ADVANCING LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY ONE ARTICLE AT A TIME

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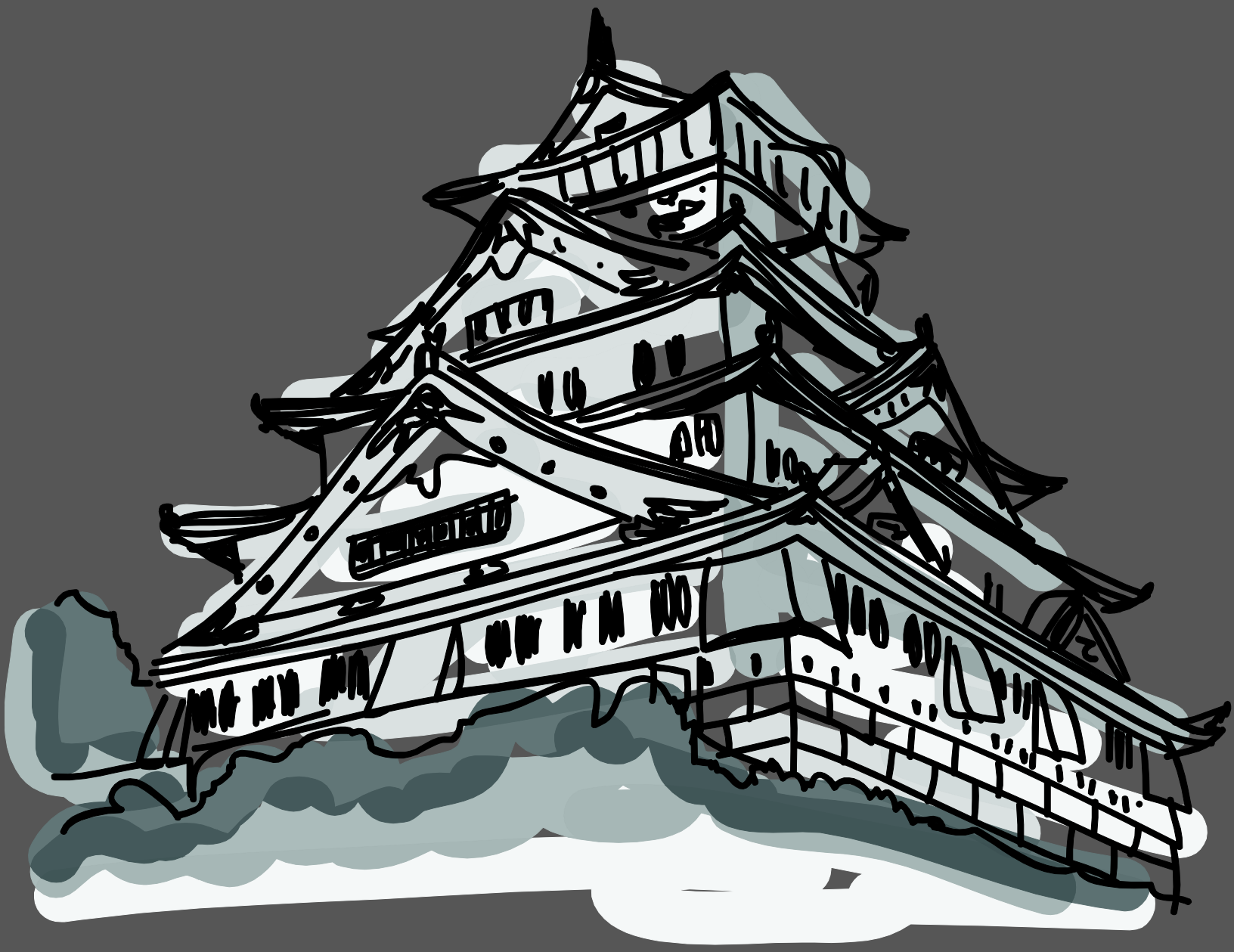

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Contents

From the Editor

Welcome to the 2018 *Osaka JALT Journal*!

On behalf of the *Osaka JALT Journal* editorial team, it is my great pleasure to be able to acquaint you with a mildly auspicious volume this year—volume five. In keeping with the providential tone that the number five holds for couples, people of faith, and humanity in general, I hope that everyone will find this milestone to be in keeping with the felicitous nature of the number. Analogously, I am delighted to declare that Volume 5 is replete with articles that not only add to the body of literature in foreign language education, but also provides the fodder for improvement in practice and stimulation for scholarship.

In this volume, you will find a variety of fascinating articles of relevance to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. The first article, ***'Student Preferences for Accessing Textbook Multimedia Resources'*** by Cameron Romney, will hopefully elicit a paradigm shift in the way teachers and textbook publishers approach learning through multimedia resources. Romney challenges us to prioritize smartphones over computers and multimedia discs so that we can capitalize on a trend toward learning with smartphones. Neil Cowie and Keiko Sakui continue with a focus on the impact of digital technology in the classroom in ***'Learning English Through Digital Projects: A Japanese University Case Study'***. Their study not only contains a thorough explanation of how to implement a digital project, but also adroitly elucidates the advantage of incorporating digital technology to facilitate the development of both communicative language skills and digital literacy. ***'Japanese University Students' Perspectives on the TOEIC Test'***, by Matthew Caldwell contains a wealth of information about student attitudes toward the TOEIC test that will be of great interest to stakeholders. Caldwell's

well-researched study provides recommendations for improved test design and tertiary-level language testing. Claire Murray's educational article, ***'Exploration of the Benefits of Process Approaches to Writing Instruction to High School English Learners'***, will be of interest to not only high school teachers, but to any teacher tasked with the challenge of teaching academic writing. She describes how by adopting a process-based approach to teaching writing teachers can help their students write more with improved cohesion and fewer grammatical mistakes. The next article, ***'Reading Attitudes and Extensive Reading at the Secondary Level'*** by Ann Flanagan and Imogen Custance contains an excellent discussion on the importance of dialogue when trying to manage a vibrant extensive reading program. Furthermore, they highlight how any negativity toward reading, be it in the first or second language, can sabotage a well-intentioned reading program. Blake Turnbull's paper, ***'Questioning the Compatibility of Nunomura's Vision of an English-only Classroom in Japan'***, will be of interest to anyone involved in the debate over whether there is room for the first language in the foreign language classroom. This volume concludes with ***'Student Responses to Video Production Projects'*** by Barry Condon, who consummately argues for the implementation of project work that culminates with a video presentation to improve student engagement.

In closing, I would like to encourage readers to explore the wide range of topics that have been compiled for this fifth volume; hopefully the articles will stimulate discussion and debate that leads to improved practice. Also, I would like to thank everyone, past and present, who has helped make the *Osaka JALT Journal* a place for authors and readers to turn to to find emerging ideas and research from our field.

Ryan Smithers

Student Preferences for Accessing Textbook Multimedia Resources

Cameron Romney
Doshisha University

Abstract

Many English Language Teaching (ELT) publishers include with their textbooks a multimedia disc containing audio recordings for use during the lessons. Many publishers also make these audio recordings available on their websites. This study looks into student preferences for accessing the textbook audio recordings. Students were given a homework assignment to relisten to the scripted conversations used in class. The students could choose to use the recordings on the disc included with the textbook or the recordings on the publisher's website. The website recordings could be accessed by either manually entering a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or scanning a Quick Response (QR) code with a smartphone. The method the students used for accessing the multimedia was logged for each homework assignment, and the students were surveyed at the end of the semester about their preferences. The results show that the students overwhelmingly preferred to access the audio recordings online with their smartphone via a QR code.

Keywords: textbook, multimedia, QR codes, smartphones, MALL

It has become common practice for English Language Teaching (ELT) publishers to include a multimedia disc with their coursebooks. A quick review of the 2017 Oxford University Press ELT Catalogue for Japan (OUP, 2017) reveals that ten of the fifteen multi-skill coursebooks recommended for use in university classrooms include such a disc. How are teachers and students using these discs? Many simply ignore the discs, thereby wasting a useful and expensive resource.

However, repeated exposure to recordings of spoken English can be beneficial for

students (e.g., Krashen, 1998), and one way to use the discs included with the textbook is to assign as homework the same listening activities done in class (Romney, 2015a).

One coursebook used by the author that includes a multimedia disc is *World Link 2, 2nd Edition* (Stempleski, Douglas, & Morgan, 2011). The disc's listening activities are also available online at the publisher's website via a web address, giving students an online alternative to the textbook's multimedia disc. In order to increase their exposure to spoken English, the students were required to listen repeatedly to the audio recordings in order to complete their homework assignments. They had the option of using the disc included with the textbook or to use the online recordings. Additionally, a Quick Response (QR) code was included with the homework handout that made access to the online resources easier.

This paper investigates which of the three available methods the students preferred to use for accessing the audio recordings: the disc that came with the textbook, a link to the audio recordings on the publisher's website, or a QR code that could be read by a smartphone that directed the student to the same website and audio recordings.

Background

Over the course of a fifteen-week semester, 88 students enrolled in four sections of a second-year, intermediate-level, English oral communication course at a private university in western Japan were given homework handouts of supplemental material that accompanied the assigned textbook for the course, *World Link 2, 2nd Edition* (Stempleski, et al., 2011).

Five times during the semester, approximately once every other week, the homework assignment included additional listening tasks. Six times during the semester, the students

were assigned non-multimedia homework, such as reading and grammar tasks. For an additional two weeks, the students were not assigned any formal homework, but engaged in self-directed study – for example, exam preparation. For the remaining two weeks of the semester, students were not expected to engage in outside study. For example, after the exam was held in the final class during week fifteen, the students were not expected to continue studying for the class.

For the five additional listening homework assignments, students were required to listen again to the textbook audio recordings of model conversations for the unit they had studied in class. They were also required to complete various tasks, including answering questions about both the content of the conversations (e.g., *where is the school located?)*, as well as meta questions about the conversations (e.g., *how many people are talking?)*. This was followed by a cloze task (filling in the gaps in a partial transcript of the conversation). Appendix A is a reproduction of one of the homework assignment handouts.

The students could access the audio recordings using any of three of the following methods. First, they could use the Compact Disc (CD) that came with the textbook. Second, they could input a Uniform Resource Locator (URL), more commonly known as a web address, into a web browser; the URL directed them to the textbook publisher's website. Finally, they could use their mobile phone to scan a QR code that directed them to the same publisher's website.

A QR code is a matrix bar code that can encode a large amount of text and can be programed to perform various functions, including directing a device to an online multimedia source via a URL (Denso Wave, n.d.). QR codes are a particularly convenient way to access online resources with long and/or complicated URLs (Rivers, 2009). When a QR code is scanned with a smartphone, the smartphone automatically recognizes the

text string as a URL, opens the device's default browser, inputs the URL, and directs the user to the online media. Depending on the particular smartphone, the audio file may begin playing automatically, or the user may be directed to press play. The student can then listen to the textbook recording through their headphones. One advantage of having the students listen to the audio recordings on their smartphones is that they can start, stop, rewind, and replay the recording as they like (Romney, 2015b).

Figure 1. An example QR Code.

Methodology

Each week, while the students were working independently on a textbook task (for example, a vocabulary-matching task), the instructor would do a quick check of the students' homework to ensure that each student had completed the assignment. If the student had satisfactorily completed the assignment, the instructor would sign the student's homework and note in a gradebook one of three scores: a zero (did not do the assignment), a partial score (did not complete the entire assignment), or a full score (completed the assignment). This would be used as part of the student's participation score for the week. When students had been assigned an additional listening task, the instructor also asked the students to indicate how they had accessed the multimedia element and noted that information in the gradebook.

At the end of the semester, the students were given a three-item, multipart

questionnaire in their native language (Japanese) about their preferences and reasons for accessing the textbook audio recordings. Appendix B is a reproduction of the questionnaire.

The first question on the survey, "Which method did you use to access the listening files for homework? Indicate all that apply" was followed by the choices "CD included with the textbook, Internet link, QR Code for smartphones." This question not only provided data for the instructor, but also reminded the students of their possible choices.

The second question asked the students to indicate the reasons why they had used a particular method. The possible choices were listed in three columns, one for each of the three methods. The choices are listed in Figure 2.

2. Please indicate the reasons that you used each method. Indicate all that apply.

CD	Internet Link	QR Code (Smartphone)
It's easy	It's easy	It's easy
It's convenient	It's convenient	It's convenient
I like it	I like it	I like it
I prefer it over other devices	I prefer it over other devices	I prefer it over other devices
I knew how to use it	I knew how to use it	I knew how to use it
Other: _____	Other: _____	Other: _____

Figure 2. Student survey question two with multiple-choice answers.

The third and final question was similar to question two. It asked the students to indicate their reasons for not using a particular method. The answer choices are listed in Figure 3.

3. Please indicate the reasons that you did not use a method. Indicate all that apply.

CD	Internet Link	QR Code (Smartphone)
I don't know how to use it	I don't know how to use it	I don't know how to use it
I don't have a CD player	I don't have a computer	I don't have a smartphone
I couldn't get it to work	I couldn't get it to work	I couldn't get it to work
I don't like to use it	I don't like to use it	I don't like to use it
Other: _____	Other: _____	Other: _____

Figure 3. Student survey question three with multiple-choice answers.

In both questions two and three, students were given the option to write in an additional answer if no appropriate choice was available.

Results

Eighty-eight students were enrolled in the four sections of the intermediate English oral communication class. Through the weekly homework quick check, the teacher-researcher was able to record 357 student responses, roughly an average of 79 student responses per week with an average absenteeism rate of nine students per week, or roughly two students per class.

Of the total 357 responses, students in 25 instances indicated that they accessed the audio recordings by using the textbook CD, in 12 instances they indicated that they accessed the audio recordings by inputting the URL into a web browser, and in 320

instances the students indicated that they accessed the audio recordings by scanning the QR code on the homework handout. There were also 37 instances of students not doing their homework and 46 total absences. These results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Results of Teacher-Researcher Collected Data

	CD	URL	QR Code	**Total**	Incomplete	Absent
Assignment 1	14	6	54	**74**	6	8
Assignment 2	2	2	63	**67**	11	10
Assignment 3	4	1	69	**73**	8	6
Assignment 4	3	1	63	**67**	6	15
Assignment 5	2	2	71	**75**	6	7
Total	25	12	320	**357**	37	46

End-of-Semester Survey

The end-of-semester survey was completed by 83 of the 88 students enrolled in the study. The first question (Q1) asked the students to indicate which method they used for relistening to the textbook audio files. Seven students indicated that they used the textbook CD. Eleven students indicated that they used the URL on the handout, and 73 students indicated that they used the QR code on the handout. Question 2 (Q2) asked the students to identify the reasons they used each particular method for accessing the audio recordings and Question 3 (Q3) asked why they did not use a particular method. The results of the student responses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Responses to the Student Survey

	CD	URL	QR Code
Q1 (method)	7	11	74
Q2 (why used)			
It's easy	6	4	65
It's convenient	1	4	61
I like it	--	--	6
I prefer it over other devices	1	1	15
I knew how to use it	3	1	14
Other (write in)	--	--	3
Q3 (why not used)			
I don't know how to use it	--	8	1
I don't have a device	21	2	1
I couldn't get it to work	5	8	--
I don't like it	6	10	--
Other (write in)	32	30	2

Discussion

The weekly data collected by the teacher-researcher shows a clear preference by the students for using the QR code to access the audio files with their smartphones: 320 instances out of a total of 357 instances, or roughly 90%. This more or less tracks with

the data collected in Question 1 of the student survey, in which roughly 89% (74 of 83 responses) of the students reported that they used the QR code to access the audio recordings. What is interesting to note is that, for the first assignment (during the third week of the semester), the QR code was used by 73% of the students (54 of 74 cases), with 27% (20 of 74 cases) using more traditional means of access. By the fifth and final extra listening assignment (during the 11th week of the semester), however, 95% (71 of 75 instances) of the students who completed the assignment used the QR code, whereas just 5% (four of 75 instances) of the students continued to use more traditional means of access. While this numerical data cannot account for the 22% increase in students using QR codes, the responses to the end of semester survey do provide some insight into the results.

Question 2 of the survey asked students to identify their reasons for using the various methods to access the audio files. The students overwhelmingly indicated that they felt using a QR code with their smartphone was easy (78%, 65 of 83 students), and convenient (73%, 61 of 83 students). Only 7% (six of 83 students) said using the disc was easy and 1% (one of 83) said it was convenient. Finally, only 5% (four of 83 students) indicated that manually inputting a URL was both easy and convenient. When correlated with the responses recorded by the teacher-researcher, these results suggest that students were most likely to access the audio files for their homework using the easiest and most convenient way, and as the students discovered the ease and convenience of QR codes over the course of the semester, they abandoned what they perceived as the more difficult and less convenient methods.

Although not addressed by this survey, other researchers have noted that the most common non-communication use of smartphones is for multimedia consumption

(Fujimoto, 2012), specifically for listening to audio files. It could be that, in addition to the ease and convenience, using a smartphone with headphones is very familiar to the students and, therefore, the most likely way for the students in this study to listen to audio recordings.

Additionally, for Question 2, six students (7%) indicated that they liked using QR codes with their smartphones and 15 students (18%) said that they preferred to use QR codes. For Question 3, however, no students indicated that they did not like using their smartphones for their homework assignments. This correlates with observations by other researchers who have noted that Japanese students have a favorable view of using smartphones for learning (e.g., White & Mills, 2012).

The student responses to Question 3 concerning why they did not use a particular access method may also provide insight into why students preferred using a QR code with their smartphones. Twenty-one of 83 students (25%) indicated that they did not have a CD player and five of 83 students (6%) could not get the disc to work with their CD players. In terms of using the textbook disc, there were 32 write-in responses in the "other" category. A common write-in comment (eight instances) was that students did not have a CD-ROM drive for their computers. While the multimedia disc included with the textbook technically was a CD-ROM, which is a type of a computer disc, the teacher-researcher was able to play the disc with a regular CD player and did so in class, but it is possible that some audio-only CD players may not have been capable of playing the disc. It is also possible that the students were unaware that the disc could be used with an audio CD player and thought that the disc would only work on a CD-ROM drive. While these are possibilities, there is no data to support them and so these explanations remain speculation.

The most common write-in comment for CD players (19 instances) was that students did have a CD player but did not have access to it when they did their homework. For example, they did not bring it with them to campus, or they owned a CD player, but it was in their family home and they had not brought it with them to university.

Teachers and indeed textbook publishers should take note that, in this survey, 53 of 83 students, or roughly 64%, were unable to use the disc, either because they did not have access to a player or they could not get the disc to work with their players. This may be an indication of a growing trend. As audio recordings move from physical media to digital resources (Rosenblatt, 2018), fewer and fewer students are likely to have access to compact disc technology. There is no reason to own a CD player if you only listen to music through an online streaming service on a smartphone.

As for the students' dispreference of manually entering a URL in a computer, eight students (10%) indicated that they did not know how to do it and eight students (10%) indicated that they could not get it to work. Thirty students selected the other category and wrote various reasons, including seven students who noted that they made typing errors when trying to input the URL and had to repeatedly make corrections. In addition, two students indicated that, when they entered the URL into a search engine, nothing came up. These are also possible explanations for students who indicated that they did not know how to input a URL and/or could not get it to work. Finally, 17 students indicated that they did not like to use computers. This correlates with other researchers who have shown that Japanese university students have a clear preference for smartphones over personal computers (e.g., Stout & Yamauchi, 2012).

As for the four students who negatively evaluated the use of QR codes in Question 3, one student indicated that they did not know how to use a QR code and one student

indicated that they did not have a smartphone. Two students wrote in answers indicating that they were concerned about the expense of using their carrier data plans for accessing the audio recordings. These are legitimate concerns that teachers should keep in mind. They may need to devote class time to ensure that students know how to use QR codes, and while audio resources are smaller than video resources, they are significantly larger than text resources. Therefore, teachers may need to show students how to connect their devices to the university's Wi-Fi network to eliminate data charge issues. Neither of these approaches were undertaken for this project; students were assumed to know how to use their own devices. As for students not having a smartphone or other device capable of using a QR code, teachers may need to provide an alternative. In this study, the alternative was using the multimedia disc or entering the URL into a web browser. Romney (2015b) discusses other alternatives such as having a loaner device for students to use or borrowing a friend's device.

Conclusion

This research shows that the students in this study overwhelmingly preferred to access web-based multimedia with a smartphone rather than using a web browser on a computer or using the multimedia discs included with their textbooks. Therefore, teachers who are interested in making use of the multimedia resources accompanying commercial textbooks should consider ways to integrate smartphones as an alternative to traditional media into their courses, and materials writers and/or publishers should develop ways to facilitate student use of smartphones with their textbooks.

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Appendix A

Reproduction of the supplementary homework handout with listening tasks

HOMEWORK unit 2B

Listen to CD-19 on the CDR, or get the MP3 at: http://bit.ly/1fk1L5M
or scan the code. Listen as many times as you need to.

CD-19

1 Listening for understanding: Answer the questions.

1. How many people are talking? _____

2. What are they talking about? _____

3. How does Marta feel? _____

2 Listening for details: Listen again and fill in the words.

A: Hi Marta. What did you do (1) _____?

B: Oh, I had (2) _____ at a friend's house. Her (3) _____ cooked.

A: Really? What was on the (4) _____ ?

B: It was a big (5) _____. Let's see. We had fried chicken, grits, fried green tomatoes, and, oh yeah, Mississippi mud pie for (6) _____.

A: Grits? Fried green tomatoes? Never heard of them.

B: Yeah, I'm not (7) _____. They're common in the (8) _____ United States. That's where my friend's mom is from.

3 About you: Answer the questions with your information.

1. Do the foods from listening above sound good to you? Why or why not?

_____

2. Is your hometown famous for a special food? What is it?

_____

3. Do you like to try new foods Why or why not?

_____

4. What is the most unusual thing you have ever eaten?

_____

SELF REFLECTION		YOUR SCORE
I actively participated	0—1—2—3	
I did all of the class activities	0—1—2—3	
I used lots of English	0—1—2—3	
I did my homework	0—1	

Unit 2A Answers

STUDENT NUMBER	NAME

Appendix B

Reproduction of the study survey

マルチメディアデータにアクセスするための学生の好みに関するアンケート

1. どちらの宿題のリスニングファイルを使用しましたか？使用したもの全てに○してください。

a) 教科書に後ろについている CD
b) プリントに記載のインターネットリンク（直接入力）
c) スマートフォン用の QR コード

2. 各メソッドを使用した理由を記入してください。 該当する全ての理由に○してください。
※使用したメソッドのみについて解答すること

CD	インターネットリンク	QR コード (スマートフォン)
簡単なため	簡単なため	簡単なため
便利なため	便利なため	便利なため
好きなため	好きなため	好きなため
他の方法より好きなため	他の方法より好きなため	他の方法より好きなため
使い方が分かるため	使い方が分かるため	使い方が分かるため
他の理由：	他の理由：	他の理由：

3. 各メソッドを使用しなかった理由を記入してください。該当する全ての理由に○してください。
※使用しなかったメソッドのみについて解答すること

CD	インターネットリンク	QR コード (スマートフォン)
使い方がわからないため	使い方がわからないため	使いが方わからないため
プレーヤーを持ってないため	パソコンを持っていないため	スマホを持ってないため
使いこなせなかったため	使いこなせなかったため	使いこなせなかったため
嫌いなため	嫌いなため	嫌いなため
他の理由：	他の理由：	他の理由：

Learning English Through Digital Projects: A Japanese University Case Study

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Keiko Sakui
Kobe Shoin Women's University

Abstract

The use of digital technology to create projects such as multimodal texts and digital stories is increasing rapidly in L1 settings. However, there are few English as a Foreign Language (EFL) studies showcasing such projects, especially within an existing language curriculum. In order to address this gap, this paper describes a case study of how one EFL teacher in a Japanese university implemented a blended course that included the creation of four digital projects as a learning outcome. The four projects were PowerPoint slideshows that were uploaded and shared online as videos. Using data from participant observations, student surveys, and interviews, as well as from the projects themselves, this case study provides evidence that a teacher and students with limited expertise in using technology can work together to create skillful and thoughtful multimedia slideshows in an L2. The study is, therefore, one that might help other EFL teachers who wish to take advantage of the increasing availability of digital technology to combine the development of communicative language skills and digital literacy. In addition to highlighting the affordances and limitations of teaching with technology, issues of academic integrity and changing teacher roles also are discussed.

Keywords: digital projects, digital literacy, language learning, Japanese university, case study

The use of digital technology in higher education has grown exponentially in recent years (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2015). Technology is also being used for foreign language teaching, and there are

many ways that technology has been used to enhance language teaching in tertiary institutions. Electronic materials include using websites for language skill practice, self-study smartphone applications (Pegrum, 2014), and the massive amount of online materials that teachers and students can access at almost any time and from anywhere (Thomas & Peterson, 2014). One area that combines language study and content study is the production of multimedia projects, such as uploaded online videos and presentations that showcase students' own study and research using the target language (Hafner, 2015). However, the advance of freely available advanced digital technology to produce such projects sometimes runs ahead of teachers' knowledge of how to use technology in the classroom; often in institutions that have not kept up with technological change (Hinostroza, Ibieta, Claro, & Labbé, 2016). This paper reports on how 'doable' (Gee, 2007) such digital projects are for language teachers and students in an 'ordinary' university setting that does not boast particularly advanced technology or pedagogical techniques. The purpose of this case study report is, by providing a description and critical analysis of the lesson process and products, to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that digital projects can offer language teachers.

Background

In the following section ways in which digital technology has been used for language learning are described in order to provide a context for the study. Cowie and Sakui (2013, 2014) surveyed university language teachers in seven countries and identified four kinds of approaches in which digital technology can be used to support language learning. This four-part framework is a useful heuristic to examine the types of tools, tasks, and activities that university language teachers can adopt when using digital technology in their lessons.

Here is a brief summary of the framework, which runs from the simplest level (out of class) to the one that needs the most institutional support (online):

1. **Out of class practice** such as students writing a report together for homework while making use of collaborative software (e.g., Google Docs).
2. **In-class blended learning** with a focus on language specific activities, such as pronunciation practice or vocabulary learning. Examples include flashcard applications such as Quizlet or listening sites such as elllo.org.
3. **Student-created digital media projects** as a focus of in-class blended learning. These could include video slideshows uploaded and shared through social media.
4. **Online courses** where the teacher and students do not usually meet face-to-face, but in which materials and learning activities are delivered online.

Approaches 1, 2, and 4 tend to use technology to supplement traditional language learning activities such as controlled speaking or intensive listening. Technology can help students carry out the repetitive practice that is necessary for such skill development. Approach 3 (creating digital projects), however, is different and seems to align well with recent educational trends such as the acquisition of 'graduate attributes' (Barrie, 2004, 2006), '21st century skills' (Kaufman, 2013), and 'deep learning' (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). These trends describe educational experiences in which institutions attempt to develop a range of qualities and skills, including digital literacy, in their students beyond the traditional content of a degree course (Meyers, Erikson, & Small, 2013). Digital literacy, or literacies, is a contested term with many competing definitions and frameworks put forward (Alexander, Adams Becker, & Cummins, 2016), but for the

purposes of this paper we will use Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum's concept of digital projects in which 'students have to learn not just to understand but to create multimedia messages, integrating text with images, sounds, and video to suit a variety of communicative purposes' (2013, p. 13). Godwin-Jones (2015a) points out that there are many examples of digital projects, such as multimodal texts and digital storytelling, in various L1s. However, there are relatively few EFL studies showcasing such projects, especially within an existing language curriculum. Amongst studies that have been carried out, there are ones from Hong Kong (Hafner, 2013, 2014, 2015), Oman (Naqvi & Al Mahrooqi, 2016), Taiwan (Yang, 2012), and Turkey (Aksel & Gürman-Kahraman, 2014). It is useful, therefore, to add further examples of L2 digital projects from other countries to the research literature.

Lockley (2011a, 2011b) and Lockley and Promnitz-Hayashi (2012) argue that many Japanese universities have installed various kinds of digital technology and EFL teachers who aspire to use it in their classes. However, there is a gap between teacher expectations and student capabilities regarding the use of technology, perhaps reflecting the 'myth of the digital native' (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017, p. 136). Lockley and Promnitz-Hayashi (2012) found that students often have a very positive attitude towards using technology but have not had many opportunities to transfer their high school experiences with social media and mobile phones to more academic uses of technology at the university level. Lockley and Promnitz-Hayashi conclude that there needs to be more research into how university teachers can incorporate appropriate uses of technology into the language learning curriculum. The problem of how to create digital projects in a language curriculum in a Japanese university, in a surprising turn, might be similar to those of other countries which have relatively little technological provision or teacher

knowledge of how to use technology for language learning. Lessons learned in Japan about the introduction of technology, student experience, and teacher development could be relevant to others both inside and outside of Japan and at other levels beside tertiary.

Method

The approach taken in this paper is that of a case study, specifically an 'intrinsic' (Stake, 1995) or 'descriptive' case study, in which a 'contemporary phenomenon [is studied] within its real-life context' (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The objective of the paper is not to generalize to other EFL settings but, by focusing on one university EFL teacher's classes, to explore some of the issues and challenges faced in teaching language students to create digital projects. Our three exploratory questions are:

1. Are the technologies and teaching approaches chosen to create digital projects suitable for this context?
2. What evidence is there that, through creating digital projects, students can develop communication and digital literacy skills?
3. What issues of teacher training or development arise when students are taught how to create digital projects?

In order to help readers understand the real life context for this case study the following is a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of the teacher, students, and lessons.

Teacher

The first author is an experienced EFL teacher who, at the time of this study, had worked for 12 years at a university in Western Japan. From April 2014, the university created a

new English language course called ‘e-learning.’ This inspired the first author to teach a presentation course which required students to use digital technology rather than requiring students to present in a more traditional face-to-face fashion. Although the teacher had relatively little experience of using technology, he welcomed the opportunity to teach a course where its use was positively encouraged. After teaching this course for one year he and the second author decided, from April 2015, to formally investigate his experience in the second iteration of the classes. That experience is the basis for this paper.

Students

Data were collected from three classes for second-year students (aged 19 to 20 years old) from several different faculties including agriculture, engineering, environmental science, and science. None of the students were language majors and the range of English proficiency was wide (students came to the classes with TOEIC scores ranging from 280 to 765). The students were required to take four English classes from a choice of six. Many of the lower proficiency students, especially in the engineering faculty, chose the e-learning presentation option as they thought that they would interact with a computer rather than with other students or a teacher and therefore would not be required to participate actively in lessons.

Lessons

Each of the three classes was held over a 16-week semester with a once-a-week lesson that lasted 90 minutes. One course (of 11 students) was held from April until August 2015 and two were held from October 2015 until February 2016 (with 40 and 42 students). Each class was held in a language laboratory with 45 desktop computers. The design of

the classroom was quite restrictive in that it was difficult for students to move around and mingle with each other. It was also difficult for the teacher to see students whose faces were largely hidden behind computers.

Each student had a university email account which included access to various Google applications such as Gmail, Drive, Google Docs, Google Community, Google Slides, and YouTube. All of these applications were used during the course. These applications were chosen because each student had an account, the applications were free and widely available, and it was thought that knowledge of these applications or similar ones would be useful at universities and in the workplace. In addition, PowerPoint and Audacity recording software were available on each computer.

The aim of the class was for students to create four slideshow projects in English over 16 weeks. The format of the projects was chosen to reflect what digital technology was available to the students and the learning outcomes that could be expected of them in the time available. These projects consisted of three-minute PowerPoint presentations with audio which were then converted to video format, uploaded to YouTube, and shared with classmates on Google Community. Students were required to watch four of their classmates' final projects and to make online comments on them in English. The four projects were a personal introduction, a guide for international students, a research problem, and a Japanese social issue.

For each four-week project cycle a similar approach was taken. In week one, the teacher introduced the topic by highlighting key ideas and vocabulary. Then, students would brainstorm ideas in pairs. They would then post their ideas on to the digital bulletin board Padlet (free software that only the teacher had to sign up for). The class would discuss the collective ideas and the teacher would highlight particularly interesting or

useful ones. In the second lesson the teacher would introduce a model presentation for the students to use. The focus of each model varied according to each project. Topics included useful content language, presentation language (e.g., introductions, transitions, conclusions, and problem-solution patterns), advice on how to select licensed images and avoid plagiarism, and advice on how to use a particular aspect of technology (recording audio clearly; making PowerPoint into a video; uploading to YouTube; using various Google tools; and suggestions for other software applications). This advice and information was presented online using the same kind of technology that students were expected to use, such as PowerPoint slideshows with audio, Google Docs, and videos uploaded to YouTube.

In weeks two and three students created their slideshows and wrote scripts. They took turns to read each other's scripts in pairs, and the teacher also tried to check as many as possible. In the smallest class of 11 students this was easy to achieve, but in the two larger classes, with 40 and 42 students, this was not always successful. Once students had finished their slideshow and script they recorded their voices, saved the PowerPoint file as a video, and uploaded it to YouTube. They then shared their file with the class via Google Community. In week four the students viewed four other slideshows and made comments on a paper evaluation sheet. They also posted online comments to their classmates, completed a reflective survey, and graded their own slideshow using a rubric. The first three projects were carried out individually and the last one (the social or cultural issue) was collaborative with students working together in pairs or threes.

In sum, the students were expected to work in English with each other and the teacher to create four multimedia slideshows. In doing so they were taught useful English language for online presentations and they received advice about various aspects of digital

literacy. This included information on searching websites, choosing visual images, avoiding plagiarism, and proper attribution of sources.

Data

Four main sources of data were collected and analyzed: the archived digital projects, journal entries from the teacher, online student surveys and paper rubrics, and student interviews. Each of these data sources are described here in more detail.

First, more than 300 digital projects were archived on the three Google Community class sites. Google Community is an application which can be used to create private or public groups. The teacher created a private group for each of the three classes and then invited students to join. Once students joined they added a profile picture and whatever they posted could be seen by all classmates. Google Community is not meant to be a Learning Management System but was used as one in that weekly instructions were posted to students, the students uploaded their digital projects to the site, and they posted comments to their classmates. The teacher also posted feedback on the projects to each student. Second, the teacher acted as a participant observer in all three classes, collecting various kinds of data such as notes on the classes, comments on student projects, and various lesson plans and materials that were prepared for each lesson. Third, after each project was completed students completed an online survey using Google Forms. The survey varied slightly with each of the four projects, but consisted of several questions asking students to reflect on their experience of using technology and their language learning during each project. The students produced over 300 survey responses in total. In addition, the students also completed a self-evaluation rubric and gave comments on four of their classmates' projects. Finally, four volunteer students were interviewed in

Japanese and English by a teacher colleague who also transcribed the interviews. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to an hour during which students were asked various questions about technology and language learning, such as their previous experiences of using technology; what they thought of the lessons; and, their opinions on using rubrics.

Results

The analysis of the four different kinds of data was carried out by the first and second author independently using principles of interpretation following Manning and Cullum-Swann (1994). This meant iteratively looking through the various data sources to create various categories which were gradually refined into a set of three: digital projects; the software tools that were used and students' reactions to them; and evidence of the development of communication and digital literacy skills. Each category is illustrated with representative quotations from students (pseudonyms are used) or the teacher.

Digital Projects

The contents of the personal introduction project included information about the students' hometowns, their university study, hobbies, and their families. The guide for international students and social projects were more wide-ranging (e.g., cycle rental systems, electronic money, Japanese mythology, paper folding principles behind engineering). Many students included photos and short videos of local places of interest or of Japanese social issues. The third project, which was to identify a problem connected to each student's major and to suggest possible solutions, was the most varied. Topics included smartphone dependency, computer hacking, flood prevention, intestinal bacteria, allergies, and metabolic syndrome in dogs. This project was also the one in which students claimed that

they spent the most amount of time researching and the one which resulted in the longest running slideshows (up to seven minutes). There is some evidence that this kind of project, where students are already invested in an issue that is important to them, is one that can engage students and encourage thoughtful research and reflection.

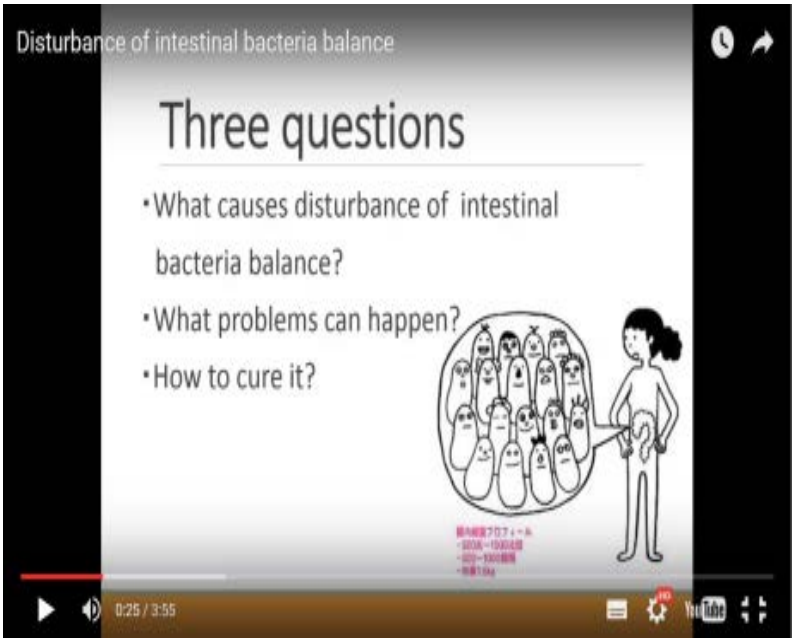

Figure 1. Examples of student multimedia slideshows.

Tools Used by the Students and Their Opinions About Them

In order to create their slideshows students used PowerPoint and the in-built audio recording feature or Audacity. Other software included animation making tools such as ToonDo and Stop Motion. Many students took photos and videos with their smart phones and embedded them into their slideshows. They edited these visual images with smartphone editing tools, Google's WeVideo, or Windows Movie Maker. In order to collaborate students also used Google Docs and Google Slides and, as previously explained, all students shared their digital products on Google Community. In sum, the students used a widely available set of free software products to create a slideshow with PowerPoint which was available to them on university computers. There were also a number of students who used additional software that they had discovered on their own. For example, one student explained that: '[I] use AviUtl which is a software to make a movie'. (Online survey. December 2015).

Students were asked what impression they had of the software tools that they had used. Most said that these tools were useful, both for this course and in other settings:

> I didn't know we can make movies in Powerpoint. So, I learned that we can make presentation movie is very easy and upload in YouTube is very easy too! This technique can be used in anywhere like study communication, and my hobbies!
>
> (Online survey. January 2016)

> I think the software tools I have used in this class is very useful. I started to use Google drive and Google documents for my hobby (scoresheet, music file).
>
> (Online survey. May 2015)

Many students enjoyed the combination of language learning and technology: 'I

think it's fun to be able to learn English and some computer skills at the same time.' (Interview: Original in Japanese. December 24th, 2015). And some students showed that they were keen to expand their repertoire of digital possibilities:

> Student: Well, I'm interested in Skype, but I don't know how to start using it. I think I'd like to be taught how to use it and other new kinds of interesting apps and contents.
>
> Interviewer: Do you want to use Skype with people you already know or new people?
>
> Student: On the internet I read that it is possible for people who want to learn languages to become friends and learn [each other's] languages, but I don't know how to go about it.
>
> (Interview: Original in Japanese. December 24th, 2015)

The above provides some support for Lockley and Promnitz-Hayashi's (2012) claim that, given the appropriate circumstances, Japanese students can use available technology for academic purposes even though they have had limited or no prior experience using them. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all students were as positive about technology, especially if they were also struggling with English. For example, one student wrote, 'I can't use the computer very well. And my English skills is not good. So this is little difficult for me.' (Online Survey. November 2015).

Communication and Digital Literacy Skills

There is evidence from the projects that they produced that students developed both their English communication skills and various aspects of digital literacy including technical

skills and safe internet practices. Let us look at each of these in turn.

Many of the students were very positive about their language improvement. Students gave different reasons for their progress, such as the use of technology, their enhanced confidence, and the lesson style. 'I think my English improved. Because, in this class, I spoke a lot of English. I add my voice into my slides in English,' (Online survey. August 2015). And, 'I think my English improved because I can do interview to foreign tourists, although [before] I hardly talk with foreign people.' (Online survey. February 2016). This latter comment, incidentally, shows that this student interviewed foreign tourists for the final project, which was a great advance for her as she had hardly ever talked to non-Japanese people before the course, and certainly not in English. Other students claimed that they had improved because of the opportunity to talk to the teacher individually:

> So the first time I made my presentation, [the teacher] advised me, this and this and this and you have a little mistakes and I asked where is my mistakes and he answered and corrected. So this parts are study for grammar and using English and he also advised my narration, pronunciation. So I think my English became better.
>
> (Interview. December 18th, 2015)

In terms of more general communication skills rather than just language acquisition many students were very positive about the chance to improve through working with other students and by observing each other's work:

> I will be able to make better presentation than this time because I watched many other students. I learned what is better organisation from them. Also, I think I should brush up speaking skills, for examples, clearly and slowly.
>
> (Online survey. February 2016)

> I [am] proud of my sense, but it is not always right. So I need other students' mind or way to thinking to enhance my [ideas].
>
> (Interview. December 18th, 2015)

Moving on to digital literacy skills, it was clear that the quality of the projects improved over time. Students became more skillful in integrating multimedia images into their slideshows, worked more quickly and efficiently, and grew more ambitious in what they could attempt by including videos, subtitles, music and interviews: 'My power point skill was improved. And my English typing skill was improved. In this class, I learned the way of use of Google (Google Community, Google Drive, Google Slide, and so on).' (Online survey. August 2015).

In addition to improving technically, as the courses evolved, students also developed their awareness of how to use digital resources ethically and safely, such as by using Google tools to identify which images were copyright free. At the beginning of the course, the teacher observed that many students did not know how to properly incorporate images into their slideshows, but later comments from students showed that their awareness of the issue of plagiarism had increased: 'It is important not to be sued by anyone. I use my own pictures and safe images. I used Google license system.' (Online survey. December 2015). One student's comment reflects a great deal of thought about this issue:

> I used Google map images. I think we should use them actively because a presentation which used photo, we can understand easily but it takes too much time and cost to get photo. But Google's search are not perfect. So we should be careful and check licenses.
>
> (Interview. December 24th, 2015)

There were also more general reflections by the students on how they could improve

their slideshows. They wrote that they needed to, for example, take clearer photos, write shorter sentences, make their organizational structure clearer, and reorder their ideas. 'I felt the importance of telling information compactly. Too much detailed presentation is boring. I have to select information which is really needed.' (Online survey. January 2016).

Discussion

In this discussion section the three exploratory questions mentioned at the start of the paper are examined: Are the technologies and teaching approaches chosen to create digital projects suitable for this context? What evidence is there that in creating digital projects students can develop communication and digital literacy skills? And, what teacher development issues are highlighted by this case study?

Are the Technologies and Teaching Approaches Chosen to Create Digital Projects Suitable for This Context?

As neither the teacher nor the students were experienced in creating digital projects this case study is put forward to show how 'doable' (Gee, 2007) this kind of course can be. It is important, as Stockwell (2012) notes, to use what technology is available and the students did indeed use several freely available resources to make their projects, and independently found other tools to use. In addition, the creation of digital projects, by themselves or with others, might be particularly appropriate for reluctant language learners, especially if they are encouraged to investigate academic areas that they are particularly interested in. This kind of autonomous learning about a specialist subject is not always possible in a more traditional lock step language classroom. The first author

found that he could spend more time than in a conventional classroom helping individual students identify what their needs were and that this was satisfying to him and motivating to students.

There is a caveat in that there is a tradeoff in using L2 to teach about technology. There is probably a minimum threshold level of English that the students need to have in order to benefit from instruction in English. If their L1 was used to teach about technology, then this is a lost opportunity for those learners to be exposed to the target language. It is likely that a more traditional language-focused classroom would have resulted in more language gains than one focusing on creating digital projects. It can be claimed that in carrying out their digital research and receiving individual feedback from the teacher students did have the potential to benefit from 'incidental learning' (Hulstijn, 2013) of English phrases, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. However, in a course with limited time for instruction, any teaching about technology must inevitably take time away from language specific instruction or practice. Many students might have increased their motivation and engagement in the course because of the digital aspect, but there is a need to be cautious about claims for technology itself (Carroll, 2013; Selwyn, 2014).

What Evidence is There That, Through Creating Digital Projects, Students Can Develop Communication and Digital Literacy Skills?

The students in this case study all created multimedia slideshows that included images, sounds, and video. Of course, these varied in quality, but overall the slideshows were creative, original works that showcased a variety of technical and language skills. For many students this was their first time to use different kinds of software tools to create a digital project, but they soon became technically competent and independent. As the

courses went on most slideshows became better organized, clearer, and made good use of different media.

There is also evidence from the students' own reflections that they improved their English communication skills. This was particularly true of many of the lower proficiency learners who found a way to express their ideas and imagination that bypassed the norms of a traditional language lesson. They were not pressured to perform and could produce a presentation which truly reflected their academic skills and interests. Higher proficiency students often have better developed communication skills by definition, so it is heartening to see their lower proficiency classmates performing well. As well as giving such students the opportunity for success in an English language class, the creation of digital projects had great potential for creativity, as evidenced by the original projects themselves. Furthermore, because they were given the opportunity to comment on the process, many students showed that they could be constructively critical about the course and their own performance. The creation of digital projects gave students a chance to reflect on the content, the presentation of ideas, and the choice of tools. These are possible in a traditional class setting, but the more experimental nature of a digital class might allow students more freedom of expression and could be 'very empowering' (Hafner, 2013, p. 833).

What Issues of Future Teacher Training and Development Can be Identified?

Hafner (2013) suggests that teachers embed opportunities to use the affordances of digital technology in an existing curriculum. This case study provides some proof that this can be done. Presentations that used to be conducted face to face were created and shared online using multimodal tools. These projects were not shared with a wider authentic

audience as they were limited to the classroom community. However, students were given a safe and private opportunity for the first time to become 'YouTubers,' and if they wanted to, they could share their work beyond the privacy of the classroom.

One important issue that teachers need to take account of is 'academic integrity' (Richardson, Hamilton, Gray, Waycott, & Clerehan, 2012); that is, using the resources that the internet can offer in an ethical and responsible manner. Students still needed guidance in how to use online materials and other, perhaps taken-for-granted issues, such as privacy and the ethical use of web resources, need to be highlighted more than they were. The issue of academic integrity and digital resources is only just beginning to be addressed in EFL courses, but as the use of multimedia will inevitably grow both teachers and students will need more guidance (Cowie & Sakui, 2015), so that 'students [can] have a clear understanding of the values and conventions that operate in the culture(s) – and particularly the academic … cultures – in which they live and work' (Chun, Kern, & Smith, 2016, p. 69).

A second issue for teacher development is that of the assessment of such digital projects, about which 'so far little has been said' (Hafner, Chik, & Jones, 2015, p. 5). This case study gives some indication that a combination of the use of rubrics and self-assessment is a fruitful way forward. Teachers unfamiliar with rubric use, however, might need some assistance and training in using them (see Jeong, 2015, for an example of such training in an EFL context).

When encouraging students to create, share, and comment on digital projects the teacher's role will probably be very different from a more traditional language lesson. First, teachers will need to have some level of 'technological fluency' (Godwin-Jones, 2015b, p. 11), meaning that they should be familiar with and have a willingness to use

digital tools. However, this responsibility does not have to rest entirely upon the teacher's shoulders. It also is a great opportunity for teachers 'to form partnerships with students in mastering the process of learning' (Gros, 2016, p. 18) and to share their experiences and knowledge about various applications. In order to encourage this, teachers need to allow students greater autonomy and initiative than they might in other kinds of lessons.

Similarly, when creating digital projects, students need time for background research and the creation of their projects. These periods of independent learning can then be used as excellent opportunities for teachers to monitor and communicate directly with individual students. This style is more akin to coaching or a flipped classroom approach, which allows a teacher to give individuals precise advice and feedback (for a recent guide to using digital technology to flip language classrooms, see Loucky and Ware, 2017). Again, in order to do this the teacher must be willing to give up some measure of control and leadership.

Conclusion

This case study provides an in-depth description and analysis of one teacher's attempt to encourage EFL students in a Japanese university setting the use of digital technology to create multimedia projects. This study provides evidence that a teacher and students with limited expertise in using such technology can work together to create skillful and thoughtful multimedia slideshows in the learners' L2. The slideshows described in this study were not the result of a particularly 'techy' institution, but they showcase practical learning outcomes in a typical university setting in Japan. The study is, therefore, one that can help other second or foreign language teachers who wish to take advantage of the increasing availability of digital technology to combine language learning with

multimedia literacy. It is also an example of how the making of such digital projects might aid the development of communicative language skills and digital literacy.

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Japanese University Students' Perspectives on the TOEIC Test

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Abstract

With the percentage of nonnative speakers of English in the world far surpassing native speakers, the importance of language testing, not least in Japan, is clear. Many large corporations in Japan now consider TOEIC scores when hiring new employees. This is reflected in the increasing number of Japanese universities which now use the TOEIC Listening and Reading test to give language credits. In light of such significance being attached to language assessment, this study sought to identify Japanese university students' experiences of, and attitudes towards, the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, as well as their preferences for other language tests. Through a research design with both quantitative (n = 95) and qualitative (n = 9) aspects, the study revealed student concerns that vocabulary in the TOEIC was impractical for their daily life. There was also evidence of dissatisfaction with restrictions on making memos or marks on the answer sheet during the test. Students also displayed a desire to take language proficiency tests other than the TOEIC Listening and Reading test. It is hoped that this research will assist Japanese university administrators when deciding which language proficiency test to use in their institutions.

Keywords: TOEIC, EIKEN, Japanese university students, vocabulary, validity

With the popularity of the Test Of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Listening and Reading test in Japan, it is not surprising that there has been plenty of research on its use at Japanese universities. Robb and Ercanbrack (1999) studied the effect of direct test preparation on the TOEIC scores of Japanese university students. Takahashi (2012) looked at how the TOEIC was incorporated into curricula at Japanese universities and the impact it has had on the

teaching and learning of English at Japanese universities. Tokunaga (2008) investigated students' assumptions regarding TOEIC in an attempt to bridge the gap between teachers and learners.

Having taught for over ten years in Japanese universities, frequently to students who must take the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, I have heard many observations from students on the subject of sitting the TOEIC test, thus providing the impetus for this research. What exactly is the nature of these comments and are student complaints about the test valid? Why do university students, who were usually exposed to the EIKEN test in junior and senior high school, have to switch to taking the TOEIC in university? Do they want to take other language tests?

To answer these questions, in this paper I first examine language testing at Japanese universities and the degree to which the TOEIC is used in universities. This is followed by a discussion on issues with the TOEIC, specifically with reference to validity and reliability. The influence that vocabulary knowledge has on students' abilities to successfully pass both the TOEIC and EIKEN (Test in Practical English Proficiency – *Jitsuyo Eigo Gino Kentei*) tests is also examined. These issues were then put in context by investigating Japanese university students' attitudes to certain aspects of the TOEIC, namely; the degree of experience university students have had with both the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, and the EIKEN test. Students' opinions on the regulations that prevent them from making any marks on the TOEIC test paper or taking notes during the test were also established. Finally, students were asked whether or not they wish to take language tests other than the TOEIC while attending university. It is hoped that the research will better inform Japanese university administrators when it comes to choosing methods of language assessment at their institutions.

Literature Review

An Introduction to Language Assessment

Brown (1996) describes two families of language tests: norm-referenced testing (NRT) and criterion-referenced testing (CRT). NRTs measure overall language proficiency, such as academic listening ability and reading comprehension. Students' scores from such a test are judged relative to the scores of all other students taking the test. A typical NRT is the standardized test, which Bachman (1990) declares has three characteristics. First, standardized tests are based on fixed content and do not vary from one test to the next. Second, there are standard procedures for administering and scoring the tests. Finally, the tests are thoroughly researched and developed, and their reliability and validity are established. In contrast, Brown (1996) states that a CRT is made to measure clearly-defined and specific objectives that are often specific to a school or class. The interpretation of the scores from such tests is considered absolute and does not relate to the scores of other students. Brown adds that with CRTs the teacher focuses on how much of the material the student knows: in other words, what percentage of material is known. Clifford (2016) tells us that NRTs compare students against each other, with test items being chosen to distinguish test takers of varying proficiencies. If it fails to "separate the 'best' from the 'rest' a test item is discarded" (p. 225).

Formative and Summative Assessment in Japanese Universities

Formative assessment attempts to give feedback to learners and, according to Lok, McNaught, and Young (2016), "focuses on improvements facilitated by information on what has been mastered and where weaknesses lie" (p. 451). Summative assessment as described by Taras (2005) is a "judgment which encapsulates all the evidence up to a

given point. This point is seen as a finality at the point of the judgment" (p. 468). Brown (1996) adds that summative assessments measure what students have learned, and typically take place at the end of a course or unit. Saito and Inoi (2017) note that the division between formative and summative is sometimes not clear because assessment information can have both formative and summative purposes.

Tanaka (2012) writes that formative assessment was introduced in Japan in the 1970s. Forsythe (2015) observes that while language assessment in universities in Japan takes place in both formative and summative forms, Japanese universities increasingly rely on language tests such as TOEIC to provide a summative assessment of students' language abilities. Takahashi (2012) cites data from The Institute for International Business Communication (IIBC), the organization which manages the TOEIC tests in Japan on behalf of Educational Testing Service (ETS), which show that among 736 universities in Japan, 245 used TOEIC as proof of English proficiency for admission purposes in 2010. Furthermore, 305 universities issued credits based on TOEIC scores. In research on the use of the EIKEN, TOEFL, and TOEIC to award EFL course credits at Japanese universities, In'nami and Koizumi (2017) write that the use of TOEIC is more prevalent at private universities, where among 9,293 courses which used English language test results to award credits, TOEIC was the test used most often, with 35.34% of the total. At public universities, TOEIC was used for 26.91% of credit-awarding courses.

Validity and Reliability

According to Thomson (2012), a test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what it is supposed to measure. There are several different forms of validity, such as content,

criterion-related, predictive, construct, and face validity. Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) state that content validity in a test is shown "if the test actually samples the subject matter about which conclusions are to be drawn," and the test-taker must present what is being measured (p. 30). Criterion-related validity is gained by comparing the results to an independent and highly-dependable assessment. If the test accurately predicts a criterion that will occur in the future, such as, entrance to medical school, it is said to have predictive validity (McLeod, 2007). Construct validity shows that the test accurately reflects the construct or theory underlying it. For example, in a reading test, if vocabulary is considered to be more relevant than syntax, this should be borne out in the weighting of scores of vocabulary and syntax (Gonzalez, 1996). A test will have face validity if it appears to measure what it is supposed to. Hughes (2003) cites the example of a test with poor face validity as a test measuring pronunciation ability in which candidates do not have to speak.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) define reliability as the "consistency of measurement" (p. 19). In other words, if the findings from research are replicated consistently, they are reliable. It is often the case that the results are not the same each time the test is administered, perhaps due to changes in situations and participants. However, a strong positive correlation between the results indicates a high degree of reliability (McLeod, 2013).

Concerns Related to Validity and Reliability on the TOEIC L&R Test

Concerns regarding threats to validity in the TOEIC Listening and Reading test have been raised in the literature (Cunningham, 2002; Healy, 2015). It could be argued that the construct of the TOEIC Listening and Reading test is too narrow. It purports, by

definition, to test communication skills but only tests reading and listening skills, and instead, seeks to infer that a student has the ability to communicate. Bachman and Palmer (1996) warn us that test makers should avoid making the construct too narrow by limiting it to only one area of language. They write that construct validity is related to Target Language Use (TLU) tasks. The TLU domain is defined as follows: "A set of specific language use tasks that the test taker is likely to encounter outside of the test itself, and to which we want our inferences about language ability to generalize" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 44).

The TLU domain involves another area of language knowledge speaking, which requires abilities such as negotiating, persuading, and the use of metacognitive strategies. Cunningham (2002) supports this view, stating that the most common criticism of construct validity for the TOEIC is that it does not recognize the communicative competency of the test taker. In'nami and Koizumi (2017) also note that listening and reading skills are often only moderately correlated with speaking and writing skills, and cite research from Watson, Harmon, Surface, and McGinnis (2012) that reports moderate correlations from .58 to .67 between (non-participatory) listening and reading skills, and speaking skills.

Guidelines issued by ETS stipulate that "highlighters or aids of any kind are not allowed in the testing room," and that "test takers may not mark or underline words in the test book or make notes in the test book or on the answer sheet" (ETS, 2017a, p. 5). These guidelines effectively prevent test takers from taking memos or marking answer choices on the test sheet during the test. It is not difficult to imagine how this can affect weaker students already struggling to comprehend longer listening passages whilst reading the choices presented in the question. Aryadoust (2011) writes that the shifting of modalities

from listening to reading is greatly affected by the test takers' working memory, the organization of processing of short-term memory. He adds that this is especially true of weaker students, where the memory span can become overloaded which can negatively affect test performance. Sarich (2011) writes that this kind of problem substantiates claims that tests such as the TOEIC face questions about testing constructs other than language. As Chapman and Newfields (as cited in Sarich, 2011) point out, not allowing test takers to take notes in the TOEIC gives an advantage to those with better working memory, thus negatively affecting construct validity.

Nicholson (2015) writes that procedures are highly standardized in the TOEIC. Answers must be chosen by marking the letters (A), (B), (C), or (D) on a separate answer sheet, and dictionaries, papers, notes, rulers, calculators, and mobile phones or aids of any kind are not allowed into the testing room. As noted previously, test takers may not use pens or pencils to mark or underline words, nor can they take notes in the test book or on the answer sheet. These procedures give the appearance of a high degree of reliability to the test. However, as Nicholson (2015) argues, the reliability of the TOEIC is threatened due to the degree in which test familiarity can improve test scores. This can happen by taking the test many times or by taking test preparation courses. Thomson (2012) argues that the formalized style of the TOEIC allows students to use test-taking strategies to get a high score without knowing how to use the language.

Misuse of the TOEIC at Japanese Universities

Even though ETS warn that the TOEIC is not suitable for measuring university students' progress over a fifteen-week semester, Bresnihan (2013) warns that some universities ignore this advice and administer the TOEIC at the start of the semester and then again at

the end of the semester to gauge students' progress, utilizing the TOEIC as if it were criterion-referenced test. A 2007 survey of TOEIC utilization at 306 universities and junior colleges carried out by ETS revealed that 156 schools (51%) used the TOEIC to award credits. Furthermore, 21% of the schools taking part in the survey said they hoped to use the TOEIC to grant credits in the future (ETS, 2007). This is problematic if universities are granting credits based on improved TOEIC scores across a semester. ETS state that the errors of measurement related with two administrations of the test are called standard error of difference, and are approximately plus or minus 35 scaled score points each for the Listening and Reading sections of the TOEIC (ETS, 2013). According to Bresnihan (2013), this allows for a comparison of scores between the two tests with 68% confidence. A confidence of 95% would require two standard errors of difference, or plus or minus 69 points. Bresnihan makes the obvious point that if these standard errors of differences are not noted by university faculty and administrators, it might result in unfair decisions and erroneous practices.

Vocabulary and Language Proficiency Tests

Takahashi (2012) raises concerns about the disparity between the vocabulary students learn in high school and the vocabulary necessary to take the TOEIC test. This disparity was investigated in a study from Nakajo and Genung (2005) which used the British National Corpus to measure the difficulty of vocabulary in TOEIC practice tests, as well as in junior and senior high school textbooks. They found that the level of vocabulary covered in textbooks used in junior and senior high schools is not adequate to cover the TOEIC test. Nation (2001) has shown that learners need a coverage level of 95% to understand the meaning of texts, which corresponds to one unknown word per 20 words.

It was estimated that the junior and senior high school texts covered 88.7% of the TOEIC test, corresponding to one unknown word per 8.8 words. It is worth noting that earlier research from Chujo and Nishigaki (2003) on vocabulary levels measured using the British National Corpus High Frequency Word List (BNC HFWL) revealed that 2,950 words from the list were required to comprehend 95% of the words used in the EIKEN Grade 2 tests. The corresponding figure for the TOEIC test was 3,950 words. Further research from Chujo and Oghigian (2009) on vocabulary levels required to take TOEIC, TOEFL and EIKEN produced similar results, with approximately 3,103 words from the BNC HFWL needed for 95% coverage of EIKEN Grade 2 tests and 4,000 words from the BNC HFWL needed for 95% coverage of the TOEIC test.

Chujo and Nishigaki (2003) write that university students should be able to learn the extra one thousand words to bring their vocabulary levels up to the 3,950 words necessary for TOEIC. However, research from Bingham (2011) has shown that vocabulary development targeted at the TOEIC test is not easily acquired. In Bingham's research, students sought to learn 600 higher-level words from Lougheed's list (as cited in Bingham, 2011) through weekly intensive vocabulary exercises and weekly quizzes. Despite a significant amount of effort, it was found that there was no significant correlation between scores from the weekly vocabulary quizzes on the 600 words from Lougheed's list and the final post-course TOEIC results.

The following quote from ETS website serves to illustrate the problem some university faculty have with vocabulary from the TOEIC test: "For more than 30 years, the TOEIC Listening and Reading test has set the standard for assessing English-language listening and reading skills needed in the workplace" (ETS, 2015, para, 2). Most university students have not been "in the workplace," so are unlikely to have heard of

many of the business terms which appear in the TOEIC. Bresnihan (2013) adds that the lack of knowledge of such terms will result in some students having difficulties understanding the context and content of some test items, leading to lower test scores for reasons other than language ability. It could be thus argued that the TOEIC test has poor content validity for tertiary level.

Outline of the TOEIC and EIKEN Tests

After the EIKEN test, the TOEIC is Japan's second most popular language test, with 2,556,000 applicants in 2015 (ETS, 2016a). The test is a Listening and Reading test (L/R) and is administered in two main formats: the Secure Program (SP) and the Institutional Program (IP). Trew (2007) notes that SP tests are administered by the TOEIC Steering Committee and IP tests are usually administered by individual companies and schools on dates fixed by the institutions that conduct the tests. ETS also offer a separate Speaking and Writing test, although it is not compulsory for those taking the L/R test. The number of those taking this Speaking and Writing test in 2015 stood at 26,300 and was a small fraction of those taking the L/R test in Japan (ETS 2016a). The L/R test is made up of 200 questions. The number of correct answers for each section is converted to a number on a scale of 5 to 495, with the maximum score being 990. ETS provide a score report to test takers. This gives a score from the listening section out of 495 and likewise for the reading section. The report then also lists up a series of abilities measured, such as "can infer gist in short sentences" and "can understand details in extended spoken texts," and lists proficiency on each ability on a scale of 1 to 100 (ETS, 2017b).

The EIKEN (Test in Practical English Proficiency – *Jitsuyo Eigo Gino Kentei*) is the most popular language test in Japan, with a total of 3,225,358 examinees between April

1, 2015 and March 31, 2016 (Eiken, 2016). Unlike the TOEIC, it provides leveled testing and gives sample benchmarks that match each level with different sections in the school system, from junior high school through to university (EIKEN, 2018). Depending on the level, the test features all four skills, with writing added to Grade Pre 2 and Grade 3 levels from the summer of 2017 (EIKEN, 2017).

In comparison with the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, secondary school students in Japan are more familiar with the EIKEN. Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, there were 2,270,708 junior and senior high school EIKEN examinees, with 66,393 university examinees (EIKEN, 2016). This trend is reversed at the tertiary level, where in 2015, 423,281 university students took the TOEIC IP test, with 36,963 high school students taking the TOEIC IP test (ETS, 2016a).

Research Methodology

Purpose

Feedback from students in my university TOEIC classes has alluded to certain frustrations with the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, and provided the impetus for this research. The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of student perceptions of the TOEIC, thus better informing university faculty and administrators about the suitability of the TOEIC for use at the tertiary level. It is also hoped that this will in turn facilitate a discussion on possible alternatives to the TOEIC test. The objectives were to: (1) gain a better understanding of students' views on their experiences of taking the TOEIC Listening and Reading test; and (2) determine students' level of experience with both the TOEIC Listening and Reading test and the EIKEN and to what extent they wish to take other language proficiency tests.

Research Questions

These objectives led to the formation of three research questions. These are:

1. What are Japanese university students' perceptions of the TOEIC Listening and Reading Test?
2. What experience do Japanese university students with the TOEIC Listening and Reading test and the EIKEN?
3. What preferences do Japanese university students display for language tests other than the TOEIC Listening and Reading test?

Participants

The sample for the quantitative element of the research was drawn from Japanese university students in their second or third years of an English Communications undergraduate program at a large private university in western Japan. The final sample size was 95. The sample for the qualitative aspect of the research was also drawn from these classes and consisted of nine students. Their proficiency was approximately B1 (higher proficiency) or B2 (lower proficiency) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (ETS, 2016b). The students must take the TOEIC Listening and Reading test at least twice a year in this course.

Research Instruments

Given that the research sought to create a discussion among university faculty and administrators about the suitability of using TOEIC at the tertiary level, it was thought that a mixed-methods research design featuring both qualitative and quantitative aspects would facilitate students in revealing information that the author might not have thought

to enquire about in the quantitative aspect. The research used two instruments: a short questionnaire featuring eighteen questions, and a series of five semi-structured interviews with pairs of students. To better identify the language proficiency tests students knew of, students of a similar English ability and majoring in English at a different university were asked to name the language tests that they had heard of. Apart from the TOEIC and EIKEN, most students could only identify the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) as alternative language tests. Closed-ended items in the form of Likert-scale, semantic differential scale, and forced-choice type questions were used. The questions were translated into Japanese to avoid misunderstanding and piloted with students in a different university and with similar language proficiency, thus helping to improve reliability. The questionnaire was administered online through Survey Monkey (Survey Monkey Inc., 2017) in the participants' L1 and remained accessible for two weeks. The interviews were carried out in pairs in the belief that students would be more comfortable in the presence of classmates.

Findings and Analysis

Experience of Taking the TOEIC and EIKEN Tests

Figure 1 (TOEIC) and Figure 2 (EIKEN) illustrate the level of experience students have had taking both tests. Students reported having had more experience with the TOEIC, with more than 50% reporting that they have taken the test five times or more (49), and over 90% (88) reporting that they had taken it at least three times. More than a third of the respondents had taken the EIKEN at least three times (37), and one fifth (19) stated they had never taken the test.

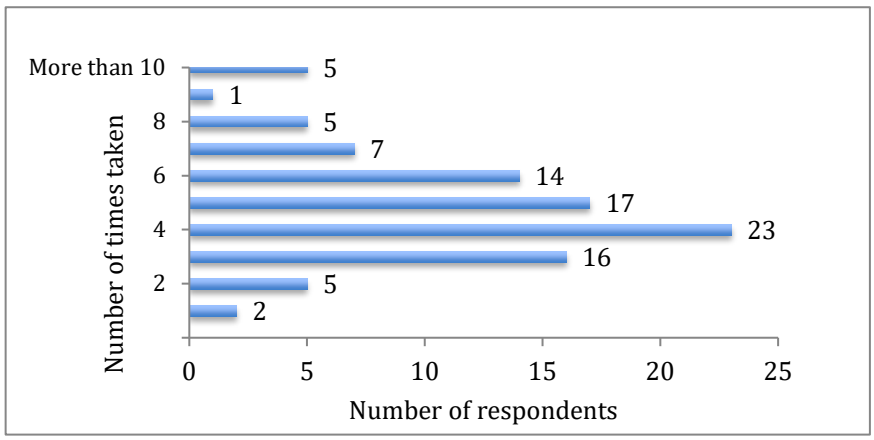

Figure 1. Result of a questionnaire that asked participants (*n* = 95) how many times they had taken the TOEIC.

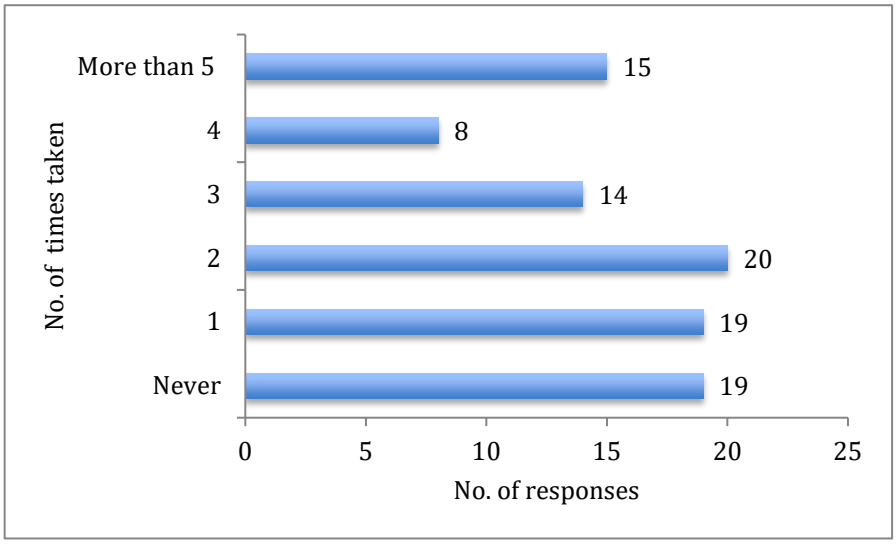

Figure 2. Result of a questionnaire that asked participants (*n* = 95) how many times they had taken the EIKEN.

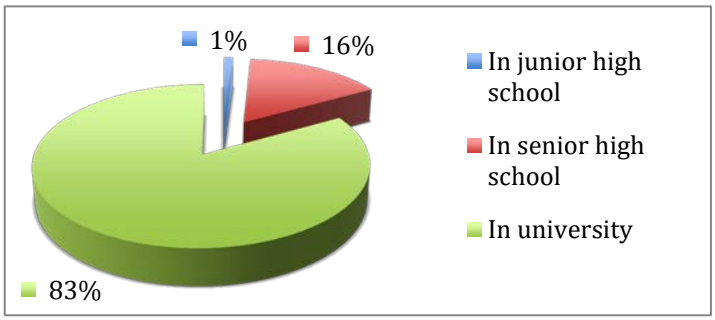

Figure 3. Results of a questionnaire that asked participants (n = 95) when they first took the TOEIC.

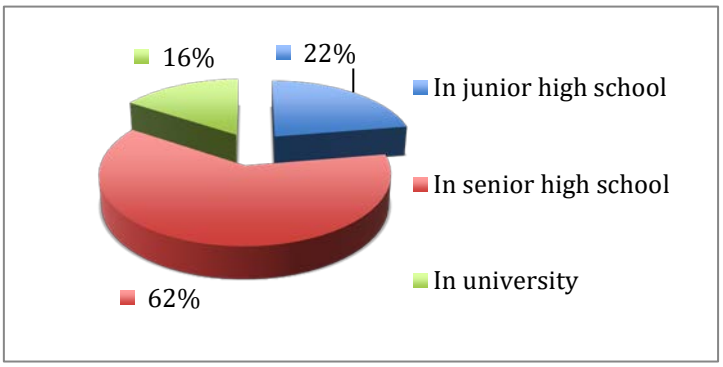

Figure 4. Results of a questionnaire that asked participants (n = 95) when they first took the EIKEN.

I wrote in the literature review that the EIKEN was the predominant English language test in Japanese secondary schools, and that the TOEIC was more popular than the EIKEN at the tertiary level. This trend is repeated in the results of this study, and Figures 3 and 4 reveal that over 83% of students took the TOEIC for the first time in university. Almost 62% of the students said that they last took the EIKEN test in senior high school, and over 22% did so in junior high school. Only a small number (16%) said they had taken the EIKEN test while at university.

Language Test Preferences at Universities

More than three quarters (68) of the students stated that they wished to take a language test other than the TOEIC (Figure 5) with the TOEFL being the most popular choice at 60% (56). The relatively high number of students who expressed a desire to take the TOEIC (44, or 91%) is supported by comments that students made in the interviews regarding the necessity of having a good TOEIC score when looking for a job, and by the belief that having a good TOEIC score would boost their chances of getting a job – 91 % (see Figure 6). A large proportion of the students (44%) expressed a desire to take the EIKEN at university, with 78% of them (Figure 6) believing that the EIKEN would help them find a job. Comments made by students in the interview indicate that they valued the speaking component of the EIKEN test. One student noted, "EIKEN has a speaking part and I like that." Another student said, "I have taken EIKEN before and found it easier than TOEIC. I also think it's closer to my daily life."

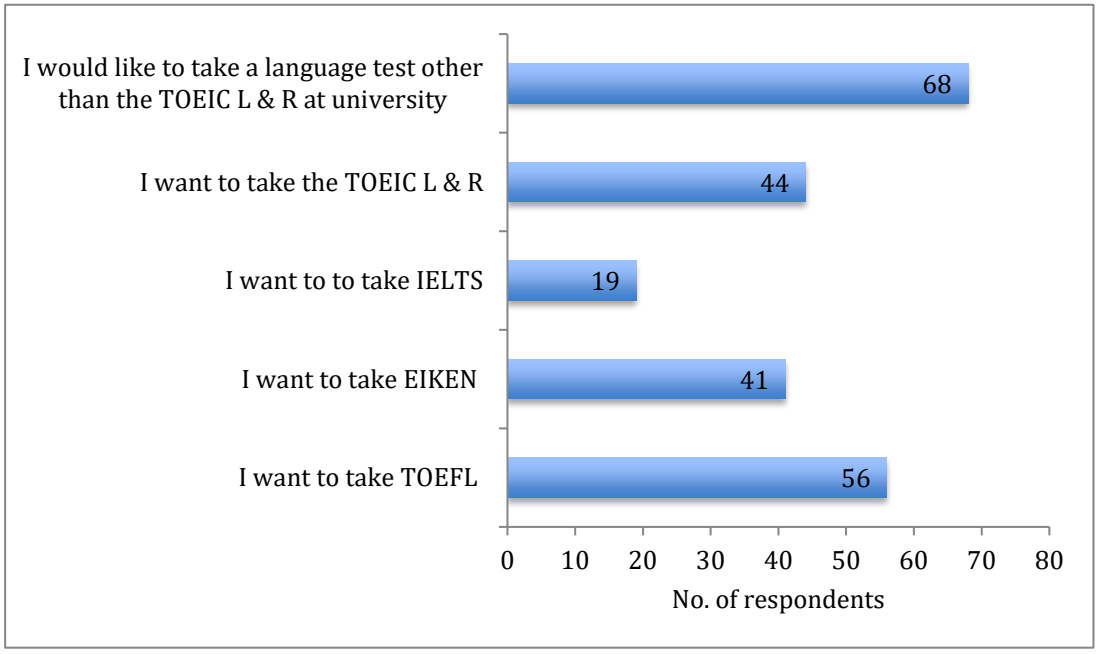

Figure 5. Language test preferences at university (*n = 95*; multiple answers acceptable).

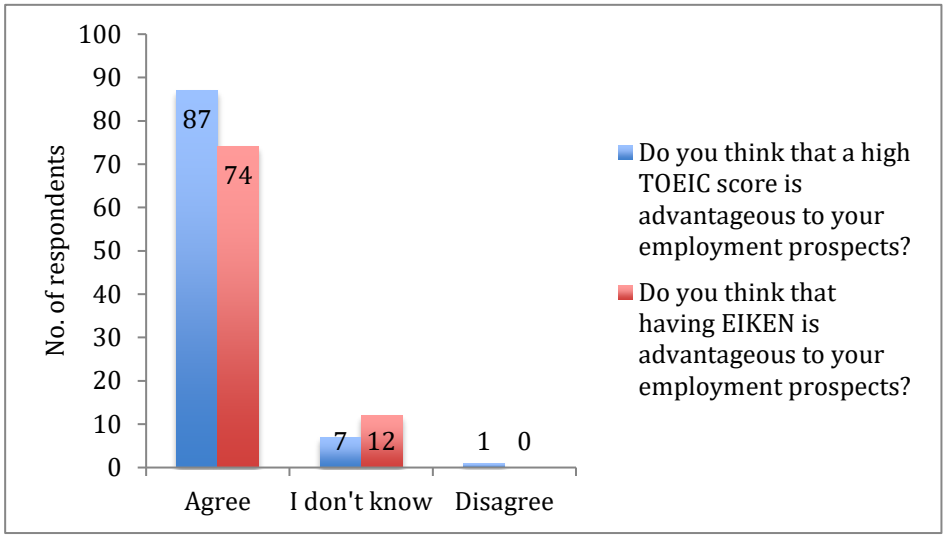

Figure 6. Perceived influence of TOEIC and EIKEN test scores on employment prospects (*n = 95*).

Improving Language Skills with TOEIC

A large majority of students (94.7%) agreed that the TOEIC benefited their reading and listening skills (see Figure 7), but were much more ambivalent about how beneficial the TOEIC was for their speaking skills with approximately half of the students replying that it was not useful. Replies were also similar about writing, and almost half of the students stated that they did not feel the TOEIC improved their writing skills (46.3%).

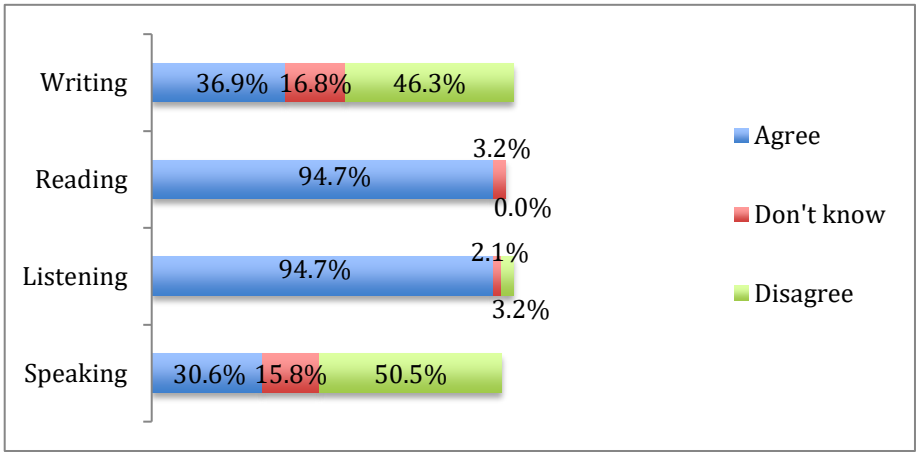

Figure 7. Perceived improvement in writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills as reported by participants (*n = 95*).

TOEIC and Vocabulary

When asked whether they thought the vocabulary studied for the TOEIC was useful for English communication ability, 71.6% of students replied affirmatively (see Figure 8).

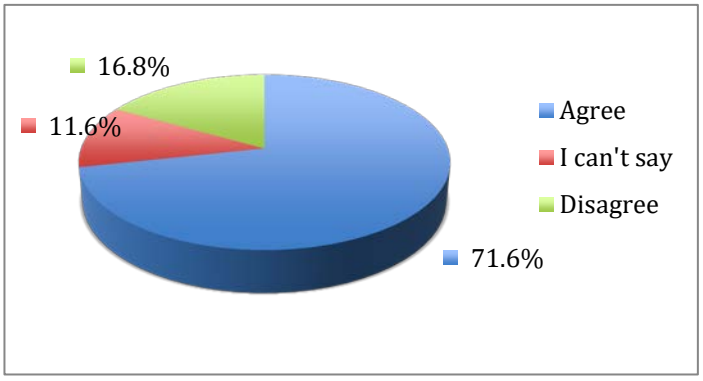

Figure 8. The percentage of students who found the TOEIC useful for their English communication ability (*n = 95*).

This would seem to contradict student replies given to the question of whether TOEIC was useful in improving writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Figure 7 shows that only approximately one third of students agree that the TOEIC improved their speaking and writing skills (30.6% and 36.9% respectively). Most comments in the interviews also revealed doubts that higher TOEIC scores mean a person could communicate well in English. For example, Student A said, "My Dad often complains that at his company they often employ staff who enter with high TOEIC scores and great confidence in their English ability, but when it comes to communicating in English, they can't!", to which Student B agreed: "People who do not speak English well can also get high scores." Student C, however, disagreed: "People who spoke English well tended to get a good score." Student D expressed the view that the vocabulary they learned in the TOEIC was not useful in their everyday lives and seemed to have more relevance to the

business world rather than their studies at university. He said, "When we communicate with foreign people, the words we use are pretty different from those we find in TOEIC."

TOEIC and Motivation

Although the data reveal that more than three quarters of the students (77%) agreed that taking the TOEIC test motivates them to study (see Figure 10), comments made by Student E in the interviews point to the difficulties that some students have with the TOEIC:

> I signed up for an extra TOEIC class in the Language Center at the start of term but gave up after a few weeks because it was so difficult. The vocabulary is too difficult and not related to my life at university.

Comments such as this support claims made by Bresnihan (2013) that students are unlikely to have heard of many of the workplace terms that appear in the TOEIC and will thus have difficulty understanding the context.

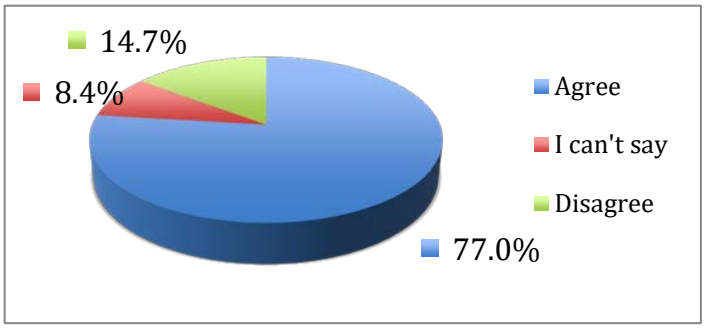

Figure 10. Responses to the statement "Taking the TOEIC motivates me to study English" (*n = 95*).

Restrictions on the Use of Pencils and Note-Taking in the TOEIC

With respect to the regulations that prevent students from underlining parts of the questions and also taking memos, Figure 11 shows that there is clear evidence that a large

majority of students want to be able to do so (77%). Figure 12 shows that students believe this would be particularly effective in the listening sections. The student interviews also point to frustrations with these restrictions. Student E said:

> In tests before coming to university, of course we always did it (make notes, underline etc.), but when I first took TOEIC at university and discovered I was not allowed to take notes, I was shocked. I can't understand the reason why we are not allowed to make notes.

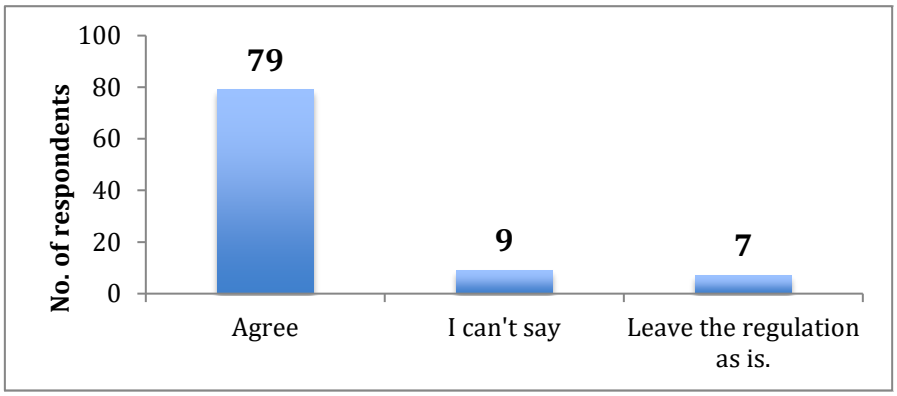

Figure 11. Responses to the statement "I feel it would be good to be able to underline parts, and take a memo when taking the TOEIC test" (*n = 95*).

When asked if they had difficulties recalling answer choices in Parts 1 and 2 of the Listening sections in the TOEIC (unlike Parts 3 and 4, answer choices are not written in the answer sheet for Parts 1 and 2), 53.1% of students answered affirmatively (see Figure 13). One student's comment shows that test takers would appreciate being able to make a mark on the sheet as they listen: "When I listen and have to make a choice from A, B, C, or D, I put an eraser or pencil-top next to the choice I think is correct as I listen and then mark the answer to the answer sheet".

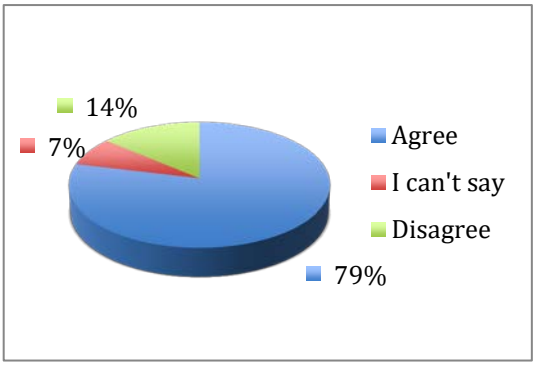

Figure 12. Responses to the statement, "I would be better able to answer in the Listening part of the test if I could write a memo on the test sheet" (n = 95).

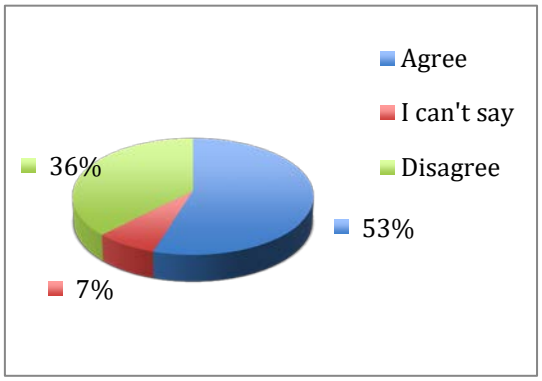

Figure 13. Responses to the statement, "It is difficult to recall the answer choices for Parts 1 and 2 in the Listening section" (n = 95).

Discussion

Answering Research Question 1

The main research question concerned students' attitudes towards the TOEIC Listening and Reading test. The quantitative aspect of the research showed that although students generally had a positive view of the TOEIC L & R test, they were less sure of the benefits TOEIC brought to their language skills, particularly writing and speaking. This indicates

a certain level of dissatisfaction with a test that focuses solely on listening and reading skills. It can be argued that measuring these skills is not the function of the TOEIC L & R test. Nevertheless, students showed a strong preference for taking language tests other than the TOEIC L & R, most likely because such tests feature a speaking and writing component.

Student comments regarding the complexity of vocabulary in the TOEIC test, and the fact that vocabulary is not relevant to their everyday lives should be of concern to faculty and administrators who seek to utilize TOEIC in university curricula. Academic self-concept, which Preckel, Rach, and Scherrer (2017) define as "a person's knowledge and perceptions about his or her academic ability in a specific academic domain," is thought to influence listening comprehension through listening anxiety (p. 2). Wolfgramm, Suter, and Goksel (2016) claim that a lack of confidence in listening comprehension ability makes students susceptible to anxiety, which in turn affects listening comprehension. These authors also remark that knowledge of vocabulary has a strong impact on listening and reading comprehension for second language learners. Similar concerns were expressed in research conducted by Chujo and Oghigian (2009) who observed that there was a considerable difference in the vocabulary sizes needed for 95% coverage between the higher levels of the EIKEN and the lower levels. They comment that students with lower proficiency will most likely struggle to understand the TOEIC, which requires 3,950 words for 95% coverage, but might be better able to cope with the lower word counts for the Grade 2 of the EIKEN test (3,103 words for 95% coverage).

Results showing that more than half of the students had difficulty recalling the answer choices in Parts 1 and 2 of the Listening give credence to the concerns raised by

Chapman and Newfield (2008) that construct validity in the TOEIC was compromised due to students not being able to make notes on the tests paper during the test.

Answering Research Question 2

The first sub-research question asked the degree of student experience with the TOEIC Listening and Reading test and the EIKEN tests. It was found that the experience of those students in the sample matched the trends occurring on a larger scale within schools and universities in Japan and which were alluded to earlier in the Literature Review.

It is not clear why university students are forced to make this change from the EIKEN to the TOEIC when they enter university. Takahashi (2012) reveals that externally-administered English proficiency tests were first proposed as goals of teaching English at junior and senior high schools in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) document from 2002 titled, *A Strategic Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities*. At that time, goals were set for various levels of the EIKEN test. MEXT have continued with this policy and the 2011 policy document *Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication* declares that education boards and schools are to actively use EIKEN and other external certification tests to assess and verify students' attainment of English proficiency (MEXT, 2011). Sarich (2012) observes that some high schools and universities now allow students to submit their EIKEN scores as an alternative to taking private entrance examinations as proof of language proficiency. If universities consider the EIKEN to be a suitable way of evaluating the proficiency of entrants on admission, it would seem logical that they would at least offer it to students as a way to measure any gains in language proficiency while they are at the university.

The appeal of the TOEIC test to university administrators might lie in the "internationalization" of TOEIC. That term features in the title, whereas EIKEN has no such appeal. However, as Jenkins and Leung (2014) point out, the "international" in tests such as TOEIC and TOEFL refers to where these tests are used and marketed, rather than any sense of how English is used in the tests.

Answering Research Question 3

Over 75% (68) of the students expressed a wish to take a language test other than the TOEIC while at university, making for a clear answer to the second sub-research question. However, which asked about their preferences for language tests other than TOEIC. However, as noted earlier in the Research Methodology section, student knowledge of tests other than the TOEIC is rather limited. This will most likely change soon as MEXT has released details of its plans from 2020 to change how the language proficiency of university applicants is measured. From 2020 MEXT plans to assess applicants' language proficiency either through privately operated language tests or by using a combination of privately run tests and examinations managed by the government-sponsored test center (MEXT, 2017). It is expected that applicants will be allowed to take these tests twice in the year before entering university and the highest scores from these tests will allow the applicants to be graded in six levels based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Mainichi Japan, 2017, May 16). If these proposals are carried out, it is not unreasonable to expect that university students will have had a far greater exposure to common standardized language proficiency tests by the time they enter university. This might make it easier for universities to use more of these tests in their curricula.

Recommendations

Considering the points raised in this research, namely student dissatisfaction with elements of the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, including the difficulty of and size of vocabulary required for the test, restrictions on using pencils and annotating in the test, and finally, student familiarity with the EIKEN tests, a case can be made that universities should offer a wider range of language tests in their curricula.

Knapman (2008) writes that the underlying model of language in the TOEIC Listening and Reading test is cognitive and predisposed towards indirect language testing, rather than the more communicative and contemporary theories of language which emphasize social and interactional roles that are used in other tests. University students might appreciate alternatives, such as the Test of English for Academic Purposes (TEAP), a four-skills based test recently developed in collaboration between EIKEN and Sophia University (Nakatsuhara, 2014).

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

The most significant limitation of this study is the relatively small sample sizes for both the qualitative ($n = 9$) and quantitative ($n = 95$) aspects of the study. Additionally, the fact that both samples are drawn from just one university, and feature students specializing in the same academic discipline limits the degree to which the findings can be generalized.

Although the small sample sizes in this research make it difficult to generalize the findings, further research might focus in more detail on how students feel their knowledge of vocabulary affects their ability to gain higher scores on the TOEIC. More in-depth research could also be conducted to focus on whether the opinions expressed by students

in the sample are dependent on either their subject major or the participants' language proficiency.

Conclusion

It should be clear that the choice of language tests at the tertiary level requires careful consideration. Certain tests might be convenient for benchmarking students' scores, but if students' concerns about the suitability of the test to measure their ability to communicate are not addressed, students will likely lose motivation and become less interested in advancing their English language skills. Furthermore, university faculty and administrators need to understand exactly which language skills can be measured with these tests.

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Exploration of the Benefits of Process Approaches to Writing Instruction to High School English Learners

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Abstract
This paper discusses L2 (English) writing instruction in Japanese high schools in relation to the Ministry of Education's (MEXT) Global Human Resource initiative. The aim is to determine whether process approaches to writing instruction can be applied to L2 learners' difficulties. Five third-year Japanese high school students' writing samples were analysed for difficulties using a rubric based on Cambridge English Language Assessment methods. The problem areas were determined and suggestions on how to incorporate process writing techniques in these areas are included. Overall it was concluded that a genre-process approach to writing instruction could benefit the students in the study.

Keywords: high school, MEXT, writing instruction, process approach

Learning to write is a complex and challenging task for language learners (Hedge, 2000; Nunan, 1999). For first language (L1) learners, speaking and listening are universally naturally learned, however, writing and reading are "culturally specific, learned behaviours" that must be taught (Brown, 2001, p. 334). Traditionally, writing instruction for second language (L2) learners was considered less important than listening and speaking (Susser, 1994) and even now writing practice is often relegated to homework and takes place in unsupported conditions of learning (Hedge, 2000). However, communicative competence involves all four language skills, and to be successful in the current context of academic and professional global mobility,

L2 learners need to be able to write coherently and appropriately in a range of formats (Brown, 2001).

This paper examines L2 (English) writing in a Japanese high school within the context of the Japanese Ministry of Education's Global Human Resource initiative. The goal is to determine areas of student writing difficulty and the extent to which genre-process approaches to writing instruction can help Japanese high school L2 learners improve in these areas. First, this paper presents a brief overview of writing approaches and the context of the study. Then an analysis of five samples of student writing provides evidence of areas of difficulty, and selected techniques from process writing are applied to these problem areas.

Approaches to Writing Instruction

Traditionally, L2 writing instruction focused on the final product. Product-oriented approaches to writing focus on language structures, vocabulary, and accuracy (Badger & White, 2000), and are associated with teaching methods, such as the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods, which use writing to promote language learning through models. Process-oriented approaches are generally thought to have developed in response to these product-oriented pedagogies (Hyland, 2003; Leki & Silva, 2004; Susser, 1994). There is, moreover, widespread agreement that adopting a process approach to writing instruction helps L2 writers (Brown, 2001; Elbow, 1973; Hedge, 2000, 2005). The general format and benefits of process writing approaches are discussed below.

Process approaches focus on the importance of understanding the writing process, with consequent focus on generating ideas and creating texts through the various writing stages of planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Brown, 2001). Furthermore, writing is

seen as a recursive process in which writers may return to any stage at any point (Hyland, 2003). At the planning stage, students determine their audience, generate ideas, and develop a sense of purpose (Tompkins, 1992). At the drafting stage, students start writing their first draft. This writing stage, however, is often interrupted by writers stopping to reread what they have written, revise their plans, and add new ideas. Teachers, peers and the writers themselves give feedback on the drafts and the writers revise based on this. The final stage – editing – is done once the main ideas are well-organised; at this point the writers edit for errors in accuracy, such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

The teacher's role in process-oriented approaches is to be a facilitator who guides and monitors the students through the writing process and ensures they develop the skills necessary to generate, draft and refine their ideas in a variety of genres (Hyland, 2003). As these skills include analysing problems, reflecting on the task and setting goals (Hyland, 2003), teachers are also helping develop the students' metacognitive awareness of the writing process.

Teaching and Learning Context

Recently, the Japanese government recognised the need to foster globally competitive human resources through their national education and training systems (Yonezawa, 2014). According to the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT), a global human resource has linguistic and communication ability (i.e., speaking and writing ability in social, academic, and business situations) in a foreign language, particularly in English, as well as fundamental competencies for working persons (including the ability to think well, ask questions, plan, and create) (Yonezawa, 2014).

However, the English instruction approach in many Japanese pre-tertiary schools

remains heavily reliant on *yakudoku* (the grammar-translation method), which involves the verbatim translation of written English into Japanese with grammatical explanations given in Japanese (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). A study by Sakui (2004) found that Japanese junior and senior high school students spend most of their class time in teacher-fronted grammar explanations, chorus reading, and vocabulary drills. Furthermore, most students have little practice in writing English, as English assessment in Japan (including the university entrance exams) relies heavily on multiple-choice tests (Gorsuch, 1998). Consequently, students have little opportunity to produce written English. This can be seen in the results of the 2015 iBT TOEFL test. The average writing score of Japanese examinees was 17 (out of 30), ranking lowest in Asia (Educational Testing Service, 2016). Therefore, to achieve MEXT's goal of preparing global human resources with social, academic, and business communication ability, there is a need to help Japanese learners improve their writing.

Participants and Samples

The five participants are third-year high school students in Japan. All students have taken at least five years of English language instruction in the public-school system and are planning to attend university. The samples are taken from work done in an elective conversation-based English class. Participation in the study was voluntary, and required students to provide a piece of writing that was previously finished as part of the class.

Five students volunteered to participate and provided one sample each. The samples were taken from five different writing activities to reflect the different types of writing in social, academic, and business contexts. A brief introduction to the samples is given in Table 1, which includes the sample style, the situation in which it was written, and its

context. The full samples are provided in Appendix A. The sentences in the samples are numbered for reference, and examples are extracted and discussed throughout the analysis.

Table 1
Writing sample information

Sample number	Style	Situation	Context
1	Short answer	Test	Academic
2	Essay	Test	Academic
3	Written transcript of a presentation	First speaker's part of a group presentation	Academic/business
4	Personal essay	Homework assignment	Social
5	Informal letter	Homework assignment	Social/business

Evaluation Method

The students' writing was evaluated using Cambridge English (2015) General and Business English Writing assessment criteria. Cambridge English Language Assessment tests use four categories to assess writing proficiency: content, communicative achievement, organisation, and language. Content includes the use of relevant and sufficient ideas, the level of ideas, and knowledge of the target audience. Communicative achievement includes using the appropriate format and register for the genre. Organisation includes logically ordering the ideas and having the appropriate length. Language includes the accuracy and range of the vocabulary and grammar, as well as mechanics, such as spelling and punctuation. A rubric was created from these categories to assess the samples for problem areas (see Table 2). See Appendix B for definitions of the criteria.

Table 2

Areas of difficulty across the five samples

		Assessment				
Assessment criteria		**Sample 1**	**Sample 2**	**Sample 3**	**Sample 4**	**Sample 5**
Content	**Relevant**	Unclear	Yes	Yes	No	No
	Sufficient	No	No	No	Yes	No
	Ideas	Simple	Simple	Complex	Simple	Simple
	Knowledge of audience	Sufficient (Teacher)	Sufficient (Teacher)	Insufficient (Classmates)	Sufficient (Teacher)	Insufficient (Stranger)
Communicative Achievement	**Genre**	Short answer	Essay	Presentation	Personal essay	Informal letter
	Format	Inappropriate	Inappropriate	N/A	Inappropriate	Inappropriate
	Register	Appropriate	Inappropriate	Inappropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Organisation	**Logical sequence**	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
	Appropriate length	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
	Cohesive devices	Simple	Simple	Simple/ complex	Simple	Simple

Analysis of Samples

The samples were evaluated for areas of difficulty in the four categories. The errors were then tabulated under the rubric subcategories. Table 2 summarises the problem areas for each sample in the content, communicative achievement, and organisation subcategories, and Table 3 shows the type and number of occurrences of language errors in the samples. The full assessment for each sample is provided in Appendix C. The following sections discuss the findings for each assessment category.

Table 3

Number of language errors by type

Language (number of errors)			**Sample 1**	**Sample 2**	**Sample 3**	**Sample 4**	**Sample 5**
Accuracy	**Vocabulary**	**Word choice**	4	4	11	12	3
		Word order	2	1	1	1	0
	Grammar	**Article**	1	1	5	5	4
		Preposition	1	8	2	2	3
		Pronoun	0	0	1	0	0
		Plural	0	0	5	0	0
		Subject	0	1	1	0	3
		Verb form	0	0	6	0	0
		Verb tense	0	2	6	0	0
	Mechanics	**Spelling**	2	1	0	0	1
		Punctuation	0	0	5	1	4
Range		**Vocabulary**	Simple	Simple	Simple	Simple	Simple
		Grammar	Simple	Simple	Complex	Simple	Simple

Content

Three problem areas were identified: insufficient or overly simple content, irrelevant content, and a lack of audience awareness. Samples 1, 2, 4, and 5 provided simple levels of content matter and insufficient content. For example, in Sample 1, the writer answered whether men and women can be best friends by writing:

> (3) Firstly, we can know the difference between men and women through the friend. (4) If I have dates, I can ask something to a boy friend easily. (5) Also a boy friend helps me when I have some probrems.

This indicates a lack of idea expansion as there are no examples of differences or problems in sentences four and five. Moreover, the use of the generic *something* in sentence four

and *some probrems* in sentence five show a lack of idea specificity.

Furthermore, Samples 1, 4, and 5 include unclear or irrelevant content. In Sample 1, it is unclear in sentences four and five (above) if the writer is referring to men and women as friends or *best* friends, as the question asks. In Sample 4, the answer for the question 'What do you want to do during the summer vacation?' was:

> (9) Second, I want to travel around the world. (10) The place I want to visit the best is Singapore. (11) Because I want to see Merlion, go to Sentosa Island and see the night view. (12) The next is America. (13) I want to see world Heritage there. (14) For example, Statue of Liberty, Grand Canyon and Yellowstone. (15) I have never been to foreign countries. (16) Therefore I'll speak well in the future and I want to make a lot of friends in all over the world. (17) I want to study English hard for that reason.

This paragraph shows that the student has misunderstood the question. Sentence 17 indicates that the writer is answering the question, 'What do you want to do in the future?'.

Finally, Samples 3 and 5 revealed a lack of audience awareness. For example, in Sample 5, the writer was asked to write a letter to someone visiting Japan for the first time giving advice on places to visit, and wrote:

> (4) First you should visit Osaka catle, it's very famous place.
> (5) Also, many people visit there at sightseeing.
> (6) Second, you should watch "Yoshimoto-Shinigeki".
> (7) it's very exciting. (8) Also, it could watch TV show on Saturday.
> (9) Third, you should go to the "Kaiyukan".
> (10) it can very relax. (11) Also, I went to there many times when I was elementary school student.
> (12) I was very fun!

Despite not knowing if the reader can speak Japanese, the writer includes the Japanese names of a Japanese-language TV show in sentence six, and an aquarium in sentence nine, which may make these ideas difficult for the reader to understand. Also, watching a

Japanese-language TV show may be an inappropriate activity if the reader cannot speak Japanese.

Organisation

Samples 2, 4, and 5 showed a lack of organisational knowledge. In Sample 2, the thesis statement does not appear until sentence five in a paragraph of seven sentences. In Samples 4 and 5, there is a lack of transition between topics due to the lack of linking words in the first paragraph of Sample 4, and the lack of paragraphs in Sample 5. Furthermore, Samples 2 and 5 are of insufficient length, as the students used only half of the allotted writing space.

Communicative Achievement

The samples were compared to Trinity College London's (2017) genre writing guide to assess format and register. Lack of appropriate format indicates a lack of genre awareness in Samples 1, 2, 4, and 5. For example, Sample 2 shows the writer's general lack of understanding of the exposition genre, which is revealed by the lack of lexically dense sentences and the repetition of phrases. The writer repeats the phrase *use smartphone with walking* five times in a 96-word exposition. Samples 2, 4, and 5 lack introductions, so without the assignment questions the reader would not know the purpose of the writing. Samples 4 and 5 lack a concluding sentence, and Sample 5 reads like a list of ideas instead of a personal letter. Lastly, inappropriate language was identified in Samples 2 and 3 which indicates a lack of knowledge about the appropriate register for the genres. The use of *stupid* in sentence six of Sample 2 to describe the consequences of someone being killed is inappropriate for both the action and the genre.

Language

Assessments of the language of the writing samples revealed problems with the range and accuracy of vocabulary and grammar in all the writing samples. For vocabulary, the greatest number of errors across all samples were related to word choice – for example, *gets trouble* (line four, Sample 2) and *play fireworks* (line five, Sample 4). These errors revealed the students' difficulty with collocation choices. Most of the word choice errors do not impede general understanding, however, in Sample 3, even with the surrounding context, the meaning of sentences two, five, and eight is unclear:

(1) Do you think how does future life change?
(2) I want you to think about it finally.
(3) At first What is the fourth industrial revolution?
(4) Simply speaking It is the project of technology development named by German federal government. (5) This is a trial that try to improve the automation or efficiency revolutionary.
(6) By the way, the third Industrial revolution aim at automation too, but the fourth industrial revolution can't only be automation but also autonomous optimization.
(7) This autonomous optimization means that artificial intelligence think by itself and take best action based on a large quantity of information.
(8) Then, What is "IOT" is often made a connection with the fourth industrial revolution?

Finally, the Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP) (Laufer & Nation, 1995) was used to measure the level of productive vocabulary in the writing samples. The LFP compares the words in the text to lists of the first and second 1000 most frequent English words, and produces a percentage of words used in the text in these two categories. Writers who lack vocabulary richness use a higher percentage of words from the top 2000 most frequent

English words (Laufer & Nation, 1995). The high LFP percentage for the samples showed that each sample used a simple range of vocabulary.

For grammar, all of the samples contained errors in the use of definite and indefinite articles and prepositions. Article errors included missing articles, such as in sentence four of Sample 5 (it's very famous place), incorrect articles, such as in sentence four of Sample 3 (it is *the* project) and unnecessary articles in front of proper nouns, such as in sentence nine of Sample 5 (go to *the* '*Kaiyukan*'). Preposition errors included unnecessary prepositions, such as in sentence four of Sample 1 (ask something *to*), incorrect prepositions, such as in sentence five of Sample 5 (*at* sightseeing) and missing prepositions, such as in sentence four of Sample 2 (crashed (*into*)).

Other linguistic errors included spelling mistakes (*probrem* in Sample 1 and *rescrently* in Sample 2), missing or incorrect subjects, such as in Sample 5 (*it* could watch tv), incorrect verb tenses such as in Sample 2 (I (*would*) make), and punctuation errors. Sample 4 had one instance of a missing comma (sentence 16) and Sample 5 had two capitalisation errors (sentences seven and ten). These errors revealed the students' difficulty in remembering and applying rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Apart from Sample 3, all of the samples used a generally simple range of grammar. However, Sample 3 had the most grammar errors and is the only sample to have instances of pronoun, pluralisation and verb form errors. These errors highlight the student's difficulty in using more complex verb forms and appropriate grammar items at higher levels of writing, which require more sophisticated sentence structures.

Discussion

The analysis indicates that students have trouble writing effectively in English across

genres, as well as generating ideas. The main problems were: linguistic errors, lack of vocabulary range, lack of or inappropriate content, weak organisation and lack of audience awareness. The next sections explore how process-oriented writing techniques could help students improve in these areas.

Insufficient Ideas

It is important for students to understand that writing is often a process in which ideas are generated and not just transcribed (Susser, 1994). At the planning stage, activities such as brainstorming and mind-mapping improve the quality and quantity of ideas (Brown, 2001; Seow, 2002). Samples 1, 2, and 5 lack supporting ideas; these students should be encouraged to make mind-maps with examples or reasons for their ideas. Working with other students can also help by exposing them to new ideas.

By allocating class time to generating ideas and ensuring that students understand the importance of this step, students can learn to quickly brainstorm ideas during a test situation. Furthermore, brainstorming or mind-mapping in groups can ensure that students understand the question correctly – a problem in Samples 1 and 4 – and which may also help them to avoid irrelevant content.

Another useful activity is freewriting, or writing quickly and continually without censorship, which can be done in class or on students' own time as writing practice. Practising freewriting can improve idea generation because it limits students' internal editing as they write (Elbow, 1973) and encourages the free flow of their ideas (Brown, 2001).

In the drafting stage, teacher conferences may help the students check the quality and quantity of their ideas. Teacher conferences involve the teacher asking focused

questions to help the students remember and formulate their points (Hedge, 2000). For Sample 2, questions such as 'what is your main idea?' and 'what are your supporting ideas?' would clarify to the student that they had only one main idea; while questions such as 'who are you writing to?' and 'why do you recommend these activities?' would make the student aware of the target audience and the lack of ideas, as in Sample 5. Then, if needed, students can return to brainstorming for more ideas. Once students are comfortable with conferencing, teachers can introduce peer conferences. In peer conferences, students take the role of asking each other focused questions. This kind of collaborative work generates discussions and increases students' awareness of potential problems by forcing them to clarify their ideas or expressions (Hedge, 2005). Peer conferences also remove teachers as the main source of feedback, and encourage students to take more responsibility for their improvement.

Vocabulary Range

The high LFP percentage produced by all of the samples indicates a lack of vocabulary range. Muncie (2002) found that revisions in students' final drafts showed a higher percentage of sophisticated vocabulary than did the first draft, and recommends concentrating on vocabulary during planning – not just during revision. Therefore, all of the samples would benefit from brainstorming for vocabulary and creating mind-maps to give the students more advanced vocabulary that can be used when draft-writing.

Knowledge of Audience

Samples 3 and 5 showed a lack of audience awareness. Hedge (2005) observes that students write more effectively and appropriately when they understand the context. This

can be accomplished by a group brainstorming activity led by the teacher who asks guided questions to lead the students to consider their audience and their audience's knowledge (Hedge, 2000). The example questions in Figure 1 might help the writer of Sample 5 develop a sense of audience. These questions can also be used as a checklist during the revision stage.

1. How old is the reader?
2. Has she been to Japan before?
3. How long is she staying?
4. How much do you think she knows about Japan?
5. What should you tell her about Japan?
6. Should you give reasons or examples for your ideas?
7. Can you share personal ideas or experiences?

Figure 1. Example of guided questions.

Also, once students have written a first draft, they can exchange papers and have their partners read their work aloud. This makes students aware of how others may perceive their words (Seow, 2002). This technique would benefit the writer of Sample 3, as the writer would have had an opportunity to practice with the intended audience.

Poor Organisation

Poor text organisation can be improved by teaching students to use a checklist (Seow, 2002; Tompkins, 1992). For example, Samples 2 and 4 were organisationally weak and could benefit from a checklist on paragraphing such as in Figure 2.

- □ Does the composition divide naturally into several parts?
- □ Do the paragraphs reflect those parts?
- □ Does each paragraph have a topic sentence with a main idea?
- □ Does each paragraph have an effective concluding sentence?

Figure 2. Organisation checklist.

Another method for improving organisation is reformulation (Hedge, 2000). According to this method, the teacher rewrites part of one student's draft for better fluency and organisation. The students then compare the two versions and discuss the reasons for the teacher's changes before revising their own texts. Reformulation is effective for addressing problems such as the wordiness in Sample 2 and the lack of linking words in Sample 4.

Finally, these techniques teach students that revision is a part of the writing process and an important source of learning and self-improvement (Seow, 2002). The traditional procedure of teachers marking the students' writing and returning it later, when the writing experience is no longer fresh in the students' minds, presents serious disadvantages (Hedge, 2000). Removing students from the revision process gives the impression that the teacher is the person who is primarily responsible for improving the quality of the students' ideas, their sense of audience, and their organisation. Through teacher and peer revision activities, students learn to assess their own writing and become responsible for improving their abilities.

Language Errors

Editing for language errors is important to ensure that the students' ideas are fully

understood. Language errors can be divided into treatable and untreatable errors (Ferris, 2014). Treatable errors, such as subject-verb agreement and verb tense, are related to rule-governed structures that students can learn to identify and correct. Untreatable errors, such as word choice and unidiomatic sentence structure, are idiosyncratic and require significant knowledge of the language to correct (Ferris, 2014).

All of the samples had examples of treatable and untreatable linguistic errors, which shows the students are not used to editing their own writing. To encourage students to self-edit treatable errors, Ferris (2003) suggests teaching them to make focused passes through their or their peers' texts for two-to-three specific problematic structures. All of the samples had article and preposition errors, so the students would benefit from practising self-editing for these structures. Furthermore, self-editing skills can be transferred to timed writing situations, such as tests, if the students have sufficient practice in class (Ferris, 2014). Finally, teaching students to peer or self-edit increases their awareness of the different strategies that they can use to improve their writing.

Inadequate Genre Knowledge

All of the samples had areas of difficulty, indicating that these learners have trouble across many genres. Hedge (2000, 2005) urges teachers to give students different kinds of writing activities to develop a sense of audience. Hyland (2003) recommends providing students with adequate guidelines for constructing different kinds of texts. The activities discussed in this paper can be used to practice many different genre forms.

Remaining Problem Areas

Vocabulary range and untreatable linguistic errors are two problem areas that were

revealed in the samples that have not been fully covered by process approaches. Process approaches have been criticised for not providing adequate linguistic input (Badger & White, 2000). For language problems, Ferris (2014) recommends reading for improving vocabulary knowledge, while Santos (1988) suggests cloze and word-form activities for improving lexical selection. Ferris (2003) warns that, for treatable errors, teachers cannot assume students know the grammar rules they are breaking, and recommends grammar instruction as part of writing feedback. Therefore, a genre-based process approach that includes some attention to grammar and vocabulary should be adopted along with attention to the context and purpose of the writing (Badger & White, 2000).

Conclusion

For the students whose samples were analysed in this paper, adopting genre-based process writing techniques can clearly help students reduce the number of linguistic errors, the lack of content, weak organisation and the lack of audience awareness. Process approaches stress the need to develop students' abilities to plan, define a rhetorical problem, and propose and evaluate solutions (Hyland, 2003), and so offer more genuine communicative practice than the traditional product-based approaches to writing which focus on reproducing model text accurately. Therefore, to align with MEXT's goal of fostering 'global human resources' by improving communication ability, as well as improving the fundamental competencies of thinking, planning, and creating, Japanese high schools should incorporate an approach to L2 writing instruction that focuses on generating ideas, drafting, revising, and self-editing across a range of genres. Further studies could widen the scope of participant involvement and data collection, as well as compare writing samples before and after the implementation of process writing

techniques in order to determine the benefits of these techniques.

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Appendix A
Writing samples

Sentences in the samples are numbered for reference and the assignment directions and question are written in bold.

Sample 1

Read these opinions. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.

Men and women can be best friends.

(1) I agree that men and women can be best friends. (2) I think that having the opposite sex friend brings benefits for us. (3) Firstly, we can know the difference between men and women through the friend. (4) If I have dates, I can ask something to a boy friend easily. (5) Also a boy friend helps me when I have some probrems. (6) Therefor, I think men and women can be best friends. (69 words)

Sample 2

If you could invent your own rules at home, at school, or in society, what new rules would you make and why?

(1) I think we must not use smartphone with walking. (2) When I walked around my house with my dog, my dog was crashed by people who use smartphone with walking. (3) I love my dog so I felt very angry. (4) Furthermore, rescrently, I often hear that someone is crashed by people who use smartphone with walking and gets trouble. (5) I think that using smartphone with walking is very dangerous. (6) If someone is crashed and killed by people who use smartphone, I think it's very stupid. (7) Therefore, I make a rule that must not use smartphone with walking anywhere. (96 words)

Sample 3

What will our future be like after the fourth industrial revolution?

(1) Do you think how does future life change?

(2) I want you to think about it finally.

(3) At first What is the fourth industrial revolution?

(4) Simply speaking It is the project of technology development named by German federal

government. (5) This is a trial that try to improve the automation or efficiency revolutionary.

(6) By the way, the third Industrial revolution aim at automation too, but the fourth industrial revolution can't only be automation but also autonomous optimization. (7) This autonomous optimization means that artificial intelligence think by itself and take best action based on a large quantity of information. (8) Then, What is "IOT" is often made a connection with the fourth industrial revolution?

(9) At first, Please watch a short play.

(Students perform short play)

(10) In this way, "IOT" let a thing and a thing access to a Network so can generate convenience. (11) In this case, the sensor of the door access to network and we could handle from distance. (12) In recent years, IOT of Japan is introduced in the factory. (13) Through internet, by equipping the instrument of factory with sensor functions, it can reduce wasteful time and general new worth.

(14) Now, What kind of merit and demerit will be there that introduce IOT in our life? (199 words)

Sample 4

What do want to do during the summer vacation? Write at least two ideas.

(1) First, I want to go to Amami Island. (2) There are my grandmother and some relatives. (3) I have ever been to there about three or four times. (4) It takes about one hour and half minutes by airplane. (5) I want to play fireworks, swim in the so beautiful sea and go to the local festival. (6) My grandmother's house is very big and it has large garden. (7) The size is as large as the size of two classrooms so I often play catch, rope jumping, with a water pistol. (8) It is so enjoy.

(9) Second, I want to travel around the world. (10) The place I want to visit the best is Singapore. (11) Because I want to see Merlion, go to Sentosa Island and see the night view. (12) The next is America. (13) I want to see world Heritage there. (14) For example, Statue of Liberty, Grand Canyon and Yellowstone. (15) I have never been to foreign countries. (16) Therefore I'll speak well in the future and I want to make a lot of friends in all over the world. (17) I want to study English hard for that reason. (180 words)

Sample 5

Write a letter to someone visiting Japan for the first time giving advice on places to visit.

(1) Dear Mrs Smith,
(2) Welcome to Osaka in Japan!
(3) I think you should visit three places in Osaka.
(4) First you should visit Osaka catle, it's very famous place.
(5) Also, many people visit there at sightseeing.
(6) Second, you should watch "Yoshimoto-Shinigeki".
(7) it's very exciting. (8) Also, it could watch TV show on Saturday.
(9) Third, you should go to the "Kaiyukan".
(10) it can very relax. (11) Also, I went to there many times when I was elementary school student.
(12) I was very fun!
(13) Sincerely Emi
(80 words)

Appendix B

Assessment criteria for assessment rubric categories

Content	
Relevant content	Content is related or relatable to required content points and/or task requirements (Cambridge English, 2015)
Sufficient content	Enough supporting ideas to convince reader of author's purpose (Brown, 2001)
Ideas (simple)	Relatively limited subject matter, usually concrete in nature, and which require simpler rhetorical devices to communicate (Cambridge English, 2015)
Ideas (complex)	More abstract ideas, or ideas which cover a wider subject area, requiring more rhetorical resources to bring together and express (Cambridge English, 2015)
Knowledge of audience	How well the writer understands the audience's initial state of knowledge and their continued comprehension (Callow & John, 1992)
Communicative achievement	
Genre, format and register	Appropriate use of rhetorical conventions appropriate to genre including physical layout and tone (Brown, 2001)
Organisation	
Logical sequence	Writing includes a clear statement of the thesis or topic or purpose is followed by main ideas (to develop and clarify thesis) (Brown, 2001)
Simple cohesive devices	Basic high-frequency items (such as 'and', 'but') to basic and phrasal items (such as 'because', 'first of all', 'finally') (Cambridge English, 2015)
Complex cohesive devices	More sophisticated linking words and phrases (e.g., 'it may appear', 'as a result'), as well as grammatical devices such as the use of reference pronouns, substitution, ellipsis, or repetition (Cambridge English, 2015)
Language	
Vocabulary range	Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP) (Laufer & Nation, 1995) was used to measure the level of productive vocabulary in the writing samples. LFP compares the words in the text (proper nouns are removed and spelling slips are corrected) to lists of the first and second 1000 most frequent English words. The percentage of words used in the text in these two categories is produced. Writers who lack vocabulary richness use a higher percentage of words from the top 2000 most frequent English words (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Cobb's (2017) VocabProfile was used to analyse the LFP.
Grammar range (simple)	Use of simple grammatical forms, e.g., simple words, phrases, basic tenses and modals, and simple clauses (Cambridge English, 2015)
Grammar range (complex)	Use of longer and more complex grammatical forms, e.g. noun clauses, relative and adverb clauses, subordination, passive forms, infinitives, verb patterns, modal forms and tense contrasts (Cambridge English, 2015)

Appendix C
Writing sample assessments

Sample 1

Assessment criteria				**Line**
Content	Relevant	Unclear		2
	Sufficient	Insufficient	No examples of advice or problems	4, 5
	Ideas	Simple	Limited subject matter	4, 5
	Knowledge of audience	Sufficient (Teacher)		
Communicative Achievement	Genre	Short answer		
	Format	Inappropriate	Concluding sentence not necessary	7
	Register	Appropriate		
Organisation	Logical sequence	Yes	Introduction and thesis included	1, 2
	Appropriate length	Yes		
	Cohesive devices	Simple	Also Therefore	5 6
Language Accuracy	Vocabulary	Word choice	*brings* benefits *know* the difference *boy* friend	2 3 4, 5
		Word order	opposite sex friend ask something to a boy friend	2 4
	Grammar	Article Preposition	an to	2 4
	Mechanics	Spelling	Probrems therefor	5 6
		Punctuation	N/A	
Language Range	Vocabulary	Simple	95.63% 1st 1000 words 1.45% 2nd 1000 words	
	Grammar	Simple Complex	Basic tenses (present) and simple modals (can) Simple clauses Noun clause If clause	 1, 3, 5, 6 2, 4

Sample 2

Assessment criteria				**Line**
Content	Relevant	Yes		
	Sufficient	Insufficient	Only one main idea	5
	Ideas	Simple	Limited subject matter	4, 6
	Knowledge of audience	Sufficient (Teacher)		
Communicative Achievement	Genre	Exposition		
	Format	No introduction Lack of concision Inappropriate examples	 Repetition of 'use smartphone with walking' Personal	 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 2, 3
	Register	Inappropriate language	Stupid	6
Organisation	Logical sequence	No	Thesis in middle of writing	5
	Appropriate length	No	Too short	
	Cohesive devices	Simple	Furthermore Therefore	4 7
Language Accuracy	Vocabulary	Word choice	crashed gets trouble	2, 4, 6 4
		Word order	gets trouble	4
	Grammar	Article (missing) Preposition (missing) Tense Subject (missing)	a with walking crashed (into) who use I make that must	1, 4, 5, 6, 7 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 2, 4, 6 2 7 7
	Mechanics	Spelling	rescrently	4
Language Range	Vocabulary	Simple	87.63% 1st 1000 words 5.15% 2nd 1000 words	
	Grammar	Simple Complex	Basic tenses (present) and simple modals (must) Simple clauses Relative clause If clause	 1, 3, 5, 7 2, 4 6

Sample 3

Assessment criteria				**Line**
Content	Relevant	Yes		12, 13
	Sufficient	Insufficient	Fourth industrial revolution is not clearly explained and the connection between IOT, Artificial Intelligence and the fourth industrial revolution is not made clear	4, 5 7, 8
	Ideas	Complex	Complex subject matter	4, 5, 7, 10, 13
	Knowledge of audience	Insufficient (Classmates)	IOT acronym not explained Difficult language	8 5, 6, 7, 10
Communicative Achievement	Genre	Presentation		
	Format	N/A		
	Register	Inappropriate language	Difficult language	5, 6, 7, 10
Organisation	Logical sequence	Yes		
	Appropriate length	Yes		
	Cohesive devices	Complex	reference pronouns (this)	5, 7, 10, 11
Language Range	Vocabulary	Simple	79.5% 1st 1000 words 5.13% 2nd 1000 words	
	Grammar	Simple Complex	Basic tenses (present) and simple modals (can, will) Simple clauses participial *clause* Relative clause Passive form Subordinate clause Lexically dense sentences	 1-3, 9 4 5 12 13 6, 7, 10, 11

Sample 3 continued

Language Accuracy	Vocabulary	Word choice	finally	1
			At first	3, 9
			revolutionary	5
			can't be	6
			In this way	10
			a thing and a thing	10
			generate	10
			IOT of Japan	12
			wasteful	13
			worth	13
		Word order	What connection	8
	Grammar	Verb tense	Do (you) think	1
			change	1
			aim	6
			access	11
			try	5
			is	12
		Question	does (future life) change	1
			be there	14
		Verb form	introduce	14
		S/V agreement	think, take	7
			let	10
		Pronoun (missing)	your	1
		Article (missing)	the	4
		(Unnecessary)	the	7
		(Incorrect)	the	4, 12, 13
		Plural	factory	12, 13
			merit, demerit, life	14
		Prepositions	about	1
			to	10, 11
		Subject (missing)	it	10
	Mechanics	Capitalisation[1]	What, It, What, Please, What	3, 4, 8, 9, 14

[1] The capitalisation errors in Sample 3 were not included in the analysis as this sample ultimately will be spoken and it is unclear if the errors are in fact intonation guides.

Sample 4

Assessment criteria				**Line**
Content	Relevant	No	Paragraph two does not address the question	9-17
	Sufficient	Sufficient	Supporting ideas for two main ideas	2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 16
	Ideas	Simple	Simple subject matter	2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 16
	Knowledge of audience	Sufficient (Teacher)		
Communicative Achievement	Genre	Personal exposition		
	Format	Inappropriate	No introduction or conclusion	
	Register	Appropriate		
Organisation	Logical sequence	No	Lack of transition between topics	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
	Appropriate length	Yes		
	Cohesive devices	Simple	First Second Because Therefore (Missing)	1 9 11 16 2, 7, 11, 13, 14
Language Range	Vocabulary	Simple	91.8% 1st 1000 words 5.26% 2nd 1000 words	
	Grammar	Simple	Basic tenses (present and present perfect) Simple clauses	1-6, 8-17

Sample 4 continued

Language Accuracy	Vocabulary	Word choice	ever	3
			one hour and a half minutes	4
			play fireworks	5
		(missing)	(or), (play), (there)	7
			enjoy	8
			the best	10
		(missing)	(place)	12
		(missing)	(sites)	13
			Therefore, (English)	16
		Word order	There are	2
	Grammar	Articles	a	6, 15
		(missing)	the	11, 14, 14
		Prepositions	to, in	3, 16
	Mechanics	Punctuation	comma (missing)	16

Sample 5

Assessment criteria				**Line**
Content	Relevant	No	Example two does not fit question criteria	6
	Sufficient	Insufficient	No specific reasons given to visit the places.	4, 7, 10
	Ideas	Simple	Limited subject matter	4, 7, 10
	Knowledge of audience	Insufficient (stranger)	Reader is coming to Japan for the first time and cannot speak Japanese. No consideration of advantages	6, 9 5, 8, 11
Communicative Achievement	Genre	Letter		
	Format	Inappropriate	No introduction or conclusion No paragraphs	
	Register	Appropriate		

Sample 5 continued

Organisation	Logical sequence	No	No transition between ideas	5, 7
	Appropriate length	No	Too short	
	Cohesive devices	Simple	First Also Second Third	4 5, 8, 11 6 9
Language Accuracy	Vocabulary	Word choice	because (missing) can, relax	4 10
		Word order	N/A	
	Grammar	Articles (missing) (unnecessary) Prepositions Subject	a, an the the in at to it I	4, 11 8 9 2 5 11 8, 10 12
	Mechanics	Spelling	catle	4
		Capitalisation Punctuation	it comma (missing)	7, 10 4, 13
Language Range	Vocabulary	Simple	90.41% 1st 1000 words 4.11% 2nd 1000 words	
	Grammar	Simple	Basic tenses (present and past) Simple clauses	 2-12

Reading Attitudes and Extensive Reading at the Secondary Level

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Abstract
Extensive Reading (ER) has been gaining momentum in tertiary and secondary education in Japan, but implementing and sustaining a program is not a simple process. While logistical aspects, such as access to books and fair evaluation are of key importance, so too is the general attitude towards and value placed on reading in general and reading in English to promote second language acquisition. This paper examines how teacher and student perceptions of reading at a private junior and senior high school in western Japan might have created an atmosphere in which an ER program that started in 2007 lost faculty support and was discontinued. Surveys were administered to all students and staff to explore the extent to which reading in general and reading in English were enjoyed, and what type of reading was engaged in. Results suggest that student enjoyment of reading wanes as they move through the school, and the majority of teachers do not have positive experiences of English reading. This seems to give credence to the idea that the current school environment is not conducive to having a truly successful English ER program.

Keywords: extensive reading, motivation, school environment

Reading is an important pillar of language acquisition, and an essential skill for learning in the modern world. It opens doors to new worlds, new ideas, and new ways of thinking. Yet as humans, we are not innately born readers. We must be taught to decipher the symbols used to represent the sounds and ideas of a language when faced with it in written form. This remains true for those learning a second language, though often with the added difficulty of limited vocabulary knowledge at the outset (Nation, 2009). As English language teachers, finding effective ways to encourage and help learners to develop L2 literacy skills is a key part of education. One tool at our disposal is what has variably been termed *free voluntary reading* (Krashen, 2004), *pleasure reading* (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012), *supplementary reading* (West, 1926, as cited in Day & Bamford, 1998), and, perhaps most prominently, *extensive reading (ER)*

(e.g., Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe, 2009; Nation, 2009). Krashen (2004) goes so far as to suggest that "Free voluntary reading may be the most powerful tool we have in language education" (p.1). He suggests that it is an effective way of increasing literacy and language development, with a strong impact on reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. Yet the existence of such a silver bullet cannot guarantee that it will always be easy to use.

The high school at which this research took place had a successful ER program for almost ten years. However, even with student input and teacher evaluation to further improve the program, it was discontinued in 2015. For details, see Flanagan and Custance (2017). To further understand the reasoning behind the discontinuation, the authors wanted to explore the extent to which teacher and student perceptions of reading, both in the L1 and L2, mutually influence the culture of reading at the school. Their findings show possible connects and disconnects between students' and teachers' perceptions of reading and reading habits inside and outside of the classroom that may have played a part in the sudden collapse of the program.

Literature Review

The development of the personal computer, increases in data storage capacity and searchability, and the Internet and connectivity, have resulted in new ways to access information (Saville, 2017). High school and university students alike are very much digital natives, ready to fall down a rabbit hole of hyperlinks at the touch of a finger. These changes have been fast, with a multitude of professions unthought of ten years ago making use of and further developing these technologies. For educators, this can be a challenge as the shifting nature of the skills needed in the workplace still need to be met.

One area in which change is very easy to observe is how individuals are reading and communicating. There is an ongoing shift from print to electronic media; text and email are often used instead of phone calls (Arnett, 2015); journalism has faced challenges as fewer people buy newspapers, instead getting their news from free, online sources. With the arrival of digital text, more emphasis is being placed on scanning skills and reading for purpose (Liu, 2005); skills that are increasingly necessary in both work and personal life. This is true in an individual's L1, but also for English as a second language, with the ability to use English approaching a minimum requirement in the increasingly globalized

marketplace. As Grabe (2009) states "L2 [English] reading skills represent a significant concern as [...] people negotiate careers and seek advancement in modern society" (p. 6). The need to ensure that students develop skills in addition to knowledge is reflected in educational policy and seems particularly evident in MEXT's reform plan corresponding to globalization (MEXT, 2014).

MEXT has indicated that teaching and assessment should move towards using Can-Do lists, and set targets based on CEFR-J (CEFR-J, 2012), listing what learners should be able to do in English at different ages. MEXT has set a target of learners achieving level B1 to B2 by the end of the third year of upper secondary education. Examining only the reading and linguistic competency at B2 level, students would have to know about 6,000 words, comprised of the first 2,000 words learned as productive vocabulary while the other 4,000 words could be learned as receptive vocabulary (Tono & Negishi, 2012). At the higher end of the proposed exit point of B2.2, students should be able to scan and extract important information from complex texts such as newspaper articles.

To be able to support learners to achieve this goal, a strong reading culture, not only in the L2 but also in the L1, is needed at a school. It is essential if instructors intend for learners to become engaged and motivated readers. Indeed, creating enthusiasm for reading is one of the aims of early Japanese language education in Japan (MEXT, 2011). Engaged readers are more motivated to read, leading to greater engagement with reading, and higher levels of overall achievement in schooling (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). With regard to language development, Ponniah (2008) found that "Students who had a pleasure reading habit easily outperformed those who were not readers on a test of grammar and on a test of reading and writing" (p. 22).

Yet many reading programs in Japan, both in Japanese language classes and for English, are focused on intensive reading with much less emphasis placed on ER, which is often seen as a pleasure activity. Intensive reading focuses on ensuring the readers' full understanding of a text (Nation, 2004). This requires students to learn and employ skills such as skimming, scanning, inferencing, and recognizing, and to understand grammatical aspects of the text. It can also help learners develop vocabulary knowledge and awareness of genre. However, intensive reading alone cannot help to build reading fluency, an essential component of overall reading ability, and is unlikely to encourage reading for pleasure.

For English classes in particular, the focus on intensive reading often results in students being drilled with shorter texts, with little attention given to developing reading fluency. It also limits the amount of English input they receive, reducing chances to become familiar with vocabulary. Grabe and Stoller (2011) highlight that without sufficient practice, the lower level working memory processes for reading (lexical access, syntactic parsing, and semantic proposition formation) cannot become automatized. With these processes slowed, active information is not processed sufficiently quickly, and fades from working memory. Subsequently, it must be reactivated for comprehension to take place, making reading inefficient. This inefficiency can cause frustration, especially if learners compare their L2 and L1 reading abilities (Takase, 2007), and demotivate learners when they are faced with longer texts. However, developing fluency to the point of automatization "typically [requires] thousands of hours of practice in reading" (Grabe & Stoller, 2011, p.15). There needs to be a balance between intensive reading and ER to ensure learners process enough written text to develop reading fluency, especially in an L2.

Given the amount of reading required to become even relatively fluent (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012), it is imperative that motivations for reading are also considered. If individuals do not have positive experiences when doing an activity, that is, feelings of success and mastery, self-efficacy will not increase, reducing the likelihood that learners will either initiate or persevere with the activity in the future (Bandura, 1997). Covington's (1984) self-worth theory suggests that learners might also actively avoid reading if their overriding experience of reading is that of failure. Creating and maintaining a positive, supportive environment for both L1 and L2 reading, where it is valued and seen as an essential part of education, is a key challenge for educational establishments (Loh, 2015).

Research Questions

To investigate the underlying reasons for dropping ER, the authors wanted to examine attitudes towards reading, both from the teachers' and students' perspectives. The following research questions were formulated to do this:

1. Do students' attitudes towards L1 and L2 reading change across different grades?

2. What are teachers' experiences of and attitudes towards L1 and L2 reading?
3. Does the school environment support reading in general?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were sampled from the students and teachers at the school. Students in grades seven to twelve answered survey questions creating a cross-sectional representation of attitudes towards reading across the years. Table 1 shows the number of students in each grade who completed the survey.

Table 1

Number of Students Who Took the Survey

Grade	Male	Female	Unlisted	Total
7	104	136	4	244
8	103	125	4	232
9	96	118	3	217
10	156	160	7	323
11	146	175	4	325
12	113	158	9	280
Total	718	872	31	1622

One-hundred seventy full-time and part-time Japanese teaching staff were asked to complete a survey indicating their current and past attitudes towards reading. Table 2 shows the number of staff members for different departments, and the number of respondents for each department.

Data Collection

Student and staff data were collected using separate surveys. The student survey contained 27 items (see Appendix A) and the staff survey contained 33 items (see Appendix B). Four items on the student survey and seven items on the staff survey used frequency adverbs (e.g. rarely, occasionally, sometimes, always) to describe reading behaviours. Eleven items on the student, and five items on the staff survey used a five-

point Likert scale to ask about reading attitudes and materials. The staff survey also included two items asking staff to estimate how often they read emails and online articles, five items that asked open-ended questions about reading habits, and two that asked about where staff read, and if reading in English was done in different places. The final twelve items on both surveys asked respondents to indicate where/when they thought it would be necessary to read English. The final item on both surveys was an open-ended free-response (Other), which provided space for additional detail. Staff were also asked to indicate their department.

Table 2

Number of Staff Who Took the Survey

Department	Number of Staff	Number of Respondents
Arts	12	5
English	38	24
Health and Sport	15	5
Japanese	19	10
Mathematics	26	12
Science	27	12
Social Sciences	17	14
Office Staff	10	10
Other	14	7*
Total	170	99

Note. *Includes responses where no department was listed, along with management staff, e.g. head and deputy head teachers.

The staff survey was piloted online in English and it was determined that a Japanese, paper-based survey would be more appropriate. Both surveys were therefore translated by the authors and checked by native-Japanese speakers at the school. The Japanese surveys were administered between May and July 2017 to all staff and students, with the exception of the English department, who received the original English survey. The English version of the survey used a four-point Likert scale for the first six items.

Library staff were also interviewed on an informal basis to learn more about how it is used by faculty and students.

Results

Student Responses

Mean Likert and frequency scores were calculated for each grade. Table 3 lists the results, ranked in order of highest to lowest average rating, based on the whole school population.

Table 3

Mean Scores for Student Responses on the Student Reading Survey

Item	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
14	4.51	4.18	4.23	4.39	4.39	4.40
3	3.41	3.59	3.79	3.77	3.96	3.73
10	3.13	3.51	3.54	3.54	3.66	3.50
13	3.53	3.18	3.34	3.57	3.57	3.66
5	3.67	3.39	3.55	3.40	3.32	3.20
1	3.72	3.31	3.48	3.34	3.26	3.11
11	2.79	3.09	3.44	3.28	3.65	3.56
4	3.31	2.97	3.00	3.27	3.30	3.31
6	2.67	2.91	2.79	2.80	2.90	3.01
7	3.18	2.72	2.60	2.70	2.55	2.58
2	3.22	2.63	2.58	2.66	2.53	2.50
9	2.66	2.38	2.41	2.43	2.26	2.21
15	2.55	2.30	2.37	2.36	2.18	2.29
8	1.97	2.34	2.29	2.15	2.12	2.27
12	2.47	2.14	2.11	2.11	2.11	2.05

Note. Items 1-4 used frequency adverbs (1 = Very infrequent; 5 = Very frequent); 5-15 used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

Students in the seventh grade indicated the strongest desire to increase their English reading skills (Item 14), though students generally agreed with this statement strongly across all grades. Seventh grade students also had the strongest disagreement with the idea that they will not need to read English in the future (Item 8). Students also generally believe that they should be reading more in English (Item 13). Despite this, most students indicated that they only read the English in their textbooks or given to them by teachers

(Item 10).

Responses to Item 3 suggest that students usually find reading English difficult, and that difficulty reading English increases with grade, though with a slight decrease in grade 12.

Items 1 and 5 asked about students' attitudes towards reading in general, while Items 2 and 7 asked about attitudes towards reading in English. Responses were generally consistent. Overall, students like reading Japanese more, and find it enjoyable more frequently, than reading in English. There was a decrease in the number of students who like (Items 5 & 7) and regularly enjoy (Items 1 & 5) reading in English and Japanese in grade eight. Students in higher grades like reading in general less than those in lower grades (see Figure 1).

Staff Responses

Staff mean Likert and frequency scores were calculated for each department. Table 4 shows the results, ranked in order of highest to lowest average rating, based on all responses.

Item 1, which asked staff to indicate how frequently they enjoyed reading, received the highest score. This suggests that teachers tend to enjoy reading when they do it. In addition, their enjoyment of reading is higher than for students in the school. This contrasts starkly with their enjoyment of reading in English, Item 2. Though English teachers enjoy reading in English quite frequently, the majority of staff do not, to the extent that the frequency of enjoying reading in English sits below that of all students (see Figure 1). The above average level of agreement with Item 7 (*Reading English is not something I enjoy*) supports this result.

Item 4 (*I should read more in English*) received the highest level of agreement of the Likert scale questions, with a slightly higher level of agreement than for the students (see Figure 2). Staff also tend to agree that they want to increase the amount of time spent reading English (Item 6), though agreement with this is slightly lower than for Item 4. It is interesting to note that with the exception of "Other," i.e., respondents who did not have or did not write their department, members of the science department feel the strongest about reading more in English.

Table 4

Mean Scores for Staff Responses on the Staff Reading Survey

Item	Health & Sports	Japanese	Math	Science	Social Science	Arts	English	Office Staff	Other
1	3.60	4.70	3.91	4.00	4.71	4.20	3.68	3.80	4.43
4	3.00	3.75	3.25	4.09	3.36	3.80	3.18*	3.50	4.33
6	2.75	3.38	3.08	3.64	3.14	3.80	3.18*	3.30	4.17
7	3.50	3.63	3.08	3.18	3.29	2.40	2.05*	3.50	2.50
8	1.80	3.20	2.58	3.00	2.92	3.20	3.59	3.00	3.67
11	1.60	3.90	2.17	2.58	3.00	3.00	3.86	2.50	2.83
2	2.00	1.90	2.55	2.50	1.69	2.20	3.77	1.60	2.83
12	1.60	2.00	1.83	2.42	2.07	2.60	3.82	2.20	2.50
3	2.40	1.75	2.33	2.18	1.79	2.40	3.05*	2.10	3.00
5	1.75	2.00	2.33	1.73	1.93	2.20	3.09*	–	2.67
9	1.60	2.00	1.67	1.58	2.07	2.40	3.23	1.70	1.67
10	1.20	2.00	1.50	1.27	1.86	2.00	2.80	1.60	1.83

Note. Items 1, 2, 8-12 used frequency adverbs (1 = Very infrequent; 5 = Very frequent); 3-7 used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

*These Items used a 4-, rather than 5-, point Likert scale. They were therefore not included in the average used to calculate the item ranking.

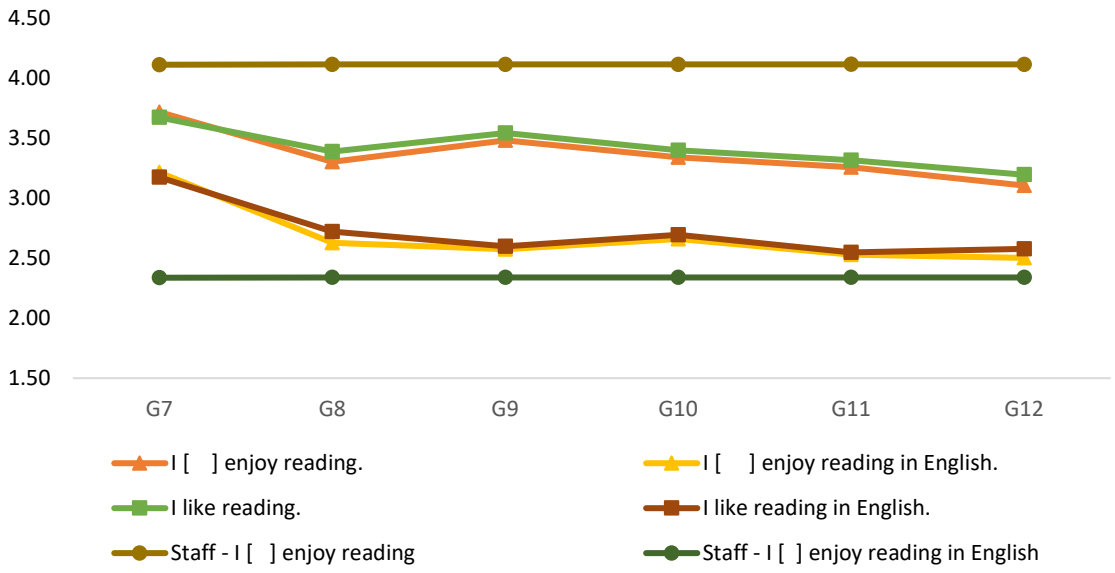

Figure 1. Student and staff enjoyment of reading.

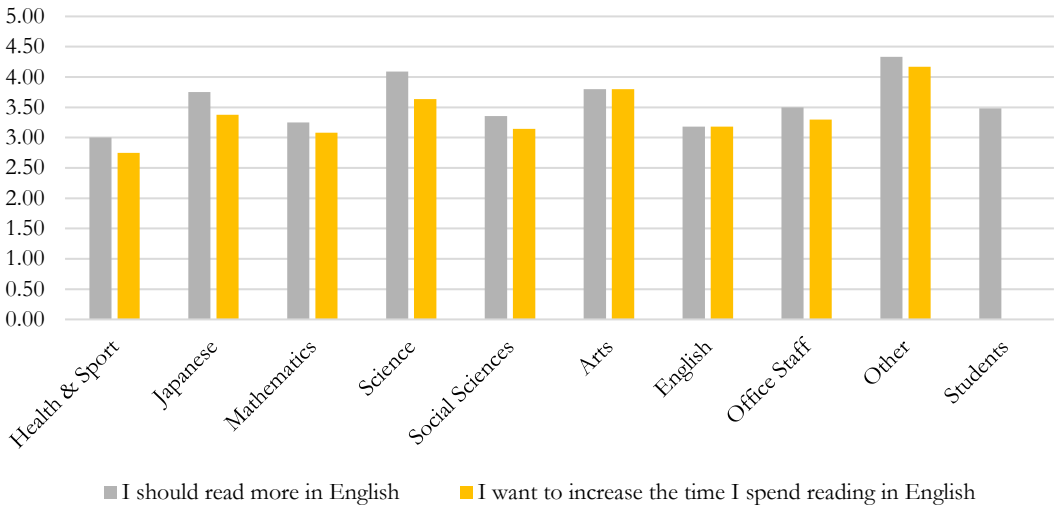

Figure 2. The extent to which staff believe they should, and want to, increase the amount of English reading they do.

Though the results from Items 8 and 10-12 must be treated cautiously since they asked staff to recall how often they enjoyed reading at high school and university, they suggest that in general, reading was far from regularly enjoyable. Staff indicated very low

frequency of enjoyment for reading English at high school, with a slightly higher rate at university, which has not changed between then and now. Interestingly, there was a dip in overall enjoyment of reading between high school and university, though as with the current students, reading is consistently enjoyed more regularly than reading in English.

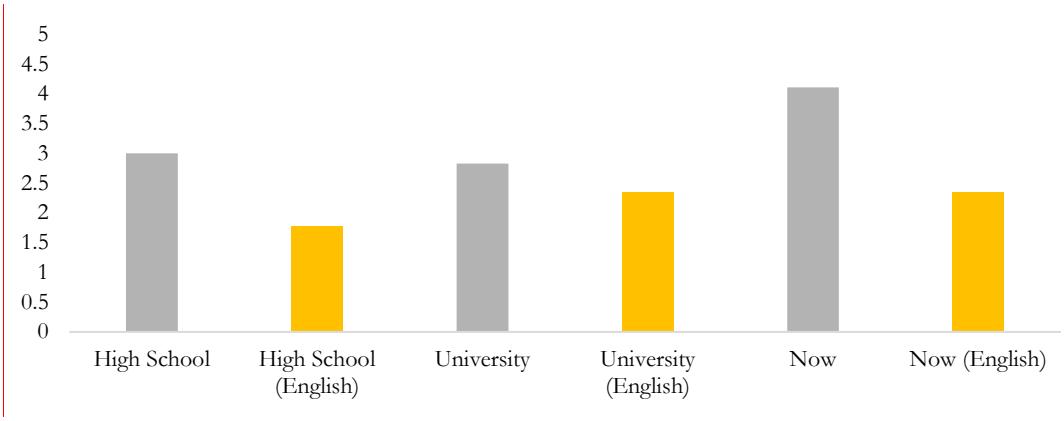

Figure 3. Staff members' frequency of enjoyment of reading (orange), and reading in English (yellow), at high school, university, and now.

Item 3 (*I enjoy reading Internet content in English*) and Item 5 (*I do background reading in English about topics I will teach in class*) both have understandably low levels of agreement for all but the English department. The responses to Item 15, which asked staff to indicate how often they read online news or other articles, supports these results with, again, all but the English department averaging in the range of a few times a year, with the exception of two members of the office staff who read English online almost daily. Frequency of English email reading was also very low amongst the general staff, again averaging a few times a year, apart from some of the office staff and members of the English department. Within the English department, reading online articles was more frequent than reading emails.

Figure 4 shows the amount of time that staff members reported reading each day.

The bars represent percentages of staff members in each department. This was done to adjust for differing numbers of staff in each department. Health and sport department members all indicated that they read less than 15 minutes a day, but other departments show more variation. For example, teachers in the Japanese department exhibit a wide range of time spent reading, though with none reporting not reading, and peaking around 2-3 hours each day. Mathematics teachers tend to read less than other departments, with 75% reading for less than 30 minutes a day, though two individuals read for between one and two hours. As with the Japanese teachers, teachers from social sciences, sciences, and English read for very different amounts of time. Overall, just over half of the staff read for less than 30 minutes a day.

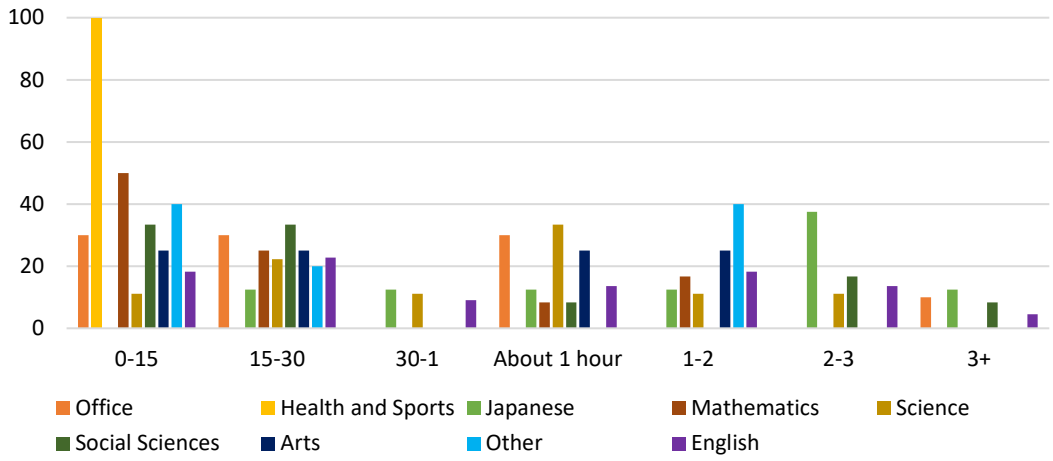

Figure 4. The time spent reading each day by staff members.

Some of the figures for instances when students and staff think they will need to read English in the future were very similar, though some were also very different. Expressed need to read newspapers and magazines, or online news, were all relatively low, with around 28% of both staff and students indicating this would be necessary. Blog reading

was also low, particularly for students (17%). Reading English instruction manuals was also very similar at about 42% for both groups. Work and travel are both seen as areas in which reading English will be necessary. Students thought it would be more necessary for work than staff (84% vs. 71%) while staff thought it was more necessary for travel (86% vs. 73%).

There were differences in the need to read English at museums or exhibitions, online to communicate with friends, and through use of social networking services. 71% of staff thought English necessary for exhibitions, while only 24% of students did. Similarly, 71% of staff thought they would need English for communicating with friends through email, Facebook, etc. while only 34% of students did. For social networking services, 35% of students thought English necessary, but only 14% of staff did. 68% of students thought they would need to read English at university, though 4% said they would not need to read English in the future. No staff thought reading English would be unnecessary.

Library Staff Interview

The library at the school is centrally located on the first floor in the school building. This location would seem to make it easily accessible to faculty and students. However, the results of the survey suggest that students find using the library more inconvenient as they move through the school (Student Survey Item 11). The interview with library staff neither confirmed or refuted this but did reveal that the library is not utilised as it had been in the past. Around 30 to 40 students browse the magazines at the front of the library or do their homework in the library daily, but few students borrow books. Compared to the attached primary school from which most students come, there is a significant decrease in the number of students using the library. Some mathematics and social studies

teachers borrow books, but few teachers from other departments do.

Summary of Results

In summary, the results suggest the following answers to the research questions:

1. Do students' attitudes towards reading differ between grades?

   Yes. Though some elements remain consistent, i.e. a desire to improve reading skills; not finding English reading materials independently. There is an overall trend of reduced enjoyment of reading as students move through the school.

2. What are teachers' experiences of and attitudes towards reading?

   Staff members generally have a positive attitude towards reading now, though not towards reading in English. This contrasts with their memories of experiences at high school and university, where enjoyment was consistently ranked as less frequent than now. However, most staff said they felt they should read more in English and wanted to increase the time that they spent reading in English. This was particularly the case for science teachers. Despite this, the majority of teachers do not spend that much time reading in Japanese or in English.

3. Does the school environment support reading?

   No. Both student and staff responses suggest an unwillingness to act upon the stated need to read more in English. In addition, the library, despite having a seemingly easily accessible location in the school, is under-utilised, especially when compared to the elementary school from which most students come. The drop in enjoyment of reading as students move through the school, especially

between seventh and eighth grades, also suggests that the school environment does not engender an engagement with reading.

Discussion

The results of the student survey indicate that the school atmosphere does not encourage reading. Students enter the school with a relatively positive attitude towards reading in both English and Japanese, but this positivity seems to wane as they move through the school. This could be related to a lack of engagement in independent reading as students are required to read things that they might not particularly enjoy. Conversely, this could also explain why staff enjoy reading more now (in Japanese) than they did at either high school or university. In both cases, the ability to stop reading something that is unenjoyable could lead to a greater enjoyment of reading overall.

The staff's lack of engagement in and enjoyment of English reading now could also be explained in part by their past experiences of reading. If they had similar experiences to the current students, staff members are likely to have found English reading becoming more difficult as they moved through the education system. Without mastery experiences, individuals are likely to become less motivated, and therefore engage in a behaviour less frequently (Bandura, 1997). This in turn limits their ability to increase their English reading fluency, with English reading remaining an often overwhelming, and perhaps painful task. Staff who see students struggling with English reading in a similar manner seem to empathise with them, sharing their usually negative experiences of reading. This normalizes the idea that "English reading is difficult," and something only engaged in by those who are already good English readers. Thus, students are less likely to read English extensively, and so the cycle repeats.

Despite this, both staff and students feel that they should read more in English. In theory, increasing the amount of English reading should not be difficult. The library is well-stocked with both graded and non-graded English books, and access to online English materials is very easy, particularly for staff. Yet staff members do not tend to read online material, and few students use the library. Motivation related to an external belief that more English reading is better is not sufficient to change behaviours. Reading, and particularly reading in English, is not something that most individuals at the school seem willing to prioritise. In addition, as Kozaki and Ross (2011) suggest, "the social mainstream [in Japan] implies diffidence about or, in some extreme cases, indifference to foreign language proficiency and an assumption that monolingualism […] is the normal outcome [of English education]" (p. 1332). Whilst learners might feel that they should improve their English, they are unwilling to work towards a level of proficiency that would theoretically separate them from their peers. There is a possible conflict between their ought- and ideal-selves (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The importance of reading models in encouraging second language reading has been expounded in the literature (e.g., Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004; Loh, 2017). The lack of models in conjunction with a social norm of non-English reading at the school provides a very plausible reason for why the ER program was halted. The majority of staff members do not spend a great deal of time reading, and especially not in English. Meanwhile, students do not make use of the library and generally do not find their own reading materials. This results in a lack of positive reading models for students, and a positive reading habit not being formed. Any suggestion that large amounts of reading should be engaged in is therefore met with resistance, as students do not see their peers or elders engaged in this type of behaviour. If an institution wants to employ ER, it is

essential to create an environment that supports the development of a lifelong reading habit for both students and teachers. To do this, school administrators and teachers need to model the behaviour of reading and take responsibility in nurturing lifelong habits.

As with many education systems, the wash-back effect of testing is also something that is likely to be influencing both student perceptions of reading, and teachers' decisions with regards to teaching reading. The students at the school must achieve a score of at least 400 on TOEFL ITP® as a graduation requirement. The slight decrease in agreement with the statement "Reading English is always difficult" between grade 11 and grade 12 suggests that the TOEFL ITP® preparation course is helping students. The (very) slight increase in agreement with the statement "I like reading in English" in grade 12 might also suggest that students' success in answering difficult questions more easily has a positive effect on their perceptions of English reading. However, the nature of the exam results in the reading instruction that students receive being very intensive in nature, with a large focus on skimming, scanning, and exam-taking strategies. There is also a perception that reading at a low level cannot help improve the reading skills that are necessary for the test, and so this type of reading is not valued. As Wigfield and Eccles (2000) suggest, if an activity is not perceived as being valuable, motivation to engage in it is reduced. The lack of value placed on reading simpler texts is likely to have a negative effect on students' willingness to read extensively. This is unfortunate, as when done correctly, ER should help counteract the potential for negative associations with reading as materials should be, "…well within the linguistic competence of the students…" (Day & Bamford, 1998, p.8). This means students will have more success when reading, leading to increased motivation to read, and a greater willingness to persevere with more difficult texts, such as those found in high-stakes examinations.

The differences between staff and student expected future use of English reading is intriguing, especially regarding the very large differences between using English at museums and in online situations. The low level of student expectation with regard to reading English at museums could indicate a general apathy towards visiting them. Alternatively, it could simply be the case that they are at a stage in their life where museums are not perceived as being interesting. The differences in future use of English online and when using SNS might result from different interpretations of what constitutes "SNS" and "online activity," i.e. with students less likely to think of smartphone applications as being online. However, interactions on social networking sites, whether interpreted as being "online" or not, remain different, and this difference could easily lead to a disconnect between staff and student views regarding English reading.

Conclusion

Given these points, future research is needed to further elaborate on the perceptions of and attitudes of reading in L1 and L2 for students and teachers. Although a cross-sectional survey was administered, a longitudinal study following a group of students from intake to graduation would provide more in-depth knowledge of how, when, and why students perceptions and attitudes change.

There were also some issues with the staff surveys. It was noted by some teachers that some of the survey questions were unclear. Though the authors asked another English teacher to check the translation, if the surveys were administered again there would need to be closer examination of the translation to ensure greater clarity. The order of some of the items also differed between surveys. Finally, a higher level of comparability between the student and staff surveys would be advantageous.

In addition, interviews with both teachers and students about their feelings towards reading would help to triangulate the survey data. More information examining other aspects of student life, for example, time spent on studying and at club activities would also be beneficial. Moreover, collecting real-time data, i.e. using cameras to track movement, could enable the authors to understand how the students use the library better, and lead to improvements to provide a better learning experience for them.

The impetus for conducting this research was to examine the perceptions of reading and reading habits that might have led to the cessation of ER as part of the school's English education program. The survey results suggest that with the current reading environment, expanding the ER program to serve all students was a step too far. The school environment, support from its teachers and students, and an ongoing assessment to better an existing program is crucial for secondary schools who wish to successfully expand ER across a six-year English curriculum in Japan. We hope that this paper will provide a platform for secondary educators to have a heartfelt discussion about how to overcome the inevitable obstacles that arise when integrating ER into an English curriculum. These solutions will allow teachers and administrators to build stronger programs in the future.

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Appendix A

Student Survey Questions (Japanese)

自分の場合・意見を考えて、最も適切な言葉を選んでください。

1. 読むのが(　)楽しい。

全くない　　たまに　　ときどき　　しばしば　　いつも

2. 英語で読むのが()楽しい。

全くない　　たまに　　ときどき　　しばしば　　いつも

3. 英語で読むのが()難しい。

全くない　　たまに　　ときどき　　しばしば　　いつも

4. 読む時に分からない言葉があったら、(　　)すぐ調べます。

全くない　　たまに　　ときどき　　しばしば　　いつも

自分の意見と最も合う答えを選んでください。

5. 読むことが好きです。

全然あてはまらない　　あまりあてはまらない　　どちらもいえない　　ややあてはまる　　よくあてはまる

6. 勉強のためにだけ読みます。

全然あてはまらない　　あまりあてはまらない　　どちらもいえない　　ややあてはまる　　よくあてはまる

7. 英語で読むのが好きです。

全然あてはまらない　　あまりあてはまらない　　どちらもいえない　　ややあてはまる　　よくあてはまる

8. 将来に英語で読むことが必要ないと思います。

全然あてはまらない　　あまりあてはまらない　　どちらもいえない　　ややあてはまる　　よくあてはまる

9. 気分を落ち着けるために読みます。

全然あてはまらない　　あまりあてはまらない　　どちらもいえない　　ややあてはまる　　よくあてはまる

10. 英語に対しては、教科書にある英語や先生がくれた英文しか読みません。

全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

11. 図書館で本を借りることが不便です。

全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

12. 英文を自分で探して読みます。

全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

13. もっと英語で読むべきです。

全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

14. 英語のリーディング力をあげたい。

全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

15. 読みながら、分からない言葉をリストに書いて勉強します。

全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

16. 将来に、いつ英文を読む必要があると思いますか？[複数回答可]

- 仕事のために（メールやレポートなど）
- 友達とオンラインについて（メールやフェイスブックなど）
- SNS
- 大学で（本や研究など）
- 旅行（レストランのメニューや旅行日程など）
- 新聞、雑誌
- オンラインニュース
- ブログとコメント
- 説明書
- 博物館（展示の情報）
- 将来に英語を必要ないと思います。
- その他（下に書いてください）

Student Survey Questions (English)

Item	Response Options
1. Reading is [ ] enjoyable. 2. Reading English is [ ] enjoyable. 3. Reading English is [ ] difficult. 4. When I don't understand a word when I'm reading, I [ ] check it straight away.	always sometimes occasionally rarely never
5. I like reading. 6. I only read for study. 7. I like reading English. 8. I don't think that I will need to read English in the future. 9. I read to relax. 10. I only read the English in my textbook or given to me by a teacher. 11. Borrowing books from the library is inconvenient. 12. I find English materials to read. 13. I should read more in English. 14. I want to improve my English reading skills. 15. When I'm reading, I make a list of words that I don't know and study them.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
16. In the future, when do you think it will be necessary to read English? 1. For work (e.g. email, reports) 2. With friends online (e.g. email, Facebook) 3. SNS 4. At university (e.g. books, research) 5. Travel (e.g. restaurant menus, timetables) 6. Newspapers; magazines 7. Online news 8. Online blogs and comments 9. Instruction manuals 10. At museums (e.g. exhibit information) 11. I do not think I will need to read English in the future. 12. Other (Please write below)	All those that apply.

Appendix B

Staff Survey Questions (Japanese)

学部：国語　美術　数学　社会　理科　技術 音楽　保健体育　家庭　その他

自分の場合・意見を考えて、最も適切な言葉を選んでください。

1. 読むのが（　　）楽しい。
   全くない　　たまに　　ときどき　　しばしば　　いつも

2. 英語で読むのが（　　）楽しい。
   全くない　　たまに　　ときどき　　しばしば　　いつも

自分の意見と最も合う答えを選んでください。

3. 英語でインターネットコンテンツを読むのが好きです。
   全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

4. 英語でもっと読むべきだと思う。
   全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

5. 英語バックグラウンドリーディングが授業準備のために読みます。
   全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

6. 私は英語で読む時間を増やしたい。
   全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

7. 私は英語を読むことは楽しくないです。
   全然あてはまらない　あまりあてはまらない　どちらもいえない　ややあてはまる　よくあてはまる

ギャップを適切な単語で埋める。自分の意見と最も合う答えを選んでください。

8. 私が高校生の時、私は（　　）喜びのために読みました。
   全くない　たまに　ときどき　しばしば　ちょくちょく

9. 私が高校生の時は、自分が見つけた英語の資料を（　　）読んでいました。
   全くない　たまに　ときどき　しばしば　ちょくちょく

10. 私が高校生の時は、私は英語の資料（本、雑誌、ウェブサイト）を（　　）喜びのために読んでいました。
   全くない　たまに　ときどき　しばしば　ちょくちょく

11. 私が大学生の時、私は（　　）喜びのために読みました。
   全くない　たまに　ときどき　しばしば　ちょくちょく

12. 私が大学生の時、私は英語の資料（本、雑誌、ウェブサイト）を（　　）喜びのために読んでいました。
   全くない　たまに　ときどき　しばしば　ちょくちょく

13. どのくらいの頻度で英語でメールを読んでいますか。
   a. 1日に数回　b. 1週間に7-14回　c. 1週間に1-6回　d. 1ヶ月に4回以下　e. 1年間5回以下

14. どのくらいの頻度でオンラインのニュース記事やその他のオンライン記事を英語で読むのですか。
   a. 1週間に7回以上　b. 1週間に4-6回　c. 1ヶ月に1-10回　d. 1年に1-8回　e. 全くない

次の答えは日本語で良いです。

15. 教科書や生徒たちの課題の他に、他の種類の英語の読書は何をしていますか。

---

16. おおよそ 1 日にどれくらいの時間を読みますか？

---

17. あなたは毎日仕事の外で読書を費やしている時間はどれくらいですか？

---

18. おおよそ、毎週英語（教材を含む）を読むのにどれくらいの時間を費やしますか

---

19. おおよそ、あなたは毎週生徒の英語の執筆（長さ 50＋単語）を読むのにどれくらいの時間を費やしますか。

---

20. 仕事の以外で、あなたはどこで一番読んでいますか。

a. 電車・バス　b. カフェ　c. 家　d. 私は仕事の外では読まない　e. 他の_____

21. あなたは英語を読んでいる時に別の場所で読む傾向がありますか？

はい　いいえ　分からない

22. 将来に、いつ英文を読む必要があると思いますか？[複数回答可]

a. 仕事のために（メールやレポートなど）
b. 友達とオンラインについて（メールやフェイスブックなど）
c. SNS
d. 大学で（本や研究など）
e. 旅行（レストランのメニューや旅行日程など）
f. 新聞、雑誌
g. オンラインニュース
h. ブログとコメント
i. 説明書
j. 博物館（展示の情報）
k. 将来に英語を必要ないと思います。
l. その他（下に書いてください）

Staff Survey Questions (English)

Item	Response Options
1. I [ ] enjoy reading. 2. I [ ] enjoy reading English.	always sometimes occasionally rarely never
3. I enjoy reading Internet content in English. 4. I think that I should read more in English. 5. I do background reading in English about the topics I will teach in class. 6. I want to spend more time reading English. 7. Reading English is not something I enjoy.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
8. When I was a high school student, I [ ] read for pleasure. 9. When I was a high school student, I [ ] read English materials that I found myself. 10. When I was a high school student, I [ ] read English materials for pleasure (e.g. books, magazines, websites). 11. When I was a university student, I [ ] read for pleasure. 12. When I was a university student, I [ ] read English materials for pleasure (e.g. books, magazines, websites).	often sometimes occasionally rarely never
13. How often do you read emails in English?	Many times every day; 7-14 times a week; 1-6 times a week; Less than 4 times a month; Less than 5 times a year
14. How often do you read online news articles/other online articles in English?	7+ times a week; 4-6 times a week; 1-10 times a week; 1-8 times a year; never

15. Apart from textbooks and student work, what other types of English reading do you do? 16. Approximately how much time do you spend reading in total each day? 17. Approximately how much time do you spend reading outside of work each day? 18. Approximately how much time do you spend reading English materials (including textbook materials) each week? 19. Approximately how much time do you spend reading students' English writing (length 50+ words) each week?	n/a
20. Outside of work, where do read the most?	On the train/bus; at cafes; at home; I don't read outside of work; other
21. Do you tend to read in different places when you are reading English?	Yes; No; Not sure
22. In the future, when do you think it will be necessary to read English? a. For work (e.g. email, reports) b. With friends online (e.g. email, Facebook) c. SNS d. At university (e.g. books, research) e. Travel (e.g. restaurant menus, timetables) f. Newspapers; magazines g. Online news h. Online blogs and comments i. Instruction manuals j. At museums (e.g. exhibit information) k. I do not think I will need to read English in the future. l. Other (Please write below)	All those that apply.

English Department Survey Questions

Directions: Read the following questions. Circle your answer.

1. I enjoy reading Internet content in English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

2. I think that I should read more in English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

3. I do background reading in English about topics I will teach in class.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

4. I want to spend more time reading in English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Reading English is not something I enjoy.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Fill in the gap with the appropriate word.

6. When I was a high school student, I ( ) read for pleasure.

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

7. When I was a high school student, I ( ) read English materials that I found myself.

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

8. When I was a high school student, I ( ) read English materials for pleasure (for example books, magazines, websites).

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

9. When I was a university student, I ( ) read for pleasure.

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

10. When I was a university student, I ( ) read English materials for pleasure (for example books, magazines, websites).

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

11. Now, I ( ) read for pleasure.

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

12. Now, I ( ) read English materials for pleasure (for example books, magazines, websites).

never rarely occasionally sometimes often

13. How often do you read emails in English?

Many times a day	7-14 times a week	1-6 times a week	1-10 times a month	1-8 times a year

14. How often do you read online news articles/other articles in English?

7+ times a week	4-6 times a week	1-10 times a month	1-8 times a year	Never

15. Apart from textbooks and student work, what other types of English reading do you do?

_____

16. Approximately how much time do you spend reading in total each day?

_____

17. Approximately how much time do you spend reading outside of work each day?

_____

18. Approximately how much time do you spend reading English materials (including textbook materials) each week?

_____

19. Approximately how much time do you spend reading students' English writing (length 50+ words) each week?

_____

20. Outside of work, where do you read the most?

On the train/bus	At cafes	At home	I don't read outside of work	Other _____

21. Do you tend to read in different places when you are reading English?

Yes No Not sure

22. When do you think you will need to read English in the future. Select as many as you want.
    - Communicating at work (e.g. emails)
    - Communicating with friends online (including email)
    - Using social networking services (SNS)
    - At university (e.g. books, research articles)
    - Travelling (e.g. menus, timetables)
    - Newspapers/magazines
    - Online news
    - Online blogs and comments
    - Instruction manuals
    - At museums (e.g. exhibit information)
    - I do not think I will need to read English in the future.
    - Other (please write)

Note: Item order on the Japanese translation is slightly different from the original English. Items 1 & 2 on the Japanese correspond to Items 11 & 12 on the English.

Questioning the Compatibility of Nunomura's Vision of an English-only Classroom in Japan

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Abstract
Naoko Nunomura's (2017) article provides three tips about how best to improve one's English speaking skills through what she calls the essence of an 'English-only' classroom. Throughout the paper, the author advocates for a communicative-language classroom which excludes all use of the first language (L1). However, I believe that the L1 has an incredibly beneficial role to play in the English classroom when employed in a strategic and purposeful manner; one that can even help improve on the pieces of advice that Nunomura has to offer. This paper is a brief response to Nunomura's article. It begins with an overview of the article's main arguments, before examining why an English-only policy is not necessarily as beneficial as some may believe, and concludes with my own point of view on the matter that may help to further strengthen the ideas which Nunomura outlines.

Keywords: Japanese EFL, English education, L1, English-only, communicative language teaching

Naoko Nunomura (2017), an English teacher at Ryōgoku High School in Tokyo, makes some bold claims about how to improve students' English speaking abilities, both inside the classroom and out. The article, entitled *Ryōkoku kōkō, sugoi shingaku-ritsu o sasaeru eigo no himitsu: 「mitsu no kotsu」 de supi-kingu ga tokui ni naru* [Three tips on how to improve at speaking English and successfully advance to tertiary-level English: A case study from Ryōgoku High School], discusses Nunomura's communicative-based teaching style and outlines her three points of advice for anyone looking to improve their English-speaking skills. Overall, this is an

insightful article with some interesting recommendations. I believe it is also a fresh breath of air for English education, specifically in a Japanese context, which has failed in the uptake of contemporary pedagogies and learning strategies popular in other parts of the world (see Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). That said, there are some major holes left unfilled in the author's argument. This brief response to Nunomura's (2017) article attempts to shed light on these issues, whilst still remaining in support of the main arguments presented in the text. In particular, I will argue that an 'English-only' classroom environment, whilst advocated for by many proponents of communicative language teaching (CLT) methods, is not a necessity for the suggestions Nunomura proposes to improve one's English speaking skills, and that the inclusion of Japanese may actually help to further support the points that Nunomura raises.

Major Article Claims

Nunomura begins her article by first discussing the effects of lessons that lack common sense. She claims that the English class in which she teaches is an *English only* environment, with all instruction and conversation between pupils conducted exclusively in English. The author also suggests that students do not use dictionaries, nor does she supply Japanese translations or English grammar explanations. This kind of classroom, Nunomura claims, is one that has been criticised for 'lacking common sense' in Japan, with suggestions that students would simply not be able to understand the lesson and would be unable to cope with university entrance examinations. However, Nunomura asserts that the 'English-only' classroom actually helps students to speak with native-speaker ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers), to improve GTEC (Global Test of English Communication) scores, and speaking skills in particular. Nunomura suggests that

removing homework based on Japanese translations and replacing it with content centering on an English-only policy helps to improve students' general communicative skills and GTCE scores overall. Specifically, the author introduces three tips, based on what she believes to be the essence of an English-only classroom, that can help even self-studiers to speak English naturally. They are: one, place importance on speaking in English; two, suppose that students are able to express themselves and give their opinions in English; and three, start with "easy English" and "affable partners".

Place Importance on Speaking in English

Firstly, Nunomura suggests placing importance on speaking *in* English rather than simply speaking English. In Japanese, this distinction can be clearly understood from the differences between *eigo o hanasu* (speak English) and *eigo de hanasu* (speak in English). In English, however, the difference is a little subtler, but is perhaps best understood through the contrast between 'to say something in English' and 'to speak in English'. To '*say something in English'* does not require students to think about, or even understand what it is they are saying, and very rarely does it lead to conversation. However, as Nunomura points out, memorising set words and phrases does not lead to the development of communicative competence in the target language (TL). To '*speak in English'*, on the other hand, requires that the meaning of input is first processed and understood before a suitable and appropriate reply can be produced. This strategy is commonly promoted in the method of CLT. Whilst this is admittedly not a new revelation by any means, it is indeed a breath of fresh air for Japanese EFL education on the whole, which has traditionally perpetuated a grammar translation approach focused on text-based reading

skills, and is yet to widely uptake a communicative-based pedagogical stance (McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

Suppose That Students Are Able to Express Themselves and Give Their Opinions in English

Nunomura's second premise is that output practice can be done alone. She claims that, because communication is merely the sharing of information, if one assumes they are sharing their ideas with a partner, they can practice by writing, speaking, or even thinking their ideas alone. The idea of talking to oneself, sometimes referred to as *intrapersonal communication*, has been discussed by researchers in the past (see, for example, Lantolf & Yáñez, 2003) as a beneficial way to improve one's ability in a second language (L2). Nunomura claims that pretending to converse with somebody in English while reading or listening to English materials is an indispensable way to improve one's English skills.

Start With "Easy English" and "Affable Partners"

The third tip Nunomura gives to learners looking to improve their English-speaking abilities is to use simple English words and constructions, and to find a speaking partner with whom they are comfortable talking to. More specifically, she suggests using plain, uncomplicated English to convey one's intended meaning, particularly when a difficult word is unknown. The author also suggests that learners should first talk with fellow Japanese learners of English, as it is easier than speaking with native speakers from the outset (cf. Varonis & Gass, 1985).

Whilst the article proposes some interesting suggestions and strategies for improving Japanese leaners' English-speaking skills on the whole, Nunomura implies

that the benefits of having a TL-exclusive environment exceeds the costs involved in losing the use of the L1, which has traditionally played an important role in Japanese EFL education. However, as Baker (2011) argues, "the separation of L1 and L2 belongs to the 20th century, while the 21st century will see the deliberate and systematic use of both languages in the classroom" (p. 291). I believe that some of the points raised in Nunomura's article might actually be enhanced with use of the L1, so long as it is strategic and purposeful; two things that it has traditionally not been in Japan. I will now briefly address some of the literature supporting L1 use in the EFL classroom, and why this has not been successful in a Japanese EFL context.

L1 Use in Japan

Japanese EFL classrooms have long perpetuated teaching approaches that employ a large amount of L1 use through grammar translation, such as the *yakudoku* method (Nishino, 2008), which has resulted in Japanese EFL students developing relatively poor levels of communicative English abilities and achieving low scores in international English tests such as TOEIC and TOEFL (McMillan & Rivers, 2011). In response to this, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has advocated for CLT methods to be introduced to Japanese EFL education in recent years. In their (2011) revision to the courses of study, MEXT stipulated that "English classes should be conducted principally in English in high school" (p. 8); part of their ongoing efforts to develop the communicative English abilities of Japanese students. However, Japanese EFL classrooms are yet to fully exclude the L1, despite the governmental policies in favour of doing so. Japanese has, and continues to be, the traditional language of instruction in most Japanese EFL classrooms regardless of student level (Terauchi, 2017).

Despite calls in favour of removing the L1 from the Japanese EFL classroom, this movement is yet to gain wide-spread momentum throughout Japan. This has, in part, been attributed to factors including the strict, grammar-based university entrance examinations (Kikuchi, 2006) and Japanese teachers' own lack of training and ability to implement communicative-based approaches (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). This has lead teachers to employ methods in which the L1 is prevalent, but in most cases, its use has been unsystematic, with heavy reliance between teachers and students on the L1. If we are to see significant development in students EFL abilities, a change away from traditional grammar-based methods towards a more communicative-based approach may be required, but that is not necessarily to say that the L1 must be banned from the classroom entirely. I will now look briefly at the benefits that strategic and purposeful use of the L1 can have in the learning of an L2.

Benefits of L1 Use

The benefits of L1 use throughout the L2 learning process have received increased attention amongst SLA scholars of recent years (see, for example, Cook, 2001; Cummins, 2007; Lin, 2015; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain 2009). In her article, Nunomura (2017) does reference the fact that, 'in the beginning, mixing in some Japanese is fine'; which has also been reported by researchers in similar Japanese secondary schools contexts (see, for example, Leeming, 2011; McDowell, 2009). Carson and Kashihara (2012), investigating students' preferences for L1 use in relation to proficiency level, found that all learners believed the L1 could be used as a beneficial learning tool, although desire for this did decrease in the *advanced* group that had TOEIC scores greater than 800. Studies have shown that strategic use of the L1 by students not

only helps them to understand L2 vocabulary (Liu, 2008), L2 grammar (Demir, 2012), and L2 texts (Turnbull & Sweetnam Evans, 2017), particularly at the beginner and intermediate levels, but that it also provides a number of important affective features such as a sense of security (Schweers, 1999), building learners' confidence levels (Phakiti, 2006), lowering affective filters (Meyer, 2008), and easing stress levels (Levine, 2003) at all levels of proficiency.

Similarly, L1 use by the L2 teacher has been shown to aid instruction (Cook, 2001) through the purposeful translation of grammar and vocabulary (Macaro, 2009), and to discuss cross-cultural issues (Tang, 2002); shown to be particularly beneficial in these studies at the beginner and intermediate levels. It can also be used for affective features to ensure that students are motivated and feel comfortable in the classroom (de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009), to create social relations and build rapport between students and their teachers (Littlewood & Yu, 2011), to build integrated knowledge in learners' minds (Mart, 2013), and to raise students' confidence levels on the whole (Karimian & Mohammadi, 2015), particularly during the early stages of language acquisition.

For one reason or another, the affective, emotional-based support that the L1 affords, for both students and teachers alike, is often overlooked as a benefit of L1 use. Too often, the L1 is viewed purely as a barrier to the development of communicative competence in the L2 because of negative connotations ascribed to the grammar-translation method of former years. But it must be remembered that affective filters and a lack of confidence can play an equally, or arguably greater, hindrance in the L2 learning process. Finding a tool to support students in this field is pivotal. I believe that strategic and purposeful use of the L1 is that tool. Meiring and Norman (2002) refer to this as the 'comforting effect'; a form of "psychological reassurance" (p. 32) that learners receive

when they can relate what it is they are learning to their familiar L1. In an English-only classroom environment, where learners are not provided with this sense of comfort or reassurance, there is a greater chance of them losing the motivation to continue studying the language.

Conclusion

Whilst I certainly agree with the points raised by Nunomura (2017), I do not believe that the removal of the L1 in favour of an English-only classroom is required to implement the author's advice. In fact, I would argue that select and purposeful use of the L1 may work to enhance students' communicative abilities by providing important affective features needed to help learners feel comfortable in the classroom, and to lower affective filters which can otherwise obstruct and hinder the learning process. For example, strategic use of the L1 to plan a speech, or ask a teacher or classmate for help with a certain word or phrase, can help strengthen the eventual output that learners produce. Furthermore, while CLT classrooms have many advantages of their own, we must look at this from the Japanese EFL context: one which has traditionally relied extensively on the L1. Removing the L1 from this context may prove psychologically and scholastically harmful to students' who suddenly find themselves in unfamiliar, potentially stressful environments. Therefore, the question we must ask ourselves is not *if* we should we use Japanese in the EFL classroom, but rather *how* should we use Japanese to maximise learning in the EFL classroom so that learners are comfortable throughout the learning process.

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Student Responses to Video Production Projects

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Abstract
This study reports on how the benefits of a project-based learning (PBL) approach to English as a foreign language (EFL) education, cited across the literature, tally with the reflections of students who had completed a video project as part of their Global Issues curriculum. Data gathered from surveys, interviews, discussion forums, journals, and observations formed the basis of this study. The study found that many of the expected benefits could indeed be reproduced, especially when the PBL approach adhered to guidelines that have been established within PBL by proponents such as Stoller (2002, 2006) and Alan and Stoller (2005). Chief among the benefits observed were increased content knowledge and integrated language skills. The students compared short video presentations favourably to traditional presentation styles. Video production posed some technical difficulties at first, but once those difficulties were overcome, the students enjoyed the creativity of the medium.

Keywords: project-based learning, video presentations

Project work is a student-centered endeavor that results in the creation of an end product. While the form this product takes will vary according to the needs of the students and the goals of the teacher, it is the production process that makes project work so worthwhile, bringing opportunities for students to develop their language skills, content knowledge, and autonomy, and work together in a real-world environment by collaborating on a task.

Project-based learning (PBL) serves as a tonic to many teaching contexts where there is a "temptation to strip away everything from the curriculum that does not directly feed into a test score" (Beckett & Miller, 2006, xii). According to Skehan (1998), it is a perfect

structure for preparing learners to approach learning autonomously, according to their own abilities, styles, and preferences. It is, however, considered an under-exploited pedagogy (Alan & Stoller, 2005). Some teachers might consider projects to be a luxury in the curriculum. The research indicates that this is certainly not the case. Thorough and careful planning on the part of the teacher is essential to the flow of the project and the success of the student (Bell, 2010). Projects need to be devised with students' language needs in mind, both present and future. Institutional expectations are also capable of being met within the parameters of PBL.

In this study I examined the benefits commonly attributed to PBL and tallied these with the reactions of students who completed a video presentation together with the observations of the researcher. This study sought to ascertain whether, through the adherence to the methodology and principles that have been established by researchers over recent years, optimum results could be achieved.

Project-Based Learning

The diverse nature of project work renders it nearly impossible to encapsulate what a project is in a succinct definition. Stoller (2006) lists the following characteristics as being integral elements to a project in an ESL/EFL context. A project should:

- Have a process and product orientation.
- Be defined, in part at least, by students, to encourage ownership in the project.
- Extend over a period of time.
- Encourage the natural integration of skills.
- Make a dual commitment to language learning and content learning.
- Oblige students to work in groups and on their own.
- Require students to take responsibility for their own learning through research.

- Require teachers and students to assume new roles and responsibilities.
- Result in a tangible final product.
- Conclude with student reflections on both the process and the product.

The Benefits of a PBL Approach

Advocates of PBL have reported many benefits accruing from the approach. Holm (2011) conducted a review of the literature available on PBL outside the ESL/EFL context and found that where students' responses were recorded, they tended to view PBL favourably. The research clearly showed improvements in student engagement, increased interest in content, and the development of problem solving and analytical skills. In an ESL context, Hedge (2000) praised the genuine communicative nature of PBL before adding that it "encourages imagination and creativity, self-discipline, and responsibility, collaboration, research and study skills, and cross-curricular work through exploitation of knowledge gained in other subjects" (p. 364).

Criticism

The increasingly prominent role of PBL in education, and by extension in ESL pedagogy, has come under criticism, with much of it emanating from the diminished role of the teacher in the process. Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006) contended that the desired results of adopting a "minimally guided" approach vanish in the face of the excessive freedom afforded to novice learners. Citing evidence collected from empirical research, they maintained that the advantage that guidance offers recedes only when the learner has attained a level by which they are "internally guided" (p. 75). Similarly, Blumenfeld et al. (as cited in Holm, 2011), described several classrooms where expectations remained unmet because the students "got stuck" or wasted time mis-channeling their efforts,

eventually concluding that significant teacher involvement and guidance is needed for optimal learning. Hirsch (as cited in Beckett, 1999), was also not convinced of the efficiency of the approach. He contended that PBL took too long, and that the autonomy resulted in students including irrelevant or erroneous material. He also questioned the evaluation methods of some teachers, doubting that their students had clear goals to work towards. He contended that students who have clear criteria for success spend more time discussing and evaluating content, and these conversations increase student learning. However, Alan and Stoller (2005) warned against preventing student growth by dint of excessive control on the part of teachers or indeed, a lack of feedback and guidance. In my experience, the instructor must strive for a balanced approach which gives students a high degree of autonomy in terms of choosing topics and embarking on a process, while clearly defining expectations and providing guidance throughout the process.

Video Projects

Historically, video has been used in the language classroom as a "static" resource (Gardner, 1994) but the ubiquity of smartphones has vastly increased the level of consumption of videos and provided the means to produce them. Exploiting the relationship between technology and pedagogy has appealed to the constructivist school of teaching (Nikitina, 2009, 2010). In the production of a video, the students are challenged to develop a deep understanding of the content and language so that they might develop the ability to share the meanings with their peers.

There are many reasons why video production is an engaging and effective pedagogical tool. Students spend a great deal of time viewing short form videos on the internet and sharing them through social media. The level of attention given to the

medium in the daily lives of the students offered hope that not only would content be assimilated by the viewing audience, but there would be an opportunity for reinforcement of existing vocabulary and exposure to new vocabulary. Gareis (as cited in Meyer & Forester, 2015), described video production as "... the perfect vehicle for integrating skills practice, authentic communication, and process-oriented group activities at a level of student involvement that is difficult to sustain through other media" (p. 192). However, the exploitation of the medium should not be interpreted merely as a trojan horse used to distract students while teaching them useful language. It is a valid method for involving learners in a 'real world' use of their target language (Gardner, 1994). The project described below could have found expression in written form alone. The decision to use video as the medium was influenced by the likelihood that a different method stood a better chance of motivating students than an additional written report. It was felt that the medium lends itself to creativity more than others. This arguably is an under-exploited mode of engagement in the traditional Japanese education system. The freedom afforded students in the planning of their own projects fosters a natural creative process although teachers can provide creative stimuli to assist in the process. PBL allows for students to "move away from mechanistic learning and towards endeavors that allow for and benefit from creativity" (Stoller, 2006, p. 26). A final but vital aspect of the reasoning behind the design of the project was the desire to develop digital literacy skills. Meyer and Forrester (2015) note that although today's university students are sometimes referred to as *digital natives*, many will often have little or no experience of video production or sound editing.

Methodology

The eighteen participants of this study were enrolled in a single-semester *Global Issues*

course at a Japanese university. The students were expected to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in an all-English environment. The course syllabus also stipulated that the students engage in presentation work throughout the semester. The materials selected for the course corresponded to B1/B2 levels on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The students were asked to make a four-minute video presentation on a topical issue of their choosing. Upon completion of the project and prior to exhibition, the participants were asked to discuss their experiences in small groups. The audio from these discussions was recorded. They were also asked to complete a short-written survey. The participants provided written comments and a numerical rating for their peers' presentations as they were exhibited. Several weeks later, the students were asked complete a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to determine their attitudes toward project work. Six students participated in a final discussion forum, the audio of which was recorded and transcribed.

Case Study

The decision to adopt a PBL approach was made in an effort to both satisfy the program objectives and as a means to consolidate and act as an extension for much of the course content. As Stoller (2002) explains, "In classrooms where a commitment has been made to content learning as well as learning, project work is particularly effective because it represents a natural extension of what is already taking place in class" (p. 109). Accordingly, each of Stoller's (2006) essential elements of a project was incorporated into this case study.

Have a process and product orientation

The process involved thorough research of their topic, note taking, composition of the presentation, collecting the necessary visuals, recording of the presentation, and the editing of the final product. There were two technical workshops held over the course of the project. There were two peer feedback sessions and several consultations with the instructor regarding both technical and language-related issues.

Be defined, in part at least, by students, to encourage ownership in the project

The topics were chosen independently by the students with the only stipulation being that there be no overlap of topics with the projects of their peers. The four-minute duration of the video was negotiated as was the three-week deadline for submission. Furthermore, to integrate the assessment within the task, the grading criteria were agreed with the students before commencement.

Extend over a period of time

The class was given extended class time and some short technical assignments to become familiar with the process of shooting and editing videos in the weeks preceding the project assignment with the deadline for completion coming three weeks later. From initiation to completion, the project extended over five weeks.

Encourage the natural integration of skills

The process necessarily involved reading, note taking, and composition in the research phase. During the recording and editing process, students were able to listen to themselves, analyse performance, and make adjustments where necessary. They were also given

opportunities to communicate in production meetings and in oral peer review sessions after viewing each other's work.

Make a dual commitment to language learning and content learning

While the project was designed to be communicative and task-based in many aspects, the students were reminded throughout of the importance of the accuracy of their output. Peer review sessions and consultations with the instructor contributed to language learning. The class was taught filmmaking vocabulary to be used in production sessions. The use of language points that had been identified and practiced in previous lessons was strongly encouraged. Meyer and Forrester (2015) warn against students using overly complex vocabulary and/or linguistic structures. With student video projects, the maxim "know your audience" is apposite. When the use of difficult vocabulary was unavoidable, such as when using scientific terms, students were asked to provide visual clues such as subtitles, diagrams, and pictures so that they could explain the terminology to the audience.

Oblige students to work in groups and on their own

Although the project required each student to submit individual projects, much of the preparatory work was done in groups. For instance, students were placed in production groups and, during the technical training sessions, students were asked to explain and demonstrate different aspects of filmmaking to each other using the correct terminology. Furthermore, the groups conducted peer-reviewing sessions for accuracy of language and were encouraged to be supportive throughout the duration of the project.

Require students to take responsibility for their own learning through research

Students were not provided with any materials directly relating to their topic. They were given assistance with the technical elements and with issues relating to language when necessary. This is a fundamental characteristic of content-based instruction. The class were encouraged to look at their issue from several perspectives and to strive to educate their audience in the hopes that this would foster deep learning.

Require teachers and students to assume new roles and responsibilities

Project work can be more effective when teachers relax their control, when students regard the teacher as a guide, according to Sheppard and Stoller (as cited in Alan & Stoller, 2005). The students assumed the role of researcher, presenter, editor, and director of their videos. They also acted as technical teachers during the production meetings.

Result in a tangible final product

The end product in each case was a digital video of approximately four minutes length. Skehan (1998, p. 274) notes that this end product, especially when shared with a real audience leads students to take their "formal accuracy more seriously."

Conclude with student reflections on both the process and the product

Participants in project work were able to measure success against the series of tasks that make up the process and the accomplishment of the end goal. The class participated in several discussion groups, completed surveys, and were interviewed by the instructor.

Before the class viewed the completed videos, the students were given the following questions to discuss before being asked to provide short answers in writing:

- What software app did you use?
- How much time did you spend on your project?
- What was the most challenging part?
- Did you think you were given enough time?
- What did you learn about your topic that surprised you?
- Did you prefer this project to a traditional oral presentation? Why/Why not?
- Would you rate your experience as being positive (P), negative (N), or mixed (M)?

The students were given evaluation sheets to fill out as they viewed the projects of others. They were asked to comment on both the content and production value and to give an overall rating for each project.

There was no direct correlation between the time spent on production of a video and the rating it received from the audience. Projects I and O, despite taking the longest time to produce, only received average ratings whereas A, E, L, N, and Q were received more favourably notwithstanding their shorter production time. Interestingly, comments submitted in the peer evaluation sheet focused nearly exclusively on the production value of the videos rather than on the content, as can be seen below:

- ‘His voice was too small.’
- ‘I enjoyed how he changed pictures [transitions].’
- ‘He used too many pictures with Japanese which I don’t think is good.’
- ‘He used many pictures and graphs. I could understand this topic easily.’
- ‘He used too many different types of music. I felt strange.’
- ‘Her toy animation was amazing [Stop Motion].’
- ‘Adding the video [of terrorists] was very powerful.’
- ‘She had a lot of good information, but her editing was too fast. I couldn't see the pictures and charts.’

Table 1

Self-Assessment and Peer Rating

Topic	Selected Comment	Positive?	Production Time (hours)	Average Peer Rating /10
A. Food Waste	It was difficult for me to make the video, especially adding the text at the right times.	M	3	8.7
B. Terrorism	The project is interesting and exciting for me. I enjoyed it.	P	4	8.1
C. Anorexia	I like to make the movie but I thought it was hard to use Kinemaster (a*n Android video editing application*) so it was tiring.	M	3	7.8
D. The Poverty Gap	Researching this topic was interesting for me but making the video was annoying because I didn't understand how to use it well.	M	5	9
E. Global Warming	Using the app was a little difficult for me.	N	3	9
F. Marriage in Japan	I was interested in making the video but I didn't know how to import music or YouTube into the video. I will use another app next time.	M	2	7.8
G. Vegetarianism	The video was fun to make. I could show it to my mother. I spent a long time on it but I was happy with the quality.	P	6	8.5
H. Guns in America	I learned a lot from the research. The video was fun for me.	P	5	6.5
I. Bullying	Making this on my phone was hard work.	N	10	8.1
J. Syrian Refugees	This was hard for me. I am not confident in my English.	N	2	6.1
K. Consumption Tax	I enjoyed learning about editing. The topic was difficult for me.	M	6	7.4

L. The Cost of the Olympic Games	I think this project is very interesting and meaningful because I will have to do some presentations in such a way in the future.	P	2	8.9
M. Traffic	I really enjoyed this presentation	P	4	7.5
N. Social Advancement of Japanese Women	I like this style of presentation because I developed computer skills. But the preparation time was long.	M	3	9.1
O. Fair Trade	I like this project because I enjoyed it and learned to make movies. in the future I have to make videos for my job, studying abroad an so on. I could practice for the future.	P	10	8.2
P. World Population	It was a very interesting project for me to make a video in English. It helped me to express my opinions.	P	5	9.2
Q. Water Shortages	I enjoyed the project. I will be able to make videos when I have a job.	P	2	8.8
R. The Music Industry in Japan	I thought it was too hard to make a video.	N	2	6.6

The peer ratings, however, indicated that the overall impression of the video was determined by these factors, agreeing broadly as they did with the evaluations of the instructor, at least.

Time was allocated in the following lesson to follow up on some of the points that students had made in the questionnaire in the preceding class, and an interesting shift in attitude was observed. It was apparent that, upon reflection, students were considerably more positive in their opinions of the project in general and of their own work in particular. The students were asked to once again describe their experience as positive, negative, or

mixed. The results are shown in Figure 1.

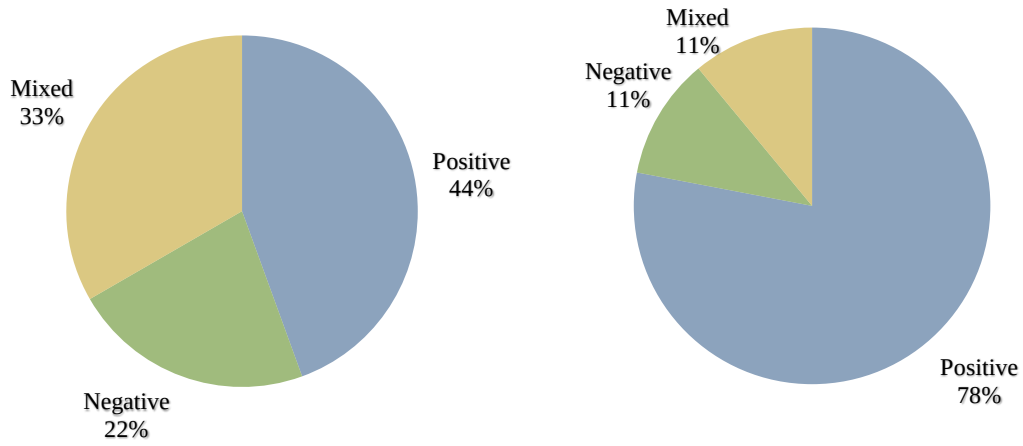

Figure 1. General feelings toward project pre-exhibition vs. post-exhibition.

Three of the students who had changed their evaluation mentioned that, once they had seen their work alongside the output of their peers, they realized that their work was as good or at least of a comparable standard.

Student Reactions

A variety of opinions were expressed in the feedback from the students. Some mentioned having been nervous about the quality of their work before the presentation was viewed, but had been reassured after receiving positive feedback from their peers and teacher immediately after the viewing. It might also be that the original, less positive evaluations were given while the difficulty of the editing process was still fresh in the minds of the students. Most of the class agreed that this was the most challenging element of the project. This was the first time for all but one of the students to produce a video, and getting to grips with some of the technical aspects was frustrating for many. This was referred to

many times in the written comments in the self-assessment. Some of the students were less enthusiastic about doing another video project in a future class, stating: ‘The editing took a long time. I spent hours making my video. It was hard on my phone. I got a headache.’ and ‘I wanted to spend more time speaking. The editing took too long’. Not everyone agreed, however, citing the following positive responses:

- ‘I don’t think it [editing] took too much time. I was happy to learn a new skill.’
- ‘We could help each other and ask you questions. I asked [the teacher] lots.’
- ‘Having the freedom was good.’

While the students seemed happy that they had access to a language consultant, they were less sure about the technical aspects and perhaps needed more structured guidance. Four students (from the discussion forum comprised of six participants) agreed with the following statement that was made by one of them: ‘I wanted (the teacher) to teach more about making the video’.

Eleven of the 18 students making up this case study said that they preferred this type of presentation to what might be considered a traditional class presentation where students make a live speech in front of an audience of their peers. In answer to the question, ‘Did you prefer this style of presentation to the usual style? Why?’ one student answered, ‘Before a regular presentation, I feel so nervous’. The five students who preferred the traditional type, cited the time-consuming nature of the video production process as the main reason. And while two students expressed no preference, at least one student welcomed the challenge of the traditional presentation, ‘I think many Japanese students don't like to speak English in front of students because they are very shy. Maybe we can be brave. It is a good chance to increase my confidence’.

One advantage of the video presentation that several students noted was the ability

to analyse their presentation, find problems, and re-edit where necessary, thus giving them the opportunity to submit what they deemed to be a 'perfect' presentation:

- 'If I make mistake, I can do it again.'
- 'We could show our best.'

Other students enjoyed being part of the audience while their presentation was being shown. They were pleased to hear the live reactions of their peers to their work. The medium of video naturally inspires creativity. One student included a stop-motion animation in her video presentation which drew a strong reaction from her impressed peers.

Less than a quarter of the class chose to appear in their videos, with several students attributing their reluctance to do so to shyness. The ability to choose whether or not to appear was considered to be an advantage over a more traditional presentation, where the students had no option other than to stand in front of their peers and make a speech regardless of their comfort in doing so. All but one student said that anxiety affected their performance negatively when giving such a presentation. Anxiety was much less a factor, if at all, with their video presentations. The students also cited the ability to use a large number of visual aids to help convey their message. From an audience perspective, it seems this was an especially impactful aspect. The power of imagery was a recurring sentiment in both the written and spoken feedback, as shown in these examples:

- 'The images helped me understand the difficult topic.'
- 'Some of the pictures made me feel so sad.'
- 'Her images were beautiful.'
- 'He used too many pictures with Japanese which I don't think is good.'
- 'Using real photos helped me to understand anorexia.'

- ‘There were some shocking pictures.’
- ‘He used many pictures and graphs. I could understand this topic easily.’

The permanent nature of the completed presentation was another positive aspect of the video project. The students were able to keep the finished product and share it with others electronically, or to post it to social media platforms. Many of the class members were due to participate in a study-abroad program the following semester and many spoke of their intentions to make videos chronicling their experience and send them to family and friends. Four students felt that the skill of video editing was one that could be directly beneficial to their professional careers at a future date. When asked, ‘Do you think this project will help you in the future?’ one student answered: ‘Yes. I want to work in a fashion company. Making a video might be necessary’. The other students who participated in the forum were less certain about potential career benefits, but at least one could envision making a video in other circumstances: ‘I can make a video for my friends. For birthday parties. For my mother’.

Responses to the first question in the Likert questionnaire, shown in Table 2, indicated that the students retained positive feelings towards a project-based approach, especially when compared to a more traditional language class. A common complaint made by students concerned the assignments that they were expected to do on a regular basis. The students had completed their first year of studies, which they all agreed was onerous in terms of homework. Having become second years students, they expected to have more opportunities to build on their hard work and put their language skills to use. Instead, they were disappointed to be given similar assignments only in smaller amounts. Below, highlights some of the dissatisfaction that students have with traditional language classes: ‘Last year was too busy. I don't want to do grammar homework every week. I don’t need

homework. I can study by myself. When I was younger maybe it was necessary, but now...'. Another student echoed a similarly negative comment about the value of traditional homework: 'Students often do the homework on the train or bus or in class'. However, some students reported that they found value in the homework that was based on project work: 'Homework is for teachers. The project is for me.'; 'We could decide what to do. We had freedom.'; and, 'We can study with each other and help each other'.

Table 2
Post Project Questionnaire Results

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
I would like to do another project in future classes.	0%	0%	11% (2)	16.6% (3)	72.2% (13)
I would like to do a similar project in the future.	5.56% (1)	22% (4)	11% (2)	44.4% (8)	16.6% (3)
I am glad I learned about video editing.	11% (2)	5.56% (1)	5.56% (1)	33.3% (6)	44.4% (8)
I learned a lot from watching the videos.	0%	0%	16.6% (3)	39% (7)	44.4% (8)
There was enough support from the teacher.	0%	5.56% (1)	16.6% (3)	44.4% (8)	33.3% (6)
I think this will benefit my future career.	16.6% (3)	16.6% (3)	16.6% (3)	22% (4)	27.8% (5)
I felt motivated to work hard.	5.56% (1)	11% (2)	5.56% (1)	33.3% (6)	44.4% (8)
This project helped me improve my English.	0%	0%	5.56% (1)	16.6% (3)	77.8% (14)

Lastly, project work offered the students a chance to integrate their language skills in ways that perhaps were not offered in other classes:

> I want to speak English. Some classes only listening, only writing. Boring. But this class... I didn't want to make a video at first. But doing this project... I noticed something. This project I can speak English. I can write. Speak. Listen. Everything put together.

Teacher's Observations

During the study, there we many takeaways for me, personally. Firstly, I found that the standard of the students' work was very high for the most part, and especially so when their lack of technical experience was taken into consideration. At one point during the process, I wondered whether the technical aspects would overwhelm some of the students, but when I directed the class to some online tutorials, they were able to learn autonomously how to overcome many of the difficulties that they were having. Also, I was pleased with the quality their research. For the most part, students showed an in-depth understanding of their chosen topics, and when they were watching their peers' videos, they were very attentive as audience members. Further to this, the visual elements allowed them to keep pace with the speakers and overcome vocabulary gaps. In addition, I observed students exchanging technical information outside of class time, indicating a willingness to develop their own skills and cooperate with each other. Finally, in spite of the misgivings I have about the English-only tech workshops that resulted in confusion and first language use, the delayed quizzes about content that were conducted two weeks after the exhibition seemed to have yielded excellent recall and accuracy, possibly underlining the impactful nature of the medium.

Conclusion

The project was broadly successful in terms of enhancing learners' language skills, motivating learners, and increasing the learners' content knowledge while affording them the opportunity to use their language for authentic purposes, to take ownership of their own research, and to be autonomous. In deciding what information or stories to include in videos, students had to exercise their discretion and make some difficult decisions. Learning the basics of video editing did not prepare students for all the technical challenges that they would need to overcome. The limitations of using several different software applications on smartphones that were in many cases incompatible created many problems that had to be solved. The students were unanimously in favour of having increased autonomy over their language learning. This fed into their motivation and sense of ownership of their work. Many students expressed boredom and frustration with other classroom methods that offered little scope for creativity or autonomy.

Video production is but one option for a project. It might be the case that the process takes too much time relative to the L2 output. A video presentation does, however, offer some advantages over a traditional live speech presentation, although a simplified version with fewer cuts might be preferable. Of course, both are of value from a skills development perspective.

There are many variables that will determine the success of any example of project-based learning: the project, the teacher, the students, the environment, the time constraints, and the grading criteria to name but a few. Even when following an established methodology, such as Stoller's (2002, 2006), it might be unrealistic to expect consistent results. A project-based method is unquestionably capable of engaging students while developing their language skills and content knowledge. It should not be viewed as a

replacement for other forms of pedagogy, but rather it might be incorporated as a complementary method.

Beckett & Miller (2006) write that PBL is often more likely to be found being employed in low-stakes courses and is more likely to be embraced by teachers of younger learners. As intrinsic motivation becomes weaker with each advancing grade (Ryan & Deci, 2000), PBL could be used as a means to arrest this decline in for many university-level students.

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