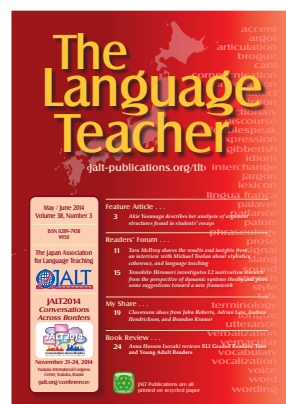


The Language Teacher

The Language Teacher (TLT) is the bimonthly publication of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). It publishes articles and other material related to language teaching, particularly in an Asian context. *TLT* also serves the important role of publicizing information about the organization and its many events.. As a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in language learning, teaching, and research, JALT has a rich tradition of publishing relevant material in its many publications.



Links

- JALT Publications: <http://jalt-publications.org>
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into a national project “Fostering Tolerance and Cultural Awareness Through English Language Teaching (ELT)” in 2013-2014.

The project is aimed at fostering tolerance through English language teaching (ELT) in Russia’s changing multicultural environment. The project focuses on the creation of guidelines for school teachers and teacher trainers, as well as on developing curriculums and digital teaching materials for elementary, middle and high school EFL students. The goal of the project is to introduce successful ways of teaching tolerance in 25 pilot regions in Russia. A resource page with existing materials has been created <toleranceefl.wikispaces.com/>, as well as Facebook group for sharing links and resources called “EFL&Tolerance”.

Language teaching is inseparable from teaching cultural awareness and foreign language teaching is inseparable from teaching tolerant attitudes towards other cultures. EFL environments are ideal for strengthening the appreciation of tolerance, non-violence, and for developing skills in resisting stereotypic attitudes. Choosing materials for lessons, EFL teachers should always keep in mind that they can shape students’ outlooks and mold students’ values.

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Owning Inclusive Sexuality in the English Language Classroom

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Little empirical research has been done to quantify successful strategies for teachers who attempt to include a discussion of queer sexuality in their English language classroom. Increasingly, teachers in global contexts are sharing personal accounts that enumerate approaches undertaken in their own classrooms to encourage important dialogues with students and to problematize norms of human sexuality. These accounts depict challenges that ESL/EFL teachers face as they broach the topic

SIG Spotlight: GALE SIG

GALE works towards building a supportive community of educators and researchers interested in raising awareness and researching how gender plays an integral role in education and professional interaction. We also network and collaborate with JALT groups and the community at large to promote pedagogical and professional practices, language teaching materials, and research inclusive of gender and gender-related topics.



of queer sexuality, as well as the methodology they have used to establish discussions that reflect modern queer pedagogy. In this literature review, modern pedagogy and EFL classroom teacher accounts guide the discussion and future of addressing sexuality in the language classroom.

英語の授業で同性愛の議論を試みる教師のために、有効な方略を定量化した実験的研究はこれまでほとんどない。しかしこのグローバル化時代に多くの教師が、学生との重要な対話を促し、人間の性規範に問いを投げかけるために授業で行ったアプローチの数々について、個人的事例を共有し合っている。これらの報告から、ESL/EFL教師が同性愛というトピックを持ち出すときに直面する課題や、現代の同性愛についての教育法を議論するために彼らが使用してきた方法論が見えてくる。この文献レビューでは、現代の教育法とEFLの教師の報告を中心に、言語の授業で性について語ることと、その今後について論じる。

Discussions of queer sexuality, traditionally a high-risk, culturally sensitive topic, have emerged in English Language classrooms for a multitude of reasons. For the most part however, teacher conduct has varied in situations where sexual identity becomes the topic of classroom conversation, with the administrative policies of the school and the teacher's comfort level regarding discussions of sexuality being major factors (Curran, 2006; Dumas, 2008; Nelson, 2002, 2004, & 2010; Ó'Móchain, 2006 & 2009; Schweers, 1997; Yoshihara, 2011). This literature review presents approaches that ESL/EFL teachers have taken while creating a language classroom environment that presents queer identities as relevant material for students of the English language. Additionally, this paper will discuss problems that these teachers have encountered in support of discussions of queer sexuality. Finally, this paper recommends research and institutional actions for the future.

Defining *queer*

Queer has been used traditionally to express lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (Warner, 1993). This definition has lately been expanded to express the problematizing of heteronormativity. Warner's definition continues that queer may be used to disrupt traditional ideas about sexual identity, and can blur the categories of sexual identity (pp. vii-xxviii). In this way, queer can disrupt a range of long-standing, socially constructed dichotomies. Throughout this paper, queer should be understood as encompassing these changes to the traditional definition, so that queer is used to complicate identity boundaries, rather than uphold them.

Insights from modern queer theory

Modern queer pedagogy, as Cynthia Nelson (2002) suggests, does not focus on acceptance, but instead investigates the norms of sexual identity, as well as how it is created and expressed on a linguistic and cultural basis. Nelson warns that defining sexual identities can support and strengthen the current structure of recognized identities, thus separating into distinct categories culturally acceptable and unacceptable orientations. Alternatively, Nelson suggests that queer theory moves beyond this debate of categorization to the position that there is no need to label and polarize.

In Greg Curran's (2006) Australian ESL classroom, inclusivity of sexual identities relied upon a calculated, reflexive recasting of students' questions that gave the students an opportunity to register their own heteronormative assumptions. In his classroom, students were asked to deconstruct and challenge the queer narratives they had heard, and in doing so, to reveal the structures implicit in their society which promote heteronormativity.

From his teaching post in Japan, Robert Ó'Móchain used activities that engaged life history narratives of local queer Japanese people, serving as the impetus for classroom discussions of sexuality. Ó'Móchain offered real life narratives as a strategy for approaching sexuality in a way that "recycles language", supports meaningful communication, and motivates students (Ó'Móchain, 2006). Additionally, this allowed EFL students to connect with the intricacies of sexual identity from within their native micro-cultural environment.

Encountering adversity: Teachers

ESOL teachers who consider *queerness* an appropriate topic for their classrooms have often encountered the attitude that sexuality is inappropriate for the classroom. Knowing how to broach the conversation is challenging, as Curran (2006) indicates, because colleagues have found the topic of queer sexuality awkward and difficult in a language learning environment. ESOL teachers have claimed that queerness is largely extraneous for most students, is potentially distressing to students of certain cultural and religious orientations, and is too challenging for students with limited language proficiency (p. 5). These arguments have been made on

the basis that sexuality is somehow extricable from language learners. However, queer theory (Butler, 1993) was founded on the principle that sexuality is a vital aspect of human subjectivity, and it becomes an ESOL teacher's charge to guide students through discussions surrounding this topic. All students participate actively and passively in the larger realm of sexual expression as human beings, so the opportunity to question assumptions and challenge notions of sexual identity is beneficial and should be supported in language classrooms (Vandrick, 1997; Yoshihara, 2011).

Teachers who are willing to discuss the topic of queer sexuality can often find themselves the target of unwanted scrutiny incurred by the supposition that the teacher must identify as queer, based on what Karen Amy Snelbecker (1994) calls "the assumption of heterosexuality". Using Snelbecker's insight, when teachers encourage discussions of a socially charged topic, it is common for students to make a subconscious connection between the authority figure in the classroom and the topic of study, which, as William Schweers (1997) points out, may cause teachers to shy away from conversations. Teachers have significant reasons to avoid being labeled, ranging from a desire to keep personal information out of class (Nelson, 2004), to the fear of negative reactions and abusive classroom behavior on the part of students or colleagues (Simon-Maeda, 2004), to a fear of accusations from colleagues and administrators of indoctrinating or brain-washing students with feminist jargon (Yoshihara, 2011). Other teachers may simply feel under-qualified to take up the topic (Yoshihara, 2006, as cited in Yoshihara 2011).

Encountering adversity: Students

If teachers decide to broach the subject of queer sexuality in their classrooms, they are requesting students' openness, and are likely bracing themselves for potential intolerance. While intolerance remains a factor, teachers have found that students are commonly unfamiliar with modern queerness. Nelson's 2004 research study underscores this. In her interviews with Tony, an ESL teacher in the US, Nelson found that Tony viewed the topic of gay identity as potentially foreign to his Asian students, and even suggested that they might conflate queerness with transvestitism (Nelson, 2004). In this case,

hesitancy may not necessarily denote prejudice; it could also reveal an unwillingness to discuss the unfamiliar.

In other cases, teachers have prejudged an intolerance that may, in fact, not exist. Interestingly, Nelson's interviews with a student of Tony's challenges the assumption that "students [are] either non gay or anti gay" (p. 34). In fact, Tony's student Miyuki said that she did not mind her American teacher being openly gay, though she said this may be more problematic for a Japanese teacher. To assume that students will be uncomfortable with queer sexuality may underestimate their capacity for realigning their opinions in a nonnative setting (Nelson, 2004). In cases of both student openness and student ignorance, exposure and classroom appropriate instruction is beneficial for all students.

Encountering adversity: Institutions

Even if students are open to the inclusion of queer themes in their English language classrooms, the administration of educational institutions often discourages any active discussion of sexuality. Ó'Móchain (2006) states that his school's official curriculum does not reference "non-normative sexualities". This omission, says Ó'Móchain, strengthens the school's heteronormative instruction. Curran (2006) cites job security as a concern when deciding whether or not to present queer topics in his language classroom in Australia. Despite his willingness to include queer sexuality in classroom discussions, he was hesitant to make this known in his school community, because he "was a part time teacher on a short term contract" (p. 87). Concern for his teaching position made asking for administrative consent problematic (also see Simon-Maeda, 2004).

Educational institutions play a major role in changing cultural perceptions. School bodies have the authority and resources to instate diversity training into their curricula as a requirement for all students. Today, international communities, governments, and individuals are becoming more affirming of sexual diversity; general models do exist for progressive-minded administrations. Educational institutions should be called to account for their own policies, recognizing their important role in cultivating the minds of local and global communities.

Queering the classroom for the future

Discussing queer sexuality in an ESOL classroom requires a willingness to examine human sexuality, a sensitive topic that requires forethought and openness on the part of teachers and students. There are many other important and inspiring topics available for ESOL educators that would not delve so deeply into the heart of identity, and a multiplicity of reasons exists why the topic of sexuality may never arise in ESOL courses. However, when students initiate a conversation and are searching for correct expressions, or when teachers see an educational advantage in discussing queer themes with ELLs, they must have appropriate resources and research to inform and enrich that dialogue.

To this end, further empirical research is necessary to provide a tangible portrait of how this inclusion is being achieved in diverse global classrooms. Problematizing the dichotomy of sexual identities for students follows current pedagogy on the topic of queer sexuality, but it is uncertain at this point how this approach will affect students' attitudes during discussions of sexuality across global cultures.

Furthermore, discussing queerness is not enough. Teachers and theorists offer personal accounts and pedagogy to shape a growing corpus, at the risk of losing their jobs and reputations, but are largely unsupported by their institutions. As discussions of queerness become more pressing, it is time for administrators to support professional, accurate discussion of sexuality in classrooms.

Teachers, learners, and language are not asexual, and sexuality is a complex aspect of humanity, expressed with the finest subtleties of human communication. Eloquently, Jacqueline Dumas (2008, p. 1) writes that "the ESL classroom is one place where learners should not feel shy or afraid to explore and negotiate their identities, including their sexual identities." To this end, it is critical that language classes acknowledge and support the development of personal identity by nurturing the conversation of human sexuality as it arises. In the near future, progress will mean the presence of open and inclusive discussion of human sexual identity in global language classrooms.

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Disclaimer

This literature review, entitled "Owning Inclusive Sexuality in the English Language Classroom" has been published only once, in the JALT GALE SIG's periodic publication. When published, the text was 12 pages, and has been reduced, as requested, for publication in JALT's the Language Teacher. As far as what has changed since original publication, all sections were shortened, and some examples/supplementary details were removed. Nothing has been added.

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Using LI to get more out of your extensive reading program

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When deciding whether to allow Japanese into the English lesson, it's important to consider not only the level of the students, but also the real objective of the activity. This article explores the use of LI as a means to an end: to promote a sense of meaningfulness associated with reading in English and cultivate a shared sense of enjoyment, both of which are especially useful in any ER program.

英語の授業に日本語の使用を許容するかどうかを決める際に、生徒のレベルを考慮に入れるだけではなく、その授業の活動の本来の目的を考えるべきである。本論では、目的に向けた手段としてのL1（日本語）の使用について考察する。つまり英語で読むこと（読解）に意味があると感じさせ、楽しさの共有感覚を育むことである。どんなERのプログラムでも、その両方が特に役立つことは言うまでもない。

As part of my extensive reading program, I frequently assign pair discussions. The students are expected to share their reading experiences with each other, usually by talking about the books they have most recently

SIG Spotlight: ER SIG

The JALT ER SIG exists to help promote Extensive Reading (ER) in Japan and via our website, our newsletter, the ERJ Journal, and presentations throughout Japan we aim to help teachers set up and make the most of their ER programmes.



finished reading. During the first few years of the program, I pushed the students to discuss entirely in English, giving as much guidance as I could afford, for example via handouts. Now, however, especially with my junior high third-year students in their first year of ER, but also with most of my high school first-year students, this activity is done mainly in Japanese (L1), with me throwing in some useful English along the way. Why? What led to this change?

Despite all of my efforts, book descriptions like the one below were a regular occurrence. The students were using English, which was one of