ADVANCING LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY ONE ARTICLE AT A TIME

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Introduction to the Ninth Volume

As the year 2022 comes to an end, I am pleased to announce the completion of the ninth volume of the Osaka JALT Journal. As always, I am greatly indented to the contributing authors and reviewers for their hard work and dedication, without which this journal would not be possible. I would like to extend a special thank you and welcome to our new Associate General Editor, Michael Hofmeyer, who has already proven himself to be an excellent reader and editor of academic literature. Michael has been a tremendous help in working with our authors and reviewers to bring meaningful and well-written articles to our readership.

For this volume, we present eight articles that each have a distinct focus on teaching. In the first article, Zeinab Shekarabi presents an analysis of perceptions the widely used Japanese textbook *Minna no Nihongo*. Hungche Ben Chen and Mingnuan Yang continue the discussion of learner perceptions with a comparison between online and paper-based quizzes as assessment tools. Argel Davis Corpuz and Natsu Azuma look at Japanese elementary school students' perceptions of their own second language skills in English after participation in oral presentation activities. Gordon Carlson describes an innovative on-campus extracurricular program implemented during the pandemic to provide much needed opportunities for socially distanced interaction and engagement among students and between students and teachers. Thomas Stones shifts the discussion to writing, offering a case study of two Japanese participants in an English academic writing skills development program designed to prepare learners for master's degree study in the UK. John Guy Perrem considers issues that language teachers face in the classroom when discussing the global issue of contested place names, where competing linguistic, political, and cultural forces produce multiple names for the same place. Bertram Allan Mullin offers a case study on the use of dedicated pronunciation practice to address phonological issues faced by a Japanese learner studying English. And finally, Denver Beirne explores issues related to the teaching of metaphor in the language classroom, offering a model for raising student awareness of this common phenomenon and offering strategies for understanding metaphor that may be encountered in the future.

Like most periodical journals, the Osaka JALT Journal counts one volume per year, and so this, the ninth volume, also represents our ninth year of operation. We will celebrate our 10th anniversary with the publication of the 2023 volume next year, and perhaps that is why it feels that the time is ripe for a change. Or, more precisely, to adopt a few more changes that will complete an evolution already in progress.

Beginning with the eighth volume in 2021, the journal switched to a rolling submission schedule, where articles were received throughout the year (with no submission deadlines) and then prepared and published individually online whenever they completed all the steps in the publication process. As with this volume, all articles published throughout the year were then combined into a single, complete issue that was posted at the end of December. That change alone has proven to be a tremendous benefit to our authors and editors. We are now able to publish quality articles more quickly and without the rush to meet submission deadlines.

After two successful years, I believe we can say that the change has been positively received. It has made our workflow more flexible and allowed us to more fully embrace our role as an online JALT chapter journal. And yet, in other ways we have remained

stuck in the past. Our manuscript file format continued to be Microsoft Word, and our primary means of file sharing continued to be email attachments. Our system of managing communication between editors, authors, and reviewers was—to be very charitable—inefficient and prone to error. And so I am excited to announce the following reforms that will be implemented beginning with the 2023 issue:

Google Docs—The journal will abandon Microsoft Word and will now use Google Docs as our exclusive word processing application. This will allow us to replace multiple versions of manuscripts shared by email with a single online version that supports collaborative editing.

Open identities peer review—The traditional double-blind peer review process complicates manuscript preparation by necessitating the use of anonymized and non-anonymized versions of the same document and discourages (and often prevents) any constructive dialog between the authors and reviewers. And in collaborative contexts like the JALT community, we feel that blind review fails to offer sufficient benefits to outweigh those costs. Thus, we will follow in the footsteps of many other academic journals and adopt a system of open peer review where the identities of the authors and reviewers will be known to each other throughout the review process.

We hope that these changes will not only reduce inefficiencies in our communication process but will foster a more helpful and supportive relationship between our reviewers and authors. More information on the precise changes to the submission process will be available on the Osaka JALT website at www.osakajalt.org/journal.

Whether you are an author, reviewer, or reader, I thank you tremendously for your continued support of the journal as we have worked over the years to build a valuable resource for Osaka JALT and the wider community of language teaching and learning.

Robert Swier
Publications Chair
Osaka JALT

Evaluation of a Japanese Language Textbook from Teachers' and Language Learners' Perspectives

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Abstract
Textbooks are valuable resources that play a key role in teaching foreign languages. Therefore, the evaluation of textbooks is considered an inseparable part of the teaching process. Since teachers and language learners use these books to teach and learn, their perspective is of great importance in evaluating textbooks. The present study is to evaluate the textbook *Minna no Nihongo* (Japanese for Everyone), which is one of the most widely used and important sources of Japanese language teaching across the globe. In a questionnaire, teachers and students of the Japanese language at the University of Tehran separately evaluated this textbook in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general. The findings showed that all participating teachers and students evaluated positively this book in most of the assessment components. Also, there were no significant differences between the teachers' and students' perspectives. In other words, both teachers and students agreed on the effectiveness of the textbook in terms of layout and design, activities, language type, content and subject, and in general; however, they believed that the book needed to be improved in teaching skills to learners. Ultimately, when choosing this book, despite its various good components, it might be found deficient in the area of skills development and so it may be necessary to use some supplementary materials.

Keywords: textbook evaluation, Japanese language teaching, *Minna no Nihongo*

Introduction

There are numerous educational resources available for language learning, including written materials such as textbooks, and non-written materials such as educational CDs and audio aids. However, since books are mostly used for teaching and learning a language, textbooks are of great importance for both teachers and language learners and are among the necessary and much needed resources. Textbooks not only provide a framework for teachers to help them achieve their lesson objectives, but also have a direct impact on the students' and language learners' performance and efficiency. In other words, teachers and students are influenced by textbooks (Ahour & Omrani, 2020). The more students are content with the textbook and like it, the more they become interested in the lesson and do more activities (Tomlinson, 2012). *Minna no Nihongo* is one of the most widely used books in the field of Japanese language teaching. Despite the emergence and decline of other textbooks, this book has been used in different parts of the world for a long time and is still in use by teachers and language learners. Therefore, the present study aims at evaluating the two-volume book *Minna no Nihongo* from Iranian teachers' and students' perspectives.

Literature Review

The use of books in language teaching, without a doubt, leads to coherence of content and order in educational materials, and books might also create a systematic structure in the learners' mind. Textbooks are useful learning resources that can serve as a guide and reference (McGrath, 2006). Moreover, textbooks are a coherent source of information for both teachers and learners that facilitate the understanding of topics and concepts and guide learners through language structures and learning patterns like a map (Yule, 2010). Although some researchers consider books as an obstacle in education (Tomlinson, 2011; Ur, 1993), books can be useful and effective when there is a common educational goal to meet the students' needs.

Although using books to promote educational goals is considered helpful, no book is complete (Grant, 1987; McDonough & Shaw, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to evaluate educational books. Teachers' and students' perspectives are very influential in evaluating and improving the quality of books. Assessment enables teachers to make the right choice from among diverse teaching resources. The wrong choice harms language learners' learning process (Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, & Hajimohammadi, 2011).

Tomlinson (2012) states that textbook evaluation means examining the effectiveness of a book from different aspects, which can include the book's achievements for its audience, the book's educational activities and content, and how it improves the audiences' knowledge. Two factors are of great importance in the process of evaluating a book: one is the students who use the book in the educational environment and the other is measuring the level of need satisfaction of both students and teachers. Therefore, textbook evaluation should not be confused with a case study and objective analysis that focus on the context of the book.

The process of evaluating books can be done in two forms of impressionistic evaluation and in-depth evaluation (McGrath, 2002; Cunningsworth, 1995). In the impressionistic method, one evaluates the structure, layout and design, content organization, and activities to get an understanding of the book advantages and disadvantages. Then, in the in-depth evaluation, certain characteristics of the book are examined in detail, such as how the activities are presented, activities being need-oriented, to what level the book can teach skills, etc. The book evaluation happens before, during and after using the book. To measure how much the book matches any long-term and short-term goals, the evaluation is done after using the book (McGrath, 2002).

Questionnaires in book evaluation can give us an understanding of how useful that book is (Harmer, 1991). They are useful to learn about different opinions regarding the books (McGrath, 2002) as they contain a systematic and logical process (McGrath, 2002). Although it is not possible to define a single questionnaire for all assessments (McDonough and Shaw, 2003), specific questionnaires can be designed to comply with the assessment components (Mukundan, et al., 2011). Evaluation of educational books based on the components of assessment is one possible way that leads teacher/educators to make the right choice and select an appropriate book that meets more needs of students.

In the field of language textbook evaluation, most of the evaluations are about languages with a larger number of learners, including English textbooks, and evaluation of languages such as Japanese are less common. In this regard, Luis Miguel Dos Santos (2017) reviewed the Romanized version of *Japanese for Busy People I*, a book for new learners of the Japanese language. Santos evaluated the book with a questionnaire from 46 teachers who taught using the book in Boston, Massachusetts. His questions included:

(1) the availability and price of the book, (2) being usable and up-to-date, (3) useful exercises, (4) the book structure, (5) balance between activities and lessons, (6) teaching the correct pronunciation of words, (7) using grammar and vocabulary in realistic contexts, (8) activities, (9) proportion of four skills, and (10) the book matching the learners' level. In this survey, none of the teachers had a negative opinion about the book and 90% believed that it has a systematic structure, and up-to-date and efficient content. However, some teachers pointed out that the book is not efficient in teaching the correct pronunciation of words and the four skills.

Onur Er (2017) analyzed the content of *Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese* from a cultural point of view. In his research, he qualitatively evaluated cultural elements such as behavioral aspects, cultural beliefs, and cultural awareness in this book. As a result of this assessment, he found out that *Ganki I* focuses on the description of cultural issues and deals with behavioral and cognitive aspects more than teaching cultural beliefs.

In another study, Umehara (2011) evaluated four Japanese textbooks (*Mirai*, *Hai*, *Iitomo*, and *Obento*) that were published in Australia and taught to the junior high school students. He evaluated the books on the basis of grammar and syntax in the foreign language curriculum of Australian schools. In his evaluation, Umehara found out that although the curriculum tries to focus on practical teachings rather than grammar, the books still deal with syntactic and grammatical issues.

Among the Japanese textbooks, no evaluation has been done on the popular and widely used textbook *Minna no Nihongo* from the perspective of the users of this book (i.e., teachers, Japanese as a second/foreign language learners). *Minna no Nihongo* had been used for about 20 years in Iran at the University of Tehran as the only prominent academic center in Iran. *Minna no Nihongo* was first published by the Japanese publisher Suri e Netowaaku (3ACorporation) in 1998 in two volumes (elementary level), and a new version was released in 2012 with some revisions. The book contains 50 lessons (25 lessons per volume). It includes a CD for the dialogues. Updating the educational content and supplementary books have made this book very popular in educational centers, both academic and non-academic. In the present study, the new 2012 version of the book was evaluated.

Research Questions

Since Japanese teachers and language learners use language textbooks to teach and learn, they are entitled to be involved in the evaluation of textbooks, and their opinion about the efficiency of the textbooks is of great importance. Therefore by examining the following three questions, this study seeks to evaluate the efficiency of *Minna no Nihongo* in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general, from the perspective of teachers and students at the University of Tehran.

1. To what degree do teachers believe *Minna no Nihongo* is a useful textbook by evaluating it in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general?
2. To what degree do students believe *Minna no Nihongo* is a useful textbook by evaluating it in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general?
3. To what degree do teachers and students have different opinions about *Minna no Nihongo*?

Methodology

In the present study, using a descriptive research model, *Minna no Nihongo* was evaluated. Evaluation was done using a questionnaire provided to Japanese language teachers and students at the University of Tehran.

As the University of Tehran is one of the major active centers in teaching Japanese language in Iran, Persian-speaking students and teachers in the university who had the experience of teaching and learning Japanese using *Minna no Nihongo* (volumes 1 and 2) participated in this study. A total of nine teachers participated in the study, all having experience teaching *Minna no Nihongo* (volumes 1 and 2), and more than half of them had more than 11 years of experience teaching Japanese. Information about teachers is given in Table 1.

Table 1
Information about teachers participating in the study

	Gender		**Teaching experience**			
	Female (%)	**Male (%)**	**1-5 years (%)**	**6-10 years (%)**	**11-15 years (%)**	**16 and over (%)**
Teachers	5 (56)	4 (44)	3 (33)	1 (12)	3 (33)	2 (22)
Total N (%)	9 (100)		9 (100)			

In addition, 90 Iranian students who were learning Japanese at the University of Tehran, including 60 female (66.66%) and 30 male (33.33%) students took part in the study. All the participating students had the experience of learning Japanese with *Minna no Nihongo* (volumes 1 and 2). They are relatively familiar with other Japanese language textbooks and resources, and language teaching methods. Familiarity of students with other Japanese language teaching books acknowledges the reliability of the assessment made by the students in the present study.

To evaluate *Minna no Nihongo*, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = partially agree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree) was used. The questionnaire was adopted from the evaluation rating scale of textbooks by Paramitha (2018). The researcher revised it for the Persian-speaking target population in this study. This questionnaire consists of 30 questions that cover six components of evaluation including layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and the book in general. The layout and design component evaluates the following issues: (1) overview of teaching patterns, (2) appropriate layout and design, (3) organized structure of each chapter, (4) vocabulary list and glossary, (5) periodic exercises, (6) appropriate periodic tests, (7) guide to use the book, and (8) clarity of book objectives for both teachers and students. In the component of activities, (9) appropriate activities, (10) practical activities for all learners, (11) individual and group activities, (12) real and tangible examples, (13) the level of creativity, and (14) the level of flexibility are evaluated. The component of skills includes (15) the level of emphasis on the student's skills learning and skills development, (16) proportion of four main language skills, (17) phonology and correct pronunciation, and (18) addressing sub-skills such as taking notes

and concepts comprehension. The language type component includes (19) applying language as it is used in the real world, (20) suitable language of the book for the students' level, (21) proper development of grammatical points and vocabulary, and (22) having comprehensible and easy explanations with appropriate examples. The content and subject component includes (23) need-driven content, (24) presentation of real and genuine content, (25) interesting and engaging content, (26) diverse subjects, and (27) content away from cultural prejudices. Finally, the 'in general' component looks at issues such as (28) whether the level of the book is appropriate for teaching at the university, (29) whether the book encourages students to learn Japanese, and (30) whether the participant would choose the book again for language teaching/learning.

Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the reliability of each of the six components was measured separately as well as the reliability of the questionnaire as a whole. The alpha coefficients in Table 2 confirm the high reliability of the questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.97$), and each of the relevant components (α value from 0.74 to 0.84).

Table 2
Cronbach's alpha coefficients on the evaluation rating scale of Minna no Nihongo

Textbook evaluation scale/criteria	**Alpha**
Layout and design	0.79
Activities	0.89
Skills	0.74
Language type	0.84
Subject and content	0.77
In general (Whole aspect)	0.83
Total	0.94

Results

In the first research question (to what degree do teachers believe *Minna no Nihongo* is a useful textbook by evaluating it in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general), the usefulness of *Minna no Nihongo* was examined in each of the components of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general from the teachers' point of view. The results are presented in Table 3. About two-thirds of the teachers, 73.60%, agreed and strongly agreed that the textbook is effective according to the layout and design. In details, they evaluated the structure of the chapters, vocabulary, exercises and clarity of book objectives in this book as effective (Table 4). In contrast, only 8.32% of teachers did not consider the book design appropriate. The 73.60% approval shows that the book has a favorable layout and design. Regarding the book activities, while less than one third (20.37%) of teachers believed the activities were inappropriate, more than half of the teachers (24.07% agree and strongly agree and 53.71% partially agree) acknowledged they were useful. Comparing 20.37% disagreement and 24.07% approval indicates that there is a slight difference between the teachers who approved and disapproved of the appropriateness of activities. However, the higher percentage of approval over the disapproval shows that activities were rather effective. Regarding the skills component,

nearly half of the teachers (47.21%) emphasized the inefficiency of the book in skills training. This shows that teachers believe that the textbook is possibly deficient in the area of skills training. The majority of teachers (80.54%) agreed and strongly agreed with the appropriateness of the language of the book, while only 2.77% disagreed. Teachers' maximum agreement and opposition of less than 3% confirm the authenticity and the proper language of the book. In evaluating the content component, nearly half of the teachers (48.89% agree and strongly agree) rated the content as appropriate, and one fifth (19.99%) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with the appropriateness of the content. This shows that the book has content that is regarded as effective. Finally, in the 'in general' evaluation, more than half of the teachers (66.65%) believed that the textbook is suitable, about one third (29.65%) said partially suitable, and only a small percentage (3.77%) of the teachers said unsuitable. This indicates that generally the book is satisfactory.

According to the results of the study, the top three components of the book, which were approved by teachers are the language of the book (80.54%), layout and design (73.60%), and in general (66.65%), respectively.

Table 3
Mean, standard deviation, and percentage of teachers' evaluation of Minna no Nihongo

Evaluation criteria	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Variance**	**Strongly disagree**	**disagree**	**partly agree**	**agree**	**Strongly agree**
					%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Layout & design	9	30.77	3.38	11.47	2.77	5.55	18.05	51.38	22.22
Activities	9	18.33	3.28	10.82	3.70	16.67	53.71	20.37	3.70
Skills	9	11	3.1	9.64	19.44	27.77	19.44	25.00	8.33
Language type	9	15.88	1.71	2.92	0	2.77	16.66	61.10	19.44
Subject & content	9	17.22	3.71	13.83	0	19.99	31.11	33.33	15.55
In general (Whole aspect)	9	11.44	1.61	2.61	0	3.70	37.03	48.14	18.51

Table 4 shows the percentage of frequency of teachers' opinion on each of the components of assessment. In the layout and design component, teachers expressed the highest level of satisfaction about clarity of book objectives for both teachers and students and glossary items with 88.89%. In the activities component, 66.67% of teachers said they were satisfied that they could easily change or complete the activities, while one third of the teachers (33.33%) were not content as they believed the activities did not stimulate students' creativity. In the skills component, the biggest objection (66.66%) is about the lack of correct teaching of pronunciation to students. However, 66.67% of teachers agreed with the level of emphasis on the student's skills learning and skills development. In assessing the language type component, more than 80% of teachers (88.88%) agreed with the way language was used in the book. In the content component,

more than half of the teachers (66.66%) agreed with the presentation of real and genuine content of the book. Regarding 'in general' component, more than 70% of the teachers (77.77%) considered the book suitable for teaching at the university, and no one indicated that they would not choose the book again for teaching.

Table 4
Percentage of frequency of teachers' and students' opinion about the evaluation of Minna no Nihongo *in each component*

Evaluation components in details		Teachers			Students		
		Agree & strongly agree	Partially agree	Disagree & strongly disagree	Agree & strongly agree	Partially agree	Disagree & strongly disagree
Layout & design	1. The book includes an overview of what will be taught in each unit.	77.78	11.11	11.11	60	26.66	13.33
	2. The book has an appropriate layout and attractive design.	55.55	44.44	0	50	40	9.99
	3. The book has an organized structure for each chapter.	88.89	0	11.11	66.66	20	13.33
	4. The book includes an adequate vocabulary list and glossary.	88.89	0	11.11	80	10	6.66
	5. The book includes periodic exercises.	77.77	22.22	0	76.66	23.33	0
	6. The book includes appropriate periodic tests.	44.44	22.22	33.33	50	13.33	36.66
	7. The book has guide/guidebook that explains how to use this book more effectively.	66.66	33.33	0	70	26.66	3
	8. The material's objectives are apparent to both the teacher and student.	88.89	11.11	0	86.66	10	3.33
Activities	9. The book provides appropriate activities which are well-balanced.	22.22	55.56	22.22	20	50	29.29
	10. The activities are practical for all learners.	22.22	55.56	22.22	20	40	39.99
	11. The activities include individual and group work.	11.11	55.56	22.22	20	50	30
	12. The activities include real and tangible examples.	22.22	55.56	22.22	20	56.66	23.33
	13. The activities promote creativity.	0	66.66	33.33	0	56.66	43.33
	14. The book's activities are flexible and modifiable.	66.67	33.33	0	50	46.66	3
Skills	15. The book emphasizes the student's skills learning and skills development.	66.67	22.22	11.11	50	40	10
	16. The book provides an appropriate proportion of four	55.55	22.22	22.22	20	23.33	56.66

	main language skills.						
	17. The book highlights the phonology and correct pronunciation (i.e., stress, intonation).	22.22	11.11.	66.66	20	10	69.99
	18. The book addresses sub-skills (e.g., note-taking, concepts comprehension).	22.22	22.22	55.55	20	20	60
Language type	19. The language of the book is authentic (real-life Japanese).	77.78	11.11	11.11	56.66	20	23.33
	20. The language of the book is suitable for the students' level.	77.77	22.22	0	76.66	20	3.33
	21. The book develops the grammatical points and vocabulary properly.	88.88	11.11	0	76.66	20	3.33
	22. The grammar points are explained comprehensibly with appropriate examples.	77.77	22.22	0	66.66	30	3.33
Content & subject	23. The content of the book is relevant to students' needs as a Japanese language learner(s).	44.44	56.56	0	40	50	10
	24. The content of the book is generally realistic.	66.66	11.11	22.22	46.66	20	33.33
	25. The content of the book is interesting and engaging.	33.33	44.44	22.22	20	40	39.99
	26. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content.	44.44	33.33	22.22	30	40	29.99
	27. The content of the book is not culturally biased.	55.55	11.11	33.33	56.66	10	33.33
In general	28. The level of the book is appropriate for teaching at the university.	77.77	22.22	20	76.66	20	3.33
	29. The book encourages students to learn Japanese.	66.67	44.44	11.11	50	26.66	23.33
	30. I would choose this book again for Japanese language teaching/learning.	55.55	44.44	0	40	56.66	3.33

In the second research question (to what degree do students believe *Minna no Nihongo* is a useful textbook by evaluating it in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general?), Japanese students expressed their opinion whether *Minna no Nihongo* is effective in each component: layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general (Table 5). More than half of the students (67.50%) agreed and strongly agreed with the effectiveness of the design of the book, and only 11.24% disagreed; this indicates that students believe the book has an appropriate layout and design. Regarding the book activities being useful, 21.66% of the students agreed and strongly agreed, while 28.32% disagreed and strongly disagreed with it. Although there is a slight difference between the students in favor of and against the activities, the number of those who disagreed with it was higher, which shows the activities are not appropriate enough. Regarding the skills component, while about one third of the students (27.50%) expressed satisfaction with how the book teaches them (agree and strongly agree), about half of the students (49.15%) disagreed and

strongly disagreed with it. Based on this, it can be said that the majority of the students are not satisfied with the skills training in the book. The language of the book is a component that more than half of the students (69.15%) agreed and strongly agreed with, while only 8.32% disagreed with it. The students' consensus in this regard confirms that the language of the book is likely suitable for the students' level, and the grammatical points and vocabulary were developed properly. More than half of the students thought that (38.66% = agree & strongly agree, 32% = partially agree) the book is effective in terms of content. This is while less than a third of them (29.32%) disagreed with the effectiveness of the content. This high percentage of agreement indicates that students rated the book as effective in terms of content. For the 'in general' evaluation, about half of the students (55.55%) agreed and strongly agreed with the usefulness of the book as a whole, while one tenth of the students (9.99%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Meanwhile, about a third of the students (34.44%) partially agreed. So it can be said that most of the students rated the book as good and useful.

According to the findings of the present study, in students' opinion, three of the best components of the book are the language of the book (69.15%), layout and design (67.50%), and 'in general' (55.55%), respectively.

Table 5
Mean, standard deviation, and percentage of students' evaluation of Minna no Nihongo

Evaluation criteria	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Variance**	**Strongly disagree**	**disagree**	**partly agree**	**agree**	**Strongly agree**
					%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Layout & design	90	3.31	0.46	0.21	2.91	8.33	21.25	47.08	20.42
Activities	90	3.73	0.51	0.27	8.33	19.99	49.99	18.33	3.33
Skills	90	2.88	0.66	0.44	16.66	32.49	23.33	20	7.5
Language type	90	2.69	0.74	0.55	0.83	7.49	22.5	54.99	14.16
Subject & content	90	3.74	0.60	0.36	3.33	25.99	32	27.33	11.33
In general (Whole aspect)	90	3.17	0.71	0.51	3.33	6.66	34.44	42.22	13.33

As shown in Table 4, in the layout and design component, the highest percentage of students' agreement went to the clarity of the book objectives with 86.66%. Glossary and proper periodic exercises came in the next ranks with 80% and 76.66%, respectively. In the activities component, half of the students (50%) agreed and strongly agreed with the flexibility of activities and less than half of them (43.33%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with that the activities of the book promote creativity. In the skills component, half of the students (50%) agreed and strongly agreed with the level of emphasis on the student's skills learning and skills development, while more than half of them (69.99%) were dissatisfied with the lack of proper Japanese pronunciation training. In assessing the language type, suitable language of the book for the students' level, proper development of grammatical points and vocabulary were approved by the students (76.66%).

Regarding the content component, around half of the students (56.66%) agreed and strongly agreed that the content of the book was not culturally biased. But 39.99% were against interesting and engaging content of the book. About 70% of the students (76.66%) agreed that the level of the book was proper for the university and half of them (50%) stated that the book has increased their interest in learning Japanese.

The third research question examines whether there is a significant difference between teachers' and students' evaluation of *Minna no Nihongo*. To do this, with the help of Chi-square test, teachers' and students' evaluation in each of the components of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general were examined. The expected frequency of no cell was less than 5. As shown in Table 6, no significant differences were observed between teachers' and students' evaluation for any of the components of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general ($p > 0.5$). This means that teachers and students agree on the evaluation of each component of the layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general. Teachers and students rated the book useful and effective in terms of layout and design, language type, content, and in general, but believed that it is not appropriate in terms of skills training.

Table 6
Chi-square test results for each component of evaluation of Minna no Nihongo

Evaluation criteria	**Pearson Chi-Square test**		
	df	**Sig**	**Value**
Layout and design	4	0.96	0.61
Activities	4	0.96	0.61
Skills	4	0.94	0.75
Language type	4	0.89	1.11
Subject and content	4	0.88	1.13
In general (Whole aspect)	4	0.88	1.15

Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study, teachers and students separately evaluated *Minna no Nihongo* in terms of layout and design, activities, skills, language type, content and subject, and in general. The result showed that the book was appropriate in terms of layout and design, activities, language type, content and subject, and in general, as teachers and students approved the book in these areas. However, they believed that the book is poor in terms of skills training, skills development, and the proportion of the four language skills.

Although individual characteristics, methods, and purpose of language learning are influential in choosing an appropriate textbook, according to the present study, it can be said that *Minna no Nihongo* is effective and valuable in most components of the evaluation. It is a suitable and useful textbook for teaching and learning Japanese regarding its layout and design, activities, language type, content and subject, and in general. In addition, as it was mentioned in the result section, to the consensus of teachers and students on positively evaluating *Minna no Nihongo*, in terms of layout and design, activities, language type, content and subject, and in general, it is interesting to note that

the first three priorities of both teachers and students are the language of the book, layout and design, and the book in general; This can indicate the great influence of the book in these areas in particular.

Regarding the language type component, both teachers and students acknowledge that grammatical points and vocabulary, and real-life Japanese as the most influential parts. Regarding the layout and design of the book, more than 80% of teachers and students considered the objectives of the book clear and effective, and named the vocabulary list and glossary, the organized structure of the chapters, the exercises, and the periodic exams among the most influential parts. Vocabulary lists and the layout of books are important elements that connect language learners with their textbooks (Sadeghi, 2020), in the present study, the Japanese language learners evaluated *Minna no Nihongo* positively at this point. Moreover, the authenticity of the language in this book is important because applying language as it is used in the real world is one of the vital elements for the development of communication skills of language learners, particularly for the language learners who learn the language as a foreign language (Alemi, Ahmadi, & Rezanejad, 2020; Alemi & Mesbah, 2013).

In general, more than 70% of teachers and students agreed that the book level was in line with university education. Also, more than half of teachers and students strongly expressed interest in choosing *Minna no Nihongo* again and said that it would encourage students to learn Japanese. Stimulating the interest of language learners in language learning is considered as an important and effective component in the evaluation of textbooks (Herliana, Djajanegara, & Suendarti, 2020). The finding of the present study confirms this feature for *Minna no Nihongo*. The existence of such features, therefore, might lead a majority of Iranian teachers and students to be satisfied with the book. On the other hand, content that avoids cultural prejudices is another strong point for this book that has attracted the attention of more than half of the teachers and students in this study. Avoidance of cultural prejudices and beliefs was mentioned in the Japanese language textbook, *Genki I*, in the previous studies (Er, 2017). Moreover, in line with the previous studies that showed general satisfaction of users with some Japanese language textbooks (Santos, 2017; Umehara, 2011), the findings of the current study showed that teachers and students are satisfied with *Minna no Nihongo* as a whole. This suggests that Japanese language textbooks are generally satisfactory to their users; however, there are some points that may need to be revised.

Although *Minna no Nihongo* has many positive aspects, its poor skills training aspect should not be ignored. Teachers and students are dissatisfied with the lack of proportion among the four language skills, lack of pronunciation and phonetics training, and the lack of sub-skills such as contents comprehension and note-taking in this book. In particular, they strongly feel the need for teaching correct Japanese pronunciation in the book. The lack of proper Japanese pronunciation training was also observed in some other Japanese textbooks (i.e. *Japanese for Busy People I*) in previous studies (Santos, 2017). Therefore, teachers, students, and language learners who intend to use this book to teach and learn Japanese should also consider using other supplementary books, educational resources, and teaching aids to improve all the language skills.

In the present study, *Minna no Nihongo*, as one of the most important and reliable Japanese language textbooks, was evaluated by Iranian teachers and students who had experience using it. The number of learners and especially teachers of Japanese in Iran is limited; however, since the role of teachers and evaluation can be decisive in the work

process (Ahmadi & Shekarabi, 2011), more accurate and in-depth findings can be achieved by increasing the number of participating teachers and adding more detailed components in the assessment. For more comprehensive and accurate results, it is also suggested that a comparison is made between *Minna no Nihongo* and other textbooks in this field in another study. Furthermore, to generalize the results of this study, it is suggested that the evaluation of *Minna no Nihongo* is also done from the perspective of teachers and language learners in other regions and countries.

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Are Online Quizzes More Efficacious? An Exploratory Study on Classroom Practices and Student Perceptions

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Abstract
One of the most important factors contributing to high quality instruction is an efficient and effective assessment. This research study focused on student perspectives on the use of online quizzes in ground classes, and their follow-up test performance. Two online quiz creators were used: Google Forms and Class Marker. Fifty college students participated, and they were divided into three groups. The first group used Google Forms, the second group used Class Marker, and the last group used papers and pencils. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected using pretest/posttest, survey, and interview. The findings indicate that the students who took online quizzes had a higher average score in exam than the ones with written quizzes, with most reporting positive feelings about the two online tools. The findings suggest that online quizzes, if planned carefully, are more likely to help teachers construct better and faster assessment than traditional quizzes.

Keywords: Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Testing and Assessment

When we examine what comprises our assessment system in place, we have large-scale summative assessments that evaluate student proficiency against benchmarks once a semester, usually at the midpoint or the end of the semester. We also have formative assessments that monitor student growth periodically throughout that semester. By implementing formative assessments for students, teachers can track ongoing progress on a frequent basis, target specific problem areas, provide comments, and adapt instruction at the classroom level. However, creating formative assessments such as weekly quizzes is probably the most time-consuming activity for teachers, especially with large classes.

One possible solution would be to find a technical tool that saves teachers time and reduces their paperwork. Online quizzes provide different opportunities to help teachers to effectively integrate formative assessments into the classroom. First, large numbers of formative assessment can be easily managed with real-time reports, which includes performance data that teachers can use to shape instructional decisions. Even in a large class, the utilization can help teachers quickly identify struggling students and then offer feedback to immediately move the learning forward. Online Quiz Maker is one example of a technology that allows teachers to easily create and grade digital quizzes. After teachers sign up for an account and log in with username and password, they are allowed

to choose the types of questions they want in the quiz and the weight each question has. The kind of quiz can be shared with students via email or a direct link on social media. When students complete the quiz, their responses will be automatically marked and stored.

In Cohen and Sasson's study (2016), 240 undergraduates who enrolled in an introductory physics course took four written quizzes and four online Moodle quizzes that allow several attempts for formative assessment in eight consecutive weeks, one quiz each week. The researchers discovered the average score on both written and online quizzes is a strong predictor of the final exam performance. Most of the students who attained a score of 80 points or more in the quizzes had high scores on their final exams as well. The researchers also found that 76% of the students in an end-of-semester survey chose online quizzes when responding to the question "If you had the choice, which would you prefer- an online quiz or a written test?". A possible explanation for such preference is that the online quizzes allowed multiple attempts to complete the online quizzes while the written quizzes was set to only one attempt.

Tarighat and Khodabakhsh (2016) interviewed 17 advanced -level learners of English who recorded a two-minutes speech and shared the recording on WhatsApp, a social networking application, for their views and attitudes on the method used to assess their speaking proficiency. The learners reported that they experienced a lack of fairness when taking the WhatApp assessment. Some students referred to other responses that had already been posted. In another study, Kocdar et al. (2018) surveyed 918 students from two universities, one school is in Turkey and one in Bulgaria, to find out whether or not students think an online test might affect the rate of cheating. Of all the 918 students, approximately 40 percent students (n = 371, 40.41%) held a neutral view of an increase in cheating. About one-third of students (n = 311, 33.88%), reported they did not feel cheating would be more likely to happen. Some students explained that test fairness can be ensured using video surveillance. However, other students (n = 236, 25.71%) provided a yes answer expressing their worries about "the implementation of e-assessment will create an even more favorable environment for cheating" (p. 229).

Siriwardhane and Tharapos (2013) interviewed seven accounting teachers for their perceptions of online testing at a university in Australia. The teachers all agreed that online testing was a useful assessment tool. Type of reasons provided by the teachers include online auto-grading tests substantially reduced the time to mark test items, and created instant results used to indicate students' understanding of that week's content and to inform the teaching for the following week. Like teachers, students generally prefer online tests over paper tests. In 2004, a survey was given to 46 male and female college students aged between 20 and 22 enrolling in a desktop publishing course at a university in Turkey (Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004). The results show that more students prefer web-based online tests over the paper, where a total of 78% of the students agreed to the statement *Better than paper-and-pencil form*.

Another study in 2014 presented the similar result (Berg & Lu, 2014). The vast majority of 46 students in an English writing course at a private university in Taiwan liked taking chapter tests on Moodle (65.3%), and they felt taking online tests is easier (69.6%) and less stressful (73.9%) than paper tests. In the study of Siriwardhane and Tharapos, the top two most negative factors affected exam performance perceived by students were: 1) note taking: Students were unable to write notes on the test; 2) speed of computer: Students did not complete the test within the time limit because computers in the lab ran slowly. Metz (2008) also found that the time of day in which students competed quizzes

affected their performance. Students in an advanced cell biology course were given a one-day access window to complete their quiz. Results show that students who took quizzes later were more likely to achieve lower scores by 10-15% than students taking quizzes early.

The ubiquity of mobile devices comes a set of possible disadvantages. Distraction is perhaps the biggest disadvantage among them. In a study conducted by Kuznekoff and Titsworth (2012), students who texted frequently during a video lecture took lower-quality notes, remembered less information, and had worse test scores verse those who did not use their mobile phones. Allowing smartphones in class create distraction, which affects students' ability to concentrate and hampers their performance because of that.

Mobile devices could be a boon if teachers consider the educational resources that can be found online. Digital textbooks, for example, make accessing resources easier. Online tests also provide instant feedback to users whether their answer is correct or not, and significantly reduce the time needed for conducting assessments. Unfortunately, not many language teachers are using it in their classroom. One of the reasons relates to a lack of understanding of the tools. Some schools may invest in new technology to support classrooms; however, they have not trained the teachers to properly use the solution to enhance their lesson plans. There is also security concern for online quizzes. Students may use their smartphones to store test questions, search for information, or help others in finding answers, while taking their quizzes online.

After the pandemic hit, online quizzes stimulated research interests. Yet much attention has been directed to the effect of a particular app on a learner's knowledge. Limited number of studies were conducted to help us understand student perceptions of using mobile phones for language testing. To fill the gap in this under-explored area, our study aimed at assessing students' perceptions about mobile-assisted language quizzes. A secondary purpose was to determine student accuracy using vocabulary and reading comprehension skills with two different methods of administering quizzes: face-to-face and online. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- **RQ1.** What is the relationship, if any, between the use of online quizzes and posttest scores?
- **RQ2.** What are the students' perceptions towards online quizzes versus traditional paper and pencil?
- **RQ3.** What are the factors that affect students' experience with online quizzes?

Methods & Procedures

Subjects

The study took place at a private university in Taiwan. Fifty first-year students enrolled in a 2-year undergraduate nursing program participated. These students were between 19 and 21 years of age, 46 were females and 4 were males, with an average TOEIC score of 307. Students took an EFL (English as a foreign language) course required in their first semester. The course comprised 18 weeks of 110-minute teaching and focused on providing students with instruction and practice in academic English. Six reading passages were assigned in advance, and each contained 600-800 words related to a specific topic.

Students who registered for the EFL course were approached by the same course instructor to discuss the research agenda. The instructor informed the students that the courses would be facilitated using either paper-based or one of two e-assessments: Google

Forms or Class Marker. The instructor provided an explanation of how the systems worked. Next, the students were asked for their consent with a choice to opt out of the study. Their course grades were not affected by their decision in any way. The students were guaranteed that their names and academic records were not going to be included in the study. Then, the participants were assigned to their separate groups using a random number generator. The first group (G1) with a total of 17 students took Google Forms Quizzes; the second group (G2, n = 17) took Class Marker Quizzes; and the last group (G3, n = 16) took written quizzes.

Procedures for Creating Quizzes in Google Forms and ClassMarker

The software community has developed tools that help language teachers author and compile questions into online quizzes that can be used to evaluate student progress in today's connected classroom. To choose the application that best suited our study, we created selection criteria. This included the function of creating quizzes with mixed question types, a time limits feature, cost-free, automatic grading, and providing individual and overall feedback in real time. Considering the selection criteria above, the research team chose Google Forms and Class Marker.

Researchers have advocated Google Forms for creating tests or quizzes because it is a free tool that allows teachers to include 11 different basic types of questions, such as multiple question, pull-down, and short answers (Suvorov & Hegelheimer, 2013; Unser-Shutz, 2018). Although teachers need a Google account (the same they need to access Gmail), students do not need one to respond. Once students complete the quiz, Google Forms will be able to generate a report with student responses, to summarize the results in graphic form, and to convert the report into usable spreadsheets in Excel.

Class Marker is another widely used online quiz maker (www.classmarker.com). It is free for individual teachers. It is easy-to-define test settings allows teachers to quickly create and give online quizzes to exact requirements with features such as time limits, randomize questions, instant feedback, and private access. Test results are also automatically graded and viewable in real time. To create a ClassMarker quiz, after log-in, the creators need to go to the Tests on the dashboard page, click on New Test, enter a quiz name, and add/edit questions in their new quiz.

Research Design and Instrumentation

The study used a mixed-methods research design, combining two quantitative components and one qualitative component. The researchers considered two major design characteristics. First, the goal of using mixed methods was to expand and strengthen our study's conclusions (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Another design dimension related to the timing of the two components. Interviews were conducted immediately following the post-test to best record the participants perceptions of the efficacy of the online quizzes. Quiz scores were used to test the hypothesis predicting that the students using mobile-assisted quizzes would not have higher scores than the students using paper-based quizzes. The survey and interview results were used to understand how students responded to online assessments and its two technology enhanced variations when it came to the three characteristics of a mobile-based assessment system: user interface, navigation, and effect on learning progress. A focus group interview protocol was prepared based on Jacob and Furgerson (2012).

The protocol had six questions:

1. Which area needs improvement first?
2. Does the interface of this mobile based assessment system have elements that are easy to access, understand, and use to facilitate what users might need to do?
3. Is the system easy to learn how to use and easy to remember how to use?
4. Does the use of this mobile based quiz have a positive effect on learning progress?
5. What are the difficulties of online quizzes using smartphone or mobile device?
6. What did you like at most when taking quizzes on your smartphone or mobile device?

The participants who signed the consent form chose a convenient time slot to attend the focus group. Focus groups involved approximately 6-8 participants and lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews were originally conducted in Mandarin Chinese, digitally recorded, and later transcribed into English by the principal investigators and his research assistants. The students' accuracy using their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skills was measured by their performance on pretest and posttest written by the research team. The two tests were used as a summative tool to assess students' reading and vocabulary skills that they learned in the class, and to detect any change that online quizzes brought to their performance. Both tests had the same 50 multiple choice questions, with randomized question order. Each question was worth two points. The pre-test was given in week 1 and the post-test in week 18. One of our co-investigators worked together with a research assistant to score all summative exams with an answer key.

Before starting to use Google Forms, the teacher held a 20-minute introductory session with a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation in the classroom and checked whether students would be able to access the quizzes. Students were asked to (a) visit Google Form quiz page and sign in with their Google account, and (b) respond to questions. The teacher worked with the students who needed assistance with the service. One example of quiz question is *For exercise Alice ___ lifting weights, swimming and jogging*, and four answer options are *resembles*, *loads*, *alternates*, and *fabric*.

To prevent cheating on Google Form quizzes, as a first step, we considered using the shuffle option order feature which changed the order of answer choices in each multiple-choice question. It would make it more difficult for students to copy answers from a classmate. As a next step, we enabled locked quiz mode. This mode would prevent students from browsing other websites or opening any other apps while during online quizzes.

Before introducing Class Marker, one of the authors gave a short class presentation that walked students through the steps to take a quiz in Class Marker: each student (a) receives a link in an email sent out to them by the teacher (b) clicks the quiz link and accesses the test (c) responds to question and taps Finish Now to finish the quiz.

Data Collection Procedure

The groups met once a week for eighteen weeks. At the end of each two-week session, the teacher gave students a quiz based on the reading assigned for that session (during week three, five, seven, eleven, thirteen, fifteen). Each quiz had 10 multiple choice questions, 5 vocabulary questions and 5 reading comprehension questions. A correct answer earned 10 points. The quiz had a time limit of 10 minutes. All the three groups in the study were given the same quiz activity in the same week by the same teacher. The only difference between these groups was the method of testing. In the G3 class, the

teacher gave paper-based formative quizzes to students. In the G1/G2 classes, the teacher gave online quizzes in Google Forms or Class Marker. The authors used the free versions of Google Forms and Class Marker, which provided a fully functional testing environment. The team registered users, created and assigned quizzes, randomized questions, and saved and reviewed test results instantly.

The pretest was administered by the PI and a trained student research assistant to all 50 students in the 1st week of the program, and the posttest in the 18th week. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a data analysis procedure for comparing the means of three or more groups and for assessing whether they are statistically different from each other, were used to see which approach creates a highest level of academic performance in large classes. The independent variable (IV) in the study was the type of quiz activity (paper-based, Google Forms, and Class Marker), whereas the dependent variables (DV) was students' test scores.

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire (6 questions) was administered to all participants in G1, G2, and G3. It featured 6 questions and solicited useful information on online quizzes being offered from respondents. In addition, individual interviews that involved only G1 and G2 students were conducted face-to-face by the PI/Co-Investigators. After we collected the data, we developed a set of codes obtained either from the researchers' prior knowledge of online assessments or from reading the interview transcription. We examined the data and conducted the coding in two levels. At the first-level coding, we divided responses into positive and negative perceptions. During the second level of coding, we read through each response and smaller topics began to emerge from the data.

Results

Pretest and Posttest

The results show the pretest ($p = 0.64$) was insignificant, meaning the three groups were equal (see Table 1). The average posttest score of G1 (Google Form) and G2 (Class Marker) was 12.11 and 16.94 points higher than pretest, while that of G3 (Classic) was 9 points higher than pretest. Of the three groups, G2 showed highest gains. The *p* values of *t*-test within each group range from .0001 to .0141.

Table 1
Pretest and Posttest Scores

Group	N	Pretest				Posttest				*t* Test
		SD	M	Min	Max	SD	M	Min	Max	
G1	17	10.27	61.18	36	78	10.79	73.29	52	94	$p = 0.0021$
G2	17	9.43	62.00	42	80	9.70	78.94	60	94	$p = 0.0001$
G3	16	7.71	64.13	50	76	11.45	73.13	54	92	$p = 0.0141$
		ANOVA	$F = 0.44$, $p = 0.64$			*ANOVA*	$F = 1.62$, $p = 0.21$			

Note. N = number of participants, SD = standard deviation, M = mean, Min = lowest score, Max = highest score, F = F-ratio, p = p-value.

Pairwise comparisons within ANOVA data were facilitated using the Tukey's honestly significant difference procedure (see Table 2). There is no significant difference between the various pairs of means.

Table 2
P-*Value of Pairwise Comparisons*

Group	Pretest	Posttest
G1:G2	0.96	0.29
G1:G3	0.63	1.00
G2:G3	0.79	0.27

Table 3
Students' Survey Responses about Quizzes

#	Statement	G	SD	D	N	A	SA	M
1	Quizzes helped me learn the material in the course.	G1	0	0	0	6	11	4.65
		G2	0	0	0	8	9	4.53
		G3	0	0	0	9	7	4.48
2	Quizzes helped me study for final exam.	G1	0	0	3	5	9	4.35
		G2	0	0	2	6	9	4.41
		G3	0	0	2	7	7	4.31
3	It was helpful to review the questions after each time I took the quiz.	G1	0	0	0	6	11	4.65
		G2	0	0	2	7	8	4.35
		G3	0	0	2	7	7	4.31
4	Each quiz made me read the assigned reading in my textbook.	G1	0	0	3	6	8	4.29
		G2	0	0	3	4	10	4.41
		G3	0	0	2	5	9	4.44
5	Quizzes made me more likely to attend classes.	G1	0	0	0	7	10	4.59
		G2	0	0	0	7	10	4.59
		G3	0	0	0	10	6	4.38
6	Quizzes should be used in other English language courses.	G1	0	0	9	4	4	3.71
		G2	1	2	4	5	5	3.65
		G3	0	2	6	5	3	3.56

Note. G = group, SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, N = neutral, A = agree, SA = strongly agree, M = mean.

Survey

The majority of participants, across all groups, responded favorable to the quiz, answering that they found it helpful and motivating (see Table 3). In response to the statements, "Quizzes helped me learn the material in the course" and "Quizzes made me more likely to attend classes," all respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, most respondents agreed that the quizzes was helpful for studying for the final exam. 14 out of 17 respondents either in G1 or G2 (14 out of 16 in G3) agreed with the statement "Quizzes made me more likely to do the readings." When asked whether quizzes should be used in

other English language courses, approximately half of respondents agreed (G1, 52.94%; G2, 58.82%; G3, 50.00%).

Interview

The qualitative data was collected by the use of focus groups. The themes that emerged from the students' responses are ease of use and accessibility, positive learning attitude, better attendance and punctuality, increased confidence, and early exam preparation (see Table 4).

Table 4
Themes and Quotations

Themes	**Student Quotations**
1. Ease of use and accessibility	"The app feels easy to use." (G1) "I get immediate feedback." (G2)
2. Positive learning attitude	"The quizzes force me to actually read each assigned reading in my textbook." (G1) "If I miss a question, I will pay attention to the information I need. So I will not miss the question again" (G2)
3. Better attendance and punctuality	"I show up for class on time." (G1) "I attend class regularly because missing a class will affect my grade." (G2)
4. Increased confidence	"I feel more confident to discuss the material." (G1) "My confidence grows when I challenge myself to take quizzes but are able to succeed." (G2)
5. Early exam preparation	"I start putting time aside to revise the topics at least two weeks prior to the final exam " (G1) "Quizzes that cover major learning points in the course allow me to see what I already know and do not know." (G2)

Discussion

The first research questions were how the online quizzes were related to test scores and if they improved summative test scores more greatly than written quizzes did. All students' scores seemed to be affected to the similar degree by quizzes over class material about once every two weeks, whether they were online or on paper. This result may be explained by that fact that quizzes helped students practice what they had covered, then consolidated that knowledge. Another possible explanation is the similarity between the format of the quizzes and that of posttest. The posttest in this study included multiple-choice and fill-in-blanks questions that were similar to quiz questions. However, the number of G1 and G2 students (6, 10) whose posttest scores fall in the range of 80-100 points was higher than G3 (5), which suggests online quizzes might help students improve their vocabulary and reading comprehension more efficiently. The growth in test scores is perhaps because the apps act as as a personal tutor who can provide immediate personalized feedback, telling students if they have answered incorrectly, and giving direct instruction prompts or explanations (pre-made by teachers) to help students learn how to answer correctly. This finding is consistent with the findings of DeSouza and Fleming (2003) and Dobson (2009), which also mentioned the use of formative online quizzes enhanced summative

exam performance.

Among the two groups taking online quizzes, G2 showed greater gains than G1 in posttest scores. This discrepancy could be attributed to the use of a stopwatch and a detailed performance report. When G2 students used Class Marker, they had a stopwatch that reveals the elapsed time on the top of their application window. That stopwatch could help students focus on their work and avoid distractions. Compared to Google Forms, Class Marker also gave a more detailed report of student responses. For example, students had access to their point and percentage scores, date started and finished, and the duration of the quiz. Including more valuable information in the report may help students more easily understand what they were learning and how they learned.

The second and the third research question were how students perceived online quizzes and what factors influenced students' experience using online quizzes. The three groups of student participants expressed a positive view of their respective quizzes. Although written quizzes required more time than online quizzes, it should be noted that this mode of teaching is still an effective method of assessment. The interview data collected revealed five main themes: ease of use & accessibility, positive learning attitude, better attendance & punctuality, increased confidence, and early exam preparation. The most common comments related to the tendency to go back and re-read the certain parts of the chapters/articles. The satisfaction students had when their expectations of knowing the answers went fulfilled quickly is partially responsible for their continuous exploration or motivation to learn. Based on other comments, it appears that students in this study welcome the idea of teachers giving two or more quizzes for each assigned reading. When students perceive online quiz as supportive learning tool to excel in exams, their desire to take advantage of the benefits of online quiz comes up.

Most teachers would agree that online quiz tools are one of the best available technology for assessments. It avoids use of paper, and saves time and energy involved in the chaos of maintaining paper records. For teachers, online quizzes are like an upgraded technique that makes classroom assessment rather easy. The shuffle feature that Class Marker and many other apps have allows teachers to randomize quiz questions, helps reduce student cheating. Another advantage of online quizzes is the instant reports generated on the quizzes. Those reports are detailed enough for teachers to measure how well students currently understand the topic and to address student weaknesses or misunderstandings by the time it is too late for students to be interested, using proper error correction strategies including modeling the correct answer, explicit correction with a little humor and recasting.

This study had two limitations. First, it was only conducted with first year nursing students. The results would not happen again with other students with differing levels of proficiency at other universities. Different contexts might reveal different results. The second problem was the small sample size, which decreases statistical power of the study and reduces the chance of detecting a true effect. However, the findings of this small study reveal that students have positive perceptions on the use of online quizzes and that factors such as the timing of feedback affect student experience. Future studies with a larger sample size and longer research period are required to further investigate the relationship between formative online quizzes and summative exam scores.

Conclusion

The results of this exploratory study can inspire teachers and school leaders to consider

possible implementation of online quizzes when they return to face-to-face classes. In terms of formative assessment efficiency, online quizzes should be the preferred approach as it not only provides students with immediate precise feedback that improves their confidence and motivation to learn, but also offers assistance to teachers who use formative assessment to scaffold student learning. Teachers should also introduce the online quizzes with a carefully organized procedure to ensure successful utilization.

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Appendix A
Pretest & Posttest Questions

Sample Multiple-choice Question
For exercise Alice ___ lifting weights, swimming and jogging.
A. resembles B. loads C. alternates D. fabric

According to the passage "Successful Dieting," which of the following statement is true?
A. JudyGirl asks for advice about fad diets.
B. JimGym points out that food is the major problem of weight control.
C. Desserts made with white flour are not good for weight control.
D. JudyGirl has kept off the weight for three years.

Sample Fill-in Blanks Question
I have tried every kind of diet. Fad diets haven't done the trick for me, _1_. The problem is that _2_ you eat too much of one kind of food and get fed up _3_, or your don't get enough of the foods your body needs. So when you stop, you eat too much of the foods that weren't on the diet and the weight comes back.
1. A. nor B. neither C. either D. too
2. A. nor B. neither C. either D. too
3. A. of B. with C. in D. for

Appendix B
Questionnaire

1. Quizzes helped me learn the material in the course.
2. Quizzes helped me study for final exam.
3. It was helpful to review the questions after each time I took the quiz.
4. Each quiz made me read the assigned reading in my textbook.
5. Quizzes made me more likely to attend classes.
6. Quizzes should be used in other English language courses.

Appendix C
Interview Protocol Matrix

Script prior to interview:
We would like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of our study. We are very interested to know how students think about online quizzes. Our interview today will last approximately 30 minutes during which I will be asking you about your ideas that you may have about Google Form/ClassMarker quiz.

Review aspects of consent form:
In class, you completed a consent form indicating that we have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still ok with us recording (or not) our conversation today?
___Yes If yes: Thank you! Please let us know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.
___No If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.
Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? If yes, discuss questions.
If any questions arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

Question #1:
Which area needs improvement first?

Question #2:
Does the interface of this mobile based assessment system have elements that are easy to access, understand, and use to facilitate what users might need to do?

Question #3:
Is the system easy to learn how to use and easy to remember how to use?

Question #4:
Does the use of this mobile based quiz have a positive effect on learning progress?

Question #5:
What are the difficulties of online quizzes using smartphone or mobile device?

Question #6:
What did you like at most when taking quizzes on your smartphone or mobile device?

Script after interview:
Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. It was a pleasure to learn more about your experience of using online quizzes.

Improving Speaking Skills Among Elementary EFL Learners: Accentuating Learning Reinforcement and Classroom Engagement Through Unit-End Presentations

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The full implementation of the new *Course of Study* has shifted schools' focus in delivering their English classes. With the shift, teachers must design better learning activities to encourage the students, one of which is by doing an oral presentation. This paper examines the impacts of consistent exposure of students to oral presentation. Determining the level of how it affects their Learning Reinforcement and Classroom Engagement by interpreting it through the Likert scale, it was discovered that oral presentation significantly impacts these two aspects. The data from the sixth-grade students (n=98) of four schools in Osaka City clearly showed the benefits of doing speaking activities, exhibiting 56.47% growth in their self-perceived English level after a unit-by-unit six consecutive performances. The study's positive results imply encouraging more speaking practice to engage and reinforce students' learning and promote communicative confidence among students.

新学習指導要領の完全実施は学校の英語授業の行い方に重点を移す方向に転じた。この転換に伴い、教師が学生をやる気にさせるためには、より良い学習活動を実施する必要がある。そのうちの一つに口頭発表である。本稿では学生が口頭発表に一貫して触れる機会をもつことの影響について調査した。リッカート尺度を通じてそのことを解釈することにより、口頭発表が学生の学習強化と教室での取り組みにどのような影響を与えるのかに関する水準を決定すること、口頭発表がこれらの２つの側面に大きな影響を与えることを発見した。大阪市内の４小学校の６年生(n=98)のデータは、６回の連続した単元末パフォーマンスの後の自己評価による英語力レベルにおいて 56. 4%の伸びを示した。すなわち話す活動を行うことの有益さを明らかにした。この研究の肯定的な結果は学生を学習に取り組みさせ、学習を強化し、学生間のコミュニケーションの自信を促進するために話すことの活動をより多くおこなうことを奨励することを示唆している。

Keywords: Classroom Engagement, Elementary English, Language Reinforcement, Oral Presentation

The shift in teaching approach to achieve the educational goals for foreign language education has become the anchor of Japanese elementary schools' pedagogical strategies. They have reverted their focus in the students' immersion to the actual language production in place of the archaic method of translation, repetition, and memorization (Bax 2003; Caine 2008; East 2016; Haixiao & Clifford 2011; Jacobs & Farrell 2001;

Jacobs & Farrell 2003; Kustati 2013; Lai 2015; & Sasaki 2008). Grounded in these approaches is the concept of focusing on tasks and communication as indicators of effective learning activities and incorporating practical discourse or oral activities, such as speeches and presentations, to gauge overall language development. After all, the highest manifestation of learning a language is the ability of the L2 learners to communicate accurately and proficiently to other individuals who speak the same language in a different context (p. 34)" (Soureshjani & Ghanbari, 2012).

From April 2020, the new *Course of Study* for elementary learners was fully implemented. The new guideline rendered fifth and sixth grades seventy hours of English class within an academic year accompanied by formal assessments as it becomes an official subject of study. From the concept of *"What should the teachers teach?"*, they have changed their perspective to *"What should the students learn?"*, *"How will they learn?"* and "*What can they do with English?"*. The new paradigm aims to nurture the three accepted English pillars identified by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT, 2018): knowledge/skills, thinking/judgement/ expression, and strength toward learning/attitude toward learning. To create a more holistic development among learners, the four macros of English communication (reading, speaking, writing, and speaking) were divided into different significant aspects of sub-skills. Speaking is divided into two areas: communication and presentation. The step is to target each skill on a step-by-step basis not to overwhelm first-time learners with the difficulty of the language.

MEXT set these goals for foreign language class in elementary schools, first to gain abilities that can be used in actual communication, second to develop skills to be able to communicate one's thoughts and feeling, third to deepen the understanding of the culture of the foreign language and fourth to cultivate an attitude of proactively trying to communicate using the foreign language. The emphasis on realizing these goals has prompted educators to devise a better learning situation that will allow the learners to become the first-hand producers in language production. Teachers have recognized the benefits of oral presentation and communication in class, and thus, they are elevating these kinds of activities better than before (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan 2010; Nguyen 2013; & Masmaliyeva 2014).

Many classrooms have started shifting to a more output-based orientation, minimizing the teacher's talk and more of that of the students. Students in this kind of classroom are guided to do learning activities designed to produce oral outputs without stressing the language's grammatical aspect. Activities to talk about familiar and simple things related to daily living, activities to introduce oneself using simple words and essential expressions, activities related to school life and community are just some content areas emphasized in the presentation. Although, in most cases, presenting in foreign language seems to be a hurdle to children (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2019). As stated by Pollard in 2008, speaking demands a great volume of ideas, vocabulary, communication, grammar, and pronunciation, and as a result, speaking is difficult to learn and acquire. Teachers who aim to explore oral activities in class should develop micro-steps to help the students connect their learning. Instead of merely constructing textbook sentences and simply orating the memorized content, the presentation should be seen as an accumulation of hourly lessons (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2019). For that purpose, it is necessary to practice, establish learning content for each meeting repeatedly and provide context for the association of knowledge. Teachers should create

activities that allow students to recycle past target languages and incorporate them into their oral tasks at each unit's end.

Related Literature

In the MEXT *Guidebook for Foreign Language Activities and Foreign Language Studies Training* (2017), it was elaborated that it is vital to set up language activities that allow children to repeatedly use learning content such as simple words and phrases and essential expression that are authentic. Driven to improve students' communication abilities, the Ministry of Education has emphasized strengthening the activities that elicit students' oral skills. Oral presentation has been an excellent tool for teachers to assess students' learning achievements in all learning levels. Citing the work of Lim (2007), Miller & Ng, (1994), Mika (2006), Une-aree (2006), Soureshjani and Ghanbari (2012) have reminded the scholarly community about the importance of having a reliable and well-organized oral practice in the classroom.

Many scholars have also researched oral production in the classroom (Liang & Kelsen, 2018; Otoshi & Heffernen, 2008; Al-Hebaish & Mohammad, 2012) to explore the extension of the said practice to the learning of students in the language classroom. The results of their studies and other experts in the field have been promising as they outline significant benefits of this style not only towards the communication skills of the students but also to their language learning experiences as a whole. Riadil (2020) has concluded that students' speaking abilities are affected by performances in an oral presentation. He further exemplified that the development of grammar system, language selection, development of discourse, strategies in communication, and the selection of appropriate response to a situation are contributing factors that affect performance. Hence, sometimes students experience difficulties.

Weaving different scholarly knowledge Munbi (2011) outlined some benefits of such tasks for learners and language teachers. He emphasized that doing an oral presentation is beneficial because it can provide effective learning, empower the students, and foster autonomy among learners. From every stage of doing a presentation, it is rather certain that the students solely do eighty percent of activities. If the teacher had the lesson plan effectively, the students would be invited to engage with their classmates, as planning and decision-making fall on their hands with little to no intervention from the teacher. In this way, students are encouraged to search, ask, discover words, expressions, and materials they need to complete the task effectively. Independent task completion in these situations allows the students to develop confidence among themselves over time as they go through a repetitive process of language discovery, usage, and production. It is crucial to fulfilling this aspect because, as Yashime, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu in 2004 asserted, the willingness of students to participate in oral activities in the classroom is determined by their self-confidence.

Godev (2003) suggests that oral presentations could supplement students' oral skills while incorporating morpho-syntactic and discourse structure essential in all levels considering the appropriateness of the topic at hand. The study of Ahagari, Rassekh-Alqol, and Hamed (2013) also stressed the multifaceted nature of speaking, highlighting that by doing so, students are required to focus on content, pronunciation, diction, body language, eye contact, and other communicative skills. Indeed, by doing multiple speaking activities in the classroom, the students will be habituated to using these skills, which will easily allow them to apply them in actual communication.

Another significant benefit of oral presentation is presented in the study of Girard, Pinar, and Trapp in 2011. According to their findings, a significant development in their students' communication and presentation skills, an increased willingness to learn, and greater class participation and interaction are crucial effects of using oral presentations in the classroom. This is further supported by the work of Wilson and Brooks in 2014, as they also pointed out that doing the same practice in class encourages proper scaffolding of language knowledge, peer-to peer teaching and learning, language skills practice, independent learning, and higher level of education motivation.

Despite the large quantity of language production research in different language education journals, there is still a scarcity of research about oral presentation at the elementary EFL level. These mentioned studies have focused on students' language skills and development at higher education or university level. Some of them are also in ESL, not in EFL (Al-Nouh, Abdul-Kareem, & Taqi, 2015). Thus, to contribute to the knowledge in the field, we are prompted to investigate oral presentation and its relationship with classroom engagement and learning reinforcement in an elementary EFL class.

Background of the Study

Grade 6 students of five elementary schools in Osaka city have experienced fifty hours of English as foreign language activities in the previous years, from 3rd grade to fifth grade, using the textbook *Let's Try 1* in 3rd grade, *Let's Try 2* in 4th grade and *We Can 1!* in 5th grade. This year, under the new *Course of Study*, using the *Here We Go 6!* textbook by Mitsumura Publishing, learners spend two hours a week and a total of seventy hours in the 2020 academic year.

In English as foreign language activities, classes were assembled with activities centered on listening and speaking, and the focus was on learning English in a fun way by incorporating interactive activities and linguistic games. However, since it has become an official subject of study, it is also necessary to conduct a proper evaluation. Unit-end tests created by the textbook company are used in the said learning assessment, consisting of listening, reading, and writing. As for speaking, it was allotted once a semester, in the form of conversation, presentation by group, or individual performance.

In this paper, we focused on oral presentation. We investigated how consistent speaking activities influence children's engagement and learning reinforcement as they go through their English study with the continuous task to do a presentation using target language learned from the lesson and the previous—using recycled structures congruently to convey their ideas properly. English textbooks commonly suggest that students should be given oral presentation tasks three times during the whole year, but in this research, students were asked to do an oral presentation at each unit's end (individual, pair, group). The content for each presentation, the target language, and the presentation type are reflected in the table below.

Table 1
Presentation Content Table

Unit	Title	Presentation Content	Target Language	Type of Presentation
Unit 1	This is me	Students are tasked to introduce themselves and tell activities they are good at, the things they like, and their personal information	I am ~ I am from ~ I am good at ~ Where are you from? What are you good at? I like ~	Individual
Unit 2	Welcome to Japan	Students are asked to present seasonal events in Japan. They are also asked to explain activities that can be done in the events.	In spring, we have ~ You can enjoy~ What do you have in ~? What can you do?	Group
Unit 3	What do you want to watch?	In line with the Olympics supposed to be hosted by Japan, students can convey what sports they want to see and explain why they want to see them.	Do you want to watch? Yes, I do. / No, I don't. What do you want to watch? Why? I want to watch ~ It's ~ How about you?	Pair
Unit 4	My summer vacation	Students must talk about their activities during their summer vacation by using the simple past tense of verbs.	What did you do in summer? I went to ~ I enjoyed~ How was it? It was~	Individual
Unit 5	He is famous. She is great.	Students should be able to introduce the people they respect or idolize. Describe their nature of work and characters.	Who is this? He is ~. He is a ~ I like ~	Group
Unit 6	This is my Town	Students are asked to introduce their own town to everyone. Explain the landmarks they have and the things that can be done in the area.	This is my town. Welcome to ~. We have ~. You can ~. We can ~.	Group

Research Questions

This research investigated four elementary schools' sixth-graders engagement in the classroom to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of continuous unit-end presentation on students' classroom engagement in terms of self-expression, willingness to participate, willingness to communicate, and confidence?
2. What is the impact of continuous unit-end presentation on the learning reinforcement of the students in the aspect of vocabulary and language knowledge, target language retention, pronunciation, and presentation skills?
3. How did continuous unit-end presentation affect the student's self-perception of their English level?

Methodology

Participants

This study's participants were ninety-eight (98) grade six students from four elementary schools in Osaka City. The students in the study took English classes under the instruction of the researchers. All of the respondents started their formal English education when they were in third grade. Although they have been studying the language for almost four years now, their rigorous oral presentation exposure started in the 2020 academic year which account to one presentation per unit adding up to nine presentations in the whole academic year. The student's exposure prior to 6th grade, on the other hand are, once or twice in the 5th grade and once to almost none in 3rd and 4th grade.

Instruments

The researchers developed a self-perception three-part Japanese questionnaire (Appendix A) for this study. This tool was used to gather the students' quantitative data to make it amenable to analysis. The first part of the questionnaire is aimed to collect data on their classroom engagement involving their confidence in class, willingness to communicate, willingness to participate, and self-expression. The purpose of the four questions is to measure the impact of oral presentation on the students' attitudes inside the classroom.

On the other hand, the second part evaluates learning reinforcement, which assesses their vocabulary and language knowledge, their target language retention, their pronunciation, and their presentation skills, geared toward the assessment of oral presentation as a scaffold of language learning. The last part of the questionnaire, which asks the students to self-assess their English level, is conducted to solicit awareness of their learning progress and for the researchers to know the students' feedback on their foreign language development.

Numerical values were assigned for each potential choice, and the weighted average of the responses was computed after surveying. For easier understanding of the interpretation of the numerical values, the point scale was made with visual representation using emotional facial icons.

Data Collection and Analysis

After deciding on the questionnaires' final design, the researchers have asked each school's principal's permission to distribute questionnaires and collect data from the students. Data gathering was conducted at the end of the second semester after the final

presentation for unit six. The purpose and content of the said survey were carefully explained to the students before filling in to ensure data reliability. The tabulation of data was done after the administration of the survey. The weighted average of each factor was calculated and interpreted using the 5-points Likert scale to determine if the impact of oral presentation on both learning reinforcement and classroom engagement. To determine the minimum and the maximum length of the 5-point Likert type scale, the range is calculated by (5−1=4) then divided by five as it is the greatest value of the scale (4÷5=0.80). Afterwards, number one which is the least value in the scale was added in order to identify the maximum of this cell. The length of cells is shown below:

Table 2
Likert Scale

Equivalent	Interpretation	Numerical Value Range
5	Excellent	4.20-5.00
4	Very good	3.40-4.19
3	Good	2.60-3.39
2	Fair	1.80-2.59
1	Poor	1.00-1.79

Aside from the questionnaire for data collection, the researchers have also employed observation method to take note of the qualitative data, i.e. attitude and motivation, of the students before, during, and after the conduct of oral presentations.

With proper permission from all the concerned people, the questionnaire's administration took a week to finish. Students in every school finished answering the questionnaire within ten minutes. This paper uses descriptive statistics in the analysis and presentation of data.

Findings

The students were reserved during the first presentation; they had a minimum level of engagement and confidence in standing in front of the class. Furthermore, their ability to integrate technical aspects of presentation is at almost zero. Observing their attitude in the class as they were exposed to presentation consecutively and at the end of the last presentation, on the other hand, it was seen that there are evident changes in the mindset of the students.

Oral Presentation on Classroom Engagement and Learning Reinforcement

Figure 1
Impact of Oral Presentation on Classroom Engagement

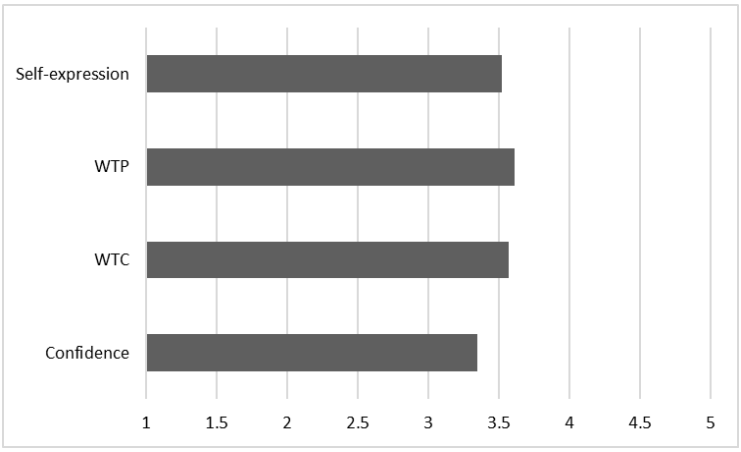


Figure 1 shows how the continued practice of oral presentation improved different aspects of the students' classroom engagement. With a general weighted average of 3.51, it implies that the impact is very good. They were also keen to ask expressions that were not written in the book to clarify their ideas. The student's engagement in the classroom as observed by the researchers also vigorously increased as they learned more about the subject of study. In the individual aspects of classroom engagement, willingness to participate is the most affected with 3.61; this signifies that as the students practice communication in the classroom, their motivation to indulge themselves more is not only to the study but also to socializing in general. Willingness to communicate with 3.57 came second as the most influenced. They were followed by self-expression 3.52 and confidence 3.34 at third and fourth spot, respectively. The confidence of the students going up allowed them to express themselves more in English. The hesitation in standing during recitation or going in front of the class during presentation changed to the active raising of hands and willingness to answer.

Figure 2
Impact of Oral Presentation on Learning Reinforcement

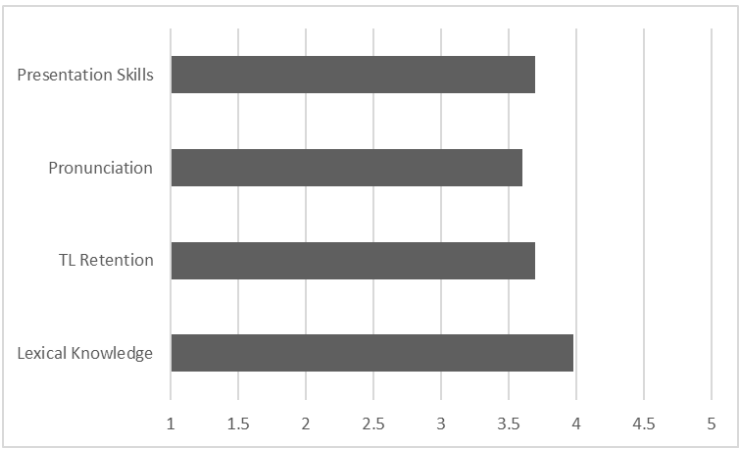
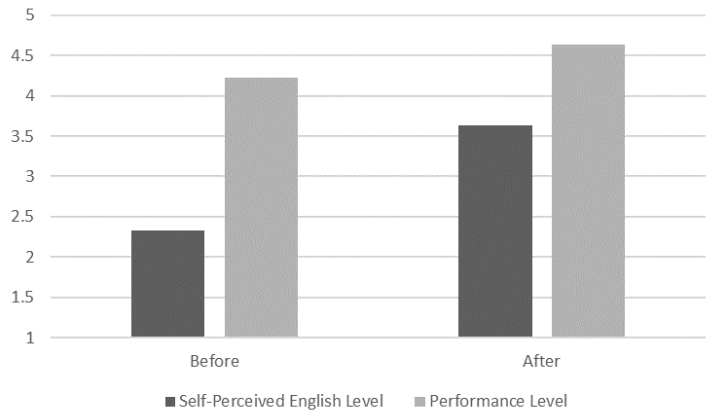


Figure 2 indicates the level of influence of oral presentation in the reinforcement of learning of the students. The 3.74 weighted average proves that incorporating speech activities has a very good impact because it practices the students' art of speaking and helps them remember information. Lexical knowledge, for example, with 3.98, means that students could improve their vocabulary because they could produce the language repetitively. Target language retention, on the other, gaining the same weighted average with presentation skills came as the second highest. Asking students to perform target language recycling to make their presentation longer and better allowed them to practice the expressions of the current topic and past topics. Furthermore, as they do a lot of presentations, they exhibit a better mindset on planning, delivering, and executing plans effectively. Most of them started to think about what kind of gestures to integrate or what visual design was more effective during the presentation. Although pronunciation gained the lowest average of 3.60, it is still interpreted as very good. Students comparing the pronunciation quality from the first and latest encounter demonstrated 10 percent to almost zero katakana accent in the latest presentation.

Self-Perceived English Level and Performance Level

Figure 3
Comparison of Self-Perceived English Level and Performance Level



Comparing the self-perceived English level of students and their performance level evaluated by their teachers is represented in Figure 3. It can be noted that the improvement of the English level as perceived by the students has increased substantially. From the initial average of 2.33 (before), after numerous oral production activities, students acknowledged that their English improved at 3.63 (latest) average with a 56.47% growth rate. The number figures entail that with the help of spoken activities, the English skills of the student could be doubled. In the latest presentation of the students, some of them even used expressions that were not included in their textbook or in their curriculum. Their interest in delivering a better presentation has boosted their learning progress. On the other hand, although there is an increase in the performance level, we cannot see much difference, unlike the English level. The slight difference in the performance grades might be caused by the teachers being lenient with the students considering their oral presentation backgrounds. The first performance has more flow than the last, but since the learning at the former compared to the latter is much less, the grading is less strict.

The performance level is 4.64 on average (latest) from the original 4.22 (before), with an improvement rate of 9.95 percent. The data implies that the students retained their enthusiasm throughout the study and performed better at the latest performance.

Classroom Engagement and Learning Reinforcement

Figure 4
Learning Reinforcement and Classroom Engagement in Scatter Plot

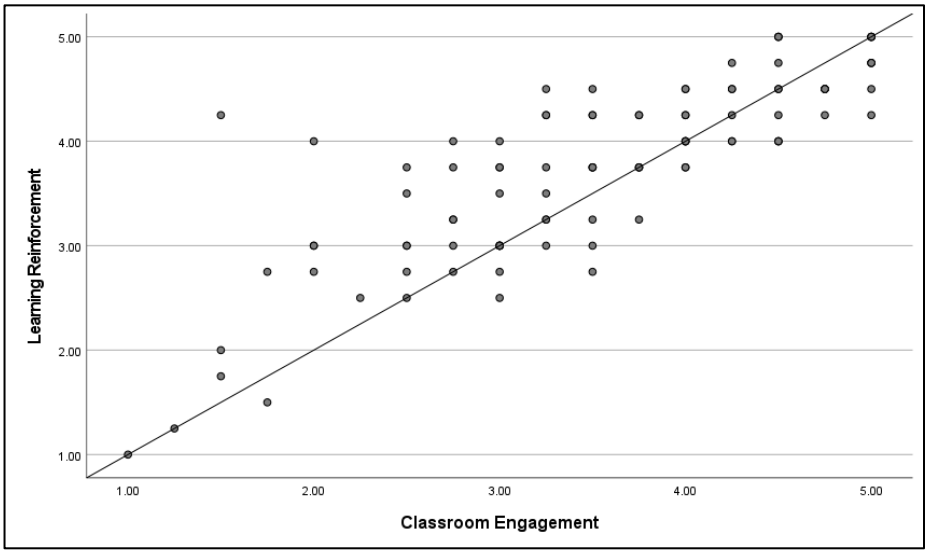


Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between the two variables in this study. The upward trend of the variables suggests a close relationship whereas, if the classroom engagement increases, so will the learning reinforcement. In the classroom setting, it is apparent that students who are more engaged in the lessons retain more knowledge than those who are not. Learners immersed in using the language patterns during freer practice and productive activities perform better in the presentations and are active during recitations and discussions. Learning patterns showed flawless learner growth and a faster absorption when the language is produced, although it varies depending on the target language. We can interpret that by using oral presentation in engaging the students in the classroom and using oral-based production practice in the classroom, the student retains more knowledge from the lesson.

The illustrations above have shown the aggregate results from five schools. For more specific details on the perception of the students per school, see Appendix B. Across all schools it can be observed that the statistics on the perceived English level and performance of the students are very closed to each other. The mean of each sub-categorical aspect of classroom engagement and learning reinforcement in Appendix B also shows the positive apprehension of the students which imply that the students in all schools received positive impact by doing presentations.

Conclusion

Oral presentation is usually frowned upon in elementary classes because of the difficulty of preparation and actual delivery, as well as the students' attitude toward the activity. Students and teachers need plenty of time to prepare, taking almost two to three hours of

classes to implement it successfully. Moreover, due to the influence of the learning environment, the confidence and initiative of the students to collaborate and take the stage are aggravated. In a classroom scenario as observed by the researchers, whenever a teacher announced that there would be a presentation in the classroom, the students usually respond negatively with side comments like "mendokusai" (troublesome), "muzukashii" (difficult), or "iya da" (I hate that). Due to this, the utilization of this strategy in reinforcing the student's learning is becoming a challenge as the students resist doing such activities. Not to mention, attitudinal factors such as shyness and timidity contribute to more vigorous opposition of students and hinder the instructors in pushing the students to perform or present in the classroom. Nevertheless, researchers have found significant data that signifies those students will successfully retain lesson contents using the said strategy in this research. With an oral presentation, teachers can also bridge the gap caused by the lack of an English-speaking environment by creating a platform for students to assume a situation where they can only speak English.

In conclusion, following the relativity between learning reinforcement and classroom engagement, oral presentation has proven that the method bears a good impact on highlighted aspects of learning with proper utilization. It also is an excellent strategy to encourage children to be more communicative in the classroom and reduce speaking hindrances such as shyness or fear of grammar mistakes in oral production. In the four schools that the researchers have taught, the positive result of the questionnaires shows the effectiveness of using this strategy to provide the students with first-hand experience in English communication. Oral presentation, in that sense, is fueling the student's learning reinforcement and classroom engagement, elevating their interests, skills, and drive to learn the English language.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study focused only on the effect of oral presentation on classroom engagement and learning reinforcement. The results show the responses of the 98 students of four schools and do not reflect the whole population of elementary schools in Osaka City. Furthermore, pre-test for the aspects is not conducted which does not allow for a comparison of pre and post analysis of student perceptions.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire

英語の授業アンケート

□ 年　□ 組　□ 番号　男 ・ 女

- このアンケートは、学習についてたずねるものです。
- それぞれの質問を読み、あてはまるものやあなたの考えに最も近いものを選んで、その番号を○でかこんでください。

1－あてはまらない　**2**－どちらかといえば、あてはまらない

3－どちらともいえない　**4**－どちらかといえばあてはまる　**5**－あてはまる

①教室での取り組み

1. 自信

プレゼンテーションを行う際に、英語の授業に対する自信は高まっていましたか?

2. コミュニケーションへの意欲

プレゼンテーションを行う際に、クラスメートとコミュニケーションを取る意欲はありましたか?

3. 参加する意欲

プレゼンテーションをやってみて、あなたは英語の授業にもっと積極的に参加しようと思いましたか?

4. 自己

プレゼンテーションをやってみて、あなたは自分が思いついたことを表現することができましたか?

② 強化学習

1. 語彙と言語知識

プレゼンテーションをやってみて、授業で習った言葉を思い出しながら、語彙（単語・語句）の知識を増やすことができましたか?

2. ターゲット言語の保持

プレゼンテーションをやってみて、あなたはその単元で学習した表現を練習し、それを習得することができましたか?

3. 発音

プレゼンテーションをやってみて、授業で正しい発音を練習したことにより発音が上手くなりましたか?

4. プレゼンテーション能力

プレゼンテーションをやってみて、プレゼンテーションをするときに大切しなければならないことを学び実践することができましたか？

③ 最初の授業と今の英語のレベルを自己評価しましょう。

一番初めの時

今(色んなプレゼンテーションの後)

Appendix B

Detailed Tables and Graphs of Results

Table 3

Classroom Engagement: Weighted Mean Average of the CE Factors

Factors in CE	Average	Interpretation
Confidence	3.34	Good
Willingness to Communicate	3.57	Very Good
Willingness to Participate	3.61	Very Good
Self-Expression	3.52	Very Good
Weighted mean average	**3.51**	**Very Good**

Table 4

Learning Reinforcement: Weighted Mean Average of the LE Factors

Factors in LE	Average	Interpretation
Lexical Knowledge	3.98	Very Good
Target Language Retention	3.69	Very Good
Pronunciation	3.60	Very Good
Presentation Skills	3.69	Very Good
Weighted mean average	**3.74**	**Very Good**

Figure 5

Comparison of the First Performance Score and the Last Performance Score per School

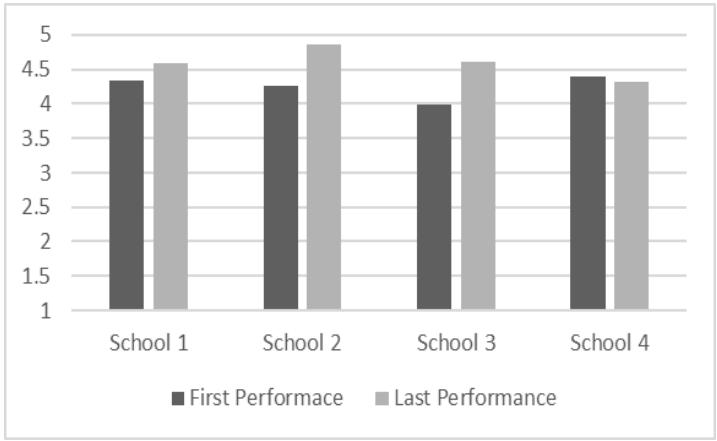
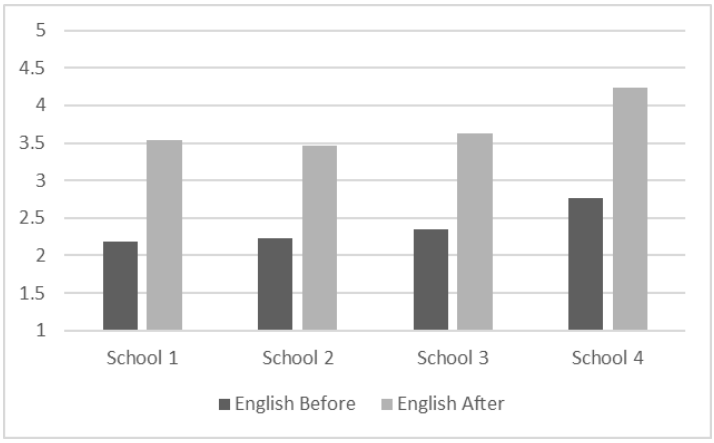


Figure 6

Comparison of self-perceived level of English before and After Series of Unit-end Presentations per School



Regaining Social Contact During a Pandemic: Conducting a Socially Distanced English Day Camp at a Japanese University

Gordon Carlson
Otemae University

Social interaction and extracurricular activities in academic institutions have drastically changed since the COVID-19 outbreak. As students have experienced an extended separation from their normal activities and friends, their educational experience has been radically altered. Nevertheless, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of community, person-to-person communication, and a sense of belonging. Upon this premise, this paper depicts favorable circumstances for a socially distanced day camp toward the end of the summer of 2021, when COVID-19 cases were on the decrease and vaccinations on the rise. The paper contends that when students are drawn together, they can be galvanized to see what they are collectively capable of accomplishing, whether in a pandemic or in the best of times. Consequently, reconnecting with other people can impart a new feeling of inclusion, self-esteem, and a higher awareness of the significance of being a part of a broader local community.

Keywords: Day Camp, Extracurricular Activities, Community Service, Student Inclusion

Introduction

Recent research overwhelmingly shows a negative impact on student motivation and socialization due to isolation during a pandemic (e.g., Arslan, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Meeter et al., 2020). However, the literature tends to overlook one of the side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is the absence of vibrant extracurricular activities which largely vanished from campus life. Despite the rapid expansion of distance education and increased innovation in educational technologies, opportunities for club activities, interscholastic competitions, camps, social events, and more became scant, if not nonexistent. Living in a relatively isolated online learning environment, students were deprived of the immediate support of the core of their social spheres. Although technology has helped academic institutions transition to online learning and teaching methodologies have quickly developed, vital out-of-classroom interactions have been abandoned due to the pandemic, with the hope for better times to return. Despite little discussion on this issue, does the literature have much to say about how important extracurricular activities are to students' lives? How essential is it to the welfare of students?

Pre-pandemic studies have demonstrated strong links between involvement in extracurricular activities and a sense of well-being because they can facilitate positive school-related experiences – which, in turn, promote perceptions of social acceptance (e.g., Freeman et al., 2007), higher academic competence (e.g., Chang & Cohen, 2002; Kuh et al., 2008; Pittman & Richmond, 2007), and lower levels of depression (e.g., Mounts et al., 2006). When learners develop relationships and feel socially connected at school through extra activities, they are inclined to feel more positively toward academic work and other school engagements (Juvonen et al., 2012). Moreover, research supports the notion that student engagement and structures for peer-to-peer interaction outside the

classroom help raise motivation and student retention (e.g., Juvonen et al., 2012; Lau, 2003; McCarthy & Kuh, 2006; Tao et al., 2000; Zepke & Leach, 2010). However, students who do not make social connections within the school community may be less likely to succeed academically and socially (Juvonen et al., 2012; Kubala, 2000; Pittman & Richmond, 2008). Such students can experience a lower level of satisfaction and a higher level of stress (Çivitci, 2015). Essentially, the literature supports the notion that involvement in the broader school community can help students succeed, whereas disengaged students tend to become more detached and discouraged. However, apart from athletics, there is an absence of writing about the sharp reduction in extracurricular and non-scholastic activities during the current pandemic. This paper does not attempt to fill in a lack of research in this area. Rather, it is an attempt to offer some ideas and solutions to help students maintain social connections which can in turn help them to progress socially and academically.

The Concept of Day Camp

Day camps, as the name implies, typically involve a series of consecutive days in which students do activities during daytime hours and return home to sleep in their own homes. The kind of day camp described in the context of this paper does not refer to a rustic outdoor experience but to time spent on campus during the day filled with various educational and recreational activities in a safe and socially distanced environment. The primary aims were to reacquaint students with their peers after an extended period of online classes, create a more inclusive community for isolated international students, set up opportunities for student leadership, and reach out to needs within the local community, which will be explained later in more detail.

The idea of having a day camp was conceived after over a year and a half of emergency remote learning and suspended extracurricular activities. All on- and off-campus endeavors were prohibited, and an annual English summer camp had been canceled for the second year. Students were bemoaning the lack of enjoyable activities to do, and morale was at a new low. First-year and international students had limited chances to form friendships, and people of all sorts longed for meaningful communication with their peers. Realizing an acute need for people to connect, the author of this paper devised an alternative to the annual English camp, which included detailed measures to minimize the possibility of the spread of COVID-19. After much deliberation, the school administration approved the proposal and gave permission to proceed. An announcement was made through the university's learning management system, and students registered online through Google Forms. Once registered, students were sent more details about the day camp and the rules to maintain a safe environment.

In mid-September 2021, 14 international students and 20 Japanese students gathered for the first communal event at the university in 21 months. Attendees were required to follow specific rules. For example, students were not to come to campus if they had a fever over 37.6 degrees, if they were experiencing any COVID or flu-like symptoms, or if a member of their household was ill. Upon arrival, students and staff had their temperatures checked and recorded before being guided to a gym where they could spread out for a short orientation before heading to designated classrooms around campus. Hand sanitizers were always available and were used before and after each activity. Masks were worn at all times, and when eating lunch, students were instructed to eat alone and not in groups. If someone were to fall ill, the staff in charge were to assess the situation and

either send the student home or seek professional help. Students were reminded to maintain a safe distance throughout activities and avoid too much personal contact.

The morning schedule comprised several parallel mini-course sessions taught by six students, five full-time and three part-time teachers over two days. All sessions were instructed in a professional manner, including the students who took up the challenge to share their unique skills and know-how with their peers in English. Student instructors volunteered to teach without compensation, but any materials they needed were provided through a small budget. Three teachers opted to teach remotely, so classrooms were equipped with reliable computers, projectors, and an operator to accommodate their needs. Students could attend 55-minute mini-courses of their choice and experience something fun, new, and outside the scope of a regular university class (see Tables 1 and 2). Each mini-course was limited to 10 people to maintain physical distancing. To spread people out evenly, students indicated their first and second choices for the mini-courses on their Google Forms and were assigned to classes accordingly (see Appendix).

The afternoon activities consisted of various team activities that spread students outside and in the school gymnasium. Such activities included game shows, relays, and introductions to unfamiliar sports, such as Australian football and cricket. The main event on the first day was a shopping game designed to raise money for charity. In short, students brought unneeded or used items from home, along with ¥500. The items were used to set up four shops, with four teachers as shopkeepers, for students to browse and buy as many items as they could with their ¥500. The students bargained and haggled with the shopkeepers to lower the prices. In the end, the person who bought the most items on a ¥500 budget won a prize, and everyone went home with some interesting items. The money raised from the sales went entirely to a larger fund created in conjunction with professors from other universities, a professional baseball player, and a local church. All donations went toward buying much-needed playground equipment for an orphanage in the prefecture.

Reflection

The bedrock of personal and professional development is reflective practice; it extracts meaning from experiences and transforms them into organized thoughts and strategies for the future. Reflecting on the day camp activities involved listening to the participants, noticing patterns, and reassessing them for future reference. After the day camp concluded, six students agreed to a sit-down interview, and two teachers responded to a request to provide feedback via email. The prevailing sentiments of the students and teachers could be condensed into four common themes as follows:

1. Learning from peers through mini-courses enhances personal growth and community
2. Learning to see teachers as people
3. Contributing to the community and the needs of others is fulfilling
4. Personal growth is developed through new experiences

Table 1
Basic Schedule for Day 1

Day 1			
Welcome and ice-breaking activity in the gym 10:00–10:25			
Mini-courses (Session 1) 10:30–11:25			
Room A22a **Fun with Juggling!** (student)	Room E103 **Relaxation Yoga** via Zoom (teacher)	Room A23 **Wood Printing** (teacher)	Room A24a **Creating Your Own Online Business** (student)
Mini-courses (Session 2) 11:30–12:25			
Room A22a **The Art of Crocheting** (teacher)	Room A22b **Amabie, Kansai, and the World** (teacher)	Room A23 **Nail Manicuring** (student)	Outside **River Nature Walk (and environmental study)** (teacher)
Lunch & relaxation 12:30–13:25			
Service-learning activity – Raising Money for Charity / Shopping Game In the gym 13:30–15:25			
Afternoon recreational activities – "The Price Is Right"/ Australian Football (teacher) / Cricket (student) / Frisbee Golf Outside and in the gym 15:30–17:00			
Debriefing and end to Day 1 17:00			

Table 2
Basic Schedule for Day 2

Day 2			
Welcome and ice-breaking activity in the gym **10:00–10:25**			
Mini-courses (Session 1) **10:30–11:25**			
Room A22a **Real 関西弁 & Culture** (student)	Room A22b **No session**	Room A23 **Dancing with the Stars!** (student)	Room A24a **Storytelling** via Zoom (teacher)
Mini-courses (Session 2) **11:30–12:25**			
Room A22a **Roasting Coffee 101!** (teacher)	Gym – Level 1 **Anyone Can Play Drums!** (teacher)	Room A23 **No session**	Room A24a **Study in Canada!** via Zoom (teacher)
Lunch & relaxation **12:30–13:25**			
Afternoon activities – "Are You as Smart as a 5th Grader?" / Photo Hunt **Outside and in the gym** **13:30–15:25**			
Featured movie in the library forum! **15:30–17:00**			
Debriefing and end to Day 2 **17:00**			

Learning From Peers Through Mini-Courses Enhances Personal Growth and Community

One of the most meaningful components of this type of day camp is the mini-courses because students take part in the teaching process. Encouraging them to step up and lead is not an easy task, and insecurities in their abilities to teach or speak in English can stand as barriers to making them commit. However, the effort is worth it. When learners shift from student recipients to teachers, they can gain feelings of satisfaction and status, which become powerful sources of reward and motivation. This is reflected in second-year Student A's (personal communication, September 30, 2021) reflections: "Before teaching, all I could think about was how I could get people to participate or be really into my

lesson. But I felt satisfaction after other students said they had a good time."

Peer-to-peer teaching can be beneficial for student teachers, as well as their coequals, because such interaction can result in a stronger connection to the student's level of understanding, increase critical thinking, broaden student participation, and inspire greater engagement with the subject matter (Stigmar, 2016). In a non-academic atmosphere at day camp, there is no apprehension on the part of the learners to doubt that their peer teachers are knowledgeable enough to present the content. Moreover, a deeper sense of community and inclusion can be fostered as students interact as equal partners without the usual authority of a conventional teacher. When students teach and learn as partners, they can learn to respect each other's skills and viewpoints from a fresh perspective. Fourth-year Student B (personal communication, September 30, 2021) remarked, "It was easier to communicate with student-to-student teaching because we were equals, and the student-teacher thinks more from a student's view and explains things in easy steps." Second-year Student C (personal communication, September 30, 2021) added:

> The pressure is gone. Sometimes when I am talking to a teacher, I am afraid of using the wrong grammar or something, but when I talk to my peers, that pressure is gone. It's just not there. I can talk freely and ask something about any topic freely without pressure.

Participating Associate Professor A (personal communication, September 12, 2021) also stated:

> "A number of students said that participating in team-based activities - particularly with students they had not previously met or spoken to, was a rewarding and fulfilling experience. Japanese and non-Japanese students alike said they felt a strong sense of community and inclusion from these mini-courses."

Learning to See Teachers as People

A small number of studies support the idea that teachers who have skills and creativity in their personal and professional lives can actively transfer creative tendencies from their outside avocations or interests into their teaching practices. This includes cross-disciplinary teaching practices and real-world learning approaches. Innovative and creative teachers accomplish this by enriching their mental pools with diverse, eclectic, cross-disciplinary interests, knowledge, and experiences and fusing them together to form new combinations (Henriksen & Mishra, 2015; Mishra, Henriksen, & the Deep-Play Research Group, 2014; Popova, 2012). All teachers have diverse skill sets, talents, and attributes often unknown to the student body. Students often attend classes assuming that learning cannot be fun or relevant to the real world, much less to their personal interests. That is why another benefit of day camp mini-courses is having participating language teachers share unique talents and abilities. Such skills can include expertise in content areas in which one has a high interest or considers oneself proficient. The skills could also include experience from former careers, educational background, or a wealth of knowledge about geographical places and cultures. Sharing such abilities can strengthen engagement with students by enabling teachers to make deeper connections with students who have similar interests, as well as bring authenticity to lessons and humanize teachers in the eyes of their students, who can see that their instructors are much more than "just English teachers."

Second-year Student D (personal communication, September 30, 2021) reflected on

teachers' extra abilities when commenting about an instructor who taught a mini-course on drums, "I just want to say that we, your students, are really lucky to have you. You are making our university life more memorable. Moreover, you look cool playing drums, my cool teacher!" Second-year Student A (personal communication, September 30, 2021) further commented:

> "It [seeing teacher's skills] gave me a new perspective of our teachers. Outside of class, we go to our teachers for things, but we always end up talking about school problems. This camp gave me a fresh perspective on them as people."

In the words of the late psychologist Carl Rogers (1969), "It is quite customary for teachers rather consciously to put on the mask, the role, the façade, of being a teacher and to wear this façade all day, removing it only when they have left school at night" (p. 107). These words ring true for many, and it might not be circumspect for educators to reveal their personal lives as an open book. However, when teachers allow students to see them as ordinary people with interests, talents, and lives outside the classroom, students can gain a new sense of respect for their abilities, interests, and even culture. In turn, this can heighten understanding and cultivate better student-teacher relationships. From the teacher's perspective, Part-Time Instructor B (personal communication, September 12, 2021) stated:

> "I feel like the event affected my own image among students in a positive way; most of them had not met me before, but after the event, some of them were eager to tell me that they took my class and stayed longer to exchange a few words."

Associate Professor A (personal communication, September 12, 2021) added:

> "I think the language teachers themselves are vital to these mini-courses as students view them in a different light from the usual classroom environment. The fact that language teachers represent different nationalities, outlooks, accents, and cultures but have English in common - also enhances their images."

Contributing to the Community and the Needs of Others is Fulfilling

A compelling number of studies exist regarding the positive effects of community service and learning. Taking part in service-related activities can enhance critical thinking skills (Kraft, 2000; Ponder et al., 2011), increase social responsibility (Dharamsi et al., 2010; Hwang et al., 2019; Wray-Lake et al., 2016), improve academic outcomes (Soslau & Yost, 2007; Warren, 2012), and lead to better collaboration and communication as students work together to solve real-world problems (Crossman & Kite, 2007; Palpacuer Lee et al., 2018; Pope-Ruark et al., 2014). As educational institutions provide students with opportunities to prepare for their role as global citizens, experiential learning methods such as service-learning can effectively address contemporary issues and connect learning to real-life experiences.

Facilitating service and action-based experiences at a day camp or in a classroom gives students opportunities to actively participate in their community and discover how one individual can make a difference and raise awareness of issues within their locality. That is why a central theme of all camps at the university where this day camp occurred is local outreach and service. In normal years, overnight camps include community service activities such as hosting English-related events for children in rural areas, translating work, engaging in cultural exchanges, and cleaning historic buildings for public use. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, travel and such service-related opportunities have been prohibited. In its place, the fundraiser mentioned above was done

for an orphanage in Hyogo Prefecture in need of playground equipment at its facility. Money from the sales, combined with teacher's donations, added up to a significant amount toward a good cause. Student E (personal communication, September 30, 2021) reflected on this by saying, "Raising money felt like we were doing something useful, more than just playing a game or competition." Part-Time Teacher B (personal communication, September 12, 2021) echoed this sentiment by stating:

> "I think the game during which we raised money for the orphanage was a wonderful idea that raised the students' awareness of how important personal contribution can be, in a playful manner. The students definitely seemed to enjoy negotiating their prices for the items we had to offer, and also seemed to be aware that the event was being held for a greater cause."

Personal Growth is Developed Through New Experiences

Student reflections show that communicating in English at a day camp can provide a unique medium for new experiences and personal development. For some, it was trying their hand at a new physical activity, such as dribbling a football, hitting a ball with a cricket bat, dancing, playing drums, juggling, or doing yoga. For others, it was a new mental exercise or relaxation, such as crocheting, nail manicuring, or smelling the soothing aroma of roasting fresh coffee beans. Other personal encounters, such as being partnered with international students for a task, meeting someone from a different department or campus, or using English as the primary communication medium, are memorable new adventures. Second-year Student F (personal communication, September 30, 2021) from Nepal illustrated such sentiment by saying, "It was a new experience. It took no time becoming comfortable, making jokes, or saying what you want. With the other students, I felt instant rapport." Part-Time Instructor B (personal communication, September 12, 2021) stated:

> "I also witnessed a different side of personal growth being developed when I saw students helping each other, either by showing each other the right way to do something during my mini-courses or explaining part of the task to each other using a few Japanese words besides talking in English."

Associate Professor A added:

> "I think students have been quite fortunate in the quality, frequency, and diversity of new activities, extracurricular events, mini-courses, and camps. Strong motivation and desire to attend and to continue or extend these experiences in the future indicates that personal growth has no limits."

The statements above illustrate how new experiences can help create a fertile environment where students can stretch and grow. Conclusively, students' contributions as teachers or participants carry a day camp event to successfully increase confidence, motivation, and a feeling of acceptance. Consequently, self-consciousness, nervousness, language barriers, and personal insecurities can diminish as students take part in various actions where learning becomes a collective endeavor that is authentic and meaningful.

Conclusion

When conducting day camp activities, adaptability can open up new experiences, solve minor problems creatively, and take the unexpected in stride. Although most activities ran smoothly and according to plan, a few mini-courses ran overtime, and some students arrived late. Relaxing the time schedule freed instructors to finish the work they started

without cutting anything off due to time constraints. Furthermore, adding small items to the program at the last minute was advantageous, such as creating new rules for a game or spontaneously giving students a chance to lob hundreds of water balloons at teachers who lined up as moving targets against a wall. Such flexibility resulted in maintaining a relaxed, "day camp" atmosphere rather than a feeling of being at school.

In retrospect, some improvements could be made for future day camps of this kind. First, maintaining social distancing was challenging, although verbal and written guidelines were clear. Undoubtedly, reasonable contact must be made between participants, but as the days wore on, students tended to cluster closer together, and some did not follow lunchtime eating precautions. If the pandemic continues and more day camps are held hereafter, concrete measures could be made to avoid excessive contact between participants. For example, sitting and eating areas could be marked, and larger classrooms could be reserved to allow for more space. A second reconsideration for future events could be to ensure an ample budget for mini-course materials. Although some classes did not require any supplies, a small budget was not quite enough to cover the rest. In the future, a better effort could be made to locate more existing materials that do not need to be purchased or slightly expand the budget for unexpected costs.

Having a day camp amid a pandemic may be somewhat controversial, but personal contact and communication between peers are of utmost importance even in the best of times. When students are isolated from each other, the nature of their educational experience radically changes. Therefore, conducting programs such as English day camps with mini-courses can promote camaraderie and give students opportunities to exercise their gifts, especially if they are involved as participants and not just as spectators. Giving students new opportunities to teach each other is also a powerful medium to create and fortify student leaders. Personal development and language acquisition can become enjoyable for all participants by learning new skills and having meaningful communication in a nonvirtual all-English environment. Students can once again attain a feeling of success, which instigates heightened motivation and a sense of belonging.

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Appendix 1 – Google Form Content for Mini-Course Sign-ups

Sign-up Form for Mini-Courses

Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us! We have prepared a total of 14 mini-courses for you to try, so please select the ones that you want to experience. We will do our best to give you your first choices, but if there are too many people in one course, we might shift a few people to their second choices instead. The reasons for this are for social distancing and to help teachers know how much material to prepare for their courses.
Descriptions of each course are in the PDF sent to you via email. Please check them first!
Name _____
Student Number _____

Saturday, September 11th

If you are not planning to attend this day, please skip to Sunday, September 12th.
Session 1 (10:30 ~ 11:25) Please select your first choice for this session.

☐Fun with Juggling!
☐Relaxation Yoga (via Zoom)
☐Wood Printing
☐Creating Your Own Online Business

Session 1 (10:30 ~ 11:25) Please select your second choice for this session.

☐Fun with Juggling!
☐Relaxation Yoga (via Zoom)
☐Wood Printing
☐Creating Your Own Online Business

Session 2 (11:30 ~ 12:25) Please select your first choice for this session.

☐The Art of Crocheting
☐Nail Manicuring
☐River Nature Walk/Study

Session 2 (11:30 ~ 12:25) Please select your second choice for this session.

☐The Art of Crocheting
☐Nail Manicuring
☐River Nature Walk/Study

Sunday, September 12th

If you are not attending this day, please leave this section blank and click on the "Submit" button below.
Session 1 (10:30 ~ 11:25) Please select your first choice for this session.

☐Real "関西弁" and Culture
☐Dancing with the Stars!
☐Storytelling (via Zoom)

Session 1 (10:30 ~ 11:25) Please select your second choice for this session.

☐Real "関西弁" and Culture
☐Dancing with the Stars!
☐Storytelling (via Zoom)

Session 2 (11:30 ~ 12:25) Please select your first choice for this session.

☐Roasting and Brewing Coffee 101

☐Anyone Can Play Drums

☐Study in Canada! (via Zoom)

One more question! What kind of movie would you prefer to see on Sunday, September 12th in the CELL Forum?

☐Action/Superhero

☐Comedy

☐Animation (Disney, Pixar, etc.)

☐Science Fiction

Other (Please specify) _____

A Case Study on the Development of Writing Skills in a Master's Pathway Program

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Abstract
The ability to write effectively is one of the key areas that learners of English need to master in order to be successful while studying at a university in an English-speaking country. It is, therefore, an area of major focus on pre-sessional, pathway, and bridging programs. This paper takes a case-study approach to investigate the development in academic writing skills that two learners of English achieved across a master's pathway program. The program is designed to prepare learners for post-graduate education in the UK and covers all aspects of academic English. The paper focuses on the development of two key areas of effective academic writing: lexis and syntax. The two featured participants made gains in a number of ways but differed in the nature and extent of their development, as there were some gains in use of academic lexis but mixed results for their development in some of the syntactic complexity measures. Thus, it is clear that while the approaches to writing development used on the course were effective to some degree, further reinforcement of these key writing skills is required to maximize improvement. This paper discusses these and other pertinent issues that arose from the research.

Keywords: Academic vocabulary, academic writing, lexical sophistication, syntactic complexity

Introduction

For many learners of English, the composition of lengthy reports for university and beyond represents a major challenge, and the process of writing and rewriting such reports can be protracted and difficult (Flottum et al., 2006). One of the difficulties is the need to communicate in the specialized language of the target discourse community, using linguistic styles and rhetorical patterns that may seem unfamiliar (Hyland, 2009). This is perhaps exacerbated for non-native students who may find their previous academic practices to be undervalued in their new environment and may be required to develop new academic skills (Snowden, 2003) as well as a new 'identity' to fit the expectations of western academia (Hyland, 1999); this is in addition to developing the necessary linguistic competence. To make this transition smoother, writing courses in English for academic purposes (EAP) pathway programs aim to prepare students for the community into which they will enter. These programs are essentially preparation courses, which aim to equip participants with the academic skills necessary for successful study at undergraduate or postgraduate courses at universities in English-speaking countries. However, this task is made more complex by the lack of a clearly definable notion of 'academic English' (Spack, 1998). This has been reflected in numerous studies that have investigated the inter-disciplinary differences in the genres of academic writing (e.g. Biber, et al., 1999; Swales, 1990; Thompson & Yiyun, 1991). Despite these differences,

there are generalizable features of written academic English that make it distinct from other genres, such as an increased lexical density; syntactic complexity; use of nominalization and passives; as well as distinct patterns of rhetorical organization at the sentence, paragraph, and discourse levels (Swales, 1990). Thus, developing students' familiarity with such features should be an important element to any writing course. This study will therefore investigate the development of students undertaking a pre-master's course in regard to two of those elements, namely, syntactic complexity and lexical sophistication. The focus here is on *academic* writing, but the approach can be applied to the development of any form of high-level writing task.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is seen as a key factor in the development of high-level writing proficiency for a number of reasons. Firstly, vocabulary has been suggested as a key indicator of general linguistic proficiency (González, 2017; Laufer & Nation, 1995; Treffers-Daller et al., 2018), and this is reflected in the assessment criteria for a number of standardized international tests, for example IELTS and TOEFL. Additionally, language learners frequently express the desire to develop broader vocabularies for more sophisticated production (Leki, & J. Carson 1991), and comprehension of subject texts (Edwards & Collins, 2011). Furthermore, L2 writing when compared to L1 writing, "Exhibited less lexical control, variety and sophistication overall" (Silva, 1993: 671) as well as fewer lexical bundles (Douglas, 2012). It has also been noted that lexical richness, or variety, is a key component in effective academic writing (Coxhead, 2000; Gregori-Signes & Clavel-Arroitia, 2015), and can be a good predictor of essay quality (McNamara et al., 2010) although it can vary between genres (Staples & Reppen, 2016). It is also important to raise learners' awareness of these phenomenon as they can shy away from using lower-frequency words (Henriksen & Danelund, 2015) Therefore, vocabulary development will be examined using measures of lexical density and token/type ratios, to discover the extent to which students could utilize larger quantities of lexical items, as well as utilization of items from the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000), a widely used list of commonly occurring academic words.

Lexical Density and the Academic Word List

The concept of lexical density was one that was first proposed by Ure (1971) and measures the proportion of different lexical items (e.g., nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives) versus the total number of words (tokens). A high lexical density, as shown earlier, is known to be a feature of written genres. One problem, however, arises when comparing texts of different lengths as lexical density can decrease with text length due to lexical items being repeated and the relative increase in the number of function words (Halliday, 2002). This paper, then, will use a standardized measure of the type-token ratio, sometimes known as lexical variation (Laufer & Nation, 1995). This will be done using WordsmithTools (Scott, 2008), which makes a new calculation at a set number of words, 1,000 words as a default, and provides a running average, making it a more reliable measure. This measure, however, does not take into account the sophistication of the words used.

One approach to measuring lexical sophistication is to analyze texts for the presence of words from established word lists. In Laufer and Nation's (1995) case, they examined learner texts for use of the three thousand most common words and also the AWL

(Coxhead, 2000). However, limitations in using the 3,000 most common words have been pointed out as being insensitive to changes in productive vocabulary sizes of over 3,000 words (Meara, 2005), although the most common 2,000 words can cover 80% of the words in academic texts (Nation, 2000). This research, then, will use a method comparing the texts to items that occur in the AWL. Changes in the use of the 3,000 most common words will not be examined as it is believed that the students in this study will be at too advanced a level to register significant changes (low-intermediate students are thought to have productive vocabularies of around 3,000 words (Meara, 2005)). As the AWL provides a sample of words that are common in academic texts and is said to be non-field specific, it is thought that the increased use of these items will represent an increase in the students' vocabulary when combined with the earlier measure. One caveat to the use of the AWL is that its distribution is irregular across disciplines (Hyland & Tse, 2007). However, it is thought that the AWL is suitable for this stage in the students' development and has been found to be a useful resource by both teachers and learners alike (Coxhead, 2012).

Syntactic complexity

A further key indicator of linguistic development is syntactic complexity (Ortega, 2003). Hinkel's (2003) research of L2 academic writing found it to be generally lacking in sophistication and syntactically simplistic and that this can negatively affect the readers' assessment. Also, professors have been found to regard L2 writing as comprehensible, but insufficiently 'academic' in tone (Santos, 1988), suggesting the lexical, stylistic, and syntactic elements to be inadequate and in need of improvement. For this study, three of the six most common measures taken from Ortega's (2003) meta-analysis of 21 studies on syntactic complexity will be used: length of sentence, length of clause, and number of clauses per sentence, thus measuring a combination of coordination and subordination.

Methods

The course featured here is a four-month, full-time master's pathway program that was held in Japan prior to the participants proceeding to post-graduate study in the UK. The course includes a content module on globalization and modules on research methods and EAP. The EAP module deals with all four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The writing module specifically covers, in Term 1, short essay and sentence level writing. The focus then shifts in Term 2 to dissertation writing and the writing of longer academic texts. The approaches to the development of the two key skill areas—syntactic and lexical complexity—are briefly described here. For the development of lexis, learners' attention was first raised as to the differences between 'general' vocabulary that might be used in any context, versus 'academic' vocabulary that is suitable for academic genres. Learners were then introduced to the AWL and given weekly tasks using words from each of its sub lists. In order to develop beyond the limitations of the AWL, learners were also given advice on vocabulary learning of words outside the AWL. In terms of the development of syntactic complexity, again, learners' attention was drawn to the number of clauses and length of sentences in academic papers, and this was then compared to their own written production. Learners were then given sentence-combining tasks where short, single-clause sentences were combined into longer, multi-clause ones. Syntactic complexity was also one area that was discussed in all peer review sessions that followed in order to reinforce its development, and this was an area also targeted in teacher

feedback.

More generally, there were four main written formative assignments on this course. There were two 1,500-word responses to questions for the content module, one relating to ethical issues regarding tobacco sales and the other relating to Corporate Social Responsibility. There was also a dissertation proposal of 1,500 words and a 5,000-word dissertation on a topic of the students' choosing that required the inclusion of primary data. This research will focus on a comparison the first subject assignment (Paper 1) and the final dissertation because these cover the widest span of the course, and so can best capture the developments in linguistic competence made over the entirety of the program.

The students selected for participation in this study, referred to by the pseudonyms Taka and Yuki, were chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are typical in age and background of the learners that feature on this program—both were in their twenties and had recently graduated from undergraduate programs in Japan: both had IELTS scores of 5.5 and so were typical of the entry point level held by many students in the program.

Further to that, there were both similarities and differences in their academic and work backgrounds. Both were economics graduates from Japanese universities, in their twenties and had learned most of their English at high school or other institutions in Japan. Both had taken a short academic English course at the featured institution prior to the course starting. The main difference was that Taka had done a three-month homestay in which he studied general English, full-time at a language school in Canada. Yuki, however, had only vacationed overseas and used very little English while on these short trips. Her English studies after high school focused on TOEIC and general English mainly for career advancement, including both speaking and writing. The writing she did appears to have been fairly general and limited to diary keeping, but she maintained this throughout those courses. Both students were working prior to the course, Yuki for a major technology company and Taka for a major hotel chain; however, neither used English frequently in their work. The students differed in future goals in that Yuki intended to go on to study business and Taka intended to study development studies. The students' progress across the course in terms of English ability is reflected in their EAP writing grades at the end of Term 1 being a C (equivalent to 6.0 on the IELTS test) for Taka and a D (equivalent to 5.5 on the IELTS test) for Yuki. Both achieved and EAP grade of A (equivalent to 7.0 on the IELTS test) for their final dissertation. This is a further reason for their selection for this research as their grades represent what is possible to gain across the course. The two participants gave permission for their work to be used in this research.

Thus, this paper aims to investigate the developments made across the course of study in terms of syntactic complexity and lexical sophistication.

Results

The measures used to evaluate syntactic complexity were the differences between Paper 1 and the Final Dissertation in terms of number of words per sentence, number of words per clause and clauses per sentence. The measures used to evaluate lexical sophistication were the differences between Paper 1 and the Final Dissertation in terms of standardized type-token ratio (i.e. lexical variation), lexical density, and the percentage of total words used that feature in the AWL.

Figure 1
Yuki: Sentence length

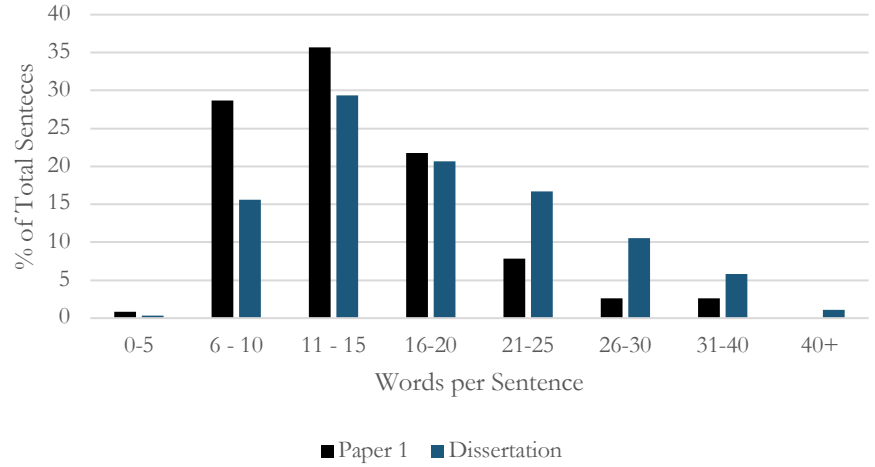
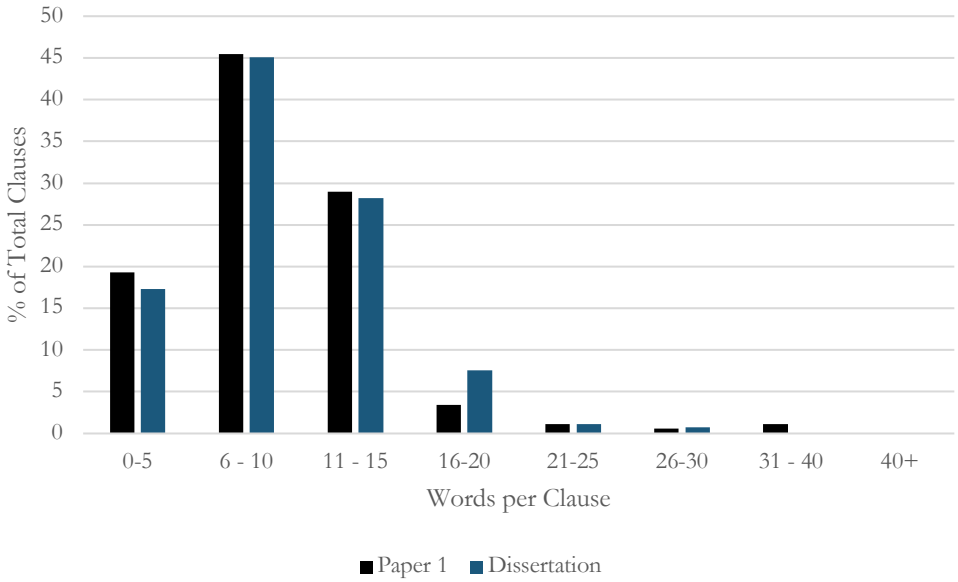
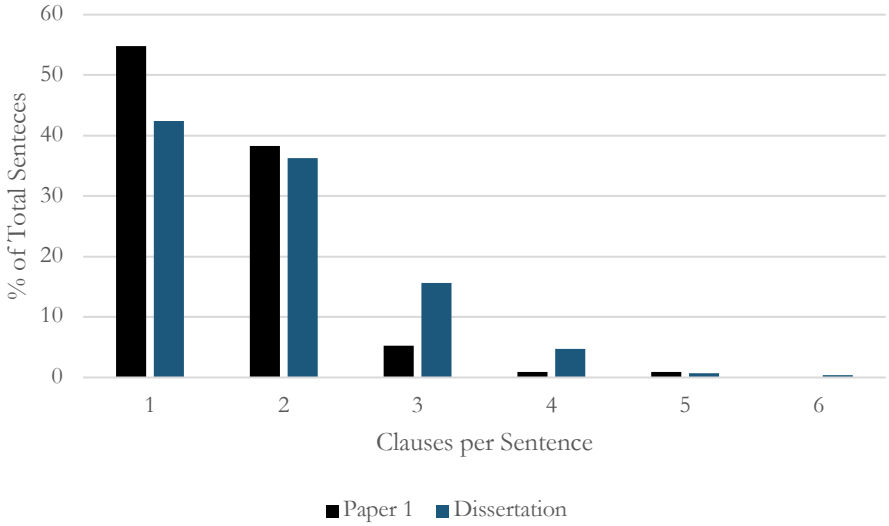


Figure 2
Yuki: Clause length



As reflected in the data, Yuki increased the overall length of both the clauses and sentences that she could produce. In terms of overall sentence length, as shown in Figure 1, there is a shift from sentences ranging in length mostly from six to twenty words, with a total of just under ten per cent over twenty words, up to sentences in the range six to thirty, all with figures over ten percent. There was also a significant reduction of almost fifty percent in sentences in the six-to-ten-word range. However, Figure 2 shows that there was very little change in the length of clauses that were produced, which would suggest that increased coordination or subordination was used to lengthen sentences. This area is examined below.

Figure 3
Yuki: Clauses per sentence



As predicted above, the results show an increase in the amount of coordination and subordination that this student used in her final dissertation. This is shown in Figure 3 by a drop of ten percentage points in one-clause sentences and a corresponding increase in three-clause sentences, with a slight increase in the number of four-clause sentences as well. Taka also showed gains in some areas under examination, as shown in Figures 4 to 6, but these differed in a number of ways.

Figure 4
Taka: Sentence length

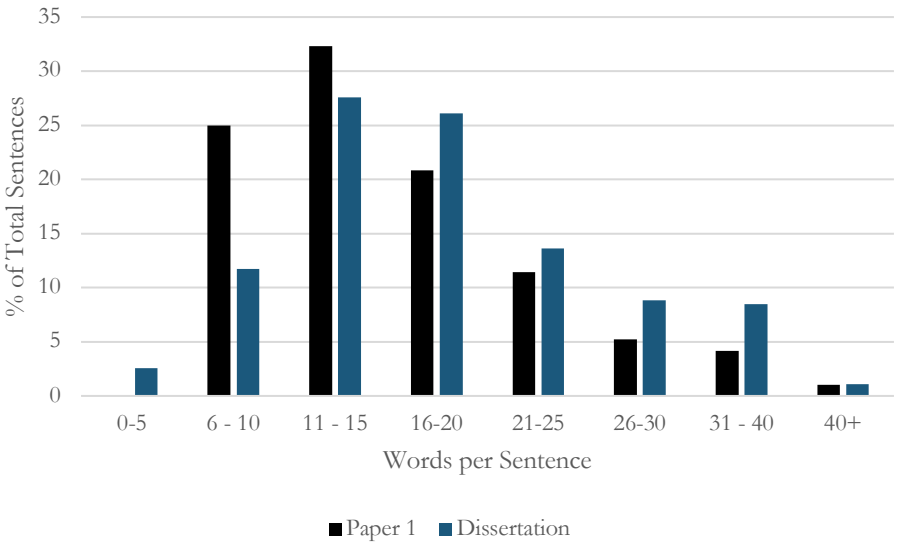
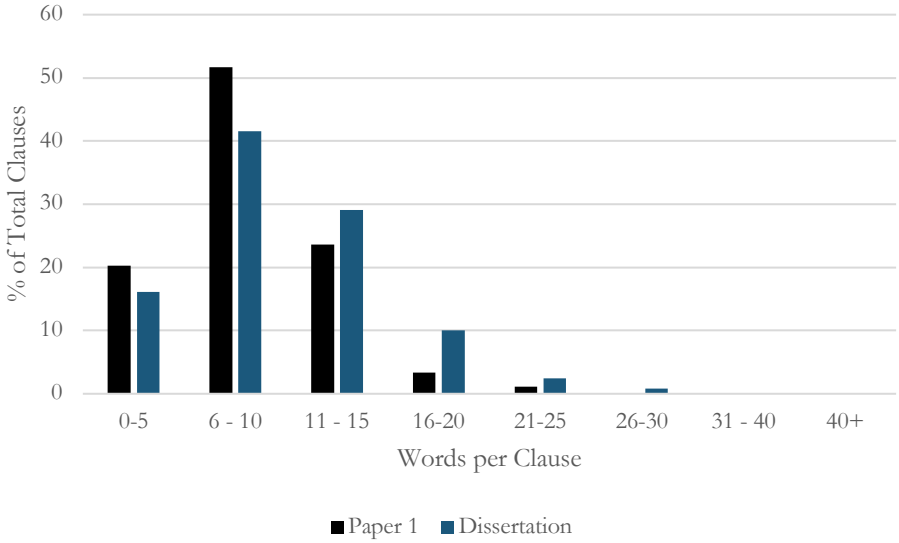
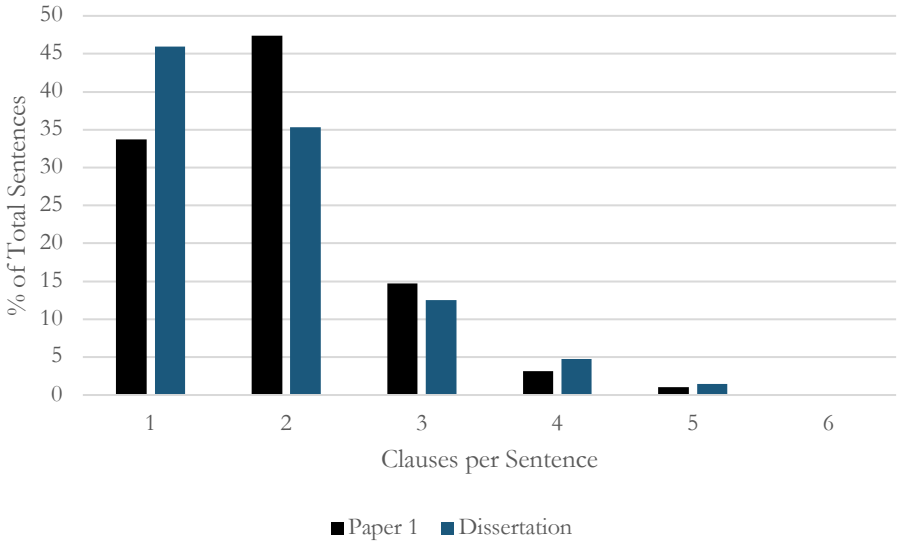


Figure 5
Taka: Clause length



Here, Taka has also exhibited a similar capacity to produce longer sentence in the final dissertation, with decreases in the six to fifteen-word range and increases of varying degrees, of sentences from sixteen to forty words in length. There was also an unexpected increase in the number of sentences of zero to five words in length. Unlike Yuki, however, Taka was used a greater proportion of longer sentences with a shift comparable in the length of clauses used, evidenced by a decrease in the lower ranges, zero to ten words per clause, and increases in the eleven-to-twenty-five-word range.

Figure 6
Taka: Clauses per sentence



Interestingly, as shown in Figure 6, Taka showed a decrease in the amount of coordination and subordination in the final dissertation, seeming to prefer one clause sentences as there was an increase in this area and drops in both two and three clause

sentences, but most noticeably with two-clause sentences. Despite this, there was a very slight increase in the number of four-clause sentences, the emergence of which suggests further experimentation with the limitations of this learner's linguistic competence and is likely to lead to further development in this area as the learner continues his journey as an academic writer. It is clear that while Taka could increase the overall length of sentences produced, more work is required in terms of use of coordination and subordination.

Table 1
Lexical variety and lexical diversity

	Tokens	Types	Standardized TTR	Lexical Density
Taka, Paper 1	1548	432	40.5	27.9
Taka, Dissertation	5013	839	41.4	16.7
Yuki, Paper 1	1642	488	45.3	29.8
Yuki, Dissertation	5049	947	42.6	19.3

Table 1 shows that the two students were not able to increase significantly, if at all, the type/token ratio of their texts at the end of the course. This may have been, however, due to the increase in length of the assignment and added task complexity and may not truly reflect a lack of development. Lexical density also decreased; however, this is often the case with increased text length (Halliday, 2002).

Table 2
Lexical development and the AWL

	Total Tokens	Tokens from AWL	% of Total Tokens	Types from AWL	% of Total Types
Taka, Paper 1	1548	115	7.4	46	10.7
Taka, Dissertation	5013	536	10.7	133	15.9
Yuki, Paper 1	1642	83	5.1	37	7.6
Yuki, Dissertation	5049	312	6.2	106	11.2

Table 2 shows that the students used more academic vocabulary as a result of participation in the course as the absolute number of words used from the AWL increased as did the ratio to other words in the text, suggesting vocabulary development. The usage of words from the AWL are also close to the typical proportion of words from the AWL that are common to written academic genres, 10% (Coxhead, 2000). Although this increase in academic word use is positive, it may not reflect the extent to which the students could develop their vocabularies, as a number of advanced words appeared in the text but were not part of the AWL. A selection of examples taken from both learners' dissertations that did not fall within the target word range can be seen in Table 3 as well as their word frequency band according to the combined BNC-COCA 1-25k corpus (Cobb, 2020), showing that the AWL has limitations if used as the sole reference for lexical development among learners or lexical complexity of a text to be used in class.

Table 3
Lexical sophistication outside the AWL

Word	Frequency Band	Word	Frequency Band
Abundant	K-4	Subordinates	K-4
Allotted	K-6	Valence	K-13
Anonymity	K-7	Abolish	K-5
Undertaken	K-3	Counterparts	K-4
Consumption	K-3	Duopoly	K-17
Cosmopolitan	K-7	Materialistic	K-2

Discussion

This research investigated students' development in a number of areas with the aim of informing future courses. While it appears that the students were able to make a variety of improvements, there were still some areas to develop, such as Taka's increased use of shorter sentences, and Yuki's need to use longer clauses was also highlighted. In order to develop these skills, a genre approach to the analysis to examples of real research papers specific to the students' field (Casanave, 2003) could be advantageous. The advantages of this would be that the students would be able to see contextualized examples of the sentence structures that they were being encouraged to use, and also, hopefully, notice some characteristics of the writing in the fields they will move into for their master's degrees. Additional areas that could be focused on in future investigations could be use of hedging, reporting verbs, and the development of argument, all key areas in effective writing.

Likewise, the development of lexical density and variety was limited for both students, and only gains were seen in terms of use of the AWL. This was due to the targeted nature of vocabulary development tasks that were a feature of the course. However, it is clear that more emphasis needs to be placed on lexis outside of the AWL. For this, training in the recording and use of vocabulary encountered through the course would be of use. Learners would be taught approaches to recognizing and making decisions about potentially useful expressions (e.g., Barker, 2007) and given a systematic means of recording them, either on paper or electronically. This could then be reviewed in the weekly study skills sessions that are a part of the course in order to increase accountability. It is also key to highlight the learners' own use of vocabulary as it can serve them well in future academic careers due to its close correlation to higher-quality writing (Gregori-Signes & Clavel-Arroitia 2015; McNamara et al., 2010), especially as learners can be reluctant to use lower-frequency words they are still gaining control over (Henriksen & Danelund, 2015)

This research had a number of limitations and perhaps the most obvious would be the unsuitability of the vocabulary measure to track vocabulary development. While it did reflect development to some extent, it did not reflect the full extent of progress made. This is in part due to the use of the AWL as a measure of lexical complexity, which it was not originally designed. As such, in future studies, the approach to analysis should be expanded to incorporate more sophisticated and reliable measures, such as Malvern et al. (2004) or Edwards and Collins (2011). Similarly, it has been noted that as learners' levels

improve, they move towards use of more phrasal than clausal aspects of complexity (Biber et al, 2020), so a focus on both aspects would add considerable precision to any future analysis. Other areas for future consideration are the number of participants, which should be increased, and variables such as length, type and topic of evaluated assignments, should also be controlled. It would also have added to the study to have heard the learners' views of how they perceived their development, whether the complexity under study here was an area they consciously worked on, and their perception of the improvements highlighted in the results of this study.

Conclusion

The research here has shown that these students were able to progress in a number of areas across the course, thus endorsing the methods used, but that further research is required using a larger sample to investigate this more closely as well as investigations into students' capabilities in other areas of academic writing.

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Global Issues and Language Education: Reflecting on Contested Place Names

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Abstract
The language surrounding place names that students encounter through maps, textbooks, listening material or other media are rarely examined beyond being simple indicators of a particular location. This paper delves beyond the locational into the social and political complexities which can surround place names. By doing so the aim is to deepen the potential for understanding how the seemingly banal can be replete with socio-political complexity and simultaneously provide learning opportunities. Three geographic strands are presented in the paper within which the contested nature of place names is explored. Firstly, Hokkaido, Japan, and the replacement/disappearance of Ainu place names. Secondly, Northern Ireland and the struggles in both physical and cartographic terms regarding the naming of the city Derry/Londonderry. Thirdly, the paper turns towards the southern USA and controversially named Confederate monuments. Relevant pedagogic activities are also presented that are connected to each preceding geographic strand.

Keywords: Geography, global issues, language, map, place names, socio-political issues

Introduction

As language educators in Japan maps and place names often feature in lessons and textbooks that are connected and interwoven in myriad ways. These place-based connections range from country profiles in intercultural lessons to reading comprehension pieces about cities or reference points for particular accents. Maps and place names provide students with focal points. For example, in a lesson on the UK a teacher may project a map and allow students to absorb the names and geographic elements of that country through listen and repeat activities. However, the language of place names, the material and physical reality of those places on the ground, and how maps are constructed are not without nuance or complication. Here then, we find an opportunity to expand our student's knowledge regarding the contested language of place names both in a local Japanese context and from wider international perspectives. From a Global Issues viewpoint, language education is not a hermetically sealed bubble separate from the politics and meaning that unfolds in everyday life around the world. By presenting Japanese students with opportunities to learn about the complexity of initially banal seeming place names we can instill additional layers of depth and nuance into language learning scenarios.

The question may emerge "Why is this relevant to language study?" The answer is that place names have power and that power has the capacity to instill both action and

emotion in people in consequential ways. In recent and heart wrenching times arising from the war in Ukraine this is evidenced in the linguistic contestation over Kyiv (derived from Ukrainian Київ) versus Kiev (derived from the Russian Киев) issue. Similar renaming contestations occur in different ways in both historical and contemporary contexts and with different groups and cultures. For example, in Hokkaido cases arose related to the discrimination of Ainu people and similarly in Okinawa with the Uchinanchu people. In Europe, Northern Ireland in the UK has ongoing and fiercely contested place name issues, such as 'Derry' versus 'Londonderry'. While across the Atlantic in the United States consistent nomenclature battles arise surrounding lingering names and monuments in public spaces linked to the civil war Confederacy. These preceding examples illustrate how widespread contested place name issues are and therefore worthy of consideration in our language teaching in Japan.

By developing students understanding of the contested nature of place names it can provide them with a new analytical lens with which to approach words which they encounter and maps they read on their language learning journey. A key idea here is that "description is never value neutral, it always comes with a framing assumption" (Schein, 2009, p. 380). As language educators in an interconnected and challenging world there are pedagogic responsibilities and opportunities to equip students with tools to interact with language in innovative ways. This paper will present examples that can be used in the language classroom in practical ways and allow educators to integrate contested place names into their teaching if they so wish.

This paper provides a Japanese, European and American example of contested place names, as well as practical classroom activities to accompany each example.

Attachment/Aversion to Place Names

People become emotionally attached or develop aversions to place names, words and objects of meaning throughout their existence. The preceding elements can become contested if competing cultural discourses vie for dominance (Brown and MacGinty, 2001). This connection or aversion of people to place names, words and objects does not emerge from a void, but rather from positive or negative interactions between others and oneself, and oneself and the relevant landscape. For example, if you think of your own connection to important places then certain places may become visible before you in your geographical imagination. These places are personalized based upon your life and how it has unfolded and are intertwined with elements such as time and cultural discourses. These connections can be benign, as in the connection to the name of a certain street you like, a negative connection from experiences in childhood, or the sense of social connection shared on an everyday basis at a particular place with others. These moments of inception for connection are the mechanisms of meaning through which people actively form emotional attachment to place names. These connections can have real world impacts if they are felt strongly in contested scenarios. They can lead to linguistic and symbolic tensions becoming segregators, causes for positive social change or lead to material changes in the landscape.

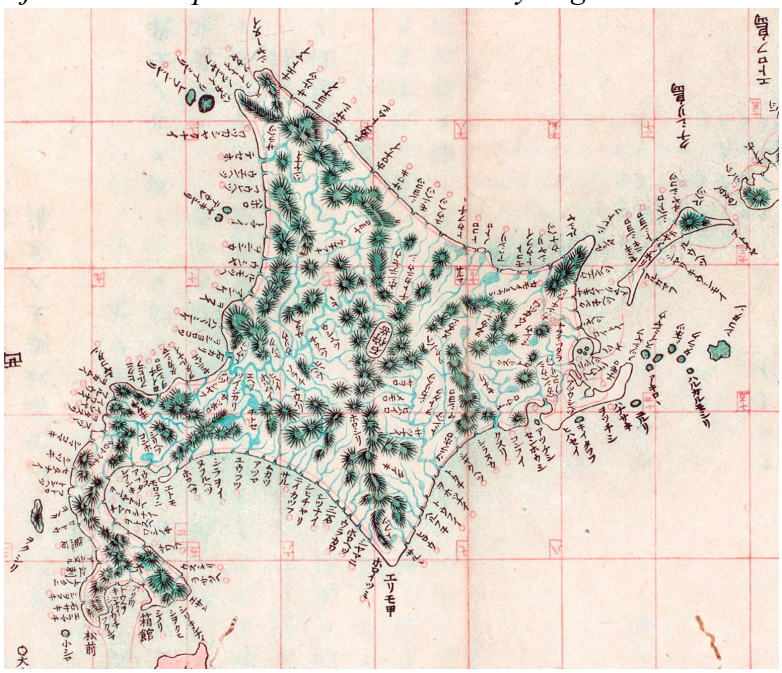
Hokkaido and Ainu Place Names

Let us begin from a Japanese perspective in Hokkaido. The Ainu are an indigenous people who originally dwelt throughout Hokkaido and its northern neighbors of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands (Aoki, 2002). The Ainu language had several regional dialects (see Figure

2) and was passed on through oral traditions. The Ainu people have endured many challenges surrounding forced assimilation and discrimination as a result of what Hamada (2015, p. 43) describes as a "hegemonic narrative" from the state. This marginalization has meant that Ainu culture, and thus language, has suffered an ongoing precarious status as well as associated social and economic equality gaps in society.

Following the annexation of Hokkaido in 1868 the Ainu language was prohibited and cultural assimilation processes were undertaken by the Japanese government. This saw Ainu traditions curtailed, Ainu children being placed in Japanese schools and the substitution and adaptation of Ainu place names throughout Hokkaido. Research has shown that "as Japan passed through the Meiji, Taisho, and Showa periods of its modern era, in most cases, most place names derived from the Ainu language came to be written in kanji, which are logographic Japanese characters of Chinese origin. Some place names were replaced with different names, some were lost entirely, and others were simply forgotten" (Hokkaido Museum, 2019, 10). The changing or adaptation of Ainu place names into kanji completely shifted the original meaning in many cases. For example, 'meman pet' in Ainu means 'cool river' but the Japanese name 'Memanbetsu' incorporates the kanji 別 meaning 'separate'.

Figure 1
An early 1859 map entitled 'Tōzai Ezo sansen chiri torishrirabezu' by Matsuura Takeshirō. The map shows mainly katakana interpretations of places prior to being replaced by kanji. Source: Japan National Diet Library Digital Collections.



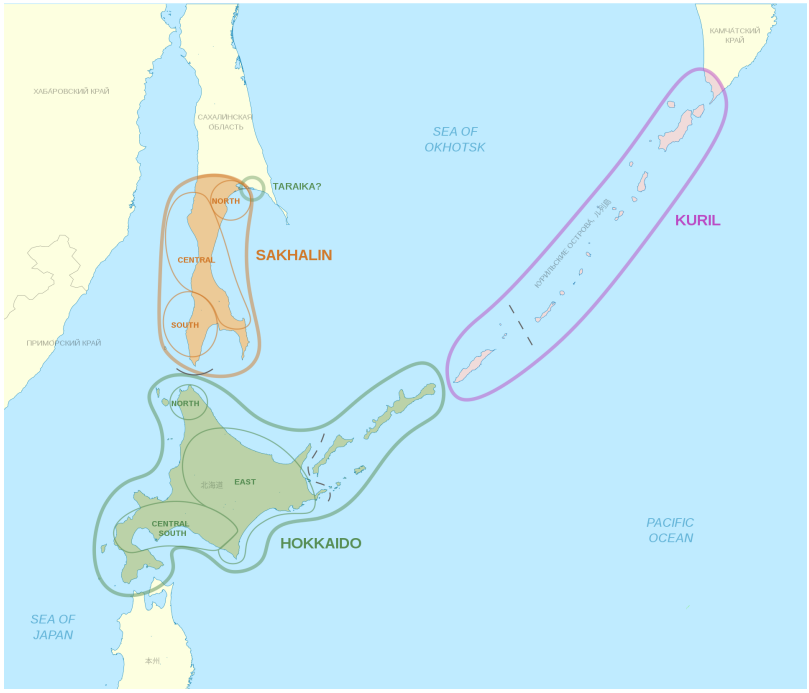
This process of place name replacement, and in some cases adaptation, has seen consistent progression and is linked with the geographic spread of Wajin (ethnic Japanese) settlers throughout the island of Hokkaido (Hamada, 2015). It was noted in the 1980's by Sibata (1981, p. 265) that "it is common knowledge throughout Japan that the place names of Hokkaido originated from the Ainu language. But no one seems to have paid enough attention to the fact that recently these place names are being replaced by Japanese

names". How were these names chosen? We can gain an insight into this process from the Hokkaido Museum's 5th Special Exhibition which was entitled 'Re-examining Hokkaido Through its Place Names: Place Names in Hokkaido and Place Names Derived from the Ainu Language'. The associated literature for that exhibition notes that: "some are named after place names elsewhere in Japan, or after leaders of the development efforts, reflecting Hokkaido's history of collective immigration. Other place names were selected to inspire confidence in regional products. In some cases, existing place names have been changed to represent new points of view" (Hokkaido Museum, 2019, 11).

Why does replacing place names in Hokkaido matter? The answer here is that place names are valuable resources culturally and that place names tell us something not only about the "structure of and content of the physical environment but also how people perceive, conceptualize and classify" (Thornton, 1997, p. 209). An example of the replacement of Ainu place names in Hokkaido can be seen through an historical comparison of maps. For example, an 1896 national map of Obihiro, located in central Hokkaido, provided place names in the Ainu language, but a corresponding map in 1976 showed an increase in Japanese place names of 65% (Sibata, 1981, p. 264). This huge percentage shift illustrates the wider process of place names in the Ainu language that have been replaced by Japanese. As Sibata (1981, p. 273) notes, traditionally "there has been no effort by the Japanese to retain Ainu place names in contrast to what was the case in Hawaii with the retention of place names of Hawaiian origin".

Figure 2

Map of pre-1945 distribution of Ainu languages and dialects throughout Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. Source: Wikimedia, Creative Commons License.



It is important to bring such matters to the attention of our language students in Japan to avoid the "homogenization of multiethnic Hokkaido histories" (Hamada, 2015, p. 43). More recently, efforts have been made by the national government of Japan to

address the plight of the Ainu people and take account of Hokkaido's heterogeneity. This has included a 2008 recognition of the Ainu people as indigenous and a greater promotion of Ainu culture through cultural spaces, such as the Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park which opened in July 2020.

Activity 1. Paraphrasing Partners: Ainu Edition

Step 1. In this activity students can gain an appreciation for and learn the meanings of Ainu place related terms. In Paraphrasing Partners students describe a word in English and their partner must try and guess the correct answer in Ainu.
Step 2. Teach the following 10 Ainu terms and meanings:

- epis = beach
- ni = tree
- ota = sand
- pet = river
- poro = large, many
- ru = road
- siatuy = ocean
- sir = island, mountain
- suma = rock
- to = lake, bog

Step 3. Break the class into pairs.
Step 4. Ask the pairs to janken and losers to close their eyes.
Step 5. Winners look at the board.
Step 6. Write the meaning of one of the Ainu terms on the board.
Step 7. Erase the word after 5 seconds viewing time.
Step 8. Winners must describe the meaning of the Ainu term to their partner without saying the term itself.
Step 9. Losers must guess the correct Ainu term based on their partner's description.
Step 10. Once you judge enough time has elapsed have the partners switch roles and repeat with a new term.

Northern Ireland's Contested Place Names

The United Kingdom consistently features in textbooks and English language learning materials for Japanese students. However, many students in Japan are unaware of any of the political complexities which unfold in different parts of the UK. Thus, we have an opportunity as educators to deepen Japanese student's knowledge of a place they consistently encounter in their English language learning journey through exploring contested place name issues in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, tensions and contestations exist across polarized political positions and are manifested in linguistic disagreements about the symbolism of nomenclature on maps and in the materiality of public urban space. The legacy of these contestations carves up maps, streets and broader sections of cities into symbolically and physically separated enclaves. The reasons for such separation are rooted in frequent violent interactions which different communities inflict upon each other as well as intra-community acts of violence, such as punishment beatings, for those assessed to be in breach of an assumed political code (Jarman & Bryan, 1998).

In order to understand the tensions in Northern Ireland surrounding contested place names we need to understand some context about that society. The republican/nationalist community seek to establish a united 32 county Ireland. At present the island of Ireland is split into two countries, as six counties in the north east of the island form the separate country of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is also a separate country in its own right with a semi-functioning devolved parliament, but is also simultaneously part of the United Kingdom. The loyalist/unionist community seek to preserve Northern Ireland´s position as part of the United Kingdom and do not wish to see a united Ireland. There is great variety within the levels of emotion, action and violence in both communities regarding the issue of sovereignty and national partition and the language around such factors. Republicans and loyalists represent the hardline elements and have traditionally constituted the largely now defunct paramilitary organizations such as the IRA (Irish Republican Army) or UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force).

Figure 3

Peace wall located in Belfast, Northern Ireland to keep communities separate. Source: David Dixon, Creative Commons License.

Ongoing inter community contestations occur in Northern Ireland regarding place names on maps. These place name contestations are evidenced in the actual signs pointing to places in the landscape on the ground and within the maps that are produced in different countries from different political perspectives.

To illustrate this highly problematic issue of contested place names in Northern Ireland I will use the City of Derry as an example. As noted previously in this paper,

"description is never value neutral, it always comes with framing assumption" (Schein, 2009, p. 380). Derry comes from the word 'Doire' in the native Irish language which means a 'grove of oak trees'. Following the British colonization of Ireland, and especially Northern Ireland where a majority of British settlers resided, the names of places were altered to reflect British colonial power over space.

Figure 4
(Left) Google Maps has Londonderry on top and Derry underneath. Source: Google Maps, Creative Commons License. (Right) Map showing the name Derry only. Source: Wikimedia: Creative Commons License.

So, Derry or Doire became 'Londonderry'. This new name was adopted in the structures of power, legally and in the maps generated officially by the British government. This works on a symbolic level in the geographic imagery that emerges by placing the capital of another country (London) at the start of another city (Derry). Other examples of name changing that occurred in the south of Ireland prior to its establishment as a free state and then a republic were: Cobh in County Cork which was changed to Queenstown and then reverted back to Cobh (1922), Kingstown became Dún Laoghaire (1921), King's County became County Offaly (1922), Queen's County became County Laois (1922) Kingwilliamstown became Ballydesmond (1951).

Due to the historically troubled nature and ongoing inter community strife in Northern Ireland, the issue of naming for Derry continues to drag on. This enshrining of colonial names in legal and cartographic terms, and also amongst the empowered colonial population is not isolated to the Northern Ireland and has occurred in many countries that have been colonized (Culcasi, 2012).

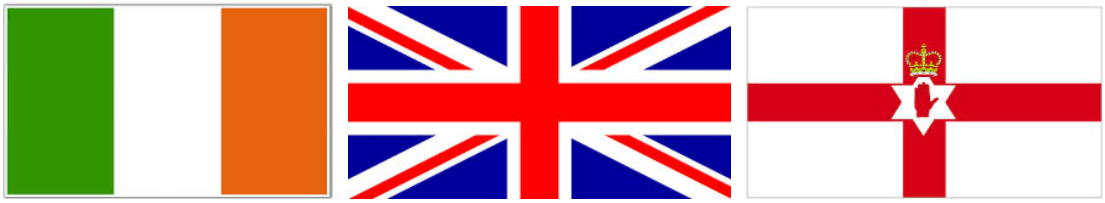
Geographic nomenclature lends a sense of legitimization and 'the official' to discourses surrounding space. The official name of the city, Londonderry, is contested within the city itself by republican/nationalist populations (those seeking a united Ireland between the Republic and the North) and defended by loyalist/unionist populations (those seeking the North of Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom). In the Republic of Ireland counter-mapping occurs but on a national level. The maps produced there refer to Derry or Doire, the signposts similarly south of the border refer to Derry and the media also refer almost exclusively to Derry in their reports. In Northern Ireland the state media, BBC NI refers to Londonderry, as do the signposts and maps generated within the UK. Increasingly a dual approach has been adopted, for example, Google Maps uses Londonderry/Derry.

Figure 5
(Left) Republican/nationalist graffiti blocking out the London part of the sign. Source: Sean Mack, Creative Commons License. (Right) Loyalist/unionist graffiti blocks out Derry leaving only 'London' visible. Source: Wikimedia: Creative Commons License.

The contested nature of the name is clearly visible in Northern Ireland and along the Republic's border through graffiti on road sign posts which blocks out the 'London' part of the signs leaving only Derry visible and the converse is also true for elements of the unionist community which will block out the Derry part to leave London visible. The examples of the signposts directly below are clear examples of how landscape is discourse materialized surrounding nomenclature.

The symbolic boundaries in the landscape of Northern Ireland (Shirlow, 2003) can also be readily seen in flags attached to high vantage points and at junctures such as roundabouts and high lighting posts (Bryan & Gillespie, 2005). These statements seek to dominate the surrounding landscape for the relevant group. These flag placements can be considered what Schein (2009, p. 383) labels as "tactical interventions" in the landscape. In essence, the flag placements are injections of the groups own cultural beliefs into that particular location in space and aims to transform that point into an outpost of republican or loyalist identity. From that outpost, their own social, political, linguistic and geographic discourse then flows out as a layer upon the visible landscape. The specific display of flags includes the Republic of Ireland´s tricolor of green, white and orange for republican/nationalists and the Union Jack of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland as well as the individual Northern Ireland flag for loyalists/unionists.

Figure 6
(Left)The tricolor of the Republic of Ireland. (Middle) The flag of the United Kingdom. (Right) The flag of Northern Ireland. Source: Wikipedia, Creative Commons License.



Activity 2. Pictionary for Places

Step 1. Teach the flags for the countries of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. This can be done by showing flag images and doing a listen and repeat activity.

- Required flag images: Union Jack flag, English flag, Scottish flag, Welsh flag, Northern Irish flag, Republic of Ireland flag.

Step 2. Show maps of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Do listen and repeat for each of the countries (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Rep. of Ireland).
Step 3. Explain to students that in this activity they will draw a picture and their partner must guess what it is in English.
Step 4. Divide the class into pairs.
Step 5. Distribute a sheet of A4 paper to each pair.
Step 6. Ask the pairs to janken and losers to closes their eyes.
Step 7. Winners look at the board.
Step 8. Show an image of one of the flags or maps for 3 seconds.
Step 9. Hide the image and ask the losers to open their eyes again.
Step 10. Say "Go" and the winners can begin drawing the flag or map.
Step 11. The losers must guess the correct place in English.
Step 12. Partners swap once you think enough drawing time has elapsed.

Activity 3. Derry/Londonderry: Giving Your Opinion Activity

Step 1. Explain to the students that they will do a 'giving your opinion in English' activity on the Derry/Londonderry naming dispute. Show the following video from YouTube (English subtitles option is available):
https://youtu.be/wP_WEfEa2IU
Step 2. Break the class into groups of four.
Step 4. Distribute a sheet of A3 paper divided into quarters to each group (the other side of the paper will be used later too).
Step 3. Write the key question on the board/project:
"Should Derry in Northern Ireland be called Derry, Londonderry or both?"
Step 4. Give students 5 minutes individual thinking time to write down their opinion on their quarter of the A3 paper.
Step 5. Next, give 10 minutes talking time for groups to discuss their opinions in English together.
Step 6. Ask for volunteers/select students to share their opinions in English with the class.

The United States and Confederate Monuments

The final contested place name example brings us to the southern United States. This example provides Japanese students with an opportunity to think about how socially consequential the naming of monuments after people can be for historically discriminated against groups and deepens their understanding of the complexity of the United States as a country. Across many states in the USA, contestations and intensifying protests have emerged in recent years regarding the racialization of landscape through names. This includes the nomenclature across a range of things, from statues, to military bases, to public buildings linked to the civil war (1861-1865) Confederacy. The Confederacy

sought the perpetuation of slavery and an enshrining of racism into everyday American life. The contestation in these cases is for officialdom to "acknowledge a long-standing absence, perhaps even suppression of slavery, race and racism" (Schein, 2009, p. 377) by the renaming or removal of racist monuments found in the landscape of many southern cities.

The contestations over place names which honor Confederate figures has especially gained momentum as a counterweight to white supremacist rallies, such as the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, white supremacist crimes, such as the 2015 Charleston church shooting, which saw the racially motivated murder of nine African Americans, and the murder via police brutality of George Floyd in 2020.

Figure 7
Hundreds of marchers rally at the Robert E. Lee statue on Monument Avenue, in Richmond, Virginia on September 16, 2017 to counter pro-Confederate statue demonstrations. The sign in the foreground says "Heritage of Hate." Source: Wikimedia, Creative Commons License.

The argument on the part of the protestors against naming which honors the Confederacy is that it preserves and spreads a white supremacist legacy from the civil war era. This racialized naming legacy serves to alienate African Americans and other non-white minorities. Gathering momentum on the part of the protestors has seen many Confederate monuments torn down or relocated with estimates that nearly 100 were removed in 2020 but that 704 still remained in place in 2021 (Triesman, 2021). Prominent examples of renaming places are evidenced in the upcoming (2022) changing of the U.S. military base names from Fort Bragg to Fort Liberty and from Fort Benning to Fort Moore. Both Bragg and Benning were prominent generals in the Confederate States Army.

Figure 12
The controversial statue of Confederate general John Hunt Morgan in Lexington Courthouse Square prior to its relocation to Lexington Cemetery. Source: Wikimedia, Creative Commons License.

An example of statues which were named and built in honor of Confederate figures but which were ultimately removed as a result of the Charlottesville rally can be seen in Lexington Courthouse Square in the state of Kentucky. The public space of the Courthouse Square, part of which is referred to as "Cheapside", was historically in constant use for slave auctions, whippings, public floggings as well as rallies for Confederate Decoration Day (Schein, 2009, p. 385). Two statues honoring confederate military men named John Hunt Morgan and John C. Breckinridge were prominently displayed in the square until 2017 when they were removed and subsequently installed as decorations in Lexington cemetery where both men are buried. These names of Confederate military men being honored through statuary represented the materialization of a racialized society which witnessed the mob lynching of an African American man in the square which they overlooked as late as 1920 (Schein, 2009, p. 389). Prior to the relocation of the John Hunt Morgan statue from the courthouse square it became a focal point for local anti-racism discussions after it was marked with 'Black Lives Matter' in spray-paint (Scheller, 2015).

Activity 4. Confederate Monuments: Giving Your Opinion Activity
Step 1. Explain to the students that they will do a 'giving your opinion in English' activity on the Confederate monuments in the USA issue. Show the following video with the former Mayor of Lexington Jim Gray as listening practice (closed caption option available for English subtitles).
https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4680187/lexington-mayor-jim-gray-relocation-confederate-statues
Step 2. Rotate members in the groups of four from Activity 3 so new members are present in each group.
Step 4. Ask the groups to flip over the sheet of quartered A3 paper used in Activity 3.
Step 3. Write the key question on the board/project:
"What should happen to statues that honor Confederate leaders?"

Step 4. Write/project the supporting sentences below to help focus opinions:

- Remove the statues from public space. Why?
- Keep the statues in public space. Why?

Step 5. Give students 5 minutes individual thinking time to write down their opinion on their quarter of the A3 paper.
Step 6. Then give 10 minutes talking time for groups to discuss their opinions in English together.
Step 7. Ask for volunteers/select students to share their opinions with the class.

Conclusion

Introducing English language students in Japan to contested place names in different locations and contexts can serve to offer valuable insights into the complexity of seemingly banal words on maps or in landscapes which they may encounter during their language learning journey. Furthermore, it can aid in developing their understanding of places in more nuanced ways. This is especially valuable for gaining an appreciation of countries where English is spoken as real places beyond a narrow focus pertaining solely to language. In this way language is connected to social and political facets of life. Valuable reflective opportunities also exist regarding considering place names within Japan as demonstrated in the Hokkaido example with the Ainu people. This paper established how often taken for granted elements, such as place names can be starting points for gaining new perspectives.

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Aspects of Pronunciation for a Japanese Adult EFL Learner

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Abstract
In this pilot study, one Japanese speaker learning English as a second language practiced increasing pronunciation skills by reading and creating sentences related to segmental and suprasegmental targets to train in phonetic speech through organized pronunciation training. This investigation covered a 1-month examination process using reading out loud and writing assessments. Data from the assessment assisted the learner with utterance problems that were due to first-language phonological impact, second-language transfer alterations, and preconceived misinformation. By the end of the assessments, the participant could self-correct specific mistakes in phonetic pronunciation.

Keywords: Adult ELL, EFL, phonemes, pronunciation training

Introduction

The aim of this project was to formatively assess a Japanese adult who was learning English as a second language (L2). Lessons occurred over 6 weeks, and one session was held each week for approximately one hour. Using Brown and Abeywickrama's (2019) meaning of formative assessment, "evaluating students in the process of 'forming' their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process" (p. 7), I observed the case study's (i.e., participant's) skill progression based on his personal goals. That is, the participant wanted to improve upon his speaking skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) by uttering specific phonemes he believed were problematic in his speech patterns. Prior to the study, the participant produced /mʌnθes/ instead of /mʌnθs/. The participant was concerned about uttering the same structure mistake in English if unassisted. For this project, the participant and I focused on a specific structure mistake. To do this, the participant targeted a problematic word (a word that the participant had difficulty uttering and was the target of improvement) to troubleshoot the structure mistake. This paper describes the strategy we used to assist a Japanese English language learner in his fifties in correcting a problematic pronunciation target specific to his needs. This will provide evidence that older EFLs can correct pronunciation issues with objectives that are developed for individualized learning.

Literature Review

A structure mistake is when a language learner utters a word with the incorrectly produced sound or tone (e.g., /mʌnθes/ instead of /mʌnθs/), in pronunciation (Wong & Strange, 2017). One such issue that creates a structure mistake is fossilization (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2013). Fossilization was defined by Mitchell et al. (2013) as the "stabilization of the interlanguage system, in a form divergent from the target language system" (p. 296). In other words, the language of focus was difficult to comprehend for

learners who had memorized the language target incorrectly and did so for a long period of time without correction. Li (2016) stated that issues differentiating /l/ and /r/ sounds and their associated words (e.g., light and right, which are sounds Japanese learners have problems distinguishing) become extrinsically more difficult as learners age. However, Saldaña (2013) advocated individualizing interventions based on each learner's needs. One hypothesis is that this strategy of individuation could trot fossilization, for example, distinguishing light versus right after meetings. Due to the lack of literature on this topic, there is a need to assess such learner needs so that future researchers and teachers can better their understanding of assessing pronunciation.

Why Assessment?

Three main types of assessment are incorporated in language learning: self-assessment and formal and informal assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Concerning pronunciation, Martin (2020) recommended self-assessment, which was referred to as self-rated proficiency. In this study, Martin had 122 participants rate their speech proficiency following pronunciation training for a task-based assessment conducted outside of the classroom. One of three groups performed the out-of-class procedure and yielded higher production. The group that applied outside learning felt satisfied with their learning goals and achievements as opposed to the controlled group and in-class groups. Self-assessment led to self-motivated learners in this case. Self-assessment comes in many forms, for example, understanding and evaluating one's mistakes from practice (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

Alternatively, formal and informal assessment applies structure and professional input for which, with self-assessment, the results stem from the learners who have not yet mastered their goals (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Formal assessments include both standardized (e.g., the Test of English for International Communication [TOEIC]) and unstandardized tests (e.g., when instructors make the tests; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Informal assessment is a spontaneous type of test often with coaching involved, and it is usually followed up with feedback (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). All assessment tools have their uses: self-assessment encourages learners to see their strengths, formal assessment gives an idea of how learners score among others, and informal assessment is a way for a professional to help learners progress.

During an assessment, Gilbert (2013) contended that teachers should recognize whether learners understand the elements of what they were learning for clear speech. Language learners from all backgrounds, whether EFL or English as a second language, must pay attention to the variations and aspects of sounds to learn them (Gilbert, 2013; Underhill, 2011), for example, understanding how the schwa works in speech. Gilbert explained that when learners were informed of schwa phonemes (e.g., /ə/, /ə/, /eə/, /əʊ/, /iə/), they were able to avoid structure mistakes when assessed. Thus, learners should focus more detailed attention on the schwa when issues exist with this factor. In other words, focusing on problematic issues, such as when using the schwa, will elicit stimuli from learners so that they can overcome language obstacles.

Empowerment

One method of assisting adult English language learners (ELLs) with structure mistakes is uttering sounds slowly, giving learners time to distinguish the sounds by listening (Underhill, 2011). Underhill (2011) said in his lecture that teachers should say sounds

slowly, so ELLs heard English phonemes and that, in time, the learner would acquire the knowledge of how to say the sound. While teaching the sounds slowly has its advantages, namely for auditory learners who can have time to consider what they hear (Underhill, 2011), this might have a reverse effect. This is why other researchers argued participants are better empowered by practicing (Saldaña, 2013). Listening alone may not empower the learner or produce the desired outcome. An example of empowered learning is Saldaña's (2013) task-based roleplaying, where the teacher and student read different parts of a dialogue. Saldaña also theorized that an organized and structured method engaged and also empowered the learner during the activity because the learner helped with scaffolding the environment of the lesson.

A factor to consider with empowerment for learners is that English has become an international language (EIL; Jenkins, 1998; Jenkins, 2002). Jenkins (1998) stated that the aims of learners changed when EIL became a factor because learners should be able to communicate their wants and needs in their L2. Jenkins questioned the appropriateness of classroom-based assessment of pronunciation because of the needs of learners. Jenkins (2002) later stated that teachers should adjust how they think to teach learners. For example, if a learner pronounces a word awkwardly, the instructor should accept the way the learner said the word rather than correct them. Jenkins stated persons whose L1 is English should "make receptive adjustments rather than expecting" L2 learners of English "to alter their production in EIL contexts" (p. 98). Understanding that not all accents are the same is important in pedagogy (Jenkins, 1998). Nevertheless, if a learner's goal is to sound a certain way, then teaching toward their learning focus is advantageous for their motivation and needs (Saldaña, 2013). Moreover, Derwing and Munro (2015) extensively expressed why accurate pronunciation is important. In one example, a plane crash occurs because the pilot did not understand instructions from an ELL.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study was that an ELL in his mid-50s could correct long-term structure mistakes by targeting a specific problem over 6 weeks. The null hypothesis was the ELL would not be able to correct the structure mistake.

Methodology

Participant

The participant's chosen alias was Dates. Dates was a male in his mid-50s from Japan. Dates' speaking proficiency was intermediate for an ELL. The term intermediate was based on Dates' score of 600 on the TOEIC conducted in Japan and on information from the Educational Testing Service (2021). A score of 600 was considered (high) intermediate according to the TOEIC testing center (Educational Testing Service, 2021).

Procedures

The six meetings were conducted over Skype once a week in the evening. Skype supplied a means to meet the participant with their camera on. Skype was the most convenient method to meet because the participant and I lived in different prefectures of Japan.

To organize the meeting structure, the participant wrote down 18 sentences on a piece of paper, and I added the sentences to a table for organization (see Table 1). While Dates created the responses, I implemented Saldaña's (2013) role-playing strategies to generate spontaneous questions to elicit Dates' pre-written answers. The questions were

random to elicit semi-spontaneous responses. Dates was able to respond with accurate sentences to my questions. The target phoneme was /mʌnθs/ and the problematic word was "months." The sentences in Table 1 were part of a role-playing dialogue that Dates and I used. Following the final session, Dates said the sentences during a formal assessment. I graded each of his sentences on a 6-point Likert scale based on Linacre's (1999) assessment strategy. Potential responses were the following: did not improve (1), slightly improved (2), somewhat improved (3), improved, but moderately (4), greatly improved (5), and completely improved (6). When responding to my questions and saying the sentences aloud (Table 1), Dates scored 6 for each response accurately producing the phoneme. I also tested this by comparing Dates' pronunciation of /mʌnθs/ with the pronunciation of the word from an IPA English pronunciation app. Moreover, I asked a professor of English to double-check my scores. He listened to Dates' recorded responses and agreed with the score of 6 for each sentence.

Table 1
Participant's Target Sentences Responses

Problematic word: Months	Target Phonemes: /mʌnθs/
Session 1, Sentence 1	I taught English for several months.
Session 1, Sentence 2	I spoke English for 8 months.
Session 1, Sentence 3	I read English for 2 months.
Session 2, Sentence 1	I haven't seen my daughter for 5 months.
Session 2, Sentence 2	How many months is this class?
Session 2, Sentence 3	How many months old is your baby?
Session 3, Sentence 1	Aya is my granddaughter. She is 5 months old.
Session 3, Sentence 2	The baby is 5 months old.
Session 3, Sentence 3	Isn't 3 months a long time?
Session 4, Sentence 1	She said months, not wants.
Session 4, Sentence 2	Aya is 5 months old.
Session 4, Sentence 3	Her first set of teeth should come in 2 months.
Session 5, Sentence 1	We haven't been to the castle in 6 months.
Session 5, Sentence 2	Will you go to the castle with me in 2 months?
Session 5, Sentence 3	I had been a guide there for many months.
Session 6, Sentence 1	Months is difficult for we Japanese to pronounce.
Session 6, Sentence 2	I think I can pronounce months fine now.
Session 6, Sentence 3	Thank you for meeting me for almost 2 months.

Sessions

During our first meeting, one utterance mistake Dates made consistently was saying "*monthes*" (/mʌnθes/) instead of months (/mʌnθs/). So, he and I decided to assess the structure mistake as a target of the study for all sessions. To begin, I coached Dates with pronouncing the phonemes of the problematic word /mʌnθs/. Simply saying, "Say *monthes* (/mʌnθes/) instead of months," does not teach the learner that they are saying something incorrectly (Swan & Smith, 2001). Instead, helping the learner understand through differentiating the utterance helps them notice the difference between what they say versus the accurate sound to build long-term correction (Gilbert, 2013). This is through training the participant with the phoneme sounds (Underhill, 2011).

Thus, I advised him to utter "*Ma n ce*," or /mʌ/ /n/ /θs/. Dates repeated what I

uttered. Next, for the activity, Dates wrote sentences using the word months (see Table 1). He practiced saying the sentences for 5 minutes. Then, Dates said the sentences without reading. During the first session, I relied on self-assessment for which Dates noticed the structure mistake himself (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

During the second session, Dates said months perfectly. The slow sound utterance process (Underhill, 2011) gradually helped Dates notice improvement during self-assessment. During the third session, however, Dates uttered the same mistake as before, saying "monthes" (/mʌnθes/).

During the fourth session, I noticed that, upon self-assessment, for the third time Dates was not catching his mistake. He was writing sentences that made sense, but when he would say /mʌnθs/, the sounds /mʌnθes/ were uttered. Self-assessment was not working on its own, but Dates was able to form meaningful sentences without mistakes, showing that his writing ability as an ELL was high.

During our fifth session, I applied empowerment strategies, in this case roleplaying to informally assess (applying corrections when necessary) Dates' skills and help him feel empowered during the assessment. Dates read a script that he wrote using the target phonemes and problematic word. I asked questions to prompt the response based on the script Dates used. Note that I am RE for "Researcher" in the dialogue that follows:

RE:	Have you been to the castle recently?
Dates:	No. *We haven't been to the castle in 6 months*.
RE:	Okay. Let's go together soon then.
Dates:	Okay. Sounds good. *Will you go to the castle with me in 2 months?*
RE:	Yes. Sounds fun.
Dates:	That's great. *I had been a guide there for many months*. I look forward to guiding you at the castle.

By the sixth session, Dates did not make the same mistake and uttered the phoneme correctly. I gave verbal and written assessments in English and Japanese so Dates could remember the correct pronunciation in the future.

Discussion

This paper discussed how empowerment leads to improved learning and how learners can feel empowered by doing rather than just listening as argued by Saldaña (2013). Dates felt empowered by creating the dialogues and participating in the design of his lessons, which he felt led to more motivation to correct the problematic utterance. The process of improving his pronunciation further gave him more confidence in his L2 because he could accurately say a previously problematic utterance. Moreover, he had the tools to correct the issue in the future if he made the same mistake later in life. This led to Dates wanting to correct other problematic utterances in the future. To test the generalizability, I followed up this study with two other small studies in Japan and one larger study 1 year after this one. Dates participated in the study 1 year later. It had 21 participants from Japan and nine raters who rated the problematic phonemes of the participants. Dates was able to produce the target phoneme (/mʌnθs/) from this study accurately when informally assessed 1 year later. One example assessment of many questions follows:

RE: How many months until your birthday?
Dates: It's 6 months until my birthday.

I noted that Dates pronounced /mʌnθs/ clearly during each response. Dates said that this was because he was made aware of the problem and given time to practice with someone who was able to correct him when the problematic utterance occurred.

Conclusion and Limitations

One could argue that, over time, Dates will forget how to pronounce the target problematic word. Additionally, Dates' target phoneme pronunciation progression might have been from repeating the word so many times. However, the sessions indicated that although at first, the participant did not remember how to pronounce the phonemes, by the end he uttered the target correctly and distinguished the difference after informal assessment and roleplaying. He continued to show that the original problematic word and sounds were no longer an issue 1 year later.

Lastly, a limitation of this study was the narrow focus. While Dates wanted to work specifically on the sound /θ/ in connection to /mʌnθs/, the session might have focused on other elements related to problematic words that occurred when adding /s/ to the end. For example, the study might have assisted Dates in connecting /s/ to the end of /kloʊðz/ "clothes." Another limitation was the small sample size of a single case. Future studies employing the strategies with more participants might inform teachers on the best ways to help ELLs who make similar structure mistakes.

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A Model for Teaching Metaphor

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Abstract
This paper outlines a model for teaching metaphor, informed by Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The model was developed in response to the pervasiveness of metaphor and the accompanying confusion it can cause for learners in the ESL and EFL classrooms. This model initially teaches students the basic definitions and concepts that underpin the metaphors found in everyday communications. Then, learners are guided through activities to practice decoding, analyzing, and creating metaphors. This process deepens students' understanding of this type of language but also provides learners with a practical toolkit for autonomously deciphering novel metaphors in their future studies.

Keywords: Metaphor, figurative language, song lyrics, learning through music

According to Steen et al. (2010), metaphor accounts for 7.7% of general conversation, 11.7% of fiction, and 18.5% of academic texts. However, the study of metaphorical language remains largely an area for literature students and cognitive linguists rather than language educators. It is not a topic that tends to be covered in many ESL courses or textbooks. This seems strange given that a study of IELTS students found metaphors to be responsible for 42% of language learners' comprehension problems in lectures (Littlemore et al., 2011). The study used a small sample size and only targeted a few lectures, but it is indicative of an issue for students in this area. Moreover, this kind of finding has been replicated more than once (Littlemore, 2001; Littlemore et al., 2006; Low et al., 2008).

The lack of focus on metaphor could result from educators not realizing just how often metaphoric language is used and how confusing it can be for students. Learners, of course, understand the concept of metaphor, as it is a device employed across languages. The main issue is that metaphors are different in each language. Moreover, the assumptions and allusions underpinning the meanings in metaphors often differ. Thus, students in the Littlemore et al. (2011) study stated that they had difficulty recognizing when language was being used metaphorically. Furthermore, the problematic language still evaded understanding even though students knew each component word in the phrase. A lot of metaphorical language is conventional and ingrained and so can often be categorized as a 'turn of phrase', 'just something we say' or 'another meaning of the word.' As pointed out by Steen et al. (2010), educators, like everyone else, employ these phrases habitually, unconscious to the complexity of the non-literal messages effortlessly parsed by experienced speakers of a language, while language learners find communication containing these phrases confusing and are further perplexed if they know the meaning of the vocabulary in the utterance. However, if these lexical chunks are considered through a metaphorical lens, then some systematic understanding can be given to students, which can create a framework for dealing with these bizarre-seeming 'turns of phrase'.

Consider the following everyday words and phrases: *goal, handful, grasp (understand) bright (intelligent), cold (personality), connection* (between people), *reached a low point (in life), something in the air, break-up (a relationship), get up to speed, good vibration/vibe, change your mind, fire questions/fire away, conflict* (as argument or dispute). These might not seem metaphorical to many at first pass but if one stops to contemplate these terms it must be concluded that they are not in fact literal. Furthermore, if these lexical items are examined in more detail, then the metaphorical nature of their usages begins to surface. Take a sentence such as, 'Your goal should be to read two novels in English this semester.' The primary meaning of goal in most dictionaries is a physical goal, used in a game, into which a ball is placed. In the example sentence, there is no *literal*, physical goal; it is a figurative expression drawing on the imagery of the literal scoring of a goal in a sports game to give understanding and impact to the utterance. Some might object to this interpretation and conclude that this use of *goal* is just another meaning of the word, but this merely underlines the broader point; this is one common way words obtain their many related usages and nuances of context.

Furthermore, metaphorical interpretations can apply some structure to this type of vocabulary to help the student decode and cement the meaning of figurative words and phrases. Take, for example, the following phrases: *feeling down/low,* and *she's rising in the ranks*. If a student understands that 'highness' or physical rising has a positive valence and 'lowliness' or physical falling is negative, then new metaphors can be less tricky to comprehend. Thus, when the student encounters phrases such as *my heart sank*, *that's a low trick/blow,* or *that's below the belt*, she immediately understands that these are negative statements and so is a considerable way toward being able to comprehend new phrases like these in real-time. These are just a handful of examples of how metaphorical thinking can help educators highlight and consider the difficulties students encounter with language that may seem simple, but which is actually complex and multi-layered. For further reading, Chapters 5 and 6 of *Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Second Language Learning and Teaching* (Littlemore, 2009, p. 94–124) provide an extremely useful introduction to the importance of metaphor, and the closely related concept of metonymy, in the classroom.

Purpose

Given the findings that metaphor is both pervasive and confusing for learners, it is evident that students need additional help to understand this type of language. However, attempts to find guidance on a systematic teaching of this kind of metaphoric view of vocabulary proved fruitless. Therefore, this became the goal: to develop just such an approach, based on the findings of metaphor research and the existing literature on the subject. Initially, it was clear that students would need an explanation or definition of metaphor, some examples, some practical activities, and assessments. The model has expanded somewhat since the initial idea, but the emphasis is still firmly on simplicity and on understandability of what could be a difficult concept for students. Since initially planning and developing the materials, the procedure has been refined and updated to better meet the goals described below. This remains an ongoing part of the process.

Goals

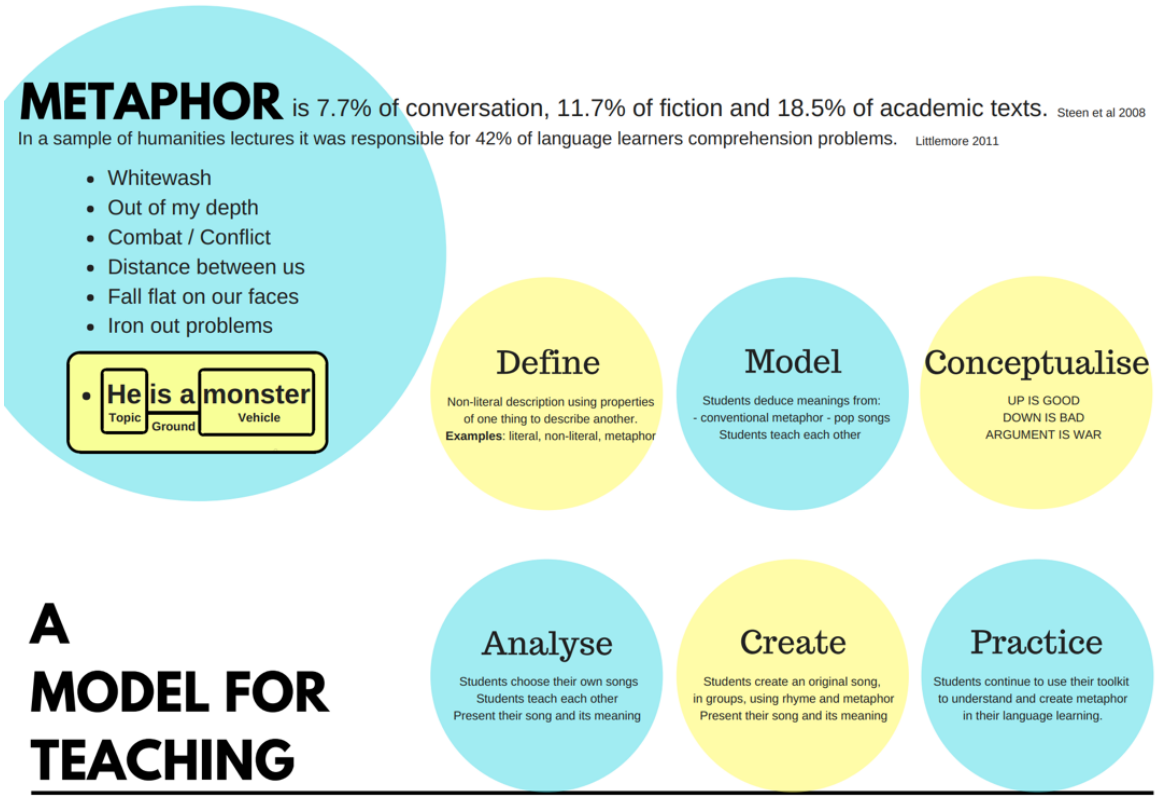
There are two goals for this method of teaching metaphor:

1. To help students understand the metaphors they will encounter during these classes.
2. To give students a toolkit to decode the metaphors they will encounter in the future.

Procedure

This metaphor content was implemented in a communicative language class of first-year English majors, which typically contained between 15–25 members. All members of the class had iPads and access to Wi-Fi. This metaphor element was taught as part of a music unit, one of three topic units covered in a semester. The music unit also covered some more simple introductory activities such as surveys and discussions on topics such as favourite artists, preferred formats for listening to music, and music listening habits, as well as lessons on some other figurative and poetic language used in songs, including idiom, rhyme, and alliteration. The final project asked the students to create and teach a short lesson (30 minutes) to the other students, demonstrating and using the tools and skills that they learned in the unit. However, the focus of this paper is specifically on the metaphor section of the unit, which took around eight *koma* (class sessions) to complete.

Figure 1
A Model for Teaching Metaphor



The model is split into the following six stages, which are outlined and described in Figure 1 and the bulleted list below:

1. Define
2. Model
3. Conceptualize
4. Analyze
5. Create
6. Practice

Each of the six stages of the model is described in more detail below, along with the specifics of how it was actually put into practice in the classroom.

Define

Students are introduced to the concept of non-literal language in this stage, with examples, pictures, and illustrations. Some screenshots of some of the slides are shown in Figure 2 for illustration.

Figure 2

Example Presentation Slides for Introducing Non-Literal Language

Next, students were given the following written summary explanations and examples.

- Metaphor is non-literal. A metaphor is an imaginative description of something.
- Literal: means it is a real fact, event, or a real description. E.g., He is tall.
- Non-literal: Something that didn't happen or is not true in the basic meaning of the words. She is hot (attractive). He is cool (attractive).
- A metaphor uses the (main) features of one thing to describe another.
- Example: Bolt is a giant (uses the main feature of the giant to describe Bolt).
- Example: Hitler was a monster (uses the scary and evil behavior of a monster to describe Hitler).
- Example: Emma is a rose (uses the feature of the flower's beauty to describe Emma).

Here, students often asked how they could spot a new metaphor 'in the wild'. In response, they were guided with the advice that if a word or phrase is confusing (i.e., the student understands most or all the constituent words in a phrase but not the phrase as a whole) then it is likely to be a metaphor. This is the case especially if the student thinks the term is being used non-literally, and descriptively.

Model

For this phase of the process, students are put into groups, and each group is assigned four conventional metaphors to decipher. The activity uses a list in a shared Google Doc, which the whole class can see and amend in real-time. An excerpt is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Example Metaphor Collaborative Analysis Activity

	Metaphor	**Explanation** (what feature of the subject is used to describe the object?)	**Meaning**
Eg	**The school was a zoo**	**A zoo (object) is full of wild animals. Can't be controlled. Lots of noise and no rules.**	**The school (subject) is noisey and full of wildness, like a zoo.**
1	America is a melting pot		
2	Her voice was music to his ears		
3	Life is a roller coaster		
4	Their home was a prison		

Students decode the meanings in their groups and write a short explanation about which feature is being used to make the description, as shown by the example in the first row of Figure 3. The answers are then reviewed as a class, with each member given the responsibility to explain at least one of their group's metaphors. Students, therefore, share

their ideas and teach each other while practicing speaking and listening skills.

The basics of this activity are then repeated in a further group activity where each group chooses a song and explains one of its metaphors. After the explanation activity, there is a homework task where students individually create their own original metaphor in a shared Google Doc. In the final part of this stage, the metaphors are reviewed with the whole class, and students use a Google Form to vote for their favorite original metaphor. The top five students are awarded class points (which contribute toward their class participation grade).

Conceptualize

The theory at the heart of this approach, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), states that metaphor is not just a particular turn of phrase but a fundamental way of storing and understanding non-literal ideas. It hypothesizes that circuitry in the brain that evolved to deal with understanding physical phenomena has been re-purposed for abstract and conceptual information. Thus, when humans handle conceptual information, it is packaged and understood in physical terms. Consequently, this may be why so many metaphors use physical language to describe abstractions such emotion, intelligence, or morality; as in the following examples: *he went to **pieces***, *she **crunched** the numbers, she is an **upright** member of society*. These physical representations of conceptual information are systemic according to the theory, and so when they are expressed as metaphors, they exhibit discernible patterns—essentially, overarching or connecting categories. Although it is not necessary to detail this theory for freshman English students, it is beneficial to introduce the learners to the idea that metaphors can be categorized into overarching groups or themes and that this can help in understanding the metaphors' meanings.

In the theory, each category or conceptual metaphor is formalized as *X IS Y;* for instance: *UP IS GOOD*. However, this can be explained in more general terms to students; for example, the conceptual metaphor *UP IS GOOD* is described in the following manner: things that are high or rise often have a positive meaning in English (according to the theory). Next, students are given some examples of actual metaphors that one might find in speech. It should be noted that not every metaphor fits these conceptual categories perfectly, for example, *head in the clouds* could be seen as somewhat negative. The reality is complex and interlocking; however, these 'rules' can be thought of as heuristics or 'rules of thumb', and many instances can be found for each conceptual metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) foundational book *Metaphors We Live by* gives many examples of conceptual metaphors and their linguistic instantiations. Listed below are a few examples from a longer factsheet given to students.

UP IS GOOD

- I'm floating on air
- I was on a high
- I'm on cloud 9

DOWN IS BAD

- She was so down
- My heart sank
- The stocks went through the floor

- I dropped the ball

ARGUMENT IS WAR

- She demolished each of his points
- They're always in conflict over this new process
- They fight all the time

Analyze

Students choose a song to analyze for metaphors, new vocabulary, rhymes, and idiomatic language. They then try to use this new knowledge to understand the general meaning of the song, using the example worksheet (Figure 4).

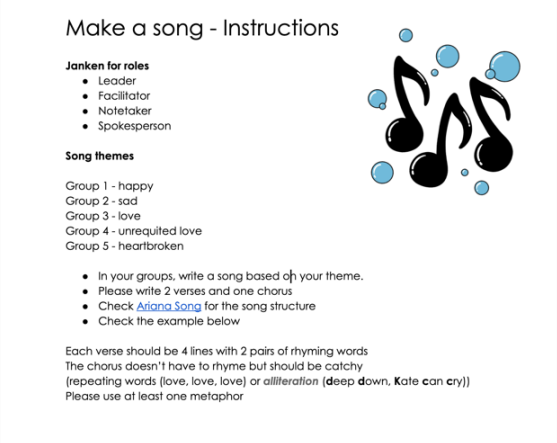
Figure 4
Song Metaphor Analysis Activity Worksheet

Next, students present their findings to the class, the best of the new vocabulary and metaphors are collected and added to a shared set in the Quizlet digital flashcard application. This enables students to learn through the interactive games available in this application. Finally, these selected terms are used in the class's weekly vocabulary quiz.

Create

In this stage, students create a simplified version of an original song in groups. The song must contain at least one metaphor, some rhymes, and some alliteration, as the instruction sheet explains (Figure 5). When these songs are complete, the students read their songs to the class. Then the class votes for their favorite using a Google Form, and each team is then allocated class points according to their position in the ranking.

Figure 5
Example Instruction Sheet for Creating an Original Song


Make a song - Instructions

Janken for roles
- Leader
- Facilitator
- Notetaker
- Spokesperson

Song themes

Group 1 - happy
Group 2 - sad
Group 3 - love
Group 4 - unrequited love
Group 5 - heartbroken

- In your groups, write a song based on your theme.
- Please write 2 verses and one chorus
- Check Ariana Song for the song structure
- Check the example below

Each verse should be 4 lines with 2 pairs of rhyming words
The chorus doesn't have to rhyme but should be catchy
(repeating words (love, love, love) or *alliteration* (**d**eep **d**own, **K**ate **c**an **c**ry))
Please use at least one metaphor

Practice

By this point, students should have internalized the *defining* stage of the model. Therefore, they can be expected to run the *modelling*, *conceptualizing,* and *analyzing* stages by themselves (formally or informally) to help them understand new metaphors. Consequently, learners now have a toolkit for their ongoing learning.

Conclusion

This process can be challenging for language learners, especially if they are freshman students. However, giving learners the freedom to choose their own materials in terms of the songs they analyze does seem to help their motivation and engagement. It has also proved essential to furnish students with clear examples, structured activities, and constructive feedback.

In the first iteration of the process, the materials were not as thoroughly developed, and so it did prove difficult for some students. It was necessary to spend some time re-explaining definitions, giving further examples, or helping students to decode metaphors. Therefore, it became clear that some of these examples and explanations needed to be written into a more detailed and visual definition phase. Consequently, the slides and worksheets were refined after each cycle to incorporate some of the generalizable instruction given to individual students. The inclusion of visual images helped enormously to cement the concept in students' minds, as did the summary definition of metaphor and the worked examples in the worksheets. This process of refinement was an important part of developing the model and this interactive method of adapting these materials is described in more detail a reflective piece (Beirne, 2021).

A potential stumbling block for some students is the complexity of language used in many songs. This connects to the point made earlier in this paper about the seeming simplicity or mundanity of many metaphors that are in actual fact surprisingly complex when analyzed. Therefore, it is advisable for the instructor to check each student's song to make sure learners have chosen material that at least has a layer of meaning that seems to be within the learner's grasp. In undertaking this activity, students are generally enthusiastic about gaining deeper understanding of the meanings in the songs they have listened to in English and this successful decoding gives students a real sense of

achievement. It is important to note that some students do still require additional assistance on their path to understanding. Therefore, it's imperative to allow appropriate time and space for students to arrive at their own (sometimes guided) conclusions and thus develop skills that are transferable to understanding new metaphors when encountered independently.

This iteratively developed model has thus become a process that seems to expand students' awareness of the layers of meaning in metaphors, songs, and English communication more generally. The experience has shown that it is possible to see the influence of this increased understanding in students' future writing, speaking, and questioning. Furthermore, from a teaching perspective, it has demonstrated how linguistic theory can be applied effectively in the classroom.

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