Presentations
Eric Reynolds	
Gregory S. Lewis	Audio Projects: eBook Narration, Voice Over, Radio Play, Podcasting

### ***Graduate Student Showcase Sessions***

Chang Fang-Yu	Integration of the 5E Model of Instruction in Bilingual Earth Science Class in a Senior High School in Taiwan
Chi Wui Ng	Relative Clauses in Written Hong Kong English: A Corpus Based Study
Chia-Ling Hsu	The Frequency of the Academic Words in American Sitcom <i>The Big Bang Theory</i>
Curtis Life	Motivating Adult Korean Students Through the Characteristics and Behaviors of Language Teachers
Danielle Joo	Project TRANSLATE: A Pedagogical Translation Approach in Improving English Language and Literacy Skills to Emergent Bilinguals
Emmi Naja	Exploring a Potential Suitable Model for ETEPs (English Teacher Education Programs) in the Indonesian Context
John George P. Pastor	Influences of Socio-cultural Factors on the Writing Mindset and Grit of Senior High School Students in Writing Academic Papers
Kyung Hee Kim	Investigating Korean Primary School Teachers' Perceptions: Using AI English Assistive Technology, Pengtalk
Mohd Farez Syinon bin Masnin	English Language Education for Indigenous Students in Rural Malaysian Borneo: Teachers' Perspectives
Nigina Misirova	Modern Approaches in Teaching English in Primary Schools
Siyang Dang	Using English as a Lingua Franca to Resist Against Language Socialization
Yenny Rahmawati	Rethinking Teacher Quality of Indonesian EFL Teachers

***Panel Discussion Sessions***

Jennie Roloff Rothman	Professional Growth Through Critical Friendships: Cases from Japan
Chhayankdhar Singh Rathore	
Chitose Asaoka	
Atsuko Watanabe	
Jocelyn Wright	Collaborative Classroom Conflict Prevention and Resolution Projects
Heidi Nam	
Jim Ronald	
Virginia Parker	

***Dialogue/Roundtable Sessions***

Soyoung Lee	What Does It Mean to Build Students' Confidence in a College English Course?
Stephen Gallas	Where Is the Overlap? Collaboration Points Between Higher Education and Education Companies

***Pecha Kucha Sessions***

Andrew Shepherd Nelson	How Stories Can Help Students Find the Words to Talk About Emotions
Joe Curd	What Makes Reading Hard Besides Vocabulary and Grammar? Parsing Long Sentences
Roger Fusselman	Any Last Requests?
Sohee Linda Lee	Virtual International Trips: Promoting Cross-Cultural Learning and Global Citizenship at Home
Jennifer Miyake-Trapp	Providing Formative Feedback on Writing in a Blended ELT Classroom
Thashmira Rajapaksha	
Nethmi Ranasinghe	
Oshadhi Jayakody	
Thi Manh Ha	An Action Research on Teaching English Pronunciation Using English Songs in EFL Classrooms
Nguyen Asoko	
Nguyen Thi Kim Thoa	
Thomas Sean Jeffery	Cultural Differences in EFL Teaching Methods Between Korean and Non-Korean Teachers

***Poster Sessions***

Brian Gallagher	The Triple Perspective Approach to Learning
Michael Savage	
Gerry Mclellan	
Brian J. Birdsell	When AI Learns to Write: Understanding Its Impact on EFL Writing Classes
Dung Le	Enhancing Cultural Experiences in Teaching and Learning English in the EFL Classroom
Haruka Ubukata	Collaborative "Kaizen" Practice for Better Space/Material Design in a Japanese SAC
Emily Marzin	
Kayo Namaizawa	
James Bury	Practical Steps to Conducting Practitioner Research

James Emmet Owens	Educating Students to Understand Genre: Awareness Rather Than Acquisition
Jennie Roloff Rothman	Lessons from the Pandemic: Implementing Responsive Professional Development Looking Towards the Future
Kathryn Jurns Rhys Colley Ran Kuperman	Collaboration and Distributed Leadership to Revise Academic Writing Student Learning Outcomes
Peter Byun	Commercials and Signs as ESL/EFL Teaching Tools
Robert Dykes Robert Remmerswaal	Minecraft: PBL 21st-Century Program Proposal
Sugene Kim	ELF Experience and Its Effects on L2 Learners' Attitudes to Translanguaging: A Case Study in Japan
Ted O'Neill	Supporting CLIL Approaches with Simple English Wikipedia

***Promotional Session***

Nikki Ashcraft	The University of Missouri Online M.Ed. TESOL Program
----------------	---



# KOTESOL Proceedings 2023

Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars,  
Instructors, and Students

