

The Language Teacher

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching

Volume 47, Number 2 • March / April 2023

ISSN 0289-7938 • ¥1,900 • TLT uses recycled paper

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Greetings, dear readers of the March/April issue of *The Language Teacher*. As this is my first issue in the role of coeditor, let me start with a brief introduction. My name is Irina Kuznetcova, and I teach in the Global Connectivity program at Akita International University. I became a JALT member only about a year ago, soon after I arrived in Japan. Since then, I had the honor of serving as JALT2022 Conference Manager and as guest editor for the *TLT* preconference issue. I am looking forward to serving the JALT and *TLT* community, and I want to thank my senior co-editor, Paul Lyddon, for his patience and invaluable help, as well as the rest of the *TLT* editorial and publishing team for their efforts in getting me on board and up to speed.

Now, on to the contents of this issue! The current issue includes two Feature Articles and two Reader's Forum pieces. In the first Feature Article, **Joe Kakitani** advocates establishing better equivalency between pre-and posttest tasks used in oral performance research by showing that simply controlling for the most obvious task-related factors does not necessarily yield identical results on all variables. In the second Feature Article, **Daniel Pearce** underscores the conflict between institutional demands for quantifiable assessment and practice-based focus of language teaching theory and provides a roadmap for bridging the gap between the two.

In the first of the two Readers' Forum pieces, **Ryosuke Aoyama** highlights the challenge of implementing the principles of the World Englishes paradigm in English language instruction and suggests several ways to bridge the theory-practice divide in the classroom. In the second Readers' Forum piece, **Joseph Siegel** reviews the existing literature on technology-mediated note-taking in first-language contexts and calls for an increase in similar research in second-language English-medium instruction settings.

This issue also includes an interview with **Tomoko Yashima** by **Ian Willey** and our regular JALT Praxis columns, such as *My Share*, *TLT Wired*, *Book Reviews*, *Teaching Assistance*, *Writers' Workshop*, and *SIG Focus*. Please check those out as well!

Continued over



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In closing, I would like to thank the many *TLT* contributors who volunteered their time, expertise, and energy to this issue and, of course, you, dear readers, for your continued support. I hope you enjoy the issue and find it useful.

Irina Kuznetcova, TLT Co-editor

The *Language Teacher* 3/4月号の読者の皆様、ようこそ、そしてはじめまして。今号において、初めて共同編集者を務めることになりましたので、まずは簡単な自己紹介をさせていただきます。私は、国際教養大学のGlobal Connectivityプログラムで教えているIrina Kuznetcovaと申します。JALTの会員になったのは、一年前の来日間もない頃です。それ以来、JALT2022の大会運営や*TLT* preconference issueのゲスト編集者を務めさせていただく機会を得ました。JALTと*TLT*のコミュニティーに貢献できることを楽しみにしています。また、上級共同編集者であるPaul Lyddonの忍耐力と貴重な助力、そして私を仲間に引き入れ、必要な情報の提供に尽力してくれた*TLT*編集・出版チームの他のメンバーの皆さんに感謝したいと思います。

さて、今号の内容です！今号には、2つのFeature Articleと2つのReaders' Forumが掲載されています。最初のFeature Articleでは、Joe Kakitaniが、スピーキングパフォーマンス研究で用いられる事前・事後テストのタスクにつ

いて、タスクに関連する最も明白な要因をコントロールするだけでは、必ずしもすべての変数について同一の結果が得られるとは限らないことを示し、より良い同等性の確立を提唱しています。2つ目のFeature Articleでは、Daniel Pearceが、定量的な評価に対する制度的な要求と言語教育理論の実践重視との間の矛盾を浮き彫りにし、両者のギャップを埋めるためのロードマップを提供しています。

2つあるうちの最初のReaders' Forumで、Ryosuke Aoyamaは、World Englishesパラダイムの原則を英語教育で実践することの難しさを強調し、授業における理論と実践の溝を埋めるためのいくつかの方法を提案しています。2つ目のReaders' Forumでは、Joseph Siegelが、第一言語の文脈におけるテクノロジーを介したノート取りに関する先行研究を調査し、第二言語の英語による指導環境における同様の研究の増加を呼びかけています。

今号では、Ian WilleyによるTomoko Yashimaへのインタビューや、JALT Praxisの定番コラムであるMy Share, *TLT* Wired, Book Reviews, Teaching Assistance, Writers' Workshop, SIG Focusなども掲載されています。ぜひ、こちらをご覧ください！

最後に、本号のために多大なる時間、専門知識、エネルギーを費やしてくださった多くの*TLT*ボランティアの方々、そしてもちろん、読者の皆様の変わらぬご支援に感謝いたします。今号が楽しく有益であることを願っています。

—Irina Kuznetcova, *TLT*共同編集者

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Equivalency of Picture-Based Speaking Tasks: An Investigation of Complexity, Accuracy, Lexis, and Fluency

Joe Kakitani

Utsunomiya University / Lancaster University

In experimental research, a pretest–posttest design is often used to examine the effect of treatment or intervention. Establishing equivalency across tests is essential for this type of research to ensure the validity of the study results. However, studies that explore test/task equivalency are scarce in second language research. This study investigates the equivalency of seven picture-based narrative tasks such as those commonly used in second language research and language tests. The oral performances elicited from 20 Japanese university students were analyzed in terms of their complexity, accuracy, lexis, and fluency. Despite controlling for the task-related variables of story length, sequential structure, and storyline complexity, the results were similar only in terms of fluency and not with regard to complexity, accuracy, or lexis. These findings suggest that it is important to determine the equivalency of testing materials as seemingly similar tasks do not necessarily elicit similar oral performances.

実験的研究では、対処や介入の効果を調べるために事前・事後テストデザインがよく用いられる。この種の研究では、結果の妥当性を担保するためにテストの同等性を確立することが重要である。しかし、第二言語研究において、テストやタスクの同等性を調査した研究は極めて少ない。本研究は、第二言語研究や言語テストにおいて頻繁に使用されている写真描写タスクに焦点を当て、7つのタスクの同等性を検証する。そのために、20人の日本人大学生のスピーキングパフォーマンスを、複雑さ、正確さ、語彙、流暢さの尺度を使って分析した。結果は、タスクに関わる要因である物語の長さ、構造、複雑さを統制したにもかかわらず、流暢さにおいてのみタスクの類似性が示され、複雑さ、正確さ、語彙においては差異が認められた。本研究結果は、外見적으로는似ているタスクであっても同等のスピーキングパフォーマンスに必ずしも結びつかないことを示し、テストに使用する題材の同等性を検証することの重要性を示唆している。

<https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTL47.2-1>

One commonly used experimental design in second language (L2) studies is the pretest–posttest design, which requires demonstration of test equivalency so as not to threaten the validity of the research findings (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Test equivalency is also essential in standardized language testing, where different test forms are supposed to yield consistent results and interpretations. Yet, despite its importance, few published L2 studies to date have explored the topic. This study seeks to

address this deficiency in the literature by examining the equivalency of one particular type of testing material, namely picture-based speaking tasks.

Literature Review

Equivalency in Oral Narrative Tasks

Picture-based speaking tasks are commonly used in L2 research (e.g., de Jong & Tillman, 2018; Suzuki et al., 2022; Suzuki & Hanzawa, 2022) and language tests such as ELKEN, one of the leading English-language tests in Japan. Previous studies, though few in number, have explored task equivalency in oral narrative tasks. For instance, Tavakoli and Foster (2011) compared four cartoon stories of varied narrative type and structure by analyzing oral performances based on the linguistic measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency. Their findings showed that, compared to a one-story narrative, a two-story narrative is likely to result in enhanced complexity because the presence of multiple events requires the speaker to use certain syntactic structures (e.g., subordination). Their findings also suggested that, compared to a loose narrative structure (one in which the order of pictures can be changed), a tight narrative structure (one in which the order of pictures cannot be changed) leads to enhanced accuracy and fluency, because the orderly nature of the narrative events frees up the speakers' attentional resources (Kormos, 2006).

In other studies, de Jong and Vercellotti (2016) and Inoue (2013) examined the equivalency of oral narrative tasks that were a priori deemed similar in terms of sequential structure, storyline complexity, and number of elements. The five tasks chosen in de Jong and Vercellotti's (2016) study produced similar performances in terms of complexity (words per Analysis of Speech Unit [AS-unit]) and accuracy (error-free AS-units) but not with regard to fluency (mean pause length). In fact, one particular task elicited longer pauses, presumably due to lexical retrieval difficulty (i.e., recalling words needed to narrate the story) and task difficulty (i.e., explaining the intention of the character). In a similar vein, In-

oue (2013) compared two narrative tasks that were nearly identical in structure and storyline (i.e., two children playing a trick on their mother in a house). The results were equivalent in terms of fluency (speech rate) but not with regard to complexity (e.g., mean clause length) or accuracy (error-free clauses). The variability was assumed to be due to the varied degree of task complexity, which was manipulated by the change in setting. Namely, Task A depicted scenes both inside and outside the house, whereas Task B showed indoor scenes only. Task A was presumably more cognitively demanding since it required the speaker to think about the connections between the scenes, thus increasing complexity while negatively impacting accuracy of the narrative performance.

The complex findings from these previous studies suggest that it is important to test the equivalency of tasks rather than assume it (Suzuki & Koizumi, 2020). As oral narrative tasks are commonly used in L2 task-based research and language testing, an investigation of their equivalency may provide useful insights for L2 researchers and test developers alike.

Present Study

The current study assessed the equivalency of seven picture-based narrative tasks on measures of complexity, accuracy, lexis, and fluency (CALF). As previous research has shown that various task-related factors can influence L2 oral performance, the current study controlled for task length, structure, and storyline complexity. Its ultimate aim was to identify narrative tasks that are comparable and, thus suitable for a pretest–posttest experimental study. The study was guided by the following research question:

RQ: To what extent do picture-based narrative tasks elicit similar oral performances when task-related variables are controlled?

Method

Participants

The participants were 20 first-language Japanese-speaking 2nd-year university learners of L2 English (12 males, 8 females) between 19 and 20 years of age. Their English proficiency level was approximately the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) equivalent of A2–B1, as estimated from their TOEIC scores at the end of their first year of study ($M = 556.5$, $SD = 55.39$, minimum = 480, maximum 650).

Materials

The chosen materials comprised seven picture prompts (*Bicycle, Race, Bus, Soccer, Picnic, Surprise, and Hide-and-Seek*) adapted from Heaton (1966, 1975). All prompts were six-frame cartoon stories (except for *Hide-and-Seek*, which had seven frames; however, its sixth and seventh frames were half-size and together depicted one event, making it practically equivalent to the others). All prompts had a tight sequential structure and a storyline that encouraged participants to express the feelings and motivation of the characters (see Appendix A for a link to the materials).

Procedure

Each participant met with the researcher individually online via Microsoft Teams. After giving informed consent, each participant performed the seven monologue tasks. Each participant thus served as his or her own control in the within-subjects design, minimizing error variance (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). Data collection was divided into two sessions, spanning two consecutive days in order to reduce fatigue. The task order was counterbalanced by randomly assigning the participants to either presentation order A (*Bicycle, Race, and Bus* on the first day and *Soccer, Picnic, Surprise, and Hide-and-Seek* on the second) or its inverse, order B (*Hide-and-Seek, Surprise, Picnic, and Soccer* on the first day and *Bus, Race, and Bicycle* on the second). Picture prompts were shown to the students via screen sharing. The students were given 3 minutes of planning time, followed by 4 minutes of speaking time to narrate the story in English. They were told not to take notes or consult a dictionary. Each task included a set of guiding questions in Japanese, which was intended to help clarify the story and give the students additional ideas with regard to content. The guiding questions were only available during the planning time, not during the speaking time. Oral performances were recorded on Microsoft Teams as well as the participant's own mobile device for backup purposes.

Analysis

A total of 140 speech datasets were transcribed and pruned (i.e., excised of filled pauses, repetitions, and self-corrections) based on AS-units. An AS-unit is roughly equivalent to a sentence but can also include commonly found sub-clausal units of speech, such as “Thank you” and “Okay” (Foster et al., 2000). The list of all the indices used in the current analysis can be found in Table 1. Following Norris and Ortega (2009), syntactic complexity was analyzed at three different

levels: sentential, phrasal, and clausal. Accuracy was evaluated using a weighted clause ratio (Foster & Wigglesworth, 2016), assessed by a trained research assistant who is a native speaker of English. Lexical complexity was analyzed using TAALED (Kyle et al., 2021) and TAALES (Kyle et al., 2018). Finally, fluency was analyzed using Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2018) and a Praat script (de Jong & Wempe, 2009).

For statistical analysis, a series of repeated-measures ANOVAs were performed. The assumption of normal distribution was tested by using histograms and the Shapiro-Wilk tests. When the assumption of normality was violated, a log transformation was performed (Field et al., 2012). In the case of inadequate transformation, the non-parametric counterpart test (i.e., Friedman's ANOVA) was used. The assumption of sphericity was assessed using Mauchly's test, and whenever it was violated, the Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment was used. Significant main effects were further analyzed by performing pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni correction.

Table 1

List of Measures

<i>Syntactic complexity</i>
1. <i>Mean length of AS-unit.</i> Average number of words per AS-unit
2. <i>Mean length of clause.</i> Average number of words per clause
3. <i>Clauses per AS-unit.</i> Average number of clauses per AS-unit
<i>Accuracy</i>
4. <i>Weighted clause ratio.</i> Total clause accuracy score divided by total number of clauses
<i>Lexical complexity</i>
5. <i>Measure of textual lexical diversity.</i> Mean length of sequential word strings that maintains a given type-token ratio value
6. <i>Word frequency.</i> Average logarithmic frequency of content words based on SUBTLEXUS
7. <i>Word familiarity.</i> Average familiarity score of content words based on MRC Psycholinguistic Database
8. <i>Word imageability.</i> Average imageability score of content words based on MRC Psycholinguistic Database

Fluency

9. *Articulation rate.* Mean number of syllables per second, excluding the duration of pauses
10. *Speech rate.* Mean number of syllables per second, including the duration of pauses
11. *Mean length of fluent run.* Mean number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses (.25 seconds and above)

Results

Syntactic Complexity

The effect of task was statistically significant for the mean length of AS-unit (MLAS), $F(6, 114) = 5.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$ (see Table 2). The results of the post hoc comparisons are shown in Appendix B. *Bus* elicited a longer MLAS compared to *Bicycle*, *Soccer*, and *Hide-and-Seek*. MLAS was also longer for *Picnic* than *Hide-and-Seek*. The effect of task was also statistically significant for the mean length of clause (MLC), $F(6, 114) = 11.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .314$. *Bus* produced a longer MLC than all the other tasks. MLC for *Hide-and-Seek* was in turn shorter than for *Race*, *Soccer*, and *Surprise*. Finally, the effect of task for the mean number of clauses per AS-unit was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(6) = 5.89$, $p = .436$.

Accuracy

The effect of task for the weighted clause ratio (WCR) was statistically significant, $F(6, 114) = 7.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .242$ (Table 3). Particularly, *Hide-and-Seek* produced a higher WCR than all the other tasks except for *Soccer* (see Appendix C).

Lexical Complexity

Four measures were used to assess lexical complexity (see Table 4). The measure of textual lexical diversity (MTLD) shows the range of words used in a text, with a higher score indicating a higher diversity (McCarthy & Jarvis, 2010). Word frequency, word familiarity, and word imageability provide word information scores based on large corpora of texts. For these three measures, lower scores indicate the use of more sophisticated words (for more detailed information, see Kyle & Crossley, 2015). The effect of task was statistically significant for MTLD, $F(6, 114) = 4.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .164$. *Hide-and-Seek* elicited greater MTLD than did *Bicycle* and *Bus*. The effect of task was also statistically significant for word frequency, $F(6, 114) = 9.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .266$. *Race* elicited words with lower word frequency scores compared to *Bicycle*, *Bus*, *Soccer*, and *Surprise*.

Furthermore, word frequency was lower for *Picnic* than for *Bus*. Word familiarity was also statistically different across tasks, $F(6, 114) = 14.61, p < .001, \eta^2 = .396$. *Bicycle* elicited higher word familiarity scores compared to all the other tasks except *Surprise*. Word familiarity was also higher for *Bus* than for *Race* and *Soccer*. *Picnic* and *Surprise* also both resulted in higher word familiarity compared to *Soccer*. Finally, the effect of task was also statistically significant for word imageability, $F(6, 114) = 13.93, p < .001, \eta^2 = .325$. All tasks except *Bus* produced higher word imageability scores than did *Race*. In turn, all tasks except *Race* showed higher word imageability than did *Bus* (see Appendix D).

Fluency

Finally, fluency was evaluated by articulation rate, speech rate, and mean length of fluent run—measures commonly used in L2 fluency research (e.g., de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Suzuki & Kormos, 2020). The effect of task was not statistically significant for any of the three measures: $F(2.62, 49.82) = 2.58, p = .071, \eta^2 = .032$, and $F(6, 114) = 0.96, p = .455, \eta^2 = .014$, and $F(2.86, 54.38) = 1.69, p = .181, \eta^2 = .03$, respectively (see Table 5). All tasks, therefore, elicited comparable performances in terms of fluency.



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Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA (or Friedman’s ANOVA) Results for Syntactic Complexity Measures

	MLAS		MLC		CPAS	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Bicycle	7.55	1.41	5.64	0.59	1.35	0.26
Race	8.08	1.15	5.96	0.73	1.36	0.19
Bus	8.90	1.60	6.70	0.77	1.35	0.31
Soccer	7.61	0.98	5.72	0.62	1.34	0.17
Picnic	8.13	1.30	5.79	0.80	1.41	0.23
Surprise	7.86	1.01	5.93	0.68	1.34	0.21
Hide-and-Seek	7.13	1.09	5.10	0.53	1.41	0.24
<i>p</i>	<.001		<.001		.436	

Note. MLAS = mean length of AS-unit; MLC = mean length of clause; CPAS = clauses per AS-unit.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results for Accuracy Measure

	WCR	
	M	SD
Bicycle	0.65	0.09
Race	0.70	0.08
Bus	0.69	0.08
Soccer	0.73	0.09
Picnic	0.73	0.08
Surprise	0.70	0.08
Hide-and-Seek	0.80	0.05
<i>p</i>	<.001	

Note. WCR = weighted clause ratio.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results for Lexical Complexity Measures

	MTLD		Word Frequency		Word Familiarity		Word Imageability	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Bicycle	22.21	4.53	4.03	0.19	599.58	5.65	469.80	20.56
Race	25.02	3.70	3.78	0.29	581.94	7.90	436.87	16.94
Bus	22.12	5.18	4.13	0.11	591.08	5.43	440.86	23.06
Soccer	25.67	6.24	4.09	0.15	582.34	4.90	470.11	22.12
Picnic	26.93	6.21	3.98	0.13	589.84	8.21	477.40	28.36
Surprise	25.28	7.01	4.13	0.16	591.53	8.84	462.57	18.90
Hide-and-Seek	30.01	7.09	4.02	0.18	585.91	8.40	471.63	21.33
<i>p</i>	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	

Note. MTLD = measure of textual lexical diversity.

Table 5*Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results for Fluency Measures*

	AR		SR		FR	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Bicycle	2.74	0.54	1.17	0.28	2.64	0.69
Race	2.64	0.65	1.18	0.24	2.56	0.60
Bus	2.68	0.50	1.24	0.28	2.92	0.89
Soccer	2.88	0.41	1.19	0.28	2.60	0.80
Picnic	2.89	0.42	1.23	0.34	2.78	0.91
Surprise	2.76	0.41	1.14	0.31	2.51	0.64
Hide-and-Seek	2.77	0.48	1.20	0.35	2.60	0.97
<i>p</i>	.071		.455		.181	

Note. AR = articulation rate; SR = speech rate; FR = mean length of fluent run.

Discussion

The current study investigated the equivalency of picture-based narrative tasks using the CALF framework. Oral performances were indeed similar in terms of fluency. However, substantial differences were found with respect to complexity, accuracy, and lexis. The *Bus* task overall elicited more syntactically complex narrative performances. One possible explanation for this result might be that this particular task requires reference to a previous event in the story—the second bus passes the first bus, which the boys could not ride earlier—leading to longer utterances. However, this explanation is inadequate considering that other tasks (e.g., *Bicycle*) have a similar storyline. Thus, another possible reason might be that there are simply more details in the *Bus* task (e.g., road condition, bus numbers, clocks showing the time) that prompt longer utterances. The *Hide-and-Seek* task, by contrast, elicited relatively less complex performances (i.e., shorter AS-units and clauses). This result may be due to the fact that most of the events take place in the foreground (Tavakoli & Foster, 2011), helping the speakers to narrate the story in a straightforward manner (e.g., without subordination).

In terms of accuracy, the *Hide-and-Seek* task produced higher accuracy scores on average. Considering that this task elicited relatively less syntactically complex utterances, it is possible that speakers were able to pay more attention to accuracy because of the simplicity of the task (Skehan & Foster, 2001). However, another possible, and perhaps more plausible, explanation might be that L2 learners simply have fewer chances of making mistakes in shorter

utterances. Although a weighted clause ratio (WCR) allows for a more fine-grained assessment of accuracy than do global indices (e.g., error-free AS-units), the rating system is still subject to the influence of clause length. Indeed, WCR was negatively correlated with the mean length of clause, $r = -.28, p < .001$. The findings thus suggest that accuracy and complexity should be interpreted in tandem to draw a nuanced conclusion about task equivalency.

With regard to lexical diversity, the *Hide-and-Seek* task produced relatively higher MTLTD. This result could be due to the fact that the story involves many characters and objects (e.g., boys, girls, a statue, a vase) and actions (e.g., hiding, falling, breaking, coming out). Thus, the number of elements may be a factor that can significantly influence the lexical diversity of a narrative performance. The measures of word frequency, word familiarity, and word imageability also showed substantial variability across tasks. Unlike lexical diversity, these indices provide word information scores based on large text corpora (Kyle & Crossley, 2015). The observed variability could be ascribed to the nature of closed tasks (Pallotti, 2009). In closed tasks, the content of speech is predefined for the most part, as the given prompt necessitates the use of certain expressions to complete them. For instance, the *Bicycle* task requires the speaker to use words such as *bicycle*, *road*, and *car*, all of which the MRC database designates as highly familiar words. The considerable variability across tasks in terms of lexical complexity suggests that the content words elicited in a narrative task might be determined by task design features and the semantic content that L2 learners need to express (see de Jong & Vercellotti, 2016, for similar discussions).

Finally, the seven tasks elicited similar performances in terms of fluency. There are two possible reasons for this. First, the tasks all had a tight sequential structure. In line with previous research (Inoue, 2013; Tavakoli & Foster, 2011), the chronological sequence of the narrative story in the present study probably helped the speakers to narrate each story with relative ease. Second, the materials used in the current study were taken from a single source (i.e., a single author), controlling for the aesthetic quality of the prompts. Different cartoon artists have different drawing styles, and these differences in artistic touch could potentially lead to varying degrees of difficulty for interpreting the intentions and emotions of the characters. As a case in point, in de Jong and Vercellotti's study (2016), the three cartoon prompts drawn by a single illustrator elicited similar performances, while the other two prompts drawn by different artists led to

statistically different fluency results. The current findings suggest that the aesthetic aspect of materials should also be taken into account when comparing and administering picture-based narrative tasks.

Conclusion and Implications

Despite controlling for task-related factors, the oral performances elicited by seven narrative tasks showed substantial differences in terms of complexity, accuracy, and lexis. The current findings bear important implications for L2 researchers, test developers, and instructors. First, as the chosen tasks elicited similar performances in terms of fluency, it is probably appropriate to use any mixture of these tasks for testing purposes in a pretest–posttest study investigating L2 speakers' fluency development. However, because differences were found in terms of syntactic complexity, accuracy, and lexical complexity, caution needs to be taken if research involves analyses of these measures. To minimize potential task effects, it is recommended that researchers counterbalance the order of test materials (Suzuki & Koizumi, 2020). In many testing programs, parallel tasks are used with the assumption that they elicit similar performance from test takers. However, the current findings suggest that this might not be the case. Rather than assuming task equivalency, the test developers should consider piloting their tasks to establish true comparability of the results and their interpretations across different test forms. Finally, from a pedagogical perspective, it may be plausible to use relatively easier tasks first and move on to more difficult tasks, taking the L2 learners' developmental processes into consideration (Lambert & Kormos, 2014). Examining the relative difficulty of instructional tasks may thus provide L2 instructors with a basis for making more informed decisions regarding classroom practice (e.g., L2 fluency training using task repetition). As the scope of the current study was limited to oral narrative tasks, future research should explore the equivalency of other types of tasks as well.

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Appendix A

A link to the materials: https://osf.io/73drq/?view_only=01e103a1d8e145c4b353d17b49b2ac44

Appendix B

Pairwise Comparison Results with Bonferroni Correction for Complexity Measures

		Effect size (<i>d</i>)	<i>p</i>
MLAS	<i>Bus > Bicycle</i>	1.16	<.001
	<i>Bus > Soccer</i>	0.79	.026
	<i>Bus > Hide-and-Seek</i>	1.00	.002
	<i>Picnic > Hide-and-Seek</i>	0.72	.042
MLC	<i>Bus > Bicycle</i>	1.22	.001
	<i>Bus > Race</i>	1.04	.001
	<i>Bus > Soccer</i>	1.12	.002
	<i>Bus > Picnic</i>	1.03	.004
	<i>Bus > Surprise</i>	0.82	.041
	<i>Bus > Hide-and-Seek</i>	2.62	<.001
	<i>Race > Hide-and-Seek</i>	1.14	.002
	<i>Soccer > Hide-and-Seek</i>	0.93	.025
	<i>Surprise > Hide-and-Seek</i>	1.10	.002

Note. MLAS = mean length of AS-unit; MLC = mean length of clause.

Appendix C

Pairwise Comparison Results with Bonferroni Correction for Accuracy Measure

		Effect size (<i>d</i>)	<i>p</i>
WCR	<i>Hide-and-Seek > Bicycle</i>	1.63	<.001
	<i>Hide-and-Seek > Race</i>	0.97	.010
	<i>Hide-and-Seek > Bus</i>	1.39	<.001
	<i>Hide-and-Seek > Picnic</i>	0.84	.045
	<i>Hide-and-Seek > Surprise</i>	1.20	<.001

Note. WCR = weighted clause ratio.



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Appendix D

Pairwise Comparison Results with Bonferroni Correction for Lexical Complexity Measures

		Effect size (<i>d</i>)	<i>p</i>
MTLD	<i>Hide-and-Seek</i> > <i>Bicycle</i>	0.81	.036
	<i>Hide-and-Seek</i> > <i>Bus</i>	1.15	.002
Word Frequency	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Race</i>	0.85	.039
	<i>Bus</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.15	.001
	<i>Soccer</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.14	.002
	<i>Surprise</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.09	.003
	<i>Bus</i> > <i>Picnic</i>	1.07	.002
Word Familiarity	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Race</i>	2.07	<.001
	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Bus</i>	1.18	<.001
	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Soccer</i>	2.66	<.001
	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Picnic</i>	1.08	.002
	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Hide-and-Seek</i>	1.21	<.001
	<i>Bus</i> > <i>Race</i>	0.90	.011
	<i>Bus</i> > <i>Soccer</i>	1.07	.002
	<i>Picnic</i> > <i>Soccer</i>	0.91	.019
Word Imageability	<i>Surprise</i> > <i>Soccer</i>	0.79	.038
	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.27	<.001
	<i>Soccer</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.36	<.001
	<i>Picnic</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.28	<.001
	<i>Surprise</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.32	<.001
	<i>Hide-and-Seek</i> > <i>Race</i>	1.28	<.001
	<i>Bicycle</i> > <i>Bus</i>	0.97	.001
	<i>Soccer</i> > <i>Bus</i>	1.06	.002
	<i>Picnic</i> > <i>Bus</i>	1.22	<.001
	<i>Surprise</i> > <i>Bus</i>	1.07	.012
	<i>Hide-and-Seek</i> > <i>Bus</i>	1.22	<.001

Note. MTLD = measure of textual lexical diversity.

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Japan Center for Michigan Universities

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Michigan State University (MSU), in coordination with Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) in Hikone, Japan has been offering a Master of Arts in TESOL program since September 2022. Participants will study online, or in-person if travel allows, with some of the top faculty in the field, as well as have an opportunity to visit the Center in August to join two-week, face-to-face intensive courses with MSU faculty as a part of the program. Students graduating with an MA from Michigan State University have gone on to careers in countries all over the world, including working at universities in Japan.

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For more information, visit <https://lilac.msu.edu/tesol/>. For inquiries, please email Christopher Garth (JCMU) cgarth@jcmu.org or Dr. Charlene Polio (MSU) polio@msu.edu

ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター(滋賀県彦根市) (JCMU)では、ミシガン州立大学 (MSU) と連携して、2022 年 9 月から TESOL プログラムの修士課程を提供しています。

受講生は、TESOLの専門家による学習をオンラインで進めますが、当センターまで来られる方は、対面で受講することも可能です。この講座の一環として、8月には、当センターにてミシガン州立大学の教授による2週間の対面型集中講座を実施します。それにもご参加いただけます。ミシガン州立大学で修士号を取得した卒業生の多くは、日本の大学で働くなど、世界各国でキャリアを積んでおられます。

ご自身のキャリアアップのため、またはTESOLに関する教育スキルや知識を大幅に向上させたいと思っておられる方々には、素晴らしい機会です。授業は夕方と夜に行われるため、フルタイムの仕事に従事されている方々や普段の生活がご多忙な方々にとっては最適なプログラムです。ミシガン州立大学は認定された米国の高等教育機関であるため、米国民は連邦財政援助(Federal Financial Aid)を申請できます。

詳細については、<https://lilac.msu.edu/tesol/completing-the-ma-tesol-at-japan-center-for-michigan-universities/completing-the-ma-tesol-at-japan-center-for-michigan-universities-faqs>をご覧ください。

その他ご質問は、Christopher Garth (JCMU) cgarth@jcmu.org または Dr. Charlene Polio (MSU) polio@msu.edu までメールでお問合せください。

Decentering and Mediation: Reconciling Theory and Practice in Skills-Based Listening Instruction

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Language teaching theory has moved beyond only teaching the surface-level lexical and grammatical aspects of language to fostering the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to engage with language in new and unfamiliar contexts. Simultaneously, pressures on institutions to produce quantifiable results through such means as standardized tests have seen pedagogical frameworks like the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages reduced to simple rubrics for assessing proficiency levels, potentially leading to reductive teaching. The present study illustrates how pedagogical theory might be reconciled with institutional demands. Specifically, I examined the author's planning and implementation of a compulsory first-year listening course and presents a qualitative analysis of learning based on weekly post-lesson reflections. The findings suggest that theory and institutional demands can indeed be reconciled. Implications for practice and avenues for future research are also presented.

言語教育の理論は、単に語彙や文法のような言語の表面的な側面を教えるだけでなく、新しい、あるいはなじみのない文脈で使用される言語に取り組むための態度、技能、知識を育成する方向へと進んできた。同時に教育機関には標準化テストなどによって定量的な結果を出すべきという圧力があり、ヨーロッパ言語共通参照枠 (CEFR) のような教育的枠組みは、習熟度を評価するための単純なルーブリックに縮小され、還元主義的な教育に向かわせている可能性がある。本研究では、教授法に関する理論と教育機関の要請をどのように調和させることができるかを検討した。大学一年次リスニング必修科目における筆者の授業計画と実施を検討し、毎週の授業後の振り返りに基づく学生の学習の質的分析を行った。研究結果は、理論と教育機関の要請が実際に調和しうることを示唆している。また、実践への示唆と今後の研究への道筋も示している。

<https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT47.2-2>

In the 21st century, language teaching theory has moved beyond viewing languages as “stable, pure objects existing outside their speakers/users” and learning as “an internal cognitive process, meant to prepare for later real-life use” (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 19). Although the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001) and research related to its theoretical constructs, including plurilingualism (Marshall & Moore, 2018) and mediation (Council of Europe, 2020), have spearheaded much pedagogical innovation (e.g., Brinkman et al., 2022; Daryai-Hansen et al., 2023)

accountability pressures to produce quantifiable results have often seen such frameworks reduced to simplified rubrics for assessing proficiency levels and increased use of external examinations—in other words, a continued adherence to a view of languages as “stable, pure objects” and language learning as a mostly “internal cognitive process” involving their rote memorization (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 19).

In Japan as well, universities are increasingly turning to private tests for course evaluation and awarding of credits (In'nami & Koizumi, 2017). As such, teachers may find themselves pressed into potentially reductive teaching or teaching to tests, treating learning as simply achieving a certain degree of lexical and grammatical mastery. Against this background, the present study seeks to consider how sociocultural and plurilingual theory, which consider the situated nature of language as central to teaching, might be reconciled with institutional pressures.

Language as Situated: Context-bound and Culturally Informed

Research has traditionally viewed language as homogenous, static knowledge divorced from use (May, 2014), treating it as a discrete set of lexical and grammatical knowledge that can be learned and applied later in “real life.” However, language use is context-bound and more complex than the mere application of lexico-grammatical rules. Consider the following:

- 1 A: where's Bill?
- 2 J: there's a yellow VW outside Sue's house

(Levinson, 1983, p. 102)

From a purely linguistic viewpoint, this interaction is nonsensical. A proficient English user, however, can infer that Bill drives a yellow VW and, therefore, is at Sue's house. Although very short, this excerpt serves to display language use as bound by context.

Language use is also culturally informed—even across native-speaking English communities specifically, pragmatics and usage vary considerably.¹ As such, language teachers have a mandate to prepare learners to navigate context-bound and culturally informed interactions, even in preparation for standardized examinations. Take, for instance, past items on the Institutional Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL ITP) test revolving around campus parking. In Japan, where student carparks are uncommon in metropolitan areas, this unfamiliar context could present a non-linguistic barrier to understanding. Despite the efforts of test-makers to eliminate such barriers, language is inherently situated. In our globalized world, language teachers must not only teach the lexical and grammatical aspects of language but also prepare learners to navigate unfamiliar contexts, even while under pressure to boost test scores.

Sociocultural/plurilingual turns (see Firth & Wagner, 1997; May, 2014) in language education have borne witness to greater emphasis on the situated nature of language, and much recent literature considers how we might prepare learners to “mobilise *all* their competences, including their general (i.e., personal, non-linguistic) competences ... in the fulfilment of a task, with a commensurate improvement of those competences ... as a result” (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 18). Skills-based tasks, however, often require neither critical engagement nor application of learners’ full competences. A cursory examination of language textbooks or guides to standardized tests such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and TOEFL will reveal that listening tasks, for instance, often require learners to answer multiple-choice questions that involve only rewordings of passages, rather than critical engagement with them. While such tests may provide useful heuristics for quantitatively evaluating linguistic ability, they are not necessarily sufficient in pedagogical practice itself; actual learning and use is more complex.

However, reconciling pedagogical theory with results-driven pressures such as to boost test scores is not easy for practitioners. The aim of this paper is to consider how such reconciliation might be feasible, through examination of the author’s implementation of a compulsory listening-skills course. The next section explores the principles behind the course design, which, while informed by theoretical elements introduced here, was not an experimental design. Inspired by recollections of students’ reflections during the course and how they might align with sociocultural and plurilingual theory, analysis of student learning was conducted after the end of the course.

Course Design

The 15-week course (one 90-minute lesson per week) was one I taught during the 2020 academic year at a small women’s college in western Japan, where emphasis was placed on raising TOEIC scores, although teachers were free to create their own course content. Within this context, my charge was to design a year-long course simply titled “Listening,” which was compulsory for first-year students. Conscious of sociocultural/plurilingual research, I sought to develop a course that would encourage students to “mobilize all their competences” (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 18).

Participants

The participants (N=20) were students enrolled in the Department of English Language and Literature. Their English ability was relatively low; none had scored above 300 on the TOEIC® Listening & Reading test at the course’s outset. Content was developed with these participants in mind.

Guiding Principles in Course and Material Design

Listening passages were crafted with the intent of having students critically engage, applying both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Passages were set within specific contexts, domestic and foreign, with narrators from various backgrounds (see Appendix for an example). The first passages had the learners engage with unfamiliar language (i.e., new English expressions) through familiar contexts (e.g., experiences of Japanese youth). Familiar contexts were chosen in order to lower the cognitive burden of critically engaging with foreign language content. As the students became accustomed to this type of engagement, the burden was gradually increased with the introduction of slightly less familiar contexts (e.g., Japanese family life from a parental perspective) and then similar contexts in foreign environments (e.g., experiences of students at overseas universities, overseas family life, etc.).

Comprehension questions were designed in accordance with the following two principles:

1. Avoid answers explicitly stated in the recording.
2. Require students to give reasons (in English or Japanese) for answers derived from contextual clues, linguistic or otherwise, for which partial credit can be earned for reasoning based on contextual evidence.

Passages were designed to include clues that would lead to “correct” answers (i.e., the keyed responses). For instance, in one passage, a question was “Does

the narrator live in England, Japan, or the U.S.?” to which reference to a sofa costing \$2,000 was a clue. Although this is not always the case in tests such as TOEIC and TOEFL, some questions (e.g., those from the latter occasionally requiring examinees to identify inferences) are based on contextual clues. Thus, the aim here was to foster the habit of paying attention to not only apparently key details but also seemingly peripheral information in order to develop a general image of the context of the passages. Students were allowed to use any means available to arrive at answers. For instance, in investigating geographical clues such as travelling distances, they were encouraged to use smartphones or any other devices to fill in knowledge gaps.

The structure of each lesson was essentially identical (see Table 1).

First, brief verbal feedback on the prior lesson’s reflection sheets would be given, before students engaged in a warm-up activity: a game similar to *Taboo* in which they had to give clues and have their partners guess specific vocabulary from a given list including words that would appear in the main listening passages. Following the warm-up, I would read the main passage aloud, and students would take notes before discussing the content in pairs/groups and imagining what kind of questions might arise. The group work, including conjecture about possible questions, was intended to encourage proactive engagement with the passages, and development of an investigative stance toward various aspects of the passages. This stance would later help them verbalize reasons for their answers (i.e., by identifying cultural elements and imagining questions they might be asked, such as “Where is this passage set?”). Only after a second reading would I reveal the questions (six for each passage), writing them on the whiteboard. After a final reading aloud of the passage, I selected students to come forward and give their answers, afterward eliciting their reasoning verbally (all students submitted written explanations for their own answers at the end of

each lesson). While presenting their justifications, classmates might provide other evidence from the passages suggesting different possible answers. As the discussions often required detailed reasoning, they were generally conducted in Japanese, for the focus was on engagement with and reasoning about the passage and, given the relatively low level of English proficiency, I did not wish to overburden the students. Finally, students would retell the listening passage to their partners before completing their short reflection sheets individually.

Starting at around 400 words in length at the beginning of the semester, passages were slowly increased to around 800 words by the 15th week. Initially, I read the passages aloud as many as four or five times, but from around mid-semester, as the students accustomed themselves, I rarely needed to read more than three times.

The Study: Process and Methodology

Analysis of students’ learning was based on their post-class reflection sheets submitted after each lesson. Reflections were written in Japanese and analyzed in the original language (excerpts included below are post-analysis translations by the author). Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) was adopted as a methodology. Initially informed by my own sociocultural and plurilingual stance towards teaching language as situated, the first stages of analyses were conducted inductively (stages 1 and 2, below). Upon review of themes specifically related to learning, the process became increasingly informed by theoretical concepts I engaged with in further study, and subsequently more deductive (stages 3 and 4). The general process, adapted from Braun and Clarke, was as follows:

1. Data familiarization: First, during the course, I familiarized myself with the data as I transcribed the hand-written reflections. I refamiliarized myself with the data upon beginning the analysis roughly a year after the course ended.

Table 1
Lesson Structure

Task (time in minutes)	Description
Warm-up/Feedback (15)	Feedback on prior lessons’ reflections, tasks to prime for main listening.
Main listening task (30)	Listening to and taking notes on a passage read multiple times, discussing content in pairs/small groups.
Comprehension questions (20)	Comprehension questions, also discussed in pairs/small groups.
Retelling (20)	Students retelling passage in own words to partners.
Reflection (5)	Students completing unguided reflection sheets.

2. Systematic data coding: Initial in-vivo and later descriptive coding generated 607 codes, including aspects such as enjoyment, “difficulty,” and “group work.” Co-occurrence networks were generated using KHCoder Version 3.Beta.04 (Higuchi, 2016) to assist in coding, which was carried out using MAXQDA2020 Version 20.4.2 (VERBI Software, 2020).
3. Generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes: Codes were grouped into preliminary themes such as “questioning pre-conceptions,” and “impressions,” which were reviewed upon study of the literature (e.g., Candelier et al., 2012; Council of Europe, 2020). As the focus was on learning, irrelevant codes such as “today’s class was fun,” which did not provide reasons, were deleted, leaving a total of 327 codes.
4. Refining, defining, and naming themes: This stage resulted in the three themes explored below: *mediation*, *decentering*, and *engagement*.

Findings and Discussion

As analyses were informed by ongoing study, in this section I will briefly introduce the relevant literature before discussing the themes.

Mediation

Mediation is a broad and complex concept, and while space precludes a full discussion, this abridged definition from the *Companion Volume of CEFR* should suffice:

the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language ... sometimes from one language to another . . . The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for com-

municating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning ... and passing on new information in an appropriate form. (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90)

Mediation accounted for 197 codes, descriptions and examples of the types of which are presented in Table 2.

Reflections were generally positive regarding pair/group work facilitating understanding. One example was “I didn’t understand at first, but talking with my friends, I was like ‘oh, that’s it!’ and the second time, it was surprisingly easy to understand, even the grammar”. Some appeared quick to recognize the value of multiple viewpoints in mediating passages: “Pair work is limited with just two, so I would like to have maybe four working together”. Reflections remained positive throughout the course: “I was exposed to ideas different from my own, we could notice each other’s mistakes, and raise each other’s level”.

Another aspect of mediation was the retelling of passages, in which students began to verbalize the difficulty of navigating different languages and integrating understanding with output:

I can listen in English and translate to Japanese for my own understanding, but it’s difficult to translate my Japanese back into English ... I want to be able to craft sentences that capture the flow of the story.

Later in the course, similar reflections showed greater refinement: “I want to be able to pay attention enough that I can retell the content in chronological order”.

Perhaps because of the personal nature of reflection, the most prevalent code was *internal mediation*, characterized by the importance of critical thought: “I realized it is not enough to just listen ... It is important to consider details and rethink them

Table 2

Mediation Codes, Descriptions, and Examples

Codes (number)	Description	Example
Pair/Group work (41)	Understanding/ questioning/analysis facilitated by collaboration.	“I found it easy to anticipate questions that might come up during pair work.”
Retelling (41)	Reformulating input into comprehensible output.	“I can understand the content in Japanese, but putting that back into English requires more words than I can use.”
Internal mediation (115)	Navigating linguistic/contextual information in relation to prior knowledge, applied to understanding.	“There were times when I didn’t understand some of the words, but I was able to understand what was said better by guessing from the surrounding sentences.”

myself”. Reflections soon began to demonstrate understandings of the situated nature of language, the frequent indispensability of non-linguistic information, and the necessity of addressing gaps in knowledge: “I felt it was important not just to listen, but to make inferences from the content. For instance, I thought about the names of foods, ‘Where are they from?’ ‘What are they made of?’”.

Some reflections conceptually overlapped with the next theme, *decentering*, such as: “If one prediction is not correct, it disrupts all understanding. I want to correct this habit and try to think of different possibilities”. Recall the parking example from TOEFL ITP and how this ability to reflect on preconceptions might help overcome non-linguistic barriers to understanding.

In mediation, language is “not just a means of expression; it is primarily a vehicle to access the ‘other,’ the new, the unknown – or to help other people to do so.” (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 21). In pedagogy, mediation encourages the mobilization of multiple participants’ competences, bringing them together in negotiation and co-construction of knowledge. Even in standardized tests, mediation is important. For instance, TOEFL iBT integrated tasks require examinees to understand, amalgamate, and retell (potentially unfamiliar) content in their own words.

Similar reflections more specifically alluded to personal experiences and prior knowledge, engendering the *decentering* theme.

Decentering

Decentering (or decentration) was a core concept in Piaget’s theory of how abstractions are developed through the process of moving beyond understand-

ing phenomena solely in terms of subjective experience to developing more objective (i.e., socially, culturally, and scientifically informed) understandings (Piaget, 1962/2000). Decentering now informs much of the educational literature and has become a key concept in language education as a process through which learners update their linguistic and cultural schemas (see Piaget, 1926/2005). Users employ the schemas of their languages to frame and interpret the world, and second/foreign language learners often begin by employing their schemas in deciphering new languages. When languages (and individual experiences within cultural frameworks) differ greatly, such as between Japanese and English, applying only pre-established schemas to interpretation entails considerable limitations to be addressed and/or overcome. In other words, learners must engage in decentering.

One pedagogical resource that treats the concept of decentering in language teaching and learning is the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA; Candelier et al., 2012), which describes it as “a change of vantage point, seeing things in a relative way” (p. 23). FREPA was amongst the literature referred to when reviewing themes.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as reflection sheets were free form and therefore not structured to elicit specific responses, codes related to decentering were limited, totaling just 47 (see Table 3). Nevertheless, analyses revealed interesting insights.

Familiarity/unfamiliarity codes showed a general trend: Passages set in Japanese (or otherwise familiar) contexts were easier to understand (e.g., “It was great for me as I live in the countryside as it was about Japan and the countryside”. Others displayed

Table 3

Decentering Codes, Descriptions, and Examples

Codes (number)	Description	Example
Familiarity /unfamiliarity (35)	References to ease/difficulty of understanding as directly related to familiarity; importance in engaging with the unfamiliar.	“Although I know a little bit of news in general, I sometimes mistook the cities, so I wanted to understand it correctly.”
Questioning of preconceptions (9)	Updating/questioning preconceived notions through engagement with content/mediation with others.	“[The narrator] seemed so masculine, climbing things and forgetting keys, etc. If it wasn’t for the make-up, I would have thought she was a man. I thought it’s not good to be prejudiced.”
Other (3)	Attitudes/reflections related to decentering.	“It was a bit heavy, but I tried to think about it carefully and not think that it has nothing to do with me.”

more specific understanding of how not-yet-acquired knowledge could facilitate comprehension (e.g., “It’s important to know about international relations; if I’d known what was in the news, I could’ve solved the questions from that knowledge”). Such reflections, many of which were indicative of a need to pay attention to the world outside of their immediate experiences, demonstrated a developing attitude defined in FREPA descriptor A10 as “the will to construct ‘informed’ knowledge/representations” (Candelier et al., 2012, p. 44).

This developing competence for decentering was overt in the questioning preconceptions code, such as in this example, regarding a passage set in the southern hemisphere: “I should pay attention to hints like reversed seasons, not just base my presumptions on the northern hemisphere.” Similarly, regarding a passage set in Japan but relating childhood experiences of an adult immigrant, comes this example: “I heard Pokémon and instantly thought ‘Japan,’ but I should broaden my thinking and consider overseas contexts.” Such reflections correspond to the FREPA descriptor A-9.2.3: “considering one’s own representations ... as objects about which questions may arise” (Candelier et al., 2012, p. 44).

Some reflections demonstrated analysis of individual interest as connected with ability and/or motivation: “The questions I find comparatively difficult are those that don’t interest me, so I try to concentrate on them even if they don’t interest me.” This kind of decentered self-analysis is essential in learning and also appeared to lead to renewed engagement in content.

Engagement

The final theme, *engagement* (see Table 4), was not specifically informed by theory but more inductively based on my own prior experiences of teaching with textbooks at the high school level and designated texts at universities.

Codes related to previous experiences with listening were common early in the course. Many compared tasks favorably to prior experiences: “For the first time I had to think about things not explicitly said, and it was really difficult, but interesting, and the first time I felt listening was fun”. Later in the course, these reflections gave way to codes related to concentration, generally related to wavering attention over longer passages, or when “there was lots I didn’t know about and it was long, which made it hard to concentrate”. Nevertheless, such remarks were usually qualified by a desire to improve concentration. These related to comments that demonstrated perceived improvement over time, such as “I’ve really improved since the beginning! I was able to fully imagine the story the second time in today’s listening”, and consistent engagement throughout the course: “In the first class, when I heard it was long listening, I felt demotivated and panicky, but now I’m like ‘bring it on!’”.

This final theme seemed to be supported by the course design, which encouraged critical engagement with the passages, and not only appeared to increase enjoyment but also intimated a connection between theoretical decentering and mediation, and the students’ learning.

Concluding Remarks

The compulsory listening-focused course in this study was designed to create “shared spaces that facilitate creativity, openness and mutual understanding” (Piccardo et al., 2019, pp. 23-24). It also sought to encourage critical engagement with the listening passages, which appeared to result in the facilitation of decentering (i.e., access to new “vantage points,” as in Candelier et al., 2012) by having the students collaborate to derive answers that were not explicitly stated, applying whatever tools they had at their disposal to consider various contexts, familiar and unfamiliar, through the target language. Findings suggested a greater level of intellectual engagement

Table 4

Engagement Codes, Descriptions, and Examples

Codes (number)	Description	Example
Previous learning experiences/ ongoing experience (64)	Comparisons to previous learning experiences; shifts in perception of listening skills.	“It was the first time I had ever listened to a passage and had to think of my own answer.” “I don’t hate listening as much as I used to.”
Concentration (19)	Reflections on the capacity to remain engaged.	“There was a lot I didn’t know, so I lost my focus part way through.”

than prior experiences had encouraged, an engagement supported by opportunities for mediation (see Council of Europe, 2020).

Present-day language teachers face dual pressures: the need to prepare students to deal with unfamiliar contexts through the application of unfamiliar language, which requires engagement with the unknown and with multiple viewpoints (Candelier et al., 2012), and the updating of linguistic and cultural schemas (Piaget, 1926/2005). At the same time, they must deal with standardized tests that can lead to reductive practices, such as the treatment of language as a mere set of lexical and grammatical knowledge to be learned through rote practice of test content. It is hoped that the present study might begin to shed light on how both objectives may be approached simultaneously.

While the results of this study were promising, it has several limitations. As an exploratory, qualitative study, it did not investigate how the practicing and learning (decentering and mediation) in the classroom might have impacted standardized test scores, which presents one avenue for further investigation. Another limitation was the small sample, which consisted of students from one department at a single university. From a qualitative perspective, structured reflection sheets that target (explicitly or implicitly) the theoretical constructs of course design could also lead to more robust results regarding students' learning, as could implementation of pre- and post-course questionnaires.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the results of this preliminary study can provide insight as to how theory can be applied to practice and how, even under the pressures of testing, language educators can avoid the all-too-easy trap of rote teaching and begin to reconcile theory with institutional pressures in the pursuit of our primary responsibility: preparing learners to engage with an increasingly globalized and complex world that cannot be reduced to a simple set of lexical and grammatical items.

Notes

1. As a stark example, at Imjin River during the Korean war, when 650 British were facing 10,000 enemy troops and an American commander inquired as to their status, the British commander, employing typical English understatement (i.e., characterizing genuinely dire circumstances with light language, a cultural habit shared by some, but not all, Anglophone cultures), described the situation as “a bit sticky” (Mackenzie, 2013, p. 82). The British commander perhaps assumed that a shared

language meant shared cultural norms as well. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and a literal description of the situation would likely have been better: Taking the British commander's statement at face value, the American commander deferred sending reinforcements, tragically resulting in the deaths of 610 British soldiers.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 22K13185. Also, thanks go to James Gray for inspiring many passages that were adapted for the classes.

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Appendix: Example Listening Script and Questions

A Dying Culture?*

Kia Ora! Today I'm going to tell you about the Māori people and culture, who are a big part of our country. They first arrived about one thousand years ago, after crossing more than three thousand kilometers in canoes from the islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

This was a rich country for the Māori. There were many forests, and many birds and fish as well. The Māori brought plants with them, such as sweet potatoes and other crops. Māori houses were often only one large room, but they were strong and beautiful. Sometimes, different tribes of Māori would go to war with each other. On occasion, they would perform a type of war dance to frighten their enemies, to try to avoid battle.

After the Māori had been here for about 800 years, European settlers began to arrive. They also thought this was a rich country, and after 100 years of settling, they outnumbered the Māori people by more than ten to one. In 1900, there were less than fifty thousand Māori people. When they went to school, they had to use English, and were punished for using the Māori language. Many people thought that soon the Māori language and culture would die out.

But now, the number of Māori speakers is increasing. There are schools and universities where the Māori language is used. Māori can be heard on television and radio and seen on public signs. Māori is also used by people with no Māori heritage, and even my parents have started to use a little bit every day.

Māori is no longer a dying culture. It is recognized as something that makes our country unique. Some parts of Māori culture are now shared by everyone in the country. For instance, our national rugby team performs a *haka* before each of their matches. If you fly into our country, you will be greeted with a big sign saying 'Haere mai' in Māori. I hope you can visit one day and see the vibrant Māori culture in our country.

1. What country is the narrator from?
2. How many Europeans lived in the country in 1900?
3. About when did the Europeans arrive?
4. Is there more than one kind of Haka?
5. Is the narrator Māori?
6. What does the phrase 'Haere mai' mean?

*Adapted in part from *Asian and Pacific Speed Readings for ESL Learners* (Quinn et al., 2017).

World Englishes as a Pedagogical Stance: Principles to Consider in ELT

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The World Englishes (WE) paradigm, by challenging the traditional, monolithic native-speaker norm and advocating instead linguistic diversity and identity, reconceptualized the use and users of English in post-colonial and globalized societies. WE thus has direct implications for English language teaching; however, bridging theory and practice is a challenging task for teachers and scholars because of the changes and innovations that the paradigm requires. This article attempts to address the theory–practice divide and discusses how teachers can incorporate WE perspectives into the classroom in a way where WE-informed pedagogy strengthens existing teaching practice without requiring an overhaul of curriculum design. Shifting the focus from a pedagogical method to a pedagogical stance, this article suggests principles for practice of WE-informed pedagogy, including four points to consider when dealing with the diversity of English in the classroom.

World Englishes (WE)のパラダイムはネイティブスピーカーモデルの伝統的で画一的な規範に疑問を呈し、言語にまつわる多様性やアイデンティティの重要性を提唱することで、ポストコロニアル・グローバル社会における英語使用、英語使用者を再概念化した。この英語使用(者)観のパラダイムシフトは英語教育に直接的な示唆を与えているが、教師や研究者にとって理論と実践の溝を埋めるのは、そのパラダイムが要する変化・イノベーションゆえに容易ではない。本稿は、カリキュラムデザインの大きな見直しを要しない、日々の教育実践とWE論を効果的に結びつけるための提案を行う。指導の方法論ではなく、教員が取る姿勢・態度に注目して、WEの教育的示唆を教室に反映させるための原則を、英語の多様性を扱う際に考慮すべき4つの点に注目しながら論じる。

<https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTL47.2-3>

Research in World Englishes (WE) has advanced our understanding of the multicultural identities of English users, linguistic diversity, and linguistic social justice in the post-colonial and globalized world, paving the way for the development of newer paradigms with similar ideological tenets such as English as a lingua franca (ELF), English as an international language (EIL), and Global Englishes (GE). As do these subsequent paradigms, WE carries pedagogical implications for English language teaching (ELT). However, WE scholars have been faced with the challenge of finding ways to utilize research knowledge to inform practitioners “in ways that resonate with their discourse” (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2017, p. 72). This paper is a response to the need to address a theory–practice divide in this area. After providing a brief overview of WE in ELT, I will discuss and propose research-informed suggestions for

how teachers can incorporate WE perspectives into the classroom, with a sensitivity to the relevance and practical application in everyday situated practice that teachers engage in.

World Englishes and ELT

The discussion of teaching WE in ELT gained momentum in academia when scholars such as B. B. Kachru (1992) articulated the diversely changing sociolinguistic reality of English use and users in the world, reconceptualizing the goals of learning and teaching English while challenging the traditional native-speaker model and offering various suggestions on teaching WE. Simply put, the teaching of WE pertains to how the reality of diverse English communication in global contexts can be incorporated into the classroom. It is not just about teaching varieties of English different from what is called “standard English.” The sociolinguistic reality of English evidences the traditional yardsticks of standard British and American English losing their relevance and validity in measuring the effectiveness of English communication in multicultural and multilingual society (B. B. Kachru, 1992). However, what has been observed in ELT is “the real-world tenacity of normative beliefs about language, language use, and language users” (Kubota, 2021, p. 81), which potentially perpetuates social injustice. As B. B. Kachru (1992) himself admitted, teaching WE is challenging and akin to teachers’ coping with an attitudinal and methodological paradigm shift. Scholars have argued that pedagogy in keeping with the tenets of WE and the related paradigms strive for “breaking the epistemic dependency” on the native speaker (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 24) and rest on “an entirely different set of assumptions than the teaching and learning of any other second or foreign language” (McKay, 2002, p. 1).

World Englishes as a Pedagogical Stance

Although the discussion of incorporating WE perspectives into the classroom may give the impression that it requires great innovation, I argue that it does not always have to be methodologically innovative; rather, it is something teachers can incorporate into their classroom with relative ease in a way that does

not interfere with their existing everyday teaching practice. I do not intend to downplay the value of attempting the conceptual and methodological overhaul that WE-related pedagogy calls for. Rather, I argue that the progressive scholarly discussion on the plurality and complexity of Englishes and the inclination towards pedagogical innovation may be what runs the risk of estranging teachers who are under contextual limitations (e.g., national standards, school curricula, assessment, collegiality, student needs). These teachers may often not be afforded the necessary autonomy to carry out such innovation. Again, I maintain that teacher practice does not have to be *innovative* to be WE-informed. In other words, it does not have to be something methodologically special or startling. Echoing similar views by Rose and Galloway (2019) and Saraceni (2015), I argue that what we need is the reconceptualization of teaching WE, shifting our focus from a pedagogical method to a pedagogical stance. WE as a pedagogical stance offers guiding principles to be interwoven into the existing ELT curricula in various teaching contexts. With a focus on secondary EFL contexts such as Japan, where dependency on idealized native-speaker norms prevails at both the policy and individual levels (Aoyama, 2021), the following section details research-informed principles that are necessary in order to take up a WE pedagogical stance, which will help teachers navigate from the theory to its practical application.

The Overarching Principle of WE as a Pedagogical Stance: Enriching Attitudes Toward English Use and Users in Global Contexts

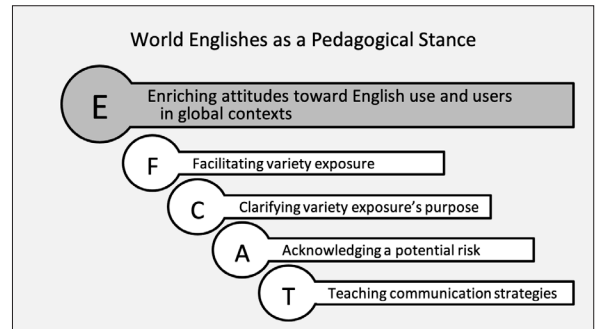
The primary goal of WE-informed pedagogy is to enrich students' attitudes toward the diversity of English users and uses in the global context (B. B. Kachru, 1992). Being keen to awareness-raising opportunities for students to think about the diversity of English users from different racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds is key in WE as a pedagogical stance. Considering that the predominant instructional model is standard English, the lack of such awareness-raising may lead to or perpetuate normative, narrow-minded attitudes toward English use and users anchored on idealized native-speaker models, where deviation from the standard is framed as deficit. This might inadvertently plant the seed of linguistic racism in students' minds, which also hampers their agentive self-identification as legitimate L2 English users.

The first step to nurturing open-minded, respectful attitudes toward diverse English users is to purposefully expose students to the variety,

uniqueness, and creativity shown by English users in the real world. The adoption of WE as a pedagogical stance can be conceptualized as a single overarching principle informed by four supporting sub-principles and encapsulated by the acronym EFCAT (see Figure 1). The overarching principle is one of enriching attitudes toward English use and users in global contexts. Each of its four supporting sub-principles will now be discussed in turn.

Figure 1

EFCAT: Principles of World Englishes as a Pedagogical Stance



Facilitating Variety Exposure: Purposeful Exposure to the Diversity of English Users

Purposefully planning to provide students with exposure to other varieties of English is of central importance in WE-informed pedagogy (B. B. Kachru, 1992; Y. Kachru, 2011; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). This is a pedagogical response to the fact that English variations are natural and omnipresent (Matsuda, 2019). Exposure to these other varieties can be smoothly embedded in the curricula where a designated textbook is the primary teaching material for instruction. For example, to supplement the input relevant to the teaching content, the use of authentic multimodal materials from online video platforms (e.g., YouTube) or online news media that feature diverse speakers of English would be the most feasible way. When the content of a lesson unit includes a story or explanation of specific individuals, cultures, or places, teachers often use actual footage about these to promote student engagement and provide necessary scaffolding for instruction. However, this practice also offers the potential for incorporating other varieties of English used in the real world into the classroom. Moreover, given the rich variety of topics in English textbooks, such opportunities are abundant. In addition to native and non-native English speakers from other countries, exposure to non-native English speakers who share the same L1 as students should also be encouraged in class to raise awareness of the ownership and performativity of English.

Clarifying Variety Exposure's Purpose: Not for "Studying" Each Variety

Although WE-informed pedagogy stresses exposure to varieties of English, the aim is not extensive linguistic analysis or mastery of each variety (Y. Kachru, 2011; Matsuda, 2019). As previously discussed, the central aim is the development of open-minded, neutral attitudes toward diverse English use and users. As Matsuda (2019) argues, what should be prioritized in instruction is "the meta-knowledge of the linguistic diversity [rather] than the specific formal and functional rules of particular varieties" (p. 688). In other words, through experiencing other varieties of English, students need to understand that the institutionally dominant model of English, namely standard English, is just one that serves a convenient purpose for learning and does not mean it is superior to any other. Such understanding can be strengthened by using discussion activities where students engage in topics about English varieties and language ideologies (e.g., Aoyama & Denton, 2022; Rose & Galloway, 2017).

In addition, assessment can play an important role in raising students' critical awareness. Teacher feedback on student performance in class and evaluation criteria for classroom-based oral performance tests should focus on what students can do using English, rather than on how similar their performance is to that of traditional native speakers. Therefore, criteria for assessing pronunciation on performance tests should especially be scrutinized in this regard.

Acknowledging a Potential Risk: Sensitivity to the Risk of Essentialization of English Varieties

One of the theoretical criticisms of WE is that it characterizes linguistic diversity in terms of differences between dominant national varieties and tends to overlook variety within nations (Pennycook, 2016). The nation-based model of conceptualizing English varieties could lead to students' overgeneralizing or essentializing language use and users within the country. Simplistic introduction of English varieties might produce or reinforce certain stereotypes about English users if students fail to recognize the nature of diversity, that is, the premise that there is always variety within variety and exception from variety (Aoyama et al., 2023). Thus, it is judicious for teachers to be sensitive to the risk of naïve essentialization of varieties when introducing a specific type of national or regional variety of English.

Here, I am not arguing against utilizing the nation-based model of English to discuss linguistic variety in the classroom. The nation-based English variety should be strategically introduced

as a convenient starting point in understanding linguistic diversity and acknowledging each English as a variety in its own right. What I problematize is the superficial treatment of linguistic variety in the classroom, which bears the aforementioned risk of stereotyping. An example of this is the use of short online videos that demonstrate reductionist and essentialist views toward particular English varieties for attention-grabbing or entertainment (e.g., YouTube or TikTok videos titled "Indian English vs. Japanese English") with no further explanation or discussion of the complex nature of language use, which fails to nurture students' nuanced understanding of linguistic diversity.

Teaching Communication Strategies: Mediating Strategies to Negotiate Differences

How can teachers prepare their students to handle different English varieties? Research on ELT has suggested that communication strategies could play an important role. A well-researched area since the early days of ELT, the teaching of communication strategies (see Dörnyei, 1995) is often given an explicit focus in speaking and listening instruction aimed at helping students develop their competence in impromptu interactions with others. WE-informed pedagogy encourages teaching communication strategies, as they are regarded as mediating strategies in negotiating linguistic and cultural differences in today's diverse communication contexts (Canagarajah, 2007; Kubota, 2012). Students benefit from explicit instruction on asking for repetition and clarification, rephrasing and circumlocution, taking conversational turns, using backchanneling, and employing full linguistic (i.e., including other languages/varieties) and non-linguistic (e.g., gestural) repertoires.

Also, although it does not sound like a strategy in a literal sense, utilizing or practicing attitudinal resources such as patience, tolerance, and openness to difference (Canagarajah, 2007; Kubota, 2012) is key to preparing students for the diverse communication opportunities they might encounter in the future. Thus, it is reasonable and natural that developing communication strategies should become one objective in a unit or syllabus. Accordingly, a rubric for classroom-based performance testing needs to reflect this objective, including a criterion to evaluate whether students can use these communication strategies to achieve what they want to do, rather than how "accurate" their utterances are compared to the standard.

Conclusion

In arguing for a shift of focus from a pedagogical method to a pedagogical stance, I have discussed

the principles for practice of a WE-informed pedagogy. As a former mid-career high school teacher of English in Japan, I understand contextual limitations such as pedagogical priority given to imminent entrance exams, the lack of resources and professional development opportunities for teachers, and all other non-teaching-related responsibilities that keep teachers busy. I hope that the focus on a stance as opposed to methodological innovations enables teachers to understand how the essence of WE-informed pedagogy can be implemented in a way that does not interfere with, but instead strengthens existing teaching practice without requiring an overhaul of curriculum design. As Kubota (2012) suggests, what is important is for practitioners to be keen for potential teachable moments and to effectively use them in instruction. WE as a pedagogical stance will prepare teachers to better predict, capture, and most importantly, respond to such critical moments in the classroom.

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Technology and Notetaking in English-Medium Instruction: A Case for Increased Attention

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Developments in technology have recently attracted interest from researchers investigating notetaking in first language (L1) contexts. Digital tools such as computers and presentation slides have impacted how students take notes in comparison to the traditional longhand method of using pen and paper. Technology-based practices, such as taking notes with computers, writing notes on handouts of lecture slides, and even taking photos of information instead of taking notes, have begun to play increasingly larger roles in English-medium instruction (EMI) in second language (L2) English contexts. However, the robust and expanding research agenda on notetaking and technology evident in L1 environments has yet to stimulate similar interest in L2 contexts. The present paper reviews relevant research on notetaking and technology from L1 contexts and argues the need for similar investigations in L2 contexts such as Japan, where increasing numbers of students are enrolled in EMI courses.

テクノロジーの進歩により、第一言語(L1)環境におけるノート取りの研究に関心が集まっている。これはコンピューターやパワーポイントなどのデジタルツールが、ペンと紙を使用する従来のノート取りの手法に変化を及ぼしているからである。コンピューターでノートを取る、講義スライドの配布物にメモを書く、ノートを取る代わりに写真を撮るなど、デジタル技術は英語を第二言語(L2)とする環境における英語で教える(EMI)授業において、ますます大きな役割を担うようになってきている。しかし、L1環境におけるノート取りとテクノロジーに関する研究に比べるとL2環境における研究はまだ限定的である。本論はL1環境におけるノート取りとテクノロジーに関する研究の先行文献調査の後に、日本のようなEMIの授業を履修する学生が増加しているL2環境においても同様の調査研究を行う必要性があることを主張する。

<https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT47.2-4>

Students in higher education face an overload of information from required readings, online sources, and lectures. To help them manage and learn from these sources of input, many students elect to take notes—a process that is generally thought to be beneficial in academic contexts. Notetaking becomes especially important when students are learning content delivered in a second language (L2), such as English-medium instruction (EMI) contexts, which have been rapidly increas-

ing around the world. For example, in 2019, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology—Japan (MEXT) reported that the number of domestic institutions offering degree programs in English nearly doubled from 2005 to 2015. When attending lectures, participating in seminars, and reading course literature in an L2, students in these EMI courses are likely faced with information processing challenges that are more intense than would be the case in their first languages.

Regardless of language of instruction, an essential tool for effectively managing, organizing, and making sense of course material is notetaking (see Crawford, 2016, for a review and discussion of relevant research with links to the Japanese context). During lectures, students must listen to and understand the content, decide what to take note of and how, and then physically transcribe it, all in rapid succession while continuing to pay attention for new important information. To help students succeed in notetaking that facilitates learning and stimulates accurate and meaningful recall of lecture content, digital tools offer potential support in terms of speed, efficiency, and convenience. Using laptops to type notes is one obvious example of the impact technology has had on notetaking practice. Another digital strategy aimed at increasing student learning involves teachers providing printed slide handouts prior to lectures, which students can use to write notes on. Teachers of EMI courses in Japan may wish to include strategies for effectively utilizing such technology in notetaking instruction alongside traditional longhand notetaking. In fact, the same can be said for teachers of English for academic purposes (EAP). Here, EAP refers to courses that prioritize academic use of English as an L2, such as high school or bridge courses, where L2 English proficiency is developed and assessed, while EMI refers to university courses where content rather than language use is in focus.

In first language (L1) contexts, the number of studies on how technology affects notetaking performance has been increasing in recent years.

Such research has compared the quality, quantity, and usefulness of notetaking via digital tools such as laptops and tablets as opposed to traditional pen and paper notetaking (PPN). Instructor-provided slide handouts may also influence how students take notes in comparison to how they do with free form notes (i.e., blank or lined paper without images of slides). While these issues have begun to receive attention in L1 contexts, greater attention is still needed in L2 contexts, where an increasing number of L2 English users are learning in EMI contexts. In EMI, students face listening, learning, and notetaking challenges distinct from those in L1 contexts. As such, research findings from L1 contexts are insufficient to address issues related to how L2 English users take notes in EMI. Such studies can be built upon and integrated into a new avenue of digital notetaking research set exclusively within L2 EMI contexts. To delineate the gap between attention to notetaking in L1 vs. L2 contexts, the present paper begins by summarizing recent L1 digital notetaking studies and highlighting the need for similar explorations of technology's impact on L2 notetaking. Throughout the paper, arguments are put forth with the aim of encouraging further research aimed at notetaking in EMI, which should be of interest to Japanese EAP students preparing for learning in EMI as well as instructors already teaching such courses.

On Notetaking: Emerging Digital Options The Recording and Storage of Information

Notetaking serves two main theoretical functions related to learning: the encoding function, or the immediate act of writing/typing the notes, and the storage function, which allows the noted information to be accessed at a later time (DiVesta & Gray, 1972). Both of these functions are relevant for research into the effects of digital tools on notetaking in EAP and EMI, particularly in a context like Japan, where technology is so prevalent in everyday life. Precisely how notes are taken under certain methodological and formatting conditions is a matter of encoding. A key question is how these variables influence the quality and quantity of the notes taken.

The storage effect is also important. Questions that have received scant attention thus far in L2 contexts include whether and how students interact with their notes after taking them and whether notetaking method (i.e., longhand or digital) plays a role in such usage. These issues have been attracting attention in L1 research literature and deserve similar notice in L2 contexts, particularly because of the challenges faced by the growing numbers of students in EAP and EMI courses.

Tools and Technologies for Taking Notes

For recording information, notetakers have a variety of options. Although notes have traditionally been taken by hand on paper using pencils and other writing implements (e.g., colored pens or highlighters), other options (e.g., laptop computers, tablets, electronic pencils, and notetaking apps) have also become available in recent years. Moreover, compared to traditional PPN, these digital options offer potential advantages in terms of convenience, speed, and integration of multimedia during the notetaking process, as well as additional security of storage. The increasing frequency of technology use in L1 contexts has prompted research interest and stimulated studies focused on various manifestations of computerized notetaking (CN) (e.g., via laptops, tablets, and even smartphones). However, it remains unclear whether one tool or technology is better than others.

In terms of notetaking method (e.g., PPN or CN), several recent studies have compared the quantity of notes and their contributions to learning in L1. As Morehead, Dunlosky, Rawson, et al.'s (2019) survey of US students ($n = 577$) reported a majority using PPN (86%) and nearly half also using CN (46%), such studies appear to be warranted. Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014) were among the first to compare the notes and comprehension test results of PPN and CN groups. Their findings suggest that CN and the temptation to type the speaker's output verbatim may lead to shallower processing of input and learning than does PPN. In a replication of Mueller and Oppenheimer's (2014) study, Morehead, Dunlosky, and Rawson (2019) failed to reproduce the original findings and found that notetaking method had no impact on test scores. They also included a tablet computer group to allow comparisons between three methods (i.e., PPN, CN, and e-Writers). The findings showed that the quantity of words in notes was greatest for the CN group and similar for the PPN and e-Writer tablet groups. Luo et al. (2018) also compared PPN and CN notetaking and found that laptop notetakers recorded more notes (i.e., idea units and individual words) than their longhand counterparts, and that longhand notetakers recorded more visual notes (i.e., images). Despite the growing body of research, no clear evidence has been provided to date on whether smaller yet denser notes are more effective for learning than are larger quantities of notes that may contain less meaningful information. Such inconsistent findings have led Morehead, Dunlosky, and Rawson (2019) to conclude that "the available evidence does not provide a definitive answer to [whether longhand, laptop or tablet notetaking is preferable]" (p. 773).

As pointed out by Siegel (2020), much research on the use of technology for notetaking in L1 contexts has failed to raise similar questions in L2 contexts, where a traditional view of notetaking as PPN is more common; for example, longhand notetaking remains prevalent in EAP textbooks that focus on listening to lectures and notetaking in order to prepare students for EMI. While more research is clearly needed in L1 contexts, these questions should also be getting research attention in EAP and EMI since they are crucial to student learning, especially when comprehension levels in EMI lectures are likely lower than are those in L1 contexts. Moreover, the range of L2 abilities among students and teachers in EMI can further complicate teaching and learning. On the one hand, students require receptive L2 abilities to process incoming input, after which they need to produce notes through writing or typing (often in the L2). On the other hand, EMI teachers can impact notetaking through their spoken delivery (e.g., rate of speech, articulation, pausing patterns, and accent) and through pedagogical skills (e.g., giving a clearly organized lecture and providing accessible examples). Having access to and analyzing student notes taken via these various methods can provide valuable insights that can inform student practice, preparations in EAP courses, and the delivery of EMI lecture material.

Options for Structuring Notes

Notes can be taken in a number of different ways, but a main distinction is whether the notes are structured (in some systematic way) or unstructured. Structured notes have typically been associated with PPN. Common structures include the outline format, the Cornell method, and the use of bullet points. Some computer word processing programs also allow for formats such as outlines and bullet points, but they are less accommodating of more complicated formats (e.g., the Cornell method or mind-maps). The findings of Morehead, Dunlosky, Rawson, Blasiman and Hollis's (2019) survey of L1 students indicate that the linear, top-to-bottom, sequential nature of bullet points and/or the outline format, along with indentation features to indicate the significance and relationships between information (i.e., the main idea-supporting detail-example relationship) remains the preferred and most commonly used organizational style. However, the practice of distributing lecture slides, either in paper or digital (i.e., soft) format, may disrupt this structural preference in terms of spatial layout (i.e., the multiple square shapes on the page; see Figure 1 below) and decision making. By deciding what information is important enough to include on the

slides, the lecturer is effectively depriving students of that valuable cognitive activity. As such, the optimal structuring of digital notes remains uncertain.

Providing Slide Handouts

When given copies of slides, students typically write notes on them. Printed slides are likely intended to provide structured support for lecture comprehension and notetaking; however, student effectiveness in doing so has not been empirically investigated in EMI contexts. When students are given freedom to take notes on blank paper, they can select one of many methods (i.e., use free form; see Figure 2). However, when they are provided partial slides (i.e., those that contain some, but likely not all, of the information they need to learn from a lecture), their notetaking performance is likely to differ. Furthermore, the timing of making slides accessible to students (i.e., before or after the lecture) is another related area that has received attention in L1 contexts (e.g., León & García-Martínez, 2021).

Figure 1

Illustration of Slide-Based Handout to Support Comprehension and Notetaking

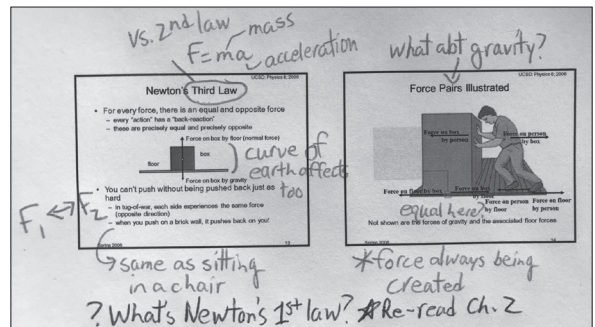
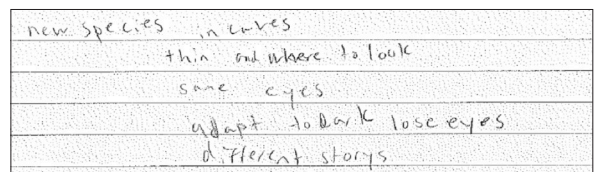


Figure 2

Illustration of Free-Form Notes



Another question to consider is whether instructors are justified in providing students with slides at all. That is, does this practice actually aid student learning and performance? According to Worthington and Levasseur's (2015) study at L1 universities, providing students with slides has an

adverse effect on course performance. Students who received slides performed worse on exam questions than those who did not receive slides. This finding was consistent for both complete slides (i.e., those with all necessary information) and partial slides (i.e., those on which the teacher has purposefully omitted certain information). Marsh and Sink (2010) found that providing access to handouts prior to L1 lectures led to less notetaking but better overall test performance. In a more recent study by Kim (2018), free-form notetakers outperformed those with access to full or partial slides. Notetaking research from L2 contexts seems limited to structures traditionally associated with PPN, such as the Cornell method and the outline format (e.g., Crawford, 2015; Siegel, 2016), and it has yet to address how slide handouts can affect notetaking in classes where English is used as an L2.

A Need for Studies on Technology and Notetaking in EAP and EMI

In a review of recent work on the topic (Siegel, 2020), only Debopriyo et al.'s (2014) study on notetaking apps used in L2 contexts focused on some aspect of digital notetaking. Thus, it seems that the valuable work conducted in L1 contexts has yet to spark similar interest and research agendas in L2 EAP and EMI. Technology and education journals such as *Computer Assisted Language Learning* (CALL) and *Computers & Education*, along with those focused on academic English more generally, such as *The Journal of English Medium Instruction*, are relevant outlets. Important areas of potential investigation include how PPN and CN are utilized by Japanese EAP and EMI students and what roles slides play in lecture notetaking. Decisions about what methods students use to take notes and how they do so (e.g., via translanguaging, paraphrasing, or abbreviation) are likely influenced by digital tools, and these topics need to be better understood in order to provide appropriate support to the many EAP and EMI students and teachers who engage in notetaking and notetaking instruction, respectively. The ways in which EMI learning and notetaking have been affected by online teaching via Zoom (and similar systems) are other areas in need of prompt attention. Not only has notetaking in EMI been underappreciated as a research avenue that can offer valuable insights related to applied educational psychology, lecture comprehension, and notetaking behavior, but technological aspects have also been largely omitted from research conducted on notetaking in L2 contexts. It is hoped that the attempt made here to raise awareness of the current

situation will provide impetus for additional attention in this area.

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ARTICLES

JALT PRACTICE

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[JALT PRACTICE] TLT INTERVIEWS



Torrin Shimono & James Nobis

TLT Interviews brings you direct insights from leaders in the field of language learning, teaching, and education—and you are invited to be an interviewer! If you have a pertinent issue you would like to explore and have access to an expert or specialist, please make a submission of 2,000 words or less.

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.interviews@jalt.org

Welcome to the March/April edition of *TLT Interviews*. For this issue, we bring you an interview with Tomoko Yashima, who is a Professor of Applied Linguistics and Intercultural Communication at Kansai University. Her main research interests comprise three broad areas: 1) communication behaviors, 2) second language use in intercultural contact situations, and 3) motivation and affect in second language learning. She has published extensively on the topics of willingness to communicate (WTC) and international posture (IP), and her IP scale has become the standard used in IP-related research by scholars across the globe. Currently, she is exploring qualitative research methods in order to conduct humanistic empirical research that leads to an understanding of people embedded in their living contexts. She was interviewed by Ian Willey, who is an associate professor of English at Kagawa University. He is currently heading a MEXT-funded research project to explore ways to increase university students' IP. His research interests include second language writing, English for Specific Purposes, and classroom medium of instruction. Now, without further ado, to the interview!

Revisiting international posture: An Interview with Tomoko Yashima Ian Willey Kagawa University

Using psychometric scales to assess individual differences in language learning has been common since the end of the twentieth century. One of the best-known scales is the willingness to communicate (WTC) scale, developed in the field of first-language communication and later extended to second language (L2) learning in the works of MacIntyre and Doucette (2010). WTC is determined by one's perceived communicative competence in an L2 as well as L2 communication anxiety. Raising learners' WTC is now considered integral to learning an L2. Related to WTC is the construct of international posture (IP), developed by Tomoko Yashima about twenty years ago.

Dr. Yashima, a pioneer in WTC research, has previously spoken about IP in the pages of *The Language*

Teacher (Ryan, 2015), but now may be a good time to revisit this concept. Life is returning to normal as the pandemic settles: borders are opening and people are moving about once again. Japanese students may start thinking about studying abroad, or at least that is what university administrators and those in the Japanese government are hoping for. The number of Japanese students studying abroad has been declining for decades, and it is unclear what effect the pandemic has had on students' interest in studying abroad—or, for that matter, their IP. Has it decreased? If so, what can English instructors do to spark a renewed interest in international issues and studying abroad? There is no better person to ask these questions than Tomoko Yashima. IP plays a large role in my research as well, and recently I had the good fortune to be able to ask her several questions about IP both for my benefit and for that of *TLT* readers.

Ian Willey: *Thank you for taking the time for this interview. I'd like to begin with a discussion of what international posture means, as some readers may be unfamiliar with this concept. Could you please describe how you developed the international posture scale?*

Tomoko Yashima: I have been working in two somewhat separate research areas—L2 learning affect and motivation on one hand and intercultural communication on the other. My interest concerned both and it made perfect sense to me. But they were separate academic fields, in terms of conferences to attend, journals to read, etc. The idea of international posture, or IP, was born out of the intersection of the two fields and my attempt to integrate the two.

Before the year 2000, language learning motivation research was dominated by the Canadian schools with researchers including Gardner and MacIntyre (1991). Gardner's studies are well known for two contrasting motivational orientations, what he termed "integrativeness", or a tendency to approach and make friends with a specific L2 group or even identify with the group, and instrumental motives to study an L2 to get credits, a job, etc. His studies showed that integrativeness was a stronger and perhaps preferable motivator of L2 learning than instrumentality. I liked the idea of integrativeness but I felt, with English in Japan, we do not have a specific target group we identify with for studying English. For learners in Japan, English is like a window open to the world outside Japan, and a means to relate to people we cannot communicate with in Japanese. At the same time, we have utilitarian English learning goals: for example, getting a good job, attaining certain TOEIC scores, etcetera.

Friendship and utilitarian orientations coexist in many learners, and they both affect motivation. IP addresses both of these orientations. With IP, I wanted to focus on motivation to learn an L2 (English in many cases) as a lingua franca, so these two aspects are included. I was also interested in studies on intercultural competency (e.g., research by Gudykunst and Kim, 1984)—many ideas, including a tendency to approach or avoid foreigners (dissimilar others) and ethnocentrism, originate in their studies. I constructed an IP scale with items drawing on Gardner and MacIntyre's (1991) as well as Gudykunst and Kim's (1984) scales. It comprises different subsections representing different aspects of IP—intercultural approach/avoidance tendency, interest in international vocations and activities, interest in international news—and later I added having things to communicate with the world. They can be used separately or to assess IP as a whole.

Your own research, especially Yashima and Zenk-Nishide (2008), and that of some other scholars (e.g., Jiang, 2013) suggests that traditional English teaching methods fail to develop international posture in students and may even hinder the development of English proficiency. What do you perceive as ideal English teaching methods in Japan?

I showed in that paper that students exposed to content-based teaching using global studies content for longer hours grew in international posture and willingness to communicate more than those exposed to traditional grammar-oriented classes. In terms of proficiency, both groups did equally well. I'm a proponent of CLIL/content-based teaching where students learn to read about international issues, form attitudes, and communicate their thoughts while learning English. Nishi High School, where the 2008 study was conducted, had a wonderful CLIL program of global studies offering content-integrated skill-based classes and hand-made textbooks. But it was not possible without the devoted teachers and their passion.

Is it possible to put in place a system of English education at the secondary level that develops international posture without radically changing the entrance examination system?

I believe it does not just concern English teaching, but concerns how other subjects, such as Social Science, are taught. English tests used in entrance exams have been much improved over the years. Learners need to read well and fairly fast to gain high scores. Some History tests I saw, on the other hand, simply asked how much information written in the text students could produce.

I believe the acquisition of basic English skills is necessary in secondary-level education. The question is, what are the skills for? If students don't have any opportunities to use them, it is like learning a rule book, playing catch or swinging a bat without ever playing a baseball game. They need real games to exhibit their skills, to be engaged, and truly enjoy the sport. In the same way, we need to create some realistic opportunities for learners. Ideally, we should create some intercultural communication opportunities (for example, discussion on global issues) online or face-to-face, where students can meet with diverse partners and apply the skills they acquired in English classes.

Let's shift to the university context. What would an international posture-building curriculum at the university level look like?

You cannot play a good game with limited skills, but you can enjoy games if you have a reasonable level of competency. I have an impression that many college students have a reasonable level of English knowledge but there are limited contexts for them to use it. As applied linguists, we know that we learn a language by using it. We need to have students use the language 100 times more than we do now. Although IP concerns many different subjects that students learn at university, the IP that we can foster in the English curriculum is linked to communication. When learners have the context and partners to communicate in English, they learn to use English, starting from simple things. Gradually, they realize that they need to have contents to communicate. (This I believe relates to your research!) From my experience, students usually enjoy getting to know each other or what others think through communicating in English. When they have things to communicate that require a bit of preparation or research, usually that makes them want to communicate it to someone. So again, CLIL would be good. Students understand that they need to brush up on their skills if they want to make their voices clearer. The idea is that language, content, and desire to communicate develop together, not separately.

The range of partners one can communicate with will expand beyond borders if he/she learns to communicate in English. Communicating with non-Japanese speaking partners will be a novel experience for many students and teach them many things they did not otherwise notice. If they enjoy the experience, they might want to try again and for that they need to have things to communicate. If they feel they want to contribute more, that motivates them to learn vocabulary, grammar, or content, etc.

I feel that students in Japan are bombarded with the message, in education and society, that Japan is a unique, safe, and wonderful place. Is it possible to develop international posture in learners when "Domestic Posture" is so prominent?

There are individual differences in the tendency you described, and in a way, the IP scale was developed to capture the difference. IP is designed to assess the degree to which a person is open to the world outside the small Japanese community around him or her, and the degree he/she is ready to use English to meet with people, explore possibilities of working overseas, etc. What you call domestic posture is a tendency among those with a low level of IP. Another word used to express a similar tendency is *uchimuki* or looking inward-ness. Other researchers call the tendency non-risk-taking; these people prefer to be on the safe side of many things. It has much to do with Japanese cultural tendencies: running the risk of being a bit stereotypical, as is often pointed out by culture researchers, the tendency to conform to norms, hating to be different, or avoiding being called KY (where you can't "read the room"). Instead, sensitivity to others and doing things together, or *minna de*, is valued. This is deeply rooted in our culture, and there is nothing wrong with it, if we don't mind having Japanese youth not so dynamic, not super-creative, satisfied with the status quo, but quiet, polite, and kind. That's fine if we can continue to live in a secure, harmonious community—in other words, if we can continue to maintain this domestic posture. But can we? The world has always required us to adapt to unpredictable new situations. If we want to make people ready for new challenges or change young people's attributes to be somewhat more outward-looking, change-oriented, and welcoming of diversity, fostering IP together with a willingness to communicate might be helpful.

You have made several adjustments to the international posture scale over the years, and there has been some criticism of some parts of this scale. For instance, Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011) point out that the category "having things to communicate with the world" does not take into account the many new ways people can communicate over the Internet. Do you think any changes to the IP scale are in order? If so, how would you change it now?

I don't quite understand the criticism. You need things to communicate even when you are communicating online, or when speaking or writing, don't you? If you are interested in World Cup soccer, you can participate in an online community of soccer fans. I have a student who is interested in fashion

and participates regularly in an online community where French fashion is discussed.

Regarding changes, I dropped a subsection of the IP scale, “intercultural friendship orientation for English learning,” at an early stage because I thought there was a conceptual overlap between this and L2 motivation that is often correlated with IP in research—correlations are natural if there is conceptual overlap. I also changed wordings: I changed too specific wordings in some items (e.g., referring to north-south issues) to those that sound somewhat broader. We used these items in our research, though the items may not have been published.

You’ve mentioned to me that you are working on a shortened version of the international posture scale. Could you tell us a bit about this?

Yes, we are working on reducing the current 20-item survey to a shorter version, restoring the same core principles—addressing the motivation to learn English or an L2 as a lingua franca without a clear target population to identify with and addressing both integrative and instrumental aspects of learning an L2. We are getting good results and hopefully will get it ready to use soon.

Recently, many textbooks, at both the secondary and tertiary level, take up global issues. Would you say these are effective in developing learners’ international posture?

I believe it is a good trend. No language learning materials are content-free unless you teach only a vocabulary list. From the perspective of IP, exposure to global information including climate, war and peace, health and disease, and much more, is precious. Some of my students did not know anything about the abortion debate in the US, girls’ education in Afghanistan, or Bollywood before they read about them in English classes. Personally, I like materials that are easy to form opinions on or have students engaged emotionally.

What effect do you think the pandemic has had on international posture among learners in Japan and in general?

It is a shame that many schools and organizations had to have study abroad programs on hold during the pandemic. At my university, many students attended study abroad programs on Zoom. But in many of these students, I feel energy has accumulated, and it might burst when things become normal. Around me, I see many students who really wish to travel abroad and see the world firsthand. The

MEXT program Tobitate, which provides scholarships for study abroad, has been very popular and competitive. It shows finance is one thing that deters young people from studying abroad, as joining study abroad programs can be very expensive. On the other hand, the pandemic gave us opportunities to explore online teaching/learning and intercultural communication experiences. There are a lot of possibilities to create intercultural contact and use English online. I sincerely hope we create many more contexts for intercultural communication experiences, face-to-face or online, to create diverse communities of practice Japanese students can participate in.

Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with us.

Conclusion

As Professor Yashima notes, the world has greatly changed since the pandemic, and students are now able to experience intercultural communication online—a trend that is likely to continue with the growing popularity of online games and the coming metaverse. International posture is thus as important to studying or working abroad as it is for young people to enjoy meaningful intercultural experiences without ever leaving Japan. Kensaku Yoshida (2022) has observed that the New Course of Study for secondary education put forward by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) acknowledges, at long last, the way people need to use English outside of the classroom and focuses on developing practical skills to satisfy these needs. One can only hope that this will work and that similar approaches will trickle their way into tertiary English education.

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Recommended Readings

Botes, E., Gottschling, J., Stadler, M., & Greiff, S. (2020). A systemic narrative review of international posture: What is known and what still needs to be uncovered. *System*, 90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102232>

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[JALT PRAXIS] MY SHARE



Lorraine Kipling & Heather Yoder

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

Email: jaltpubs.tl.my.share@jalt.org • Web: <https://jalt-publications.org/tl/departments/myshare>

Welcome to My Share, the column where TLT readers share their tried-and-tested classroom activities for the benefit of the JALT community. The beginning of a new academic year is an excellent time to add a fresh idea to your repertoire, and in this issue we have a nice range of activities to inspire you!

First up, Jim Ronald outlines a getting-to-know-you activity in which students introduce and comment on their favourite songs. Next, Glenn Magee addresses issues of anxiety and performance pressure by applying Inverted-U theory to the language learning context. After that, Liam Ring explains how you can create your own level-appropriate dictation texts using vocabulary profilers. Finally, Kathryn Yamagishi provides a group activity for eliciting and sharing reflections on course content.

I hope you find some of the above ideas useful as you head into the Spring semester. Do you have an original activity that you are particularly proud of? If so, we always welcome contributions of useful and accessible activities from My Share veterans and newbies alike. Feel free to get in touch with us at jaltpubs.tl.my.share@jalt.org.

Best wishes, Lorraine

Sharing Songs, Building Friendships

Jim Ronald

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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** Songs, online interaction, pragmatics
- » **Learner English level:** Pre-intermediate and above
- » **Learner maturity:** University
- » **Preparation:** 1 hour
- » **Activity time:** 3–5 hours, depending on class size, over three weeks
- » **Materials:** Google document, example introduction (see Appendix), computer and projector (or Zoom, etc.)

In this activity, students introduce English songs to their classmates on a shared online document and respond to each other's songs. Ideally conducted at the beginning of the school year as students

get to know each other, this activity fulfils two important purposes: it provides students with an opportunity to interact positively with each of their new classmates and it brings students into contact with large amounts of the target language (songs, song lyrics, and classmates' writing).

Preparation

Step 1: Set up a horizontally formatted Google Document, which can be edited by by all the class members.

Step 2: Write a model introduction to an English song that you like. This should include the song title, singer or band name, a YouTube link to the song, a URL for the song lyrics, and a brief explanation of why you like this song (see Appendix).

Step 3: As examples for students, add a couple of real or fictional comments from fellow teachers or friends, together with your responses to these comments. Keep these simple and not too long (see Appendix).

Step 4: Below these examples, put a list of the names of the students in your class, so that they can add their comments about your song.

Step 5: Create a new section of the document for each student in the class. Under the student's name, set out the same headings as for your example: *Song title* and *Singer or band*, *YouTube link*, *Lyrics URL*, and *Why I chose this song*. Then, as in Step 4, add a list of all the other students in the class, together with the teacher's name at the bottom of the list. (See Appendix)

Procedure

Step 1: Introduce this activity. Show the prepared Google Document, with the links for the YouTube video and song lyrics for your song. Play the song, briefly show the lyrics, and read aloud what you have written, the comments, and your responses.

Step 2: Tell each student to write a comment about your song on the line on which their name is written.

Step 3: As students complete Step 2, give a short response to each student's comment.

Step 4: As homework, tell the students to choose a song and write an introduction to it in their section of the Google Document. Remind them to provide the links to the YouTube video and lyrics, as per your example.

Step 5: When the homework is complete, tell the students to read about their classmates' chosen songs, listen to the songs, read the lyrics, and write a comment about each song. This requires some in-

dependent work, so can also be done as homework to save class time.

Step 6: Finally, as Step 5 is being completed, instruct the students to respond to each classmate's comment about their song by the following class.

Step 7: In class, celebrate the completion of this activity, and respond to any language issues that have come up.

Extension

Start future classes by playing one or two of the students' chosen songs, possibly showing the students' introductions to the songs.

Conclusion

This activity is especially useful for building confidence and developing relationships with new classmates in the first classes of a new course. It has proven very popular, with students expressing appreciation for the language use involved, for the contact it provided with classmates, and for the songs they introduced.

Appendix

A colored version of the appendix is available from the online version of this article at <https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

A Song I Like!

Jim Ronald

- Song title and singer or band: "Happy" Tokyo by Pharrell Williams
- YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Qrdu62uZqQ>
- Song lyrics URL: <https://genius.com/Pharrell-williams-happy-lyrics>
- Why I chose this song: Hello, everyone! The song I have chosen to share with our class is "Happy" by Pharrell Williams.

I first heard this song about eight years ago - and I danced in my kitchen as I listened to it! When the Coronavirus pandemic started, I found this version set in Tokyo and it really cheered me up. I like the way they show all different kinds of people in different public places in Tokyo enjoying dancing to this song - being HAPPY! I hope you like it, too!

By the way, do you remember this song from when it came out?

Comments, questions, and responses! (Choose the colour font you like!)

Amir Feroze: *I like this song, too. Do you want to dance? Jim: Yes, but not with you - hahaha ;-)*

Kris Habacon: *The lyrics are a bit strange! "a house without a roof"? Jim: True, but I like those lyrics, too, including "a house without a roof!"*

Naomi Miura: *I like this song because I feel that my heart has become strong! Jim: Yes, free and strong—I listen and imagine I can dance in the street like that!*

Nana Matsuura: *I feel they really enjoyed dancing! Jim: Yes, they look so full of life, and I want more of that, too!*

Koki Miyamoto: *Do you remember this song from when it came out? Jim: I remember the first time I heard it—about 10 years ago?*

Rei Fukui: *I have heard the song. The song makes us happy. Jim: Yes, it reminds me of that Japanese song by Ai, Happiness!*

Momoka Fujii: *I have heard this famous song many times on TV and in shops. this song made me happy too, Jim: Good to hear from you! I'm glad you like it, too :-)*

Yuma Kawachi: *This song makes me happy!!! When I sit in the train, I become happy. If I feel lonely and sad, I listen to this music!!!! Jim: Yuma, let's play it in class one day! Do you think that everyone will dance? Maybe in our final class - in January!*

Hyuga Kawamoto: *I have heard it somewhere before. This song has a big power and I felt whenever we listen to it, anyone can be happy!*

Jim: *Thanks, Hyuga. I usually only listen to this song when I'm already happy—but I want to believe it can change our moods!*

Arisa Fujita: *I like this song very much too!! I hope these happy days will return with the decrease in the coronavirus~ ;-)* Jim: *Yes, you're right - and I think it's the hope in this song and video in this song that makes me love it!*

Kosuke Matsuo: *I have heard the song many times!! I like it too! Jim: I'm glad so many people like this song. This YouTube video is special, too!*



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November 24~27, 2023

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Optimal Learning Inverted-U

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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** Anxiety reduction, collaborative learning, awareness raising, well-being
- » **Learner English level:** Low intermediate and above
- » **Learner maturity:** University
- » **Preparation time:** Less than 30 minutes
- » **Activity time:** 60-90 minutes
- » **Materials:** Handouts A and B (see appendices)

Inverted-U Theory (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908) provides students with an objective way to address learning-related anxiety. The theory proposes that there is an optimal level of pressure at the top of the curve, and beyond that level of pressure, performance starts to suffer. It is a frequently discussed theory in psychology, in particular sports psychology and coaching. Adapting the theory for language teaching presents an opportunity to raise student awareness of strategies to reduce anxiety and pressure in the classroom.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare class slides and/or handouts of *Optimal Learning Inverted-U* (Appendix A) and *Pressure Adjectives List* (Appendix B)

Procedure

Step 1: Put students into groups and ask them how they might help, or what they might say to, another student who is struggling to study and concentrate in class. Elicit answers from each group.

Step 2: In the same groups, ask students to recall times they were really engaged in learning. Elicit answers from each group.

Step 3: Show students the *Optimal Learning Inverted-U* chart and *Pressure Adjectives List*. Introduce the theme of helping yourself and others move from highly stressed situations to highly immersed learning situations by accessing vocabulary for your own feelings, and creating strategies for helping yourself

and others learn more effectively.

Step 4: Explain that they will need to add their own words for numbers 2 through 4 (too little pressure), and 7 through 9 (too much pressure) on the *Optimal Learning Inverted-U*. You can use your own experiences as examples for students. For instance, “The class was too easy for me, and the teacher lectured all the time without allowing us to interact.” Or if the class was too hard for you, “The teacher always called me by name to answer, so I couldn’t concentrate.” Make sure to point out that the sweet spot is in the middle.

Step 5: In groups, ask students to add words to their charts based on their own learning experiences.

Step 6: Next, demonstrate something you do to relax when you need to. This might be walking outside, breathing exercises, doodling or fidget toys (fidget spinners).

Step 7: Ask students to discuss things they do to make themselves more relaxed when studying. As a group, ask them to give feedback on one activity that students could use in the classroom.

Step 8: Each group of students should write up one activity on the board for relaxing in the classroom.

Step 9: Ask students to vote, by raising hands, for the activity they would like to try first in class and then encourage them to try it.

Step 10: Tell students they will use this chart to monitor their pressure levels in class and will use the exercises they shared to get back to feeling at their best.

Conclusion

When the activity is introduced for the first time, it takes some time to discuss. However, in subsequent classes, students can reflect and pick out strategies with ease. The ideas they share in the classroom will be valuable resources for them as they navigate life outside the classroom.

Reference

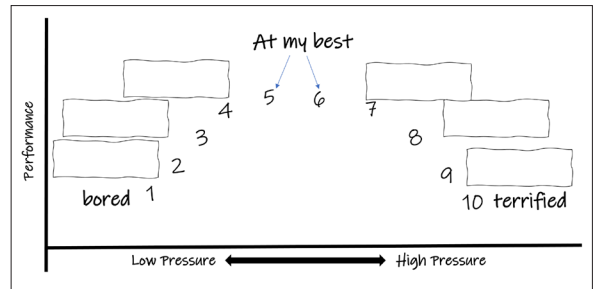
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Appendices

The appendices are also available from the online version of this article at <https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

Appendix A

Optimal Learning Inverted-U



Appendix B

Pressure Adjectives List

Under high-pressure words:

- afraid
- scared
- distressed
- fearful
- sweating bullets
- worried sick

Under moderately high-pressure words:

- concerned
- nervous
- uneasy
- restless
- fidgety
- apprehensive
- shaky
- jumpy
- bugged

Under moderately low-pressure words:

- preoccupied
- unmindful
- removed
- dreamy
- lost
- absentminded

Under very low-pressure words:

- indifferent
- apathetic
- faraway
- out to lunch
- thoughtless
- laid-back

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Personalizing Dictations: Creating Listening Tasks for Your Teaching Context

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Quick Guide

- » **Key words:** *Listening, modelling a structure, guided learning, practice activity*
- » **Learner English level:** *Elementary to Intermediate*
- » **Learner maturity:** *High school and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *20-30 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *20-25 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Slides, paper/online device, vocabulary list, dictation text*

Dictation exercises are used to test listening skills and review target language taught in second language learning classrooms. Teachers can make their own dictations using vocabulary profilers to build vocabulary skills and expose learners to meaningful content at an appropriate language level. This can be used in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) classrooms where we may need to edit language to create extra accessibility for beginner to intermediate learners.

Preparation

Step 1: Choose a relevant text from a textbook or website (e.g., <https://www.ted.com>: Appendix A).

Step 2: Go to lextutor (<https://www.lextutor.ca/>). Paste the text into the box. Check the *BNC/COCA K1-K25, AWL*, and *K1 proper noun* boxes. Click “submit” to generate the vocabulary profile (Appendix B1).

Step 3: Use the word-types profile (Appendix B2) to choose words for a vocabulary box that is appropriate to your students’ level (Appendix B3). Write a shorter version of the original text (up to 200 words) (Appendix C).

Step 4: Paste the text into a slide for students to check their dictation.

Procedure

Step 1: Ask students to take out a pen and paper/notebook. Confident students can type their dictation on their computers/smartphones.

Step 2: Explain to students that they will listen to a short dictation and they need to write what they hear as a paragraph.

Step 3: Board any key or off-list words. Students can write these words at the top of their page.

Step 4: Read the dictation to the students the first time at just below your normal speaking speed. The students can just listen, or, if they feel confident, write down key words at the side of the page. This first reading is for overall understanding.

Step 5: Read the dictation for a second time in chunks that naturally break the clusters of words (e.g., *this morning/I went to the shop/*). Chunks should be a maximum of seven words as this is usually the most input learners can retain in short-term memory. Give students enough time to write down what they hear. Try timing the pauses by repeating the chunk twice more in your head after reading it aloud. This second reading is for detail.

Step 6: After the second reading, give students two-to-four minutes to review what they’ve written. Encourage students to check for accuracy and to guess missing words. Students can work in pairs to evaluate their writing together without feeling pressured.

Step 7: Show the slide with the dictation text. Students should change pen/font color and correct their work. Provide feedback on any difficulties (i.e., similar sounding words, contractions).

Step 8: Review the vocabulary and/or topic for the students. Students can draw images to show main ideas or highlight key words from the text to retell the story.

Conclusion

Personalizing dictations allows teachers to create their own listening content. In situations where authentic texts may appear too long or have a difficult vocabulary load, teachers can provide learners with a realistic summary with level-appropriate vocabulary to suit different learning circumstances.

Appendices

The appendices are also available from the online version of this article at <https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

Appendix A

Keep your goals to yourself (transcript)

Everyone, please think of your biggest personal goal. For real—you can take a second. You’ve got to feel this to learn it. Take a few seconds and think of your personal biggest goal, okay? Imagine deciding right now that you’re going to do it. Imagine telling someone that you meet today what you’re going to do. Imagine their congratulations and their high image of you. Doesn’t it feel good to say it out loud? Don’t you feel one step closer already, like it’s already becoming part of your identity?

Well, bad news: you should have kept your mouth shut, because that good feeling now will make you less likely to do it. Repeated psychology tests have proven that telling someone your goal makes it less likely to happen. Any time you have a goal, there are some steps that need to be done, some work that needs to be done in order to achieve it. Ideally, you would not be satisfied until you had actually done the work. But when you tell someone your goal and they acknowledge it, psychologists have found that it’s called a “social reality.” The mind is kind of tricked into feeling that it’s already done. And then, because you felt that satisfaction, you’re less motivated to do the actual hard work necessary. (Laughter) So this goes against the conventional wisdom that we should tell our friends our goals, right --so they hold us to it.

So, let’s look at the proof. 1926, Kurt Lewin, founder of social psychology, called this “substitution.” 1933, Vera Mahler found, when it was acknowledged by others, it felt real in the mind. 1982, Peter Gollwitzer wrote a whole book about this and in 2009, he did some new tests that were published.

It goes like this: 163 people across four separate tests—everyone wrote down their personal goal. Then half of them announced their commitment to this goal to the room, and half didn’t. Then everyone was given 45 minutes of work that would directly lead them towards their goal, but they were told that they could stop at any time. Now, those who kept their mouths shut worked the entire 45 minutes, on average, and when asked afterwards, said that they felt that they had a long way to go still to achieve their goal. But those who had announced it, quit after only 33 minutes, on average, and when asked afterwards, said that they felt much closer to achieving their goal.

So, if this is true, what can we do? Well, you could resist the temptation to announce your goal. You can delay the gratification that the social acknowledgement brings, and you can understand that your mind mistakes the talking for the doing. But if you do need to talk about something, you can state it in a way that gives you no satisfaction, such as, “I really want to run this marathon, so I need to train five times a week and kick my ass if I don’t, okay?”

So, audience, next time you’re tempted to tell someone your goal, what will you say? (Silence)

Exactly, well done.

Reference

Sivers, D. (2014). Keep your goals to yourself. [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_keep_your_goals_to_yourself

Appendix B

Vocabulary Profile (generated for the TED Talk), Word Types, and Vocabulary List

Appendix B1: Vocabulary Profile of Derek Sivers—Keep Your Goals To Yourself

	Families	Types	Tokens	Percent
K1 Words (1-1000):	149	188	474	88.76%
Function:	...	...	(289)	(54.12%)
Content:	...	...	(185)	(34.64%)
> Anglo-Sax	...	...	(125)	(23.41%)
K2 Words (1001-2000):	15	16	20	3.75%
> Anglo-Sax	...	...	(6)	(1.12%)
1k+2k	...	...	...	(92.51%)
AWL Words:	12	17	30	5.62%
> Anglo-Sax	...	...	(16)	(3.00%)
Off-List Words:	?	8	10	1.87%
	176+?	229	534	100%

Appendix B2: Selected Word Types (K2, Academic Word List, and Off-List)

2k types: [15:16:20] audience_[1] congratulations_[1] delay_[1] entire_[1] ideally_[1] imagine_[3] kick_[1] loud_[1] mistakes_[1] repeated_[1] resist_[1] satisfaction_[2] satisfied_[1] shut_[2] tempted_[1] tricked_[1]

AWL types: [12:17:30] achieve_[2] achieving_[1] acknowledge_[1] acknowledged_[1] acknowledgement_[1] commitment_[1] conventional_[1] founder_[1] goal_[12] goals_[1] identity_[1] image_[1] motivated_[1] psychologists_[1] psychology_[2] published_[1] substitution_[1]

OFF types: [?:8:10] announce_[1] announced_[2] ass_[1] gratification_[1] marathon_[1] okay_[2] quit_[1] temptation_[1]

Appendix B3: Vocabulary list—Academic Words from Derek Sivers

Image	Acknowledge	Commitment
Identify	Goal	Motivated
Announce	Gratification	Founder
Quit	Marathon	Achieve
Conventional	Published	Substitution
Psychologists	Temptation	Proof

Appendix C: Personalized Dictation

People often announce their goals to their friends. They believe that doing this will remove the temptation to quit because their friends will help them commit to the goal. However, some psychologists have published research which disagrees with this conventional wisdom. These researchers

believe that if you announce your goal – such as you are going to run a **marathon** - you receive **gratification** because your friends congratulate you too early. That means your brain is tricked into thinking that the goal has already been **achieved**, so your **image** of yourself is increased before you do the work. Because of that, you are more likely to quit earlier, and so the goal is never reached. Therefore, resist the **temptation** of telling people your new goal. Or if you do tell them, tell your friends that they should be mean to you if you don't **achieve** it. Then you will not stop.

Note: **Bold words** are from the vocabulary profile.

Triple A Game: Group Activity for Eliciting Individual Reflection

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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Reflection, elicitation, questioning*
- » **Learner English Level:** *Intermediate and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *University and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *1 hour*
- » **Activity Time:** *30 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Reflective Question cards (Appendix A), and discussion contribution cards (ASK (?), ANSWER (A) and ADD (+)) (Appendix B)*

This is a fun group activity to help students generate discussion and share individual reflections on course content. It involves groups of students asking and answering reflective questions. It is fun and interesting in that it has a competitive component and students can learn from one another through sharing their reflections. It can be used in any class as a reflection exercise at the end of a unit.

Preparation

Step 1: Write 9–12 Reflective Questions based on the unit content you want students to reflect on (see Appendix A for an example focusing on an Argumentative Essay unit).

Step 2: Print, photocopy and cut up questions (one set for each group of three).

Step 3: Print, photocopy and cut up Discussion Contribution cards (see Appendix B)—six of each card for every student.

Procedure

Step 1: Put students into groups of three. Tell them they are going to do an activity to help them reflect on the unit they have studied.

Step 2: Have students place the Reflective Question cards in a pile face down in the middle of the desk. Each student is then dealt 18 Discussion Contribution cards (six of each).

Step 3: Explain the overall goal of the activity is to get rid of all their Discussion Contribution cards. The first person in the group to do so is the winner.

Step 4: Model the activity by showing an example dialogue (see Appendix C) on the whiteboard. Teachers can ask students to model (read) the dialogue.

Step 5: Have group members take turns reading the Reflective Question cards from the pile. Anybody can answer the question. The person who answers the question discards an ANSWER (A) card. If another student then ADDS (+) additional information or comments to his group members' response they can then discard an ADD (+) card. Explain that the ADD (+) response needs to be of a reasonable length. It can't just be an "I think so too" type comment. Also, the ASK (?) card can be discarded after asking a follow up question at any time. When the conversation comes to an end, the next Reflective Question is asked and the above procedure is repeated.

Step 6: Monitor groups by giving feedback, advice or answering questions when necessary.

Extension

Have students come up with their own Reflective Questions for the next unit studied, and make their own cards.

Conclusion

This reflection activity is an effective alternative to individually writing responses to reflection questions, and has proved hugely popular with students. In feedback on the activity, students conveyed that sharing their reflection with others, and learning from other group members' experiences was not only beneficial, but also enjoyable.

Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at <https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>



Paul Raine

In this column, we discuss the latest developments in ed-tech, as well as tried and tested apps and platforms, and the integration between teaching and technology. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

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Paul Raine has been a Japan-based teacher and coder since 2006. He has developed the web-based language teaching and learning platform *TeacherTools.Digital*, and many other web-based tools.

ChatGPT: Initial Implications for Language Teaching and Learning

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This article was not written by Artificial Intelligence, but you might have to take my word for it because the latest advances in Large Language Models (LLMs) are making it increasingly hard to tell. LLMs are neural networks that are trained on enormous amounts (gigabytes or terabytes) of textual data to find probabilistic connections between words. The upshot is grammatically accurate and stylistically authentic text generation, which is completely original and, in many cases, indistinguishable from human-authored content (Zhang & Li, 2021).

A highly sophisticated LLM known as ChatGPT was rolled out by the OpenAI company as a web application (chat.openai.com) in late November 2022. It has since generated a lot of consternation amongst academics, especially those working in the humanities.

Much of the concern arises from the potential for students to use ChatGPT and similar LLMs to gain an unfair advantage in producing written work that has been administered as part of a formally assessed course of learning. While some commentators have gone so far as to declare the “death” of the college essay (Marche, 2022), others have been more circumspect in considering the advantages and disadvantages of this new technological breakthrough (Greteman, 2022; Karpf, 2022).

Similar concerns have been expressed in the past with regard to Machine Translation applications such as DeepL (www.deepl.com), and previous *Wired* columns have discussed some ways that

language teachers and learners might use the technology in a more productive way (Hougham 2021; Oda, 2020). In this report, I hope to continue in this vein and suggest some more productive uses of this technology as well as highlighting some risks and limitations to be aware of.

How to use ChatGPT

OpenAI’s ChatGPT LLM is currently a free service and is readily accessible through a web browser (chat.openai.com). You will need to register for an OpenAI account before you can log into the ChatGPT portal. Once you have logged in, you will be presented with an interface similar to that shown in Figure 1.

As noted in the interface, one of the major benefits of ChatGPT compared to other LLMs is its ability to “remember what [the] user has said earlier in the conversation”. This allows for incremental edits to the output generated by ChatGPT. It should be noted, however, that ChatGPT’s memory is limited to approximately 3000 words, and it is unable to access past conversations in order to inform its responses (Raf, n.d.).

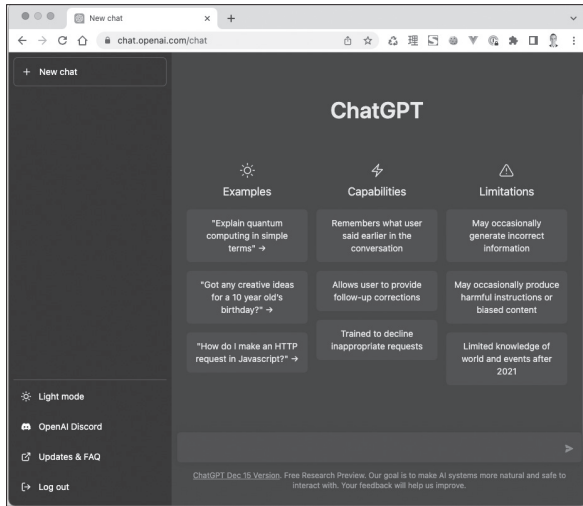
ChatGPT requires a prompt in order to produce output, and almost any prompt is acceptable with the exception of prompts that would cause it to generate harmful or hateful output. Some examples of prompts that English language teachers might find useful are provided below.

Example prompts

The range of text-based tasks ChatGPT can handle is incredibly large, and it is able to understand some very sophisticated instructions in the prompts. For example, if an English teacher wanted to generate a simple factual reading passage about elephants, they might use the following prompt:

Write a short factual passage about elephants suitable for English language learners

Figure 1
The ChatGPT Web Interface



ChatGPT would then output the following text:

Elephants are large, intelligent mammals that are native to parts of Africa and Asia. They are known for their distinctive features, such as their long trunk, large ears, and tusks. Elephants are herbivores, which means they only eat plants. They are known to be very social animals and live in groups called herds. Elephants are also known for their strong memory and problem-solving abilities. They are often used in forestry and other forms of work due to their strength and intelligence. However, elephants are also endangered due to poaching and habitat loss.

As the vocabulary and grammar in this passage may still be too difficult for some language learners, it could be further simplified by entering a follow-up prompt such as:

Simplify the grammar and vocabulary further

To which ChatGPT responds with the output:

Elephants are big animals that are smart and live in Africa and Asia. They have a long nose, big ears, and pointy teeth. They only eat plants and live with other elephants in a group called a herd. Elephants are also very good at remembering things and solving problems. They are strong and helpful for work, but also in danger because people hunt them and destroy their homes.

Once an appropriate text has been generated, the teacher could move onto generating some language learning activities to accompany the text, such as comprehension and vocabulary matching questions.

The following prompt can be used to generate multiple choice comprehension questions:

Generate some multiple-choice comprehension questions for this passage

To which ChatGPT responds with the output similar to the following (truncated):

What do elephants eat?
 a) Meat
 b) Plants
 c) Both meat and plants
 d) Fish

Where do elephants live?
 a) Africa and Asia
 b) North America
 c) South America
 d) Australia

For the vocabulary matching activities, a prompt similar to the following one could be used:

Generate some vocabulary matching activities for this passage

To which ChatGPT responds with output similar to the following (truncated):

Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right:

herbivores a) animals that only eat plants
habitat b) a group of animals living together
poaching c) the act of illegally hunting or trapping animals
herd d) the natural home or environment of an animal

Match the words on the left with their synonyms on the right:

distinctive a) unique
intelligent b) smart
social c) friendly
problem-solving d) resourceful

Teachers have to take care to ensure that the output produced by ChatGPT is accurate, appropriate, and fit for purpose. In the example above, we can see that the questions and answers have been

randomized for the first vocabulary matching activity but not for the second one. Inconsistencies like this are not uncommon in ChatGPT output. There is also no indication of which is the correct answer in each case. It is possible to get ChatGPT to mark each correct answer in some way, but the teacher will need to experiment with the prompt wording in order to achieve this.

Undesirable Uses of ChatGPT

The above example responses make ChatGPT seem like a very productive tool for English language teachers, and they are just the very tip of the iceberg in terms of the output that ChatGPT can generate. We can see from the above that ChatGPT has the potential to greatly increase teacher efficiency when it comes to making lesson materials, for example.

However, in the hands of students, ChatGPT could be used as a tool for plagiarism, or as some have dubbed it, “Algiarism” (Hern, 2022). For example, if the teacher administered a writing task for homework, there would be nothing to stop an unscrupulous student from delegating the task directly to ChatGPT. If the homework task was to “write about your homestay experience in Vancouver,” the student could use a prompt similar to the following:

Generate an account of a homestay experience in Vancouver written by a Japanese learner of English. The account should contain some grammatical and lexical errors.

To which ChatGPT responds with output similar to the following (truncated):

I went to Vancouver for vacation and I stay in homestay. My host family is so kind and friendly. They have two daughter, both is high school student. They also have a cute dog.

I really enjoy staying with them because I can practice my English and learn about Canadian culture. My host mother is a great cook and she made delicious breakfast for me every morning.

As we can see from the above example, ChatGPT not only completed the task it was given, but it did so in a way that might conceivably fool a teacher into thinking it had been written by the student themselves. Admittedly, it is unlikely that the kind of student who would want to use ChatGPT in this way (low motivation or low proficiency) would possess the linguistic ability to write the prompt necessary to produce the above output by themselves, but

with help (or by sharing prompts with others) they may be able to do so.

Nevertheless, in cases where students are submitting written work for formally assessed courses of language learning, such as those taught at universities throughout Japan, there is a significant risk that some students will resort to Algiarism in order to complete assignments. It has always been possible that some students could obtain unauthorized assistance from friends or family members, or even from a host of “essay writing” services that are available on the Internet. However, free AI tools such as ChatGPT make it more tempting and convenient to do so, and the fact that they can be used to generate completely original text means that traditional plagiarism detectors (which search the Internet for previously published material with similar phrasing) simply will not work.

Detecting AI generated content

Given the potential of ChatGPT for academic misuse, there has been understandable concern among both academic and administrative staff, with some US districts going so far as to completely ban the service on school networks and devices (Elsen-Rooney, 2023). It seems that OpenAI themselves are not oblivious to the concerns that have been expressed, and reports have emerged that the company is working on a digital watermarking technique that would allow anyone to check whether a certain passage was indeed generated by ChatGPT (Hern, 2022). There are also some third party AI text detectors (e.g. <http://gptzero.me>, <https://writer.com/ai-content-detector>, <https://openai-openai-detector.hf.space>) that have shown some promise in spotting text that was generated by ChatGPT.

Limitations of ChatGPT

As mentioned above, the output generated by ChatGPT is not always perfect, and there can be some strange inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the text. If a teacher intends to use AI generated text in some of their lesson materials, they will need to proofread it carefully beforehand. Some other limitations of ChatGPT include its inability to access the Internet (try asking it for the current time in Japan) and its lack of knowledge about world events after late 2021 (try asking it who the current monarch of the UK is). However, further updates to ChatGPT are being regularly released, and it seems almost certain that some of its current limitations will be addressed in the near future.

Conclusion

The recent development and deployment of highly sophisticated LLMs such as ChatGPT has significant implications for language teachers and learners. While some students may be tempted to use these technologies to take shortcuts in homework and coursework, others may be able to use them in ways that genuinely help them to improve their language proficiency. Efforts have already begun to list the ways in which language learners could use ChatGPT productively (Deubelbeiss, 2022; Gravell, 2022; Ryan, 2022). The possibilities for teachers, too, are almost limitless, and many innovative activities and exercises using ChatGPT will surely be forthcoming in 2023 and beyond.

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[JALT PRACTICE] YOUNGER LEARNERS



Martin Sedaghat & Emily MacFarlane

The Younger Learners column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editors at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

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The Bigger Picture: Part 2 Not Just a Time-filler: Expanding the Use of Picturebooks

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In the previous issue, Martin Sedaghat shared a variety of different post-reading activities that can be used with picturebook read-alouds to further

children's learning and enhance their enjoyment. In this issue, I will discuss ways to improve how picturebooks are currently used in the elementary English classroom. While many Japanese teachers are still unfamiliar with using English picturebooks in the classroom (Kaneko, 2020), the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has begun recommending their use to increase students' confidence (MEXT, 2017) and help develop their listening skills (Tada, 2020). Therefore, in addition to discussing how to improve the current use of picturebooks, this article will also explore how teachers can expand their implementation in the classroom. Although public elementary schools will be the main focus of this article, I hope practitioners in different teaching contexts will also be able to gain inspiration and learn new ideas.

Why Use Picturebooks?

The benefits of using picturebooks for both linguistic and broader educational reasons have been recognised since the 1980s (Ellis & Mourão, 2021). Picturebooks can be used in the English language classroom in order to create ideal learning conditions and an environment to allow for easy acquisition of language (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). They expose children to new language that is rich and authentic while their often-repetitive patterns make linguistic input more noticeable and allow children to pick up language easily (Pinter, 2017). The visual support of pictures as well as intonation, gestures, facial expressions, and mime from the reader can also allow children to grasp the meaning even if they do not understand the words (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). In the Japanese elementary context, Kanayama (2021) showed that picturebooks were often used in Japanese classrooms to increase students' motivation and interest in English. He suggested this increase in motivation and confidence would allow students to improve their listening abilities and by listening to the same story multiple times, students would increase their understanding of English.

The Current Situation at Elementary Schools

As detailed in MEXT's 2018 new *Course of Study Guidelines*, from 2020, foreign languages have been required to be taught from the third grade nationwide. MEXT also recommends the use of read-alouds as a method of developing the listening skills of young learners (Tada, 2020). The materials used in the foreign language activities classes at the third- and fourth-grade level, were from the MEXT-created *Let's Try! 1* (MEXT, 2018b) and

Let's Try! 2 (MEXT, 2018c) in which the final units for both levels are shorter "digest" versions of two picturebooks called *Hi, friends!*. In the teacher's versions of both *'Let's Try!'* books, MEXT recommends using read-alouds to give students confidence through the experience of understanding a story read to them in English. In the MEXT Training Guidebook, published in 2017, they go into greater detail recommending using picturebooks for input at this level, as well as emphasising the importance of reading in an interactive style and adapting the English in the books to fit the students' level of comprehension. There is no obligatory use of picturebooks in the fifth- and sixth-grade curriculum; however, the published MEXT commentary on the curriculum guidelines does suggest that English picturebooks could be used to make skits or plays that could be performed at a school show (MEXT, 2018a). At all levels, teachers could still supplement the official curriculum with their own use of picturebooks.

How are Picturebooks Used in Japanese Elementary Schools?

Teachers may choose to utilize picturebooks for numerous reasons. However, their use in the English language classroom can be classified into 3 main groups (Mourão & Ellis, 2020):

1. Storytime: picturebooks are used for the purposes of students' enjoyment which together with the shared social experience helps to develop the students' language naturally.
2. Picturebooks, as one resource of many: the use thereof exposes students to the target language in a meaningful, authentic manner.
3. Story-based methodology: all activities and learning outcomes are based around the picturebook.

In the context of the Japanese elementary classroom, a survey by Kaneko (2020) suggested that read-alouds were usually done as a separate activity at the end of class if there was extra time. This use fits the 'storytime' category and contrasts with use in other countries where learning is often based around the read-aloud. Anecdotally, many elementary English teachers in Japan state that they chose picturebooks related to whatever topic they are currently teaching—for example, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle (1967) when studying animals—in order to introduce the students to the topic or review what students have already learned. As previously mentioned, picturebook read-alouds are also often used because they are enjoyable for students and help increase students' motivation.

How to Improve Current Picturebook Use

When using picturebooks to introduce a specific topic or even just to increase students' motivation there are a few things to consider that could improve their use:

Selection

One of the biggest hurdles when working at a public elementary school is that the choice of English picturebooks can be very limited. Even if you have a budget for picturebooks, the sparse stock carried by approved suppliers can leave teachers using their own money to buy new and interesting picturebooks. In order to avoid this, I recommend checking out local libraries, international centres, and universities or asking your local teacher community to expand the available books. I also have had some success in working with the school librarian directly to order new books, as their own suppliers were able to get some of the books that I requested, which were not available through other means. However, my all-time favourite way to get around the purchasing limitation and to save my wallet is to use Japanese books, which are much easier to access. When using these books, rather than translating the written Japanese into English, I provide my own questions and commentary for the students. For example, the book *きんぎょがにげた* [*kingo ga nigeta*] by Tarō Gomi (1982; see Figure 1), about a little goldfish that hides in different scenes, is great to use to practise answering “Where?” questions as the students have to find and describe where the fish is.

Figure 1

Front Cover of *きんぎょがにげた* by Tarō Gomi



Another example is when I teach “What’s this?” I like using three books by Katsu Kiuchi (see Figure 2), *くだものなんだ* [*kudamono nanda*] (2007) and *やさいのおなか* [*yasai onaka*] (1997), which show the silhouettes of different fruits and vegetables, as

well as *やさいのせなか* [*yasai senaka*] (2005) which has charcoal rubbings of the texture of vegetables. These read-alouds can become very interactive as you can create your own English hints to help students guess the particular fruit or vegetable.

Figure 2

Front Covers of Three Books by Katsu Kiuchi



Adaptation

Another common issue when using picturebooks in the Japanese classroom is that there is often a gap between the students' English ability and their cognitive level. A report by the Fukui Prefecture Educational Research Institute showed that teachers often felt that if they chose a book for its English level then it was often aimed at much younger students or the contents were lacking, whereas if they chose a book for the story, then the vocabulary and grammar would be far too difficult (Yoshimura et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers should focus on selecting picturebooks where the pictures show as much of the story as possible, and the English can be adapted to suit the students' level. Ellis and Brewster (2014) suggest looking at these four areas and possible ways they could be adapted:

1. Vocabulary and general meaning (unfamiliar content and words, idioms, clarity)
2. Grammar (tenses, use of structures, word order)
3. Organisation of ideas (sentence length and complexity, time references, how ideas are linked and explained)
4. Story length (number of ideas in the story)

Even though there is always the possibility of losing some of the magic of a story through adaptation, the benefits of making it more accessible to students outweigh the risk.

Timing

The final thing to consider when improving current picturebook use is the timing of picturebook read-alouds. Teachers often have the least freedom when reading picturebooks during English class. Instead, why not try reading a picturebook over the school broadcast during lunchtime or on a rainy day during break time, starting a recess read-aloud

club, or volunteering to read picturebooks to a class during morning work before registration? These are all situations that have been very popular at the elementary schools I have worked at. Creating an atmosphere where English picturebook read-alouds are fun, interesting, and frequent will make them less daunting when they happen in English class. Consequently, it will give students the confidence that they will understand what they are about to hear.

Thinking Outside the Box

While improving on read-alouds to fill time or introduce certain vocabulary or grammar points is a great start, there are also a number of other ways that we can use picturebooks which are not often seen in the Japanese elementary school classroom.

Critical Thinking

Picturebooks can be used to help develop children's critical thinking. In my experience, English read-alouds are often the first time that students are involved in an interactive style read-aloud as they are otherwise expected to sit and listen passively. Allowing students time to think about picturebooks and then involving them in discussion encourages their language ability as well as their critical thinking and visual literacy (Roche, 2014). My students enjoyed books with open endings such as *Shh! We have a Plan!* (2015) and *Oh no, George!* (2012) both by Chris Haughton (see Figure 3). They expressed that they were not used to this uncertainty and struggled in the beginning with open questions such as discussing what might happen next. However, with practice they became more familiar with expressing what they thought and imagined. Even in read-alouds such as these, where motivating students was actually the main aim, allowing discussion and reading in an interactive style can also improve students' critical thinking skills.

Figure 3

Front Covers of Two Books by Chris Haughton



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Another way picturebooks can be used is to help develop children's emotional literacy as the images in picturebooks can portray strong emotions for which words would be inadequate and help train children's empathy. This can be as straightforward as using a book like *Glad Monster, Sad Monster* by Ed Emberly (1997) to practise recognising different emotions with special needs classes or talking about what makes us feel glad or sad with younger students. However, it can also involve much deeper topics. My favourite SEL themed read-aloud involved using the book *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall (2015), where a blue crayon has been mistakenly labeled as "red" and suffers an identity crisis. This book has been used in other countries to discuss gender identity but there are a number of other possible interpretations, too. In my case, a number of students who were neurodivergent related strongly to the idea of not being able to act how everyone expects. This also allowed their classmates to gain insight into and sympathise with their struggle to fit in.

Intercultural Understanding

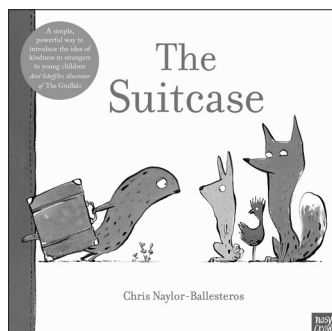
One of the best ways to use picturebooks with the national curriculum—5th and 6th grade in particular—is by using read-alouds to help students' intercultural understanding. When only using the textbook, I felt that students did not connect with the content in a meaningful way. However, when the same material was taught combined with a picturebook, it sparked interest and encouraged students to think more deeply about other cultures as well as their own. On the topic of names, we used the book *Alma and How She Got her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal (2018). The story follows the main character as she learns about the family members that she has been named after. This allowed the students to consider naming traditions and the meaning behind their own names. Although finding suitable picturebooks to fit each part of the curriculum is challenging, the benefits to students' interest and understanding are undeniable.

If you are looking for further inspiration, the *Intercultural Citizenship Education through Picturebooks in Early English Language Learning (ICEPELL)* project has created teaching packs, ICEKits, to use with 18 different picturebooks including *The Suitcase* by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros (2019; see Figure 4). The most obvious use of the story of a tired animal carrying all his worldly possessions in a suitcase is to familiarise students with migration and refugee stories, however as the ICEKits suggests, each pic-

turebook has a number of different ICE outcomes. Personally, I used this picturebook in the final 6th grade English class of the school year and focused on the ICE outcome of “learning not to judge people on first impressions.” This allowed the students who were all moving to new schools to relate to the story on a personal level while still creating discussion about reasons why other people might need to leave their homes.

Figure 4

Front Cover of *The Suitcase* by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros



Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

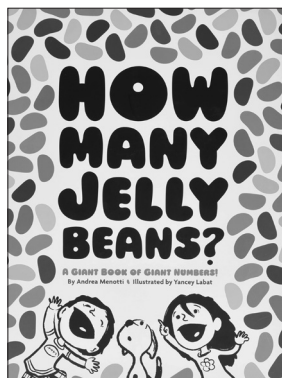
CLIL lessons—where language learning and content learning take place at the same time—and lessons involving picturebooks are some of the most enjoyable for children. Students like to learn about interesting topics, enjoy actively participating in activities related to read-alouds, and are genuinely motivated to acquire language in order to understand the content when the two types of lessons are combined (Hasegawa et al., 2020). Whether it’s using *Clean Up!* by Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeola (2020) as a springboard to talk about recycling or *The Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (1969) to segue into tissue paper art projects, there are a multitude of options for CLIL picturebook classes.

Creating these kinds of classes can be more difficult at public elementary schools unless you focus on levels without a nationally set curriculum such as special needs classes or the lower grade levels. However, it is still possible to include some CLIL elements in some of the older classes. I have enjoyed expanding beyond the standard lessons when teaching numbers and shapes by using books from the *Mouse Math* series (Penguin). These are small and aimed at native speakers so they need some adaptation to be suitable, but my students enjoyed learning shape names beyond the standard circle, square etc. without any pressure to remember them. The

book, *How Many Jelly Beans?* by Andrea Menotti and Yancy Labat (2012; see Figure 5), made teaching larger numbers in a class so much more interesting as the characters in the book decide how many jelly beans is *too* many starting at ten and ending on a giant fold-out page with one million jelly beans.

Figure 5

Front Cover of *How Many Jelly Beans?* by Andrea Menotti and Yancy Labat



Conclusion

While picturebook read-alouds in English class at the elementary school level are encouraged by MEXT, there are few stories in the actual curriculum and there is little, if any, instruction on how and when any extra read-alouds should take place. Many teachers do not use picturebooks beyond filling time at the end of class and struggle to select books that suit their students’ needs. Current picturebook use at this level can be improved with careful consideration and adjustments to selection, adaptation, and timing. Furthermore, while expanding the use of picturebooks can be difficult due to curriculum constraints, it is possible to use picturebooks at this level to promote critical thinking, SEL, intercultural understanding in CLIL lessons. Picturebook read-alouds can spark interest and motivation in students of all ages and abilities if teachers just look beyond using picturebooks as a time filler and try to see the bigger picture.

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Emily MacFarlane is a teacher of English with over twelve years' experience in primary schools. She recently completed an MA in TESOL and currently teaches at several universities in Sendai, Japan. Her research focuses on effective scaffolding techniques for picturebook read-aloud sessions.

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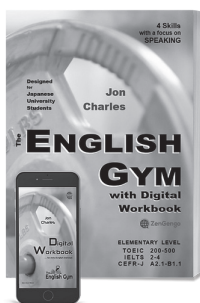
This month's column features Peter Chu's review of *The English Gym*.

The English Gym

[Jon Charles. Oak Hills Press, 2017. p. 142. ¥2,800. ISBN: 978-4-9909741-0-7.]

Reviewed by Peter Chu, Kansai University

The *English Gym* is a topic-based EFL student coursebook that provides engaging topics relevant to Japanese university students that encourages conversation while introducing them to copious amounts of real-world vocabulary items. Although it is aimed at lower-intermediate levels, its flexibility allows teachers to use it with higher-level classes as well.



The textbook is well set up for a 15-week term. Each of its 20 units is comprised of four pages following the same format: a listening activity on the first page, vocabulary and accompanying exercises on the second, a colour-coded transcript on the third, and an interview (i.e., discussion) page on the last.

The listening task on the first page is an interview-format dialogue with a gap-fill activity that includes 10 missing words found in the word bank. These same questions are used as starting points for students to expand on in the later discussion. The dialogue itself is not terribly challenging for higher-level classes, but there are often a few things that are hard for most students to catch. One minor complaint I have is that because of its interview format, each question is preceded by the interviewer announcing the question number. While lower-level students will likely find this helpful, students will often parrot this and state the number during their discussion, which makes conversation feel somewhat mechanical.

The voice acting in each unit's dialogue is something I really appreciate. There is always one native English speaker and one Japanese user of the language. I have always disliked having two native speakers of English, with one pretending to be a learner. With this, students have a real-world model where they can hear proficient second-language users. As Medgyes (1992) notes, "only non-NESTs [native English speaking teachers] can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of English" (p. 346), as native speaker models are nearly unattainable. Likewise, Murphy (2014) encourages incorporation of "intelligible, comprehensible, non-native English speech samples" (p. 267), and Rattanaphumma (2018) shows that exposure to competent language users from the same background serves to motivate students and promote "a positive vision towards their ideal L2 [second language] self" (p. 137).

The vocabulary sections are very thorough, including useful phrases for discussion as well as footnotes for the dialogue transcript. Both sets include a Japanese glossary. Many of the items are colloquial phrases, fillers, and discourse markers students might not otherwise have explicit exposure to.

In the middle of each lesson, there is either some kind of game students can play (e.g., 20 questions) or a common mistakes section. I appreciate both of these, as they are things that I usually try to incorporate into my lessons.

The interview page invites students to talk using the same questions from the dialogue. The transcript on the facing page enables students to check if they need help with how to respond, as well as giving them cues on what follow-up questions they can use. Students are encouraged to take notes and then write (and present) their own conversation using the space provided.

At the back of the book there are communication crosswords for the students to practice vocabulary related to each unit, which my students always enjoy. You will also find translations of the dialogues and thorough instructions and materials regarding oral testing and presentations.

The publisher's website (www.englishgymjapan.com) is extremely handy and robust, with the complete textbook online (including the audio) as well

as helpful tools such as background music playlists, stopwatches, and links to other resources, for example, online quizzes for assessment, printable quizzes, Kahoot! games, and Quizlet. I like to end classes with these latter two games, which the students absolutely love. The publisher has recently released an online digital workbook, which automates much of the exercises and homework. One interesting feature of the workbook is that it records students' spoken answers and analyzes the transcriptions for their answers.

Finally, there are a few potential concerns. Firstly, although I was initially put off by the length of the interviews, they serve to let students hear how the questions can be used and answered, so I always incorporate them. Another small issue is that there are no grammar sections or structures that are taught or drilled. If you like explicit grammar instruction, you will have to find supplements. Lastly, there are no warm-up questions included to activate topic schema.

All in all, I really like *The English Gym* and highly recommend it. Students always enjoy the conversations from each unit, and the plethora of fun activities allows the teacher to create variety in their lessons.

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Penguin Readers—Penguin Books, 2019. [Penguin Readers is a series of classics, contemporary fiction, and non-fiction, written for learners of English.]

A Christmas carol—Dickens, C. [Retold by K. Kovacs. Ebenezer Scrooge hates Christmas and is angry that people are not working. He meets the ghost of his former partner. Can Scrooge become a good person before it is too late? Level: 1, CEFR A1.]

Private—Patterson, J., & Paetro, M. [Retold by N. Bullard. Jack Morgan has a company called Private. He helps people. Sometimes, he helps the police, too. Now, Jack's friend is dead, and Jack has to find the killer. Level 2, CEFR A1+.]

The Great Gatsby—Fitzgerald, F. S. [Retold by A. Collins. Everybody wants to know Jay Gatsby. He is handsome and very rich. He owns a big house and has wonderful parties there. But does anyone really know who he is? Level 3, CEFR A2.]

Women who changed the world—Leather, S. [This graded reader consists of ten chapters on some of the women who have fought to be equal to men as well as their achievements in education, science, sports, and politics. Level: 4, CEFR A2+.]

The spy who came in from the cold—le Carré, J. [Retold by F. MacKenzie. Alec Leamas, a British spy, is worn out and ready to stop working. But he has to do one last job. His boss wants him to spread false information about an important man in East Germany. Can Alec retire and finally come in from the cold? Level: 6, CEFR: B1+.]

What's that you say? Bright ideas for reading, writing, and discussing in the English classroom—David, J., Nan'un-do, 2023. [This book takes a student-centered approach and provides students with topics and activities designed to foster language learning and practical usage. There are 15 units in which students can engage in vocabulary and reading activities, as well as engaging follow-up activities including trivia questions and famous quotations.]

* **Critical thinking**—Hadley, G., Boon, A., Routledge, 2022. [This resource book provides language teachers with a framework for fostering critical thinking skills in explicit and systematic ways. Critical Thinking can be used as a resource for teacher-directed classroom investigations as well as graduate school research projects.]

* **Life topics: Changing views**—Berman, J., Nan'un-do, 2023. [This new addition to the Life Topics series provides advice on how Japanese EFL students can lead happy and meaningful lives. This coursebook contains 15 units and is adaptable for learners of various proficiencies but was written for lower proficiency students in mind. Additional resources include a teacher's manual and audio download. TOEIC 250-450.]

* **What do you think? 15 topics for discussion and conversation**—Bossaer, A., Nan'un-do, 2023. [This coursebook was written for intermediate EFL learners and students to discuss their opinions with their partners or groups. In-class assessments based on these discussions provide students with opportunities to both demonstrate their understanding of the topic and reinforce the idea that our opinions can change when we are presented with new information.]



David McMurray

Graduate students and teaching assistants are invited to submit compositions in the form of a speech, appeal, memoir, essay, conference review, or interview on the policy and practice of language education. Master's and doctoral thesis supervisors are also welcome to contribute or encourage their students to join this vibrant debate. Grounded in the author's reading, practicum, or empirical research, contributions are expected to share an impassioned presentation of opinions in 1,000 words or less. Teaching Assistance is not a peer-reviewed column.

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This issue's column offers an essay by an international graduate student, Wong Hinming, who was hired to work as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for two English language courses with divergent goals. The TA contrasts the teaching strategies for an entry-level communication class with those for an advanced teacher training course. Interestingly, he also explains how students in the two classes were able to help each other to achieve their goals.

Multilingual Teaching Assistants Required for University English Classes in Japan

Wong Hinming

The International University of Kagoshima

As an undergraduate student from Hong Kong at a private university in Japan, the part-time job offers I got were to work in restaurants, supermarkets, or drugstores. Most of the international graduate students whom I know work up to twenty hours a week as service providers, dishwashers, cashiers, or salespersons. When I began studying for a Master's degree in intercultural studies at a private university in Japan, I felt lucky to have been invited by an instructor to work as a TA. Picking up a job leading toward a teaching career, such as a tutor, student assistant, research assistant, or TA pays about the same salary, but they are much more demanding. In addition to unlocking doors, setting up teaching equipment, and taking attendance, TAs have to help prepare lesson materials, help to resolve questions asked by students during class time, and respond in writing to questions in student reflection journals. In this article, I explain the demands of the job and what happened after I accepted the TA position.

I was a TA for two semesters for a 15-week English Oral Communication course and for a 30-week English Education Methodology course. At first glance,

I assumed the only thing similar between these two subjects would be the learning of the English language. I was informed that the first-year cohort enrolled in the basic communication class were non-English majors and were required to study the course. Among the 45 students on the rollcall, there were Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese names. My first language is Cantonese, but I communicated in three other languages as a TA: in English with the teacher and as the target language for his classes, in Japanese when students will ask for translations, and in Chinese with participating foreign students. In the first class, it seemed to me as though the majority were unable to converse freely in English. The 15 students enrolled in the education course were education majors in their third year of learning how to teach English. They were all Japanese citizens, who hoped to land jobs working for the prefecture, city governments, or private high schools.

The classroom atmospheres for these two subjects were completely different. The syllabus for the teachers-in-training included the requirement to demonstrate two short presentations during the English Education Methodology course. Participants were free to choose from among 15 topics each semester: needs analysis, penmanship, pronunciation, vocabulary, ICT, grammar, reading, writing, listening, speaking, integrating the four skills, interaction, debate, haiku, and evaluation. The lesson plan always included a role play: Each participant performed the roles of teacher, assistant language teacher (ALT), supervisor, vice-principal, principal, or junior high school students. A page or chapter from the textbook *New Horizon* (2015), which is a widely used Japanese ministry approved English textbook for junior high schools, had to be used in addition to supplementary materials and worksheets. *New Horizon* has one full chapter on haiku in English as well as a supplementary DVD on making photo-haiku. The student acting as a vice principal had to think and express an opinion about what was good or bad in the class. The student acting as a supervisor had to suggest ideas for a follow-up lesson. The student-principal would thank the struggling student-teacher and offer a few words of consolation or motivation. I was

often asked to act as the ALT from Hong Kong who pronounced words, explained cultural points, and modeled the perfect way to respond to questions in the textbook. After each class of English Education Methodology, I read the daily reflection journals that each student was expected to write. The students explained what they learned in the class. For example, they learned how to make a photo Haiku, studied pronunciation and English grammar, and listened to another student's graduation thesis to get ready to write their own thesis. All around the English education method class was meant to prepare students to be professional teachers.

In contrast, the English Oral Communication class immediately seemed much more relaxing and slower paced than the English Education Method class. Students used Kadoyama and Capper's (2011) textbook *English with Hit Songs*. The book has 14 units, each with a different song. Students were assigned groups, and each group of five to six students was expected to make a PowerPoint presentation to explain the song lyrics. The vocabulary from these songs was recycled for using the seasonal words to make haiku in English. The pop songs fitted well with American festivals, such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. In the English Oral Communication class, my job was to help the group to prepare their PowerPoint slides and to offer suggestions about assigning roles, such as MC, DJ, singer, and quiz-maker. Because the textbook had 14 chapters, for the extra week without a topic, I suggested that we talk about Christmas. As the TA, I explained about Christmas in Hong Kong. In Figure 1, the students are exchanging gifts while singing *Let it Go*, the theme song from the movie *Frozen*.

Figure 1

Photograph of a Group of Students in the Oral Communication Class



Interestingly, the education majors were sometimes asked by the teacher to try out their teaching practice with the first-year students in extracurricular activities, such as the ESS (English Speaking Society) club or an English supervision program and remedial classes. The professor in-charge of these classes told me that he used teaching methods that Suzuki and Ishikawa (2007) designed so that students could learn from each other. As the TA, I was able to observe a way to link the student-teachers from the English Education Methodology course with the first-year students in the basic communication class. This is an important connection because students in the two classes were able to help each other to achieve their goals. The beginners could improve their English-speaking skills and the juniors could improve their ability to teach those skills.

By mid-semester, I was becoming more comfortable in my role as TA. The teacher asked me to assist the students from both his classes to use ICT to make presentations. That gave me the opportunity to offer each group advice one week prior to their presentation day. That helped them prevent problems before they happened in class. One student-teacher showed me the quiz questions and test she was planning to do in the next class. Even though the goal of the education class was to focus on using ICT to teach, she said she planned to try to use paper worksheets, the whiteboard, or a paper test. That was the way she learned English at high school, so I explained how to use more digital technology. The teacher suggested that it was necessary for practicing teachers to provide language input not only from ICT-based textbooks, but also from realia, such as newspapers, songs, and real conversations with ALTs (Lyddon & Okumura, 2020). He helped me to caution the trainee to be sensitive to subtle structural differences among wh-question types and explain the grammar forms in the textbook to students before giving supplementary input such as haiku.

Working as a TA in English language and education classes in Japan was a challenging experience. Most of the classroom communication was in real time and had to be spontaneous. While listening to presentations by the student-teachers in training, I had little time to think about the suggestions I would offer them to improve their lessons. Writing comments in the student reflection journals afforded me some thinking time. I responded in the students' preferred language, so I was lucky to have the chance to check my own grammar outside of the classroom. Nonetheless, the demands of being a multilingual TA with an understanding of ICT is a daunting job.

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Announcement from the Student Peer Interaction Network Subcommittee (SPINS)

SPINS Student Research Symposium

- When: March 18, 2023 from 1:00 p.m.
- Presenters: Students in and outside JALT
- Language: English and Japanese
- Who can attend: Anyone interested
- Where: Online
- Registration form: <https://forms.gle/5QWvUivq3ZgT-NMft6>

Please contact us at spins@jalt.org for inquiries



[JALT PRAXIS] WRITERS' WORKSHOP



Jerry Talandis Jr. & Kinsella Valies

The Writers' Workshop is a collaborative endeavour of the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group (PSG). Articles in the column provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to submit a paper for consideration, please contact us.

Email: jaltpubs.tl.writers.ws@jalt.org • Web: <https://jalt-publications.org/psg>

Exploring APA: Journal Article Reporting Standards

Before I get started, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Kinsella Valies, who will be coediting this column with me from this issue. Kinsella has recently taken over for Rich Bailey as JALT's Peer Support Group (PSG) Coordinator. Rich stepped up to help in a very busy time. I am grateful for his contributions and wish him the best of luck going forward. I am also really looking forward to working with Kinsella, who I know has many keen insights and advice to offer our readership. Since its inception nearly eight years ago, PSG volunteers have been producing this column with the aim of supporting writers of all levels who are looking to improve their academic writing skills and getting published: "That is the mission of this column: to assist you in becoming a better researcher and writer, and in the process help you to progress in your career professionally" (Beaufait et al., 2015, p. 44). Kinsella and I will do our best to keep this mission going.

Exploring the APA Series

To help you get more out of the APA 7th Edition manual (2020), I began an occasional series last year to highlight specific aspects that are especially useful to building academic writing and research skills. This book is so much more than a simple guide for formatting references. In fact, it can be likened to a veritable academic writing text (Talandis Jr., 2022). The key advantage of using APA 7th to guide your professional writing is its authoritative status. It is not just any writing manual; it's THE standard that many journals adhere to, including all of the publications within JALT. Simply put, following APA at all stages of your academic projects will improve your chances of success. In this column, I will focus on Chapter 3, which is about *Journal Article Reporting Standards*, or JARS for short. After introducing JARS and highlighting some key benefits, I will briefly summarize the chapter to give those of you who have not read it a taste of what is available.

What is JARS and Why Should I Care?

Chapter 3 begins with a definition of JARS and provides a list of key benefits to potential users. In short, JARS represents a specialized set of guidelines that enable authors, editors, and reviewers to know what information must be included at a minimum in academic journal articles. The basic premise is that "comprehensive, uniform reporting standards

make it easier to compare research, to understand the implications of individual studies, and to allow techniques of meta-analysis to proceed more efficiently” (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 71). Because JARS contains copious amounts of detailed information, this chapter is itself an introduction to the full body of work, which can be accessed online at apastyle.apa.org/jars. This website allows users to promptly view revisions and expansions as they are developed. It also contains a comprehensive glossary of research-oriented terminology.

No matter where you stand in the world of academia, adopting JARS has its benefits. First, as a researcher, following JARS in your articles will help your readers fully comprehend your work and draw valid conclusions from it. As a reviewer or editor, you will improve your ability to evaluate submissions properly for their scientific value. As a policy decision maker, consulting JARS can help you understand how research is conducted and what key results imply. Overall, educators and students are encouraged to use JARS for conducting higher quality research (American Psychological Association, 2021).

Common Elements to All Forms of Research

The chapter first covers those elements that are common to all types of research articles, be they quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods—the *abstract* and *introduction*. Regardless of the approach, abstracts need to be accurate, nonevaluative, coherent, readable, and concise. If you are doing any sort of empirical study, the checklist of must-have items described in this chapter will prove invaluable, as will extra commentary devoted to subtle differences between various types of articles. For example, checklists of key features for the following types are provided:

- replication studies
- quantitative or qualitative meta-analysis papers
- literature reviews
- theoretical or methodological articles

For introductions, clear advice is given on how to frame the importance of the problem or puzzle under investigation so that readers' expectations are set for what the paper will and will not include. Next, guidance is provided on how to present the historical antecedents to your study in ways that highlight the study's scope, context, and any theoretical or practical implications. Finally, detailed pointers on articulating your research goals vis-à-vis the three main types of research are covered.

Reporting Standards for Different Types of Research

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to covering reporting standards for different kinds of research, namely quantitative (*JARS-Quant*), qualitative (*JARS-Qual*), and mixed approaches (*JARS-Mixed*). Each type has its own section, where basic reporting expectations are summarized comprehensively in a lengthy and detailed table. These tables are organized by the main sections of a paper, such as the title page, abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion. Information is presented that pertains to each research type. For example, the Method section of Table 3.1 (*JARS-Quant*) on page 77 covers topics such as participant characteristics, sampling procedures, describing sample sizes, determining quality of measurements and instrumentation, conditions and design, data diagnostics, and analytic strategy, to name a few. As befitting this type of research, the language is quite dense and technical, so if you are just getting started in this area, do consult the online glossary!

The reporting standards for qualitative research (*JARS-Qual*) are summarized in Table 3.2 (p. 95). Given the flexibility of many qualitative research designs, it is noted that all of the information listed in this table and on the website may not be applicable to all types of studies. However, this is an excellent place to start to make sure you are not leaving anything important out of your paper. Table 1 contains an excerpt from Table 3.2 to give you an idea of the scope and level of detail provided. Note the special commentary intended for reviewers.

Table 1

Excerpt from Table 3.2 (JARS-Qual): Data Collection or Identification Procedures

- State the form of data collected (e.g., interviews, questionnaires, media, observation).
- Describe the origins or evolution of the data-collection protocol.
- Describe any alterations of data-collection strategy in response to the evolving findings or the study rationale.
- Describe the data-selection or data-collection process (e.g., were others present when data were collected, number of times data were collected, duration of collection, context).
- Convey the extensiveness of engagement (e.g., depth of engagement, time intensiveness of data collection).
- For interview and written studies, indicate the mean and range of the time duration in the data-collection process (e.g., interviews were held for 75 to 110 min, with an average interview time of 90 min).

- Describe the management or use of reflexivity in the data-collection process, as it illuminates the study.
- Describe questions asked in data collection: content of central questions, form of questions (e.g., open vs. closed).

Guidance for Reviewers

- Researchers may use terms for data collection that are coherent within their research approach and process, such as "data identification," "data collection," or "data selection." Descriptions should be provided, however, in accessible terms in relation to the readership.
- It may not be useful for researchers to reproduce all of the questions they asked in an interview, especially in the case of unstructured or semistructured interviews as questions are adapted to the content of each interview.

Note: This excerpt can be found on p. 97.

The final section of Chapter 3 is devoted to reporting standards for mixed methods research (JARS-Mixed). Table 3.3 (p. 106) features less detail than the other two research types and instead focuses mainly on issues that arise when mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches. The basic assumption in combining the two is that it can lead to deeper insights than either one on its own. A mixed approach can also allow authors to publish multiple papers from a single study by producing papers of each type from one set of data.

Some Recommendations and Final Thoughts

If you are considering a research project, be sure to read the JARS chapter in the APA manual or at

least check out the website (apastyle.apa.org/jars). Going over these guidelines will help you create and plan your study. If you are currently working on a paper for publication, make sure you consult JARS before you submit the manuscript. Doing so will help you catch anything you have missed and better your chances of acceptance. Many papers are rejected because they are missing key elements, so do your best to avoid this fate. Speaking of rejection, since we have all been there, the best we can do is learn from those experiences. JARS can help with that. For example, you could cross-check the reviewer comments you received on a failed paper with the relevant JARS checklist and see if they match up. Identifying and addressing weaknesses in your writing and research design is a great way to improve. Finally, if you are tasked with reviewing or editing a paper, familiarizing yourself with JARS will enable you to give more precise feedback and make better decisions.

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[JALT FOCUS] SIG FOCUS



Michael Phillips

Collaboration, in all its forms, is a cornerstone of JALT activities and the same goes for SIGs. JALT currently has 30 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes an in-depth view of one SIG each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of what these groups believe and do. Past SIG Focus columns are available at <https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/sig-news> • Email: jaltpubs.tlt.sig.focus@jalt.org

Accessibility in Language Learning SIG

Ryota Moriya (Coordinator)

Andrew Reimann (Program Chair)

The mission of the Accessibility in Language Learning (ALL) SIG (Japanese: 言語教育のアクセシビリティ研究部会) is to provide a forum for current and potential members to share experiences, to exchange teaching practices, to discuss



strategies, and to collaborate. Our goal, therefore, is to increase awareness of key developments in accessible learning among teachers and administrators in Japan. By working collaboratively, we can help to establish a more accessible language learning environment for students across all levels of education.

As a diverse field, accessibility touches on all aspects of language teaching. In April 2016, the *Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities* (EDPD: <https://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/en/laws/view/3052/en>) became law. This change mandates that teachers and teaching organizations in Japan should become aware of relevant issues and apply resources and information towards accessibility pedagogies, materials, and strategies. This is particularly essential in order to optimize educational outcomes for learners with special needs, including psychological, physical, cognitive, and communicative disabilities.

As learner needs have become more diverse and context specific, there is no “one-size-fits-all” pedagogy for accessible language learning. Thus, it is increasingly important that teachers and institutions are aware of both the challenges as well as the available resources. We therefore welcome anyone with an interest in increasing accessibility and improving language teaching and learning across such differences. In this way, we can all contribute to the field by sharing relevant professional insights and experiences.

Activities

In addition to SIG forums at PanSIG and the JALT International Conference, we often organize mini joint forums and collaborations with different SIGs and chapters. For example, we had a *Joint Mini Conference of JALT’s Accessibility in Language Learning & Lifelong Language Learning Special Interest Groups* in February 2022. We also try to plan at least two presentations annually, focusing on accessible language teaching—a recent example being the *Joint Mini Conference of JALT’s Accessibility in Language Learning & Lifelong Language Learning Special Interest Groups* (<https://jalt.org/event/accessibility-language-learning/22-02-26>).

Following that, we hosted the *Helping You Help Your Students: Q&A with a Japanese Counselor* event alongside the Niigata chapter and the TYL SIG in March 2022 (<https://jalt.org/event/accessibility-language-learning/22-03-20>). In addition, we co-sponsored the *Active Allyship in ELT* alongside the GALE SIG, and the Kyoto and Yokohama chapters in April 2022 (<https://jalt.org/event/accessibility-language-learning/22-04-17>). Besides these examples,

our SIG members also often deliver presentations at regular chapter events around Japan every year.

Areas of Interest

Member research interests in our field include special needs; learner diversity; universal design; disability studies in education; alternative schools; color-blindness; accessible pedagogies for primary, secondary, and higher education; early childhood education; and social psychological differences.

Publications

The *Accessibility in Language Learning Review* (<https://sites.google.com/view/all-sig/newsletter?-authuser=0>) is an online newsletter published by the ALL SIG three times a year. Regular sections include the popular column *UD Tips*, short articles on accessibility in practice, announcements, and reports on recent conferences and events. The newsletter is open for every member of JALT and those outside the JALT community too, in order to promote more accessible language teaching. In this way, the newsletter itself uses various accessibility tips to make itself more accessible for as many readers as possible.

Web Presence

If you would like to increase your awareness on any of the issues raised here or view an example of an accessible publication, please be sure to visit the SIG’s main website (<https://sites.google.com/view/all-sig/home?-authuser=0>). We also regularly update the information on the ALL SIG Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/452497221874596/>) as well. For those interested in joining our SIG or finding out more about what we do, please use the QR code for easy access to the Facebook page.



— MW SIG SHOWCASE —



The MW SIG SHOWCASE is up and running! This website features textbooks and other teaching materials created by JALT members. If you are a JALT member and would like to showcase your materials, please visit the site and follow the submission guidelines.

<https://sites.google.com/view/mwsigshowcase>





Scott Gardner jaltpubs.tlt.old.gram@jalt.org

In-class Textbooking

It's BYOB time again: Blame Your Old Book! Time for teachers to lay the burden of a year's worth of pedagogical and academic failure on the textbooks they used, and to start looking for new books they can scapegoat next year.

Fear not. Every year in the language education field there are hundreds of new titles to choose from. Some of them are so good that to fail with them you'd almost literally have to use them as a pillow and take a nap at the lectern every week. However, there are always a few duds that make their way into print as well. Here are some sketchy ones I was thumbing through recently with examples of activities I took issue with.

An ESP (English for Specific Purposes) textbook for nursing students called *You've Got It Bad*:

A chutes-and-ladders type game called *Disease Transmission*, with in-square directives like these:

"Your host doesn't get enough sleep at night. Move ahead 3 spaces."

"Vaccination! Lose 5 turns!"

"The dog sleeps on the dinner table, but no one notices. Spin again."

"Diagnosis: incurable. Collect 20 glycoproteins and advance to terminal stage!"

A dialogue between a patient and a hospital worker that tries to be conveniently vague but is so ambiguous that it's unclear whether the interlocutors are talking about taking medicine or making a credit card payment:

A: Uh oh.

B: What's the matter?

A: I might have given you the wrong one.

B: The wrong one?

A: Take this one instead.

B: It's too late!

A: Can't you just start over?

B: It's already processing!

A: Oh my god!

A heavily prescriptive textbook called *English Ultimatum* in which the authors try to create a "new standard" of English that they say is more logical and easier to use:

A dialogue that promotes loading up on present progressives to aid in understanding:

A: Are you liking any sports?

B: Yes, I am currently liking golfing and tennis.

A: That's neat.

B: How about you? What sports are you liking?

A: Me? Well, I'm not liking sports much these days. I was liking soccer for a while until I blew out my knee.

B: You *what*?

A: Uh, my medial leg joint is languishing in a state of injury.

B: Oh, I see.

A: See what?

B: I am seeing...I am understanding.

A: Under what?

B: Oh, never mind!

A pragmatics-obsessed textbook, called *It's Your Attitude*, that promises to give the learner exposure to all varieties of politeness, or lack thereof:

A dialogue between two customers in a liquor store:

A: This is the express lane, isn't it?

B: See that sign there above you? It says, "express lane."

A: I see. It just looks like you have more than 10 items in your cart.

B: Wow, you can't read *or* count. How do you make it through the day?

A: _____

Activity 1: Choose a suitable response for A:

1. I'm terribly sorry for bothering you.
2. You don't have to be so rude.
3. I don't know, but I'm guessing you need that whole cartload of vodka coolers to get through *your* day.

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

- A professional organization formed in 1976
- 1976年に設立された学術学会
- Working to improve language learning and teaching, particularly in a Japanese context
- 語学の学習と教育の向上を図ることを目的としています
- Almost 3,000 members in Japan and overseas
- 国内外で約3,000名の会員がいます

<https://jalt.org>

Annual International Conference

- 1,500 to 2,000 participants
- 毎年1,500名から2,000名が参加します
- Hundreds of workshops and presentations
- 多数のワークショップや発表があります
- Publishers' exhibition - 出版社による教材展があります
- Job Information Centre
- 就職情報センターが設けられます

<https://jalt.org/conference>

JALT Publications

- *The Language Teacher*—our bimonthly publication
- 隔月発行します
- *JALT Journal*—biannual research journal
- 年2回発行します
- JALT Postconference Publication
- 年次国際大会の研究発表記録集を発行します
- SIG and chapter newsletters, anthologies, and conference proceedings - 分野別研究部会や支部も会報、アンソロジー、研究会発表記録集を発行します

<https://jalt-publications.org>

JALT Community

Meetings and conferences sponsored by local chapters and special interest groups (SIGs) are held throughout Japan. Presentation and research areas include:

Bilingualism • CALL • College and university education • Cooperative learning • Gender awareness in language education • Global issues in language education • Japanese as a second language • Learner autonomy • Pragmatics, pronunciation, second language acquisition • Teaching children • Lifelong language learning • Testing and evaluation • Materials development

支部及び分野別研究部会による例会や研究会は日本各地で開催され、以下の分野での発表や研究報告が行われます。バイリンガリズム、CALL、大学外国語教育、共同学習、ジェンダーと語学学習、グローバル問題、日本語教育、自主的学習、語用論・発音・第二言語習得、児童語学教育、生涯語学教育、試験と評価、教材開発等。

<https://jalt.org/main/groups>



JALT Partners

JALT cooperates with domestic and international partners, including (JALTは以下の国内外の学会と提携しています):

- AJET—The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching
- IATEFL—International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- JACET—The Japan Association of College English Teachers
- PAC—Pan-Asian Consortium of Language Teaching Societies
- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Membership Categories

All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. *The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal*等の出版物が1年間送付されます。また例会や大会に割引価格で参加できます。

- Regular 一般会員: ¥13,000
- Student rate (FULL-TIME students of undergraduate/graduate universities and colleges in Japan) 学生会員(国内の全日制の大学または大学院の学生): ¥7,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員 (同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥21,000
- Senior rate (people aged 65 and over) シニア会員(65歳以上の方): ¥7,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥8,500/person—one set of publications for each five members グループ会員(5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名ごとに1部): 1名 ¥8,500

<https://jalt.org/main/membership>

Information

For more information please consult our website <<https://jalt.org>>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT's main office.

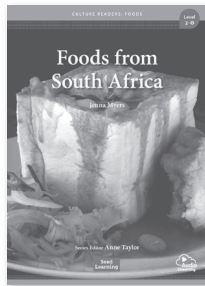
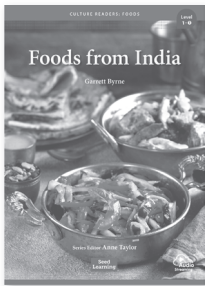
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Joining JALT

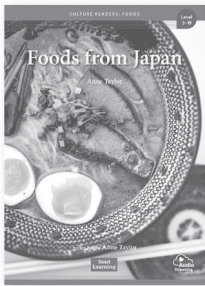
Use the attached *furikae* form at post offices ONLY. When payment is made through a bank using the *furikae*, the JALT Central Office receives only a name and the cash amount that was transferred. The lack of information (mailing address, chapter designation, etc.) prevents the JCO from successfully processing your membership application. Members are strongly encouraged to use the secure online sign-up page located at:

<https://jalt.org/joining>.



Discover fascinating facts about foods and culinary traditions from around the world!

Total 20 books
(5 books / level)



Seed Learning's *Culture Readers: Foods* explains dishes that are central to the cuisine of various nations while looking at important aspects of these foods. Readers will get a glimpse into the history of how people began eating certain foods and the customs that surround these foods. In particular, the series aims to broaden the perspective of learners who may have limited exposure to other cultures by presenting positive and accurate portraits of foods and traditions around the world.

Free downloadable materials (Power Point and Activity Pack: worksheets) available from Seed Learning website.

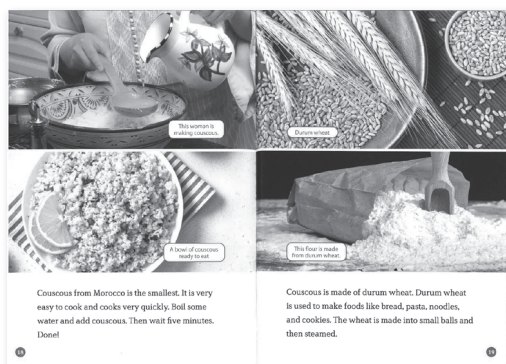
<http://www.seed-learning.com/CRF/>



Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Foods from India 2 Foods from Italy 3 Foods from South Korea 4 Foods from Mexico 5 Foods from Spain 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Foods from the United States 2 Foods from China 3 Foods from England 4 Foods from France 5 Foods from South Africa 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Foods from Germany 2 Foods from Japan 3 Foods from Morocco 4 Foods from Thailand 5 Foods from Turkey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Foods from Australia 2 Foods from Brazil 3 Foods from Greece 4 Foods from Russia 5 Foods from Vietnam



Level 2 France



Level 3 Morocco

Levels	1	2	3	4
Base Vocabulary	500	750	1000	1250
Word Count	400	600	800	1000
ERF Scale	High Beginner	Elementary		Early Intermediate
CEFR	A1	A2		B1



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LOOKING FORWARD

Sustainable futures in language education
May 12-14, 2023, Kyoto Sangyo University



Building the future of language education

How will language learning communities evolve?

Let's get together and think it through,
in Kyoto, the cultural capital of Japan.

古都 京都で、語学教育の未来へ

言語学習コミュニティはどう進化するのでしょうか。
今こそ、皆と交流しながら考えましょう。

VISIT THE WEBSITE AND SNS FOR MORE INFO



www.pansig.org



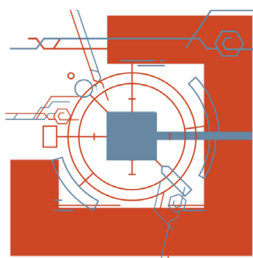
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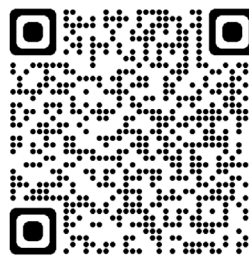
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JALTCALL 2023 Conference: Special invited Friday night workshops

Dr. Olena Prysiazhna
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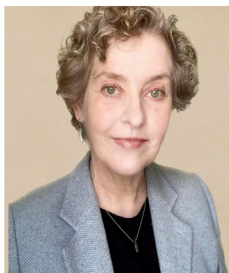
Brought to you by Sojo
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Workshop contents:
Ukrainian history and
culture, followed by a
Ukrainian CALL lesson.



Brought to you by BRAIN
SIG and CUE SIG

Workshop contents:
Using the Immersive reader
and other text-to-speech
tools to bring text to life for
readers of all levels,
increasing accessibility.



Conference dates: June 2 - 4. F-2-F in Kumamoto with online attendance option.

<https://jaltcall.org/jaltcall2023/>