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Invited Papers

Reframing Notions of Research Collaboration in Language Education: Some Suggestions on Why and How

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Abstract

A recurrent theme in education, including English language education, is the extent to which teachers draw on the findings of academic research, despite the fact that 'evidence-based' practice is usually promoted as the gold standard. Research on teachers as consumers and users of research (Noonoo, 2019) suggests that although teachers may access research in various ways, such as in teacher training programs, workshops, or conference presentations, in their actual daily classroom practices very little attention may be paid to research. There are various reasons for this situation, including inaccessibility of academic research concepts and methods, the perceived lack of relevance to teachers' contexts, or the gap between the worlds of researchers and teachers. In this paper, based on a JACET 2023 plenary presentation, I argue for a rethinking of the types of collaboration that could work to overcome these disparities. I use the notion of the need for 'transcultural' work where researchers and teachers could cross the divides that separate them. I discuss why, given the growing complexity and challenges in education, it is important that we do not overlook or fail to deploy the range of empirical and pedagogical resources available to us as educators. I will outline why collaboration is central to the building of stronger transcultures of research that can aim to have an impact on practice. I will go on to suggest what kinds of initiatives and strategies could be harnessed to strengthen research collaborations and how these could be implemented. To illustrate my arguments, I will draw on my own experiences of research

collaboration with teachers as well as other examples from international contexts. In so doing I will attempt to draw out what kinds of roles, knowledge, relationships, and procedures might work towards effective collaboration.

As has been widely argued in the applied linguistics literature, academic research aspires to inform the field of practice (e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Sato & Loewen, 2019, 2022; Spada, 2015) and, in the case of English language education, to have a positive impact on how language is learned and taught. Internally within this field, one way that academic research relating to language education is typically disseminated and expanded is through academic conferences containing strands relating to applied linguistics, educational linguistics, and second language acquisition (SLA). Another means is, of course, through publication, and to further the dissemination of research to practice, academic journals often (but not always) adopt criteria about the relevance of research to practice. They often request inclusion of 'implications for practice' in the articles they publish, although these sections have a tendency to be sparse or even absent (Han, 2007). In short, internally to the field some of the major aims of academic research are to inform good practice in language teaching. Externally to the field, there is demand from governments, and other bodies that provide funding, for increased accountability that research should benefit professional practice and the community at large. For example, over at least the last decade there have been increasing requirements in national university research assessment frameworks for academics to show the 'impact' of their research on end-users in the broader community, in the case of language teaching typically on teachers, teacher educators, curriculum developers, and policy makers.

My main thesis in this paper is that English language teaching (ELT) has, however, long suffered from a separation of the educational cultures of academic and those of teachers. As a

result, the unfortunate situation has arisen that much of the vast amount of academic research undertaken in language teaching has not easily transferred to the classroom, or perhaps never reaches it at all (see Noonoo, 2019; Rose & McKinley, 2022). The key questions I am aiming to address are:

What kinds of 'cultures of research' currently tend to exist for academics and teachers in ELT?

What are some of the issues that characterise these cultures?

In what ways is TESOL research in a transcultural process?

How can we reframe notions of collaboration in ELT research for fuller deployment of available research resources and practices?

Literature Review

Although there has been disquiet for several decades about the 'theory-research-practice' divide in the language teaching field, in the recent literature it is now observable that there is a growing movement attempting to shift the separation of researcher and teacher cultures and to look for ways that researchers and teachers can work more closely together for the benefit of more effective language education (Sato & Loewen, 2022). To explore this shift, I draw on the notion of 'transculture' to interrogate what possibilities exist to break down the separations that have traditionally existed. The term transculture was coined by the Cuban anthropologist and historian Fernando Ortiz (1940/1995) to identify "a meeting between an existing culture or subculture and a migrant culture, recently arrived, which transforms the two and creates in the process a neoculture..." (p. 181). He saw transculture as a process of 'possibility' where two separate and different cultures could come together. He wrote:

...to describe this process, the Latinate word transcultural provides us with a term that

does not suggest the idea of one culture having to lean towards another, but of a

transition between two cultures, both active and participating parties, both

contributing in their own ways, cooperating in the advent of a new [cultural] reality.

(p. 182)

Ortiz's concept of transculturation was one that challenged the traditional view that

cultural encounters only work in one direction. Instead, he suggested that these are two-way

processes during which some cultural characteristics may get lost, while new possibilities

emerge. It is this space of possibility that I wish to explore in this paper.

Socratic concepts of what constitutes knowledge incur three major sources. *Episteme*

(or epistemology) related to scientific knowledge seeks 'disinterested knowledge' that can

create universal laws (and generalisability) that are invariable, replicable, and context-

independent. Such approaches to knowledge-creation are related to 'pure' or scientific

research capable of leading to theoretical development and improvement with the aim of

better understanding of and advancement of knowledge. The aim is to explain the

relationships among variables in order to predict how natural and other phenomena work in

the world. Pure research does not typically have a specific practical or problem-solving goal

in mind, but may act as the basis for *techne* (or craftsmanship), the second source of

knowledge. Knowledge derived from techne relates to 'interested knowledge' in the sense

that it leads to research that has practical problem-solving as a goal. In this sense it is

'applied' research, that is context-dependent and product-oriented and therefore variable, as it

is focused on producing pragmatic outcomes within specific situations. Applied research is

typically framed by theories derived from scientific research in order to investigate particular

kinds of problems and draws on established empirical methods. The third source of

knowledge is *phronesis* (or practical wisdom); this relates to the knowledge gained from

experience through ethical practices and values. Such knowledge is contingent upon action

that is reasoned in relation to specific social circumstances, and in the case of education, that

can be said to be within the classroom. This kind of process-oriented and action-based research is 'practitioner research' which leads to deeper knowledge through practical reasoning and investigation and which holds out realistic possibilities of a way for teachers to involve themselves in research (see Burns & Williams, forthcoming, for an example).

For reasons already outlined earlier, traditionally within the field of ELT there has been a dominance of episteme, with growing attention over the last half-century to techne. Such research has contributed greatly to the development of what can be termed 'grand theories' of the field which constitute general frameworks for language acquisition and learning: ways of looking at these phenomena which may hold true over different social cultural contexts and different periods of time. For example, there are now extensive theories of second language acquisition intended to inform different approaches that teachers should take to practice, although research also shows they are not always readily transferred into the classroom (Ellis, 2010). On the other hand, there has been limited development of theories of language teaching that can inform the field, as several authors have noted (Larsen-Freeman, 1990; Graves, 2009; Webster, 2019). In relation to these theoretical gaps, others have also commented on the need for transformative rather than transmissive teaching practices, those based on socially-embedded sensitivity to learning needs and circumstances, with a view to developing higher order cognition and empowering further learning, rather than those that see learning as a commodity focused on the delivery of content-mastery (see Freeman, 2016).

It is for several of the reasons outlined that there is an increasing appetite for researchers to seek engaging ways to disseminate their research to the language teaching field. As Sato and Loewen (2019, p. 1) recently noted:

> …researchers have become more concerned with whether they are disseminating
> their findings to teachers effectively. Additionally, there is an ongoing debate about
> the extent of teachers' interest in ISLA [Instructed second language acquisition].

Both researchers and teachers need to be willing and open for there to be an effective research-pedagogy dialogue.

Conversely, others have argued that there is also a pressing need for researchers to hear the views of teachers about what they would like to see being researched that could provide insights for researchers. For example, Lightbown (2000, p. 453) observed that "it is essential for researchers to enter into a dialogue with classroom teachers - not only so that teachers can know what researchers are saying, but also so researchers can hear what teachers are saying..."

In line with Lightbown, I too would argue that movement towards a transculture of research collaboration involves not only the dissemination of research from researchers to teachers (a one-way street), but also the flow of phronesis, or teachers' pedagogical wisdom, from teachers to researchers (a two-way street) so that researchers can gain insights into teachers' knowledge and needs, and undertake research that can relate more directly to their concerns. I would also argue that one way to achieve such mutual openness is for closer research collaboration between researchers and teachers and towards the end of this paper I suggest some possible strategies towards pursuing this goal.

There are several reported benefits from studies that investigate what occurs when teachers collaborate in and undertake research. Winch et al., (2015) argue that systematic inquiry into their practices serves to develop 'scholar teachers' for whom their own classroom-based research can become a way of being. Teachers become equipped to be partners in educational research, thus enhancing their identities and skills both as teachers and educational researchers. Furlong et al. (2014) note that doing research enables teachers to gain deeper insights into technical, practical, and theoretical aspects of pedagogical knowledge, while Borg (2010) states that teacher research offers new ways of seeing, doing, talking, knowing, and thinking about practice. In order to test out some of the findings of the literature

and the conceptions teachers hold about research, I conducted a small-scale study with teachers with whom I worked in Australia. This investigation is briefly described below.

Method

Context and Participants

The study took place within the context of an annual action research program conducted in Australia for teachers who work in the international student sector. Australia receives numerous international students from across the world, many of them enrolled in courses at university language centres, and private colleges. These centres prepare students for university entry to undergraduate and postgraduate courses upon successful completion of their courses. Centres, centre managers, and teachers within this sector are supported by a national peak body—English Australia—that advocates for quality provision and provides various forms of teacher professional development across the country. One of these professional development programs is the annual action research program for which I act as a facilitator, where teachers can apply to be included in a year-long program, attending workshops, conducting research within their centres and presenting and publishing their research (see Burns & Williams, forthcoming).

The participants in this study comprised eight teachers who were all involved in one particular recent year of the action research program. These teachers were from different language teaching centres across Australia and before the program were not familiar with each other.

Procedures

The main data collection instrument was a focus group discussion with all the teachers. Focus groups, which are part of a suite of qualitative research data collection tools, typically comprise a group of 6–12 people and use a controlled but non-directive approach by a moderator to generate discussion among participants (Winke, 2017). In this study I was the

moderator of the focus group discussion. The composition of a focus group sample is 'purposive' and reflective of the target population, in this instance practising in-service teachers working in the international student sector in Australia. Focus groups are sometimes used in combination with other methods, such as surveys and interviews, which was not however the case in this small-scale qualitative study. Focus groups may be preferred to individual interviews as they can generate discussion and further reflection among participants and moderator and therefore can generate richer and more in-depth data. Written permission was received from the teachers to use their responses in any public presentations or published research. The focus group took place for approximately 45 minutes at one of the workshops and teachers were asked to respond to the following questions from their perspectives as practising teachers:

1. How does academic research benefit you as a teacher?

2. What kind of research is valuable and useful to you as a teacher?

They were also asked to consider how conducting research could be useful for teachers.

3. What benefits might there be for teachers to conduct research?

The spoken data were audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis. The data were then analysed thematically by developing overall categories that responded to the three research questions.

Findings

The findings revealed interesting and valuable insights on this group of teachers' attitudes to research. In general, they indicated that the teachers valued academic research as a basis for their teaching; they also believed that doing research themselves benefitted them as teachers.

Benefits of Academic Research for Teachers

Several of the teachers indicated that they believed they drew on academic research as a

way of informing and identifying their teaching practices. Some saw research as providing them with a way of clarifying the basis for practice so that teaching was not simply intuitive and uninformed. As one teacher put it:

Research provides a metalanguage for the field of practice—it gives us a term to refer to and a way of naming our practice that comes from research.

This teacher appeared to be referring to theories, or as she put it 'a term' or metalanguage, that could help her identify and name aspects of her practice, and thereby perhaps feel more confident in what she was doing. Another teacher felt it was important to read and draw on research as it provided a base for practice and a source of knowledge and new ideas for teaching. He stated that:

Reading research articles gives fresh perspectives on different issues, like teaching grammar, and provides ideas for teaching strategies.

Two other teachers stated that they valued the links to practice provided by research. These teachers clearly felt that as far as possible practice should be based on research and that knowing something about the research provided a more solid foundation for their teaching. One viewed it this way, as a kind of two-way process between research and practice:

Theory to practice reaffirms practice and helps to ground practice in research.

The other felt that research was a motivator for further development of sound practice, again reflecting the benefits of a two-way process:

….prevents teachers becoming stale as it's possible to go back from practice to research and theory.

The opinion was also put forward that, apart from researchers, professional organisations had a role to play in promoting research:

…when it's disseminated by professional organisations it helps teachers keep up-to-date.

Overall these teachers held a positive view towards academic research, feeling that it was necessary and beneficial to them, and in general they expressed a desire to draw on research in their teaching.

Value and Usefulness of Academic Research

The second question related to the teachers' perceptions about what made research valuable and useful to them. It was clear from their responses that research that made explicit links to practice was felt to be the most useful. One teacher expressed it this way:

Research that's valuable for teachers bridges the gaps between the research and the practice.

Another teacher, endorsing this point of view, added a further comment:

Some researchers do this particularly well… for example they provide free resources that emerges from the research.

Another teacher extended these discussion points, adding other suggestions about how researchers could support teachers and make their research more valuable by linking it to practice:

Research that explains practical implications and gives examples, suggestions, or case studies is more useful than research that just states the results.

These comments point to a willingness on the part of teachers to learn from academic research, especially when researchers are able to spell out the implications and possible applications of the research for practice.

Benefits for Teachers who do Research

The third question took a different angle and asked teachers to respond to the idea of teachers themselves doing research and what they could gain from it. They made several positive remarks about how teachers could benefit if they engage in research themselves. A general point that appeared to summarise most responses was expressed by one of the

teachers in this way:

> Research leads to growth and professional learning.

Another teacher added more detail to this comment by remarking that:

> Professional development is in short supply for many teachers, so getting ideas from your own studies is valuable and also helps your work with other teachers…

Apart from the expansion of their knowledge through research, teachers also pointed to the more emotional or psychological elements derived from doing research themselves. One suggested that:

> Research gives teachers more confidence to challenge themselves and state your own position on the issues.

This teacher's comment pointed to both the psychological and the cognitive developments that engagement in research provided. A second teacher supported this view of the role that doing research played in their personal development as teachers:

> After exposure to research, teachers' posture and confidence increase and are different.

Another statement drew on these points but added a further benefit about the links that could be strengthened between research and practice. This comment suggests the importance of teachers doing research as a way of more firmly forging these links:

> Doing research prevents teachers becoming stale as it's possible to go back from practice to research and theory.

Such a comment suggests that for some teachers the route into paying more attention to research may be through first investigating, understanding and critically evaluating their own practices and then looking for the connections with research. This orientation reverses the usual expectation among academic researchers that research should translate into practice and suggests a useful strategy that researchers working with teachers could exploit more.

It needs to be pointed out that this small-scale study is indeed small and limited and cannot in any way be generalised to other teachers. It has a number of noteworthy limitations that should be highlighted. First, the participants were a group of teachers who had already self-selected to undertake research in their classrooms and therefore cannot necessarily be said to be a representative group. Nevertheless, they were illustrative of a proportion of teachers working within their sector who clearly placed value on research and whose views were worth canvassing. Second, the research is limited to just one group and the findings are therefore skewed to this very small number of teachers. To investigate whether their views have greater currency it would be necessary to greatly expand the research and conduct other focus group discussions or interviews, or administer to a broader cross-section through surveys. Third, as the mediator I was known to the group and therefore they may have biased their responses towards what they felt were my expectations. However, over the course of working together for a continuing period of time, as a group we had established open and trusting collaboration where participants were encouraged to reflect critically and express their views freely. Therefore, it is likely that the responses were more frank and transparent than those that might have emerged from a one-off opportunistic grouping of respondents.

Discussion

In his authoritative volume on research methods in applied linguistics, Dörnyei (2007) laments the lack of links between researchers and teachers and questions what approaches could be adopted to make them more viable. He eschews the idea that teachers should be passive recipients of researcher knowledge, stating that this approach has had little success in the past. As he sees it (p. 193–194):

> … the challenge is to find some doable form of teacher-researcher partnership
>
> between the two extremes that is embraced by educational managers and which
>
> teachers will not consider merely an additional burden on their already busy daily

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lives.

It seems that Dörnyei was seeking the kind of transcultural research space that I alluded to earlier whereby a transition between two active and participating groups—researchers and teachers—could contribute. As Ortiz suggested in the notion of a transculture, such a process of possibility would mean each group making new kinds of contributions that could create different research realities. In the interests of contributing to this debate, I outline some suggestions for how more positive contexts of language teaching research transculture might be achieved.

From Researchers to Teachers

My first set of suggestions relates to how researchers could be in greater research contact with teachers. One possibility is for educational research centres established within universities to actively engage teachers in their research and invite them into their centres, either face-to-face or online. One such centre, where I worked in Australia, focused on a large-scale national program of English language teaching for immigrants and its research was directed to enhancing the quality of teaching provision for this group (see Brindley, 1990, Burns, 1996). For over 15 years, its research actively integrated teachers as co-researchers into a program of key projects on issues suggested both by researcher and teacher groups, that were relevant to the teaching and learning within this sector. Teachers then co-published with the centre's academics through books and journal articles and a series of forums and workshops was initiated to disseminate the results.

Another suggestion is for universities to initiate partnerships with various schools, whereby researchers support teachers to conduct research relevant to their work. This kind of approach was adopted by Wang and Mu (2013) in China where 17 university researchers (URs) and 45 senior high school teachers worked in collaboration. The aim of the project was to support teachers to do research related to their own contexts but also to investigate what the

URs could learn about researcher-teacher collaboration and how they themselves could grow professionally in their understanding of their own roles and what research issues were relevant to teachers. In relation to researchers opening up to teachers, Sato and Loewen (2019) make the further suggestions that researchers could be active in creating communities of practice, whereby they extend invitations for teacher-researcher symposia where teachers can talk about gaps and obstacles in their practices and discuss with researchers ways to overcome them. Conversely, researchers could offer free talks and workshops for teachers where they explain the implications of their research for practice (Sato & Loewen, 2019). Professional associations can also play a part by organising sessions where panels of researchers could outline their research and the links to practice and teachers could react from their own experience about how to adopt or modify these implications for their situations. Aliaga et al (2015) describe the growth of an association of researchers and teachers in Chile, which was supported in its initiation by IATEFL. Over several years, RICELT (Red de Investigadores Chilenos/as en ELT) as it is known has grown into a national network of researchers and teachers with the aim of making Chilean research more visible, promoting dialogue between researchers and teachers, and encouraging teacher research. The organization also provides a bridge to government institutions and professional associations. Its focus is on giving teachers greater accessibility to research by university-based academics and by teachers and creating a contextualized bottom-up approach to bridge the research-practice divide.

From Teachers to Researchers

Consideration also needs to be made of how teachers could be active in collaborating with researchers and this is the focus of my second set of suggestions. Various studies have highlighted the barriers to teachers doing research, including lack of time, support and resources, limited motivation or incentives to do research, restricted knowledge and skills

about how to carry out research and lack of institutional acknowledgement or collaboration (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2010). However, the growing movement over the last three decades in what has come to be known as teacher or practitioner research also show evidence that teachers are indeed interested in working with researchers and conducting research, given conducive conditions, including institutional support, time to do research, and opportunities to work with research mentors (Borg, 2010; Hanks, 2017).

As Burns (2018) points out, here educational managers and leaders need to play a critical role in facilitating a research culture and in supporting teachers to disseminate their research. They can create a research-friendly climate by putting research firmly on the teaching agenda, becoming research mentors and seeking collaborations with academic researchers, learning about research approaches that appeal to teachers, and creating structured timeframes for research to be carried out (see also Burns et al., 2022; Dikilitaş, 2014; Haines, 2016).

Firth (2016) offers an excellent example of how a culture of research established in a school can extend outwards towards academic researchers. His secondary school in the UK established a Centre for Research "to build an ethos of research throughout the school, and to develop a collaborative community of scholars - comprising both pupils and staff, and connecting with external researchers" (p. 164). The centre focused on assisting teachers to learn professionally through continued research engagement that enabled them to highlight their own plans and aspirations for student learning. These initiatives led to greater engagement with the research literature and development of research knowledge but also outreach from the school to working with academic researchers. Firth describes how he was working with a local university to investigate early secondary school learners' memory for vocabulary in a foreign language, while other projects had led to networking with other schools to conduct research and link with education faculties in two other universities. The

school's research centre also hosted visiting research fellows from a local university, and ran staff/student conferences to which other schools were invited. Senior students were also mentored to write independent research papers and the school was engaged in plans to support students from junior classes to develop interdisciplinary research skills.

Such initiatives may still be relatively rare (see Curtis & Uştuk, forthcoming; Kirwan & Little, 2023 for further recent examples of collaborative research) but they provide a positive model of how teacher researchers and school leaders working within a conducive school culture of research can reach out to academic researchers to traverse the research-practice divide.

Researcher to Teacher, Teacher to Researcher Communication

One final set of suggestions relates to the dissemination of research and how that may be opened up to greater collaboration. Typically, much published academic research in academic journals is read and disseminated only within scholarly contexts. Generally academic research is not written and structured in such a way that makes it easily accessible to teachers, even though there may be expectations that teachers will take up the findings of the research (Medgyes, 2017). Marsden and Kasprowicz (2017) suggest that one way that journals could make research more accessible is by encouraging authors to provide 'plain language' or 'lay' summaries that would explicate the implications or applications of the research in the classroom. Similarly, Paran (2017) recommends 'action sections' in journals that could outline what activities or practical strategies could emerge from research. Researchers could also consider sending out calls to be contacted by teachers who wish to do research with them on specific topics. In that way researchers could test out the implications of their research in real classrooms and potentially critically evaluate and refine the direction of their research. Another means of collaboration is through preparation for dissemination whereby researchers mentor teachers to publish and present their research. Dikilitaş and

Mumford (2016) describe how they worked with novice teacher researchers to assist them to write up and publish their research. They found that having mentors and peer collaborators work with teachers greatly enhanced their motivation and success in publishing. Two major implications were that these strategies increased teachers' commitment and participation, while the role of institutional support was also found to be essential.

Conclusion

In this paper, based on a recent plenary, I have explored some of the debates surrounding the research-practice divide in language teaching and the concerns expressed by various commentators. I have also explored, though a small-scale study, teachers' perspectives on academic research and whether and how they believe it might benefit them. In addition, I have touched on the teachers' views of the benefits of doing research themselves. I then suggested some ideas for how greater collaboration between researchers and teachers might be achieved and how that may create an improved 'transculture' of research where researchers and teachers could learn from each other. If the field of language teaching is to thrive there needs to be a stronger emphasis, both theoretical and practical, on breaking down the barriers between research and practice. Fortunately, the intensity of this debate appears to be accelerating and there is a gradual but noticeable shift towards a desire to democratise what counts as research (Rose, 2019), perhaps propelled also by the growing teacher research movement over the last two decades. Such a move can only be to the benefit of both research and practice. It could create stronger hope that the 'processes of possibility' highlighted by Ortiz might generate a new neoculture of research for the language teaching field.

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Collaboration in English Language Education:

Teaching, Researching, and Testing

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Abstract

Collaboration in English language education has been a crucial mechanism for improvement in language pedagogy across disciplines, research, and testing. Collaborative efforts in language education are undertaken to meet the needs of various stakeholders in this dynamic world, where technology plays an important and transformative role in multiple dimensions of language instruction (Ngoc & Barrot, 2022). It is established that English language education in the 21st century has constantly faced disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), and more importantly, the emergence of large language models (e.g., ChatGPT by Open AI, Amazon Titan, and Microsoft 365 Copilot) that have an inevitable impact on all involved parties in the language education system. In this paper, I reflect on collaborative work in the Thai English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) context, with a focus on collaboration in teaching across disciplinary studies, research, testing, and assessment. Empirical studies have also been cited to contextualize and illustrate each type of collaboration, highlighting their perceived significance, challenges, and possible future directions in similar contexts. The analyses have been drawn from the authors' experiences as practitioners, course designers, material developers, assessors, educators, and administrators. Evidence-based suggestions will also be made based on the empirical study examples.

Keywords: collaboration, English language education, teaching collaboration, research collaboration, testing collaboration

In an English language education discipline, collaboration can take on multiple forms. Some key forms of collaboration include collaborative teaching (among teachers both intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary), learning (among students), research, curriculum design and development, and testing and assessment. Regardless of its form, collaboration begins with initial goal setting, sharing information, designing tasks, and cooperating to achieve the goal(s) beyond individual achievement (Barfield, 2016). Collaborative learning occurs through a series of dialogues, social interactive engagement, and importantly collaborative decision-making that are believed to significantly contribute to both individual and collective improvement as ways to co-construct understanding and exchange knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). To capture such dynamism of real-world needs in language learning, the field of English language education has encountered significant transitions, resulting from new paradigm shifts and advancements in technology. Since the great paradigm shift from a traditional teaching approach of grammar-translation to communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1960s, English language teaching in both inner circle countries and expanding circle countries (based on Kachru's World Englishes model, 1985) has focused more on communicative use, rather than discrete linguistic features. In a modern disruption, the arrival of AI and AI-assisted tools, such as ChatGPT, a large language model chatbot that can automatically interact with its users in a human-like conversation and help its users to solve problems based on the given contexts and prompts with immediate feedback provision (Huang et al., 2019; Kohnke, 2022). This AI-supported chatbot has generated a considerable impact on English language education in many aspects as student-users can take advantage of it to work on their assignments and written exams, casting critical concerns on academic

integrity (Thorp, 2023). Thus, it is notable that collaborative efforts and the embracement of technology to be utilized in language pedagogy appear to be key mechanisms that need more attention from stakeholders.

This paper focuses on three main collaboration types: collaboration in teaching across disciplines, research, and testing. It is important to note here that, in English language education, there are more than three macro collaboration types. However, the author believes that these are essential to the field and deserve a greater collaborative effort. Moreover, the author's years of experience have been drawn upon to strengthen each type of collaboration. First, teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology has supplemented the first type of collaboration where interdisciplinary effort is focused. Key challenges that emerge from the pedagogical contexts have been yielded to pave the way forward for those in similar contexts. For collaboration in research, English language teaching (ELT) research on the integration of technology in reading and writing classroom has been illustrated to shed light on the nexus between a technology-assisted tool and students' language learning experiences. This initiative project is under the collaboration between the Language Institute Thammasat University and Microsoft Thailand, together with the school partner. Lastly, for collaboration in testing, the author reports on the research project on aligning TU-GET CBT scores—a computerised in-house English proficiency test––with the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2). Under each case of collaboration, perceived challenges and future directions have also been discussed, promoting the transfer of knowledge, localised research-driven practice, and empirically driven ideas for the better.

Collaboration in teaching across disciplines

A Case of English for Specific Purposes

One of the crucial collaborations in English language education concerns collaborative teaching across disciplines. This is evidenced in the field of ESP, proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), in which the focus is on English used specifically for communicative purposes in a specific field, for example, medicine, aviation, trades, business, and other vocation-related sub-fields (Hyland, 2016). Given its inception, ESP was initially expanded from the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Basturkmen, 2021) with the focus on the interplay between English language and its actual vocational use and to assist language users excel in their skills of communication for their current and future work (Basturkmen, 2010; Bruce, 2011; Harding, 2007). As the name suggests, ESP aims to serve a specific cohort of students with specific academic and professional needs. That means, some core linguistic and discursive elements, such as linguistic features, syntactic structures, writing conventions, lexical utilisation, and idiomatic expressions are unique, requiring a different method of message interpretation (Hyland & Jiang, 2021). Unlike general English or English that interlocutors use on a regular basis, ESP instruction is catered to meet certain students' learning needs (Hans & Hans, 2015), rooted in their vocational communication with the emphasis upon appropriate language use in occupation-related communicative activities (Strevens, 1988).

It appears that teaching ESP requires a significant amount of complex knowledge. In other words, ESP instructors must be able to create and develop courses, assess needs, and implement specialized teaching methods in their own context, in addition to possessing disciplinary knowledge and fluency in English (Basturkmen, 2014; Bruce, 2011; Campion, 2016; Dudley-Evans, 1998; Ferguson, 1997; Hall, 2013; Master, 2005). According to Wu and Badger (2009, p. 21), the line between subject-matter expertise of content specialists and ESP instructors is "potentially unclear and sometimes disputed." This is illustrated in the case of ESP team-teaching, where a specialist teaches the subject matter in a particular field, and an

English teacher teaches the language. According to Ferguson (1997, p. 85), ESP teachers should have expertise in three broad areas: genres and discourse, the epistemological foundation of disciplines, and disciplinary culture and values. On the other hand, Harding (2007, p. 7) suggests that "understanding the nature of the material of the ESP specialism" should be a prerequisite for ESP teachers. This presumably relates to what Ferguson (1997, p. 85) refers to as "knowledge of genres and discourse," with a focus on texts that adhere to standard formats across many professional fields. The way professionals in a particular area think, practice, critique, and express themselves through writing and speaking can be influenced by disciplinary cultures and values. This is demonstrated in the interconnectedness of all proposed knowledge, which is reflected in the knowledge of genres and discourse (community of practice).

ESP teachers, as key mechanisms in pedagogic collaboration, appear to have various roles to play at different stages of ESP instruction. ESP teachers are perceived to be specialists who play a role as "needs analysts, first and foremost, then designers and implementers of specialised curricula" (Belcher, 2006, p. 135). In theory, ESP teachers are responsible for designing lessons, selecting language and professional content, managing the linguistic and subject content, and providing an opportunity in the classroom to encourage students to use English language based on a series of assumptions about what students would encounter in real-life working situations. In practice, ESP teachers in many pedagogical contexts are English teachers, not disciplinary specialists (e.g., Ahmed, 2014; Bojovic, 2006), while in many settings, ESP teachers are disciplinary specialists (e.g., Bocanegra-Valle & Basturkmen, 2019; Cao et al., 2022; Górska-Poręcka, 2013; Mulyadi et al., 2020). This poses many instructional challenges that require pedagogic and administrative collaboration, whether it is within or between organizations, to better enhance the quality of ESP instruction where classroom practice and real-world occupations meet. Another role of ESP teachers is as

evaluators. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) propose that there are two types of evaluation in ESP courses: (1) student evaluation, and (2) course evaluation. The former evaluation concerns how to assess students' achievements of academic requirements in terms of language and skills necessary for employment-related uses. For course evaluation, ESP teachers need to be able to determine if the designed materials and tasks cater to students' academic and professional needs. Figure 1 illustrates examples of in-house materials specifically designed for students of sociology and anthropology.

Through the extensive review of ESP teacher literature, three types of teacher collaboration are evident to help strengthen ESP instruction across contexts. Firstly, intradisciplinary cooperation takes place within the same group of ESP instructors or within the same organisation or university. In other words, content or language teachers work together to organise, execute, and reflect on their own ESP practices. Pedagogical knowledge can be enhanced by sharing ideas and collaborating on reflection, whereby those with more experience teaching ESP can resolve ineffective practices. This serves as a platform for knowledge sharing and problem-solving (Basturkmen, 2019) before, during, and even after instruction. Secondly, collaboration can be multidisciplinary. Through this kind of partnership, language teachers may help content teachers with language-related issues so that they can apply it in their ESP instruction, and content teachers can, on the other hand, help language teachers to comprehend some specific discipline-based knowledge so that language teachers are able to make sense of those specialised terminologies. Working together might also teach new ESP instructors how to meet the professional and academic standards of the ESP community (Chien, 2014; Körkkö et al., 2016).

Another type of collaboration is between ESP teachers (either language or content teacher) and domain experts. Domain experts are those who currently work in certain fields or are still in service. This collaboration could be conducted to promote students' engagement

and help them see the linkage between the course and current employment demands.
Jitpaiboon and Sripicharn (2022) raised in their study that this collaboration could be done in
a short training and workshop or special lecture series. In addition, not only does it help
students acquire dated knowledge from the field, but in-service ESP teachers can also gain
up-to-date knowledge and practices. Despite the similarities with the previous collaboration,
this type of collaboration focuses on the up-to-date knowledge and practices in certain
disciplines from in-service personnel. This may be advantageous for administrative purposes
as it is unnecessary to hire two teachers (content and language teachers) to teach in one
subject.

In current ESP instruction, teachers are required to acquire necessary discipline-based
knowledge and discursive language use specific to different disciplines. ESP teachers are
assumed to have acquired pedagogical, linguistic, and disciplinary knowledge to deliver their
lessons based on specialised lexical items or vocation-specific terms to students of different
L1 backgrounds (Swales, 1988). Students' linguistic and professional needs are also focused.
That is, specific needs of students from different disciplinary cohorts should be taken into
account when it comes to the design and development of pedagogical practices, tasks, and
activities. This is to ensure that there is a linkage between theoretical concepts and classroom
practices (Anthony, 2018; Belcher, 2009; Johns, 2013).

Challenges and Ways Forward

Despite the theory-driven aspiration and practicality of ESP instruction, many
inevitable challenges have been evidenced throughout its implementation. Firstly, even with a
well-designed course that includes specific disciplinary-based content, language focus,
sufficient tasks, and classroom activities, it is still a challenging task to meet subject teachers'
and faculty's expectations. ESP has a dual focus that needs to be enhanced along the way as
instruction moves forward. This means, language and subject content need to be enhanced in

a balanced manner by the ESP teacher. In practice, an even balance is still questionable and requires how-to knowledge of such balance as Basturkmen (2019) comments that a literature of ESP teachers is still in its infancy, meaning more empirical studies are required to bring more concrete procedural knowledge on how to balance the two focuses so that ESP could meet the stakeholders' expectations.

Another issue concerns the collaboration, itself. Specifically, collaboration between language teachers and content teachers has always been an issue at both administrative and practical levels. More financial support is needed in case two teachers need to work together for one subject. Another point to consider is that ESP instruction is time-consuming, starting from the design stage to the during-instruction, and the post-instruction phase. Moreover, in material design and development, a collaborative effort from both content and language teachers is still required if instructional success is focused. Supunya's (2023) systematic review of ESP teachers also raises a similar point concerning how to make ESP instruction sustainable, stating that administrative effort appears to be the key in fostering collaborative practice between or among teachers. More specifically, institutional support in terms of budget, material provision, and positive enforcement (e.g., reward and self-efficacy promotion) appears to contribute to a more sustainable practice in ESP instruction in different contexts (Bayram & Canaran, 2020; Bocanegra-Valle & Basturkmen, 2019; Demirdöken, 2021; Iswati & Triastuti, 2021). Assessment in ESP shares a similarity to that of English for Academic Purposes and English for General Purposes. This means that the test impact has not yet successfully responded to authentic professional demands and that results in indifferences in course design and mismatches between students' real-world needs. The last challenge is related to the development of ESP coursebook in relation to teachers' academic promotion in many universities. The development of ESP coursebooks is a result of a compilation of the in-class materials and may lack theoretical concepts underlying each chapter development. Such

a phenomenon leads to a misleading design of coursebooks in which all language exercises are compiled, or an exercise book in different thematic content as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Examples of In-house Materials Designed for English for Sociologists and Anthropologists

Collaboration in Research

Integration of Technology and Research

Another pivotal collaboration in English language education pertains to the integration of educational technology into instruction. Reflecting on the author's teaching and administrative experience, this collaboration began at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020 initially reported that the number of infected individuals worldwide was estimated to be over 44 million, and the death toll was accounted for around 1.1 million (World Health Organization, 2020). Many governments made serious efforts to control and prevent further infection and the spread of this deadly virus, resulting in nationwide school and university shutdowns to undertake serious long-term precautionary measures (e.g., self-quarantine and social distancing) (Bangkok Post, 2020). In education, including English language education, classroom-based instruction was urgently forced to shift to online deliveries. As such, language learning and teaching significantly relied on technology, and this was where technology came into play in language education on a broad scale. Language teachers at all levels of education were also forced to practice their traditionally proposed pedagogical activities through online learning management systems. All aspects related to language instruction, such as classroom interaction, teacher-student response, self-positioning, classroom dynamic, how to deliver a lesson, drills on language practice, and even assessment formats, also experienced new norms of practice. This appears to be one of the disruptive paradigm shifts in education that require the integration of technology to solve past problems and to pave the way for tomorrow's education.

Integrating technology into a traditional English lesson has always been challenging for many English language teachers in Thailand. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, many teachers of English reported to have encountered various technology-related difficulties and challenges (Ruangrong et al., 2014). That is, teachers were not fully equipped with technological implications necessary for classroom instruction or they could not see the significance of technological integration into classroom practices (Inpeng & Nomnian, 2020).

In addition, classroom realities or contextual factors, such as, the accessibility of the technology in schools, students' and teachers' readiness for technological use, class size, and large influence of traditional approaches, may have also prevented teachers from accepting the use of technology in their classes. Teachers also mentioned that they lacked both hardware and software to assist fostering such an integration, and the dated knowledge of pedagogy vis-à-vis technology seemed to be insufficient (Jinda & Bangthamai, 2016; Nomnian & Arphattanon, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, using the Technological and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model, Kanchai (2021) also noted that English teachers were developing their ICT literacy during a time of crisis together with their students, anticipating that they could use the ICT knowledge for future online, on-site, or hybrid instruction.

The following section highlights the interorganisational collaboration between the Language Institute Thammasat University (LITU), where the author serves as a director, and Microsoft Thailand. Through the collaborative academic partnership, LITU and Microsoft Thailand have organised several public and in-house trainings on different technology-related topics, school showcases, research projects, and international conferences.

LITU x Microsoft Thailand

With the needs in technology and educational transformation for future classrooms, the Language Institute at Thammasat University (LITU) in Bangkok, Thailand, has undertaken an initiative with Microsoft Thailand. Under this initiative, multiple schemes have been organised for both academic and support teams. The in-house training, "Implementing Data Culture Using Power BI", was organised for participants interested in how to use AI-assisted software to help with data visualisation and management, as studies have shown that procedural knowledge or how-to knowledge is needed for educators to transform their classrooms onto the cloud. Power BI is a data visualising software developed by Microsoft

that can be used to assist educators and practitioners with data analytics. This software can also be used to monitor students' performances over time and help language teachers with grading and calculating test scores, as illustrated in Figure 2. With the accumulated data, teachers can diagnose general learning problems so that those learning problems can be resolved with the help of technology. Moreover, using the data at hand, Power BI can be used for decision-making purposes. Academic institutions can also use the collected data to determine teaching and learning strategies. Based on usage patterns, resources can be used efficiently to allocate to different cohorts of students. Furthermore, institutional administrators are able to use it for financial management and inform future financial decisions. For research, Power BI can help researchers analyse their collected data and visually present their data in a variety of ways. Lastly, this software can be beneficial for initiatives and collaborations as it allows for a co-analysis of online data, sharing insights in relation to researchers' ongoing projects, and fostering spontaneous interaction among data analysts.

Figure 2

Example of Power BI Dashboard in an In-house Training
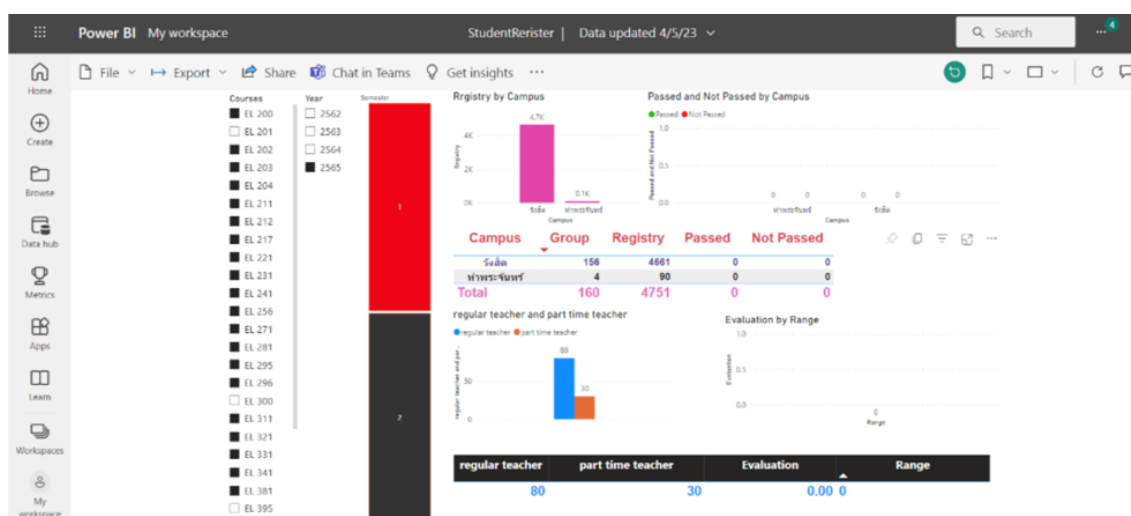
Other forms of collaborative projects were designed in the activities of public and in-house trainings. The online webinars were driven by a mission to provide technology-oriented knowledge to the public who were in charge of language instruction. Topics included: (1) "Empowering English language learners: How AI transforms language learners" and (2) "Empowering ELT institutions with Microsoft Technology." In these webinars, participants were equipped with procedural knowledge and user-friendly, ready-to-use software packages released by Microsoft. The accessible programs language teachers can use vary, serving a diverse cohort of stakeholders and language skills as illustrated in Figure 3. For listening skills development, the useful applications include: (1) Immersive Reader, (2) Video Assignment, (3) Transcript Generator, and (4) Microsoft Lens. These features were designed to help strengthen students' listening skills through a variety of activities with a tracking system. Authentic language use is also used to generate associated materials. For speaking skills enhancement, the applications include: (1) Reading Progress, (2) Reading Coach, (3) Rehearse with Coach, and (4) Dictate. Using these applications, students can practice reading aloud along with the authentic guiding voices. To achieve some tasks, intelligible pronunciation is focused on. For reading skills, Immersive Reader, Reading Progress and Transcript are opted for students' use. Notably, some applications are developed for integrated skills, not specifically catered to improving only one linguistic skill, as in real-life language use, multiple skills are used to create meaning(s) in a spontaneous conversation. Lastly, for writing skills, two applications, Editor and Reflect, can help students improve their written paper before submission. Not only can students use these technology-assisted tools, but language teachers can also apply them in their classrooms or for grading activities.

Figure 3

Examples of Features on Microsoft Technology
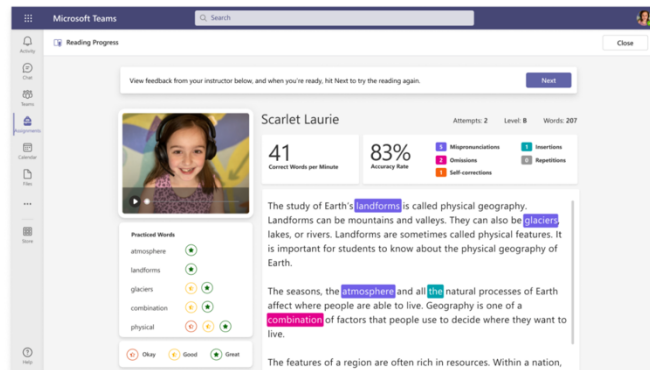
Reading progress profile
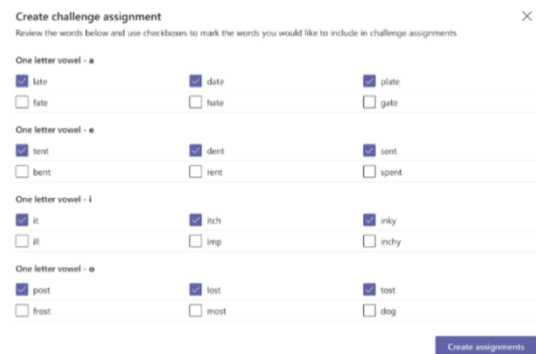
Phonetic Assignment
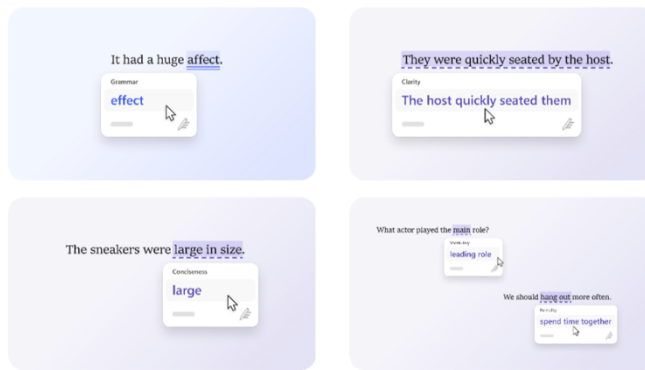
Word suggestions to make sentences grammatical
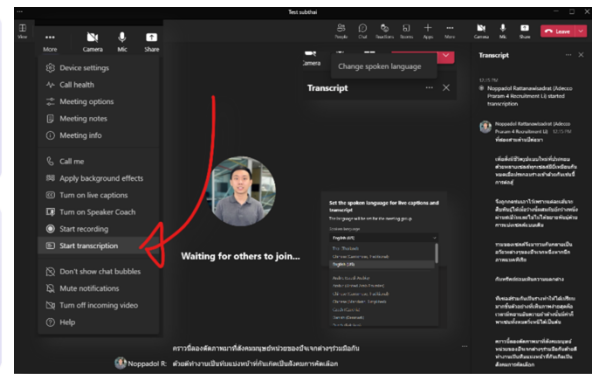
Auto generated captions available
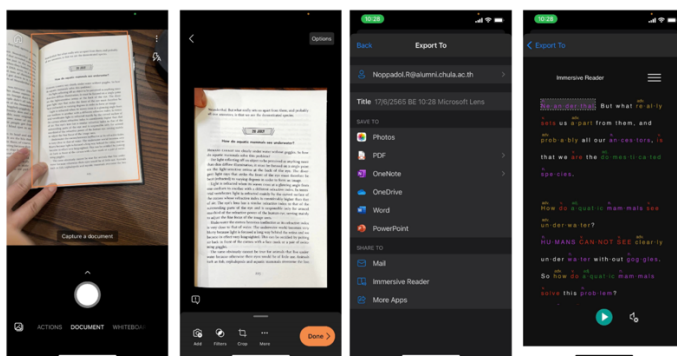
Immersive reader work on real-life materials
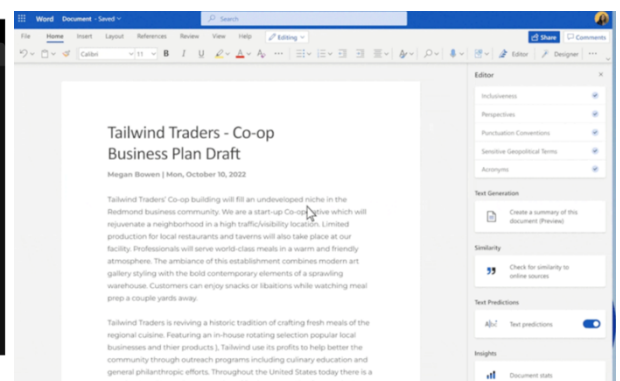
Summarisation with Microsoft Editor

Research on Technology Acceptance of Reading Progress

Language education in the post-COVID era has been tremendously reliant on the integration of innovative technology for learning and teaching. English language teachers at schools have embraced online learning and teaching by having a blended instruction, having both synchronous and asynchronous modes of teaching through existing platforms (Fitrianingsih & Lestari, 2023). In tertiary education, technology has been employed as a facilitative tool for learning and teaching through a hybrid session with a focus on real-time and spontaneous classroom interaction (Ulla & Perales, 2022). Despite its significance in language learning, teaching, assessment, and research, the optimal use of technological tools in language education across pedagogical contexts can be critical. Stakeholders' perceptions towards a new technological integration in their own educational context appear to be pivotal as their technology acceptance or how they perceive and respond to such an innovative change needs to be taken into account and to inform administrative and practical decisions (Granić, 2023). As such, the research into the collaborative project between the language institute Thammasat university (LITU) and Microsoft Thailand is believed to shed more light on stakeholders' perceptions on a new technological integration into classroom practice.

The collaboration in research between LITU and Microsoft Thailand was driven by a mission to enhance English language teachers' skills through the adoption of Microsoft technologies. Microsoft technology that was implemented was Reading Progress to improve students' reading fluency and comprehension. One trilingual program at a private secondary school in Bangkok, Thailand, was set as a target research site. With the licensed Microsoft Team Education, Microsoft Team in this school was used as a learning management system (LMS) for students to personalize their language learning. Reading Progress technology was initially implemented in a total of six classes of 7th grade students ($N = 176$). As seen in Table 1, the number of students in each class was 27 to 30 mixed-ability students who enrolled in Reading and Writing subject delivered by two non-Thai English-speaking

teachers. Throughout the implementation stage, teachers and administrators had extensive

training sessions with Microsoft Education Technology trainers. Prior to the implementation,

students were also familiarized with specific and technical terms and some unknown lexical

items from the passage available in Reading Progress. Reading-at-home assignments were

also given to the students. The two reading assignments were set as formative assessments of

the course with different times of distribution as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Students' Demographics and Reading Progress Assignments (Taylor et al., 2023, p. 724)

Class	Number of total students	English language Proficiency Level (based on CEFF level)					Subject teacher
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	
M1/1	30	5	13	8	4	-	UN
M1/2	29	3	13	7	6	-	SA
M1/3	29	3	14	7	4	1	UN
M1/4	27	3	10	9	4	1	SA
M1/5	30	4	10	11	4	1	SA
M1/6	30	2	11	12	5	-	SA

Assignment date and due date	Reading Passage	Genre	Pronunciation sensitivity	Number of attempts
17 Jan 2023 - 22 Jan 2023	Reading 1 'Practice' Unlock 2: Reading, Writing & Critical Thinking (Cambridge University Press)	Non-fiction	Low	3
27 Feb 2023 - 3 Mar 2023	Reading 2 'Surviving the Sea of Sand' Unlock 2: Reading, Writing & Critical Thinking (Cambridge University Press)	Non-fiction	Low	5

The researchers designed the study as a qualitative case study research, with a focus on

providing insights into stakeholders' perceptions of technology acceptance. The Technology

Acceptance Model (TAM) was used as a conceptual framework to analyze the collected

qualitative data. The participants involved in the study included: (1) students ($N = 9$) in the

program who experienced the use of Reading Progress technology, (2) teachers ($N = 2$) who

implemented Reading Progress in their teaching, and (3) program administrators ($N = 1$)

during the adoption of the technology. Focus-group interviews and semi-structured interviews

were used for data collection. Despite the aim of the case study research to focus on an in-

depth account of a social phenomenon, only a certain number of participants were involved in

providing such insights, as it remains scarce in the body of TAM literature. The interview

questions used in focus-group interviews were adopted from AlDakhil and AlFadda's (2021)

study, as they were relevant to the implementation of new technology in education. To encapsulate the factors influencing technology users' acceptance, Kampookaew's (2020) interview questions were followed, as the study's context shared similarities.

The findings (Taylor et al., 2023) revealed that student participants perceived the implemented technology as a computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) tool, while teachers and administrators viewed it as a teaching assistant tool that could facilitate their instruction, management, and personalized teaching and learning. In terms of perceived usefulness, Reading Progress was perceived by the trilingual program to be useful, as it could help the students personalize their practice on pronunciation across all levels, evident in an improved accuracy rate and an increase in students' words-per-minute (WPM). This is also in line with some other studies (Hongnaphadol & Attanak, 2022; Molenda & Grabarczyk, 2022). Moreover, it was reported that Reading Progress also had a variety of features for reading skill development. Its perceived usefulness was associated with ease of use. For the emerging factors influencing TAM in the context of the study, participants' familiarity with such technology and users' experiences pertaining to perceived enjoyment emerged. These two factors may play an important role in establishing the understanding of technology acceptance in this context, as it may concern users' engagement with the technology so that they can personalize their language learning.

Challenges and Ways Forward

Implementing innovative technology into a traditional classroom may pose some challenges. Firstly, to achieve better and sustained implementation of the technology, interdisciplinary collaboration is required. This means that more approaches across disciplines may better capture a diverse cohort of students, interests, and communicative purposes. Such collaboration may also be used to better solve language learning problems as real-world language use seems to go beyond what we do in a controlled and inauthentic

classroom environment. Another challenge in collaboration is sustained interdisciplinary collaboration. In other words, a sustained collaboration between the academics from language education and computer-related disciplines may result in greater success in teaching and learning, research publication, reflective practice provision, and exchange of successful pedagogical practice so that the impact of collaboration is sustained across contexts.

Collaboration in Testing

Language Testing Collaboration in Aligning TU-GET CBT Scores With CEFR Levels

The Language Institute at Thammasat University has developed its own English proficiency test for over two decades, which serves as an eligible benchmark for both undergraduate and postgraduate admissions. The Thammasat University General English Test (TU-GET PBT) is designed in a paper-based format and consists of three main sections: grammatical structure, vocabulary, and reading, which are perceived as necessary for tertiary education. TU-GET also welcomes public candidates to assess their English language competence. Due to an increasing demand for technological integration to enhance its test-administration practicality, the test was redesigned in 2019 to become TU-GET CBT, a computer-based test. TU-GET CBT aims to measure both receptive and productive skills of candidates, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking, as given in Table 2. This computerised format test is believed to be used as a standardised test, comparable to other existing standardised test scores, such as TOEFL iBT and IELTS (see Shin et al., 2022) with a focus on communicative use of English, rather than knowledge of linguistic rules and other receptive skills of language that may be insufficient for candidates' future dynamic employment in both academic and non-academic contexts.

Table 2

Components and Details of TU-GET CBT and TU-GET PBT

TU-GET CBT	TU-GET PBT
Computer-based test. Tests all 4 skills: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. Overall score: 120	4-multiple-choice test consisting of 3 parts: Structure, Vocabulary, and Reading. Overall score: 1000
Test fee: 1500 baht (1800 baht for late applications)	Test fee: 800 baht (1000 baht for late applications)
Available on-site only	Available on-site only
Test location: LITC room, 1st floor, SC1 building, Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus	Test location: SC1 building, Rangsit Campus, and LITU building, Tha Pra Chan Campus
Scores will be announced and delivered 15 days after the test date	Scores will be announced and delivered 5-7 days after the test date

Aligning locally developed test scores to a benchmark of English language proficiency using standard-setting methods is considered crucial to language learning and teaching in British English. Test scores can reflect a test-taker's language ability and help determine their progress (Shin & Lidster, 2017; Tannebaum & Cho, 2014). However, numeric scores alone cannot fully explain a test-taker's language skill. To translate a local test into a large-scale and standardized test, the scores obtained from a localised, in-house test must be aligned with a certain language proficiency standard. In this case, TU-GET CBT scores need to be aligned with the CEFR levels (i.e., A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2) set by the Council of Europe (2001). This alignment requires academic collaboration among scholars. In the LITU project in Bangkok, Thailand, scholars' collaborative efforts were acknowledged. Assoc. Prof. Sun-Young Shin, Ph.D., from the Department of Second Language Studies, Indiana University Bloomington, Suchada Sanaonguthai, Ph.D. candidate from the Department of Second Language Studies, Indiana University Bloomington, and 12 university lecturers from LITU,

Thailand, along with six scholars from other universities served as a committee in the standard-setting processes. To establish the cut-off scores for each level of competency based on the CEFR global scales, Yes/No Angoff (e.g., Hsieh, 2013; Impara & Plake, 1997) and Bookmark (e.g., Karantonis & Sireci, 2006; Shin & Lidster, 2017) methods were employed. These methods were used to validate scores and promote the test score interpretability and accountability of a test for all involved stakeholders. After the standard-setting process, the alignment of TU-GET CBT scores with the CEFR levels can be seen in Table 3.

This score alignment report shows the raw score of TU-GET CBT in relation to each CEFR level. This alignment has resulted from the collaborative efforts among the aforementioned scholars. The aligning procedures have been strictly followed to maintain and promote the validity and reliability of the whole research process as guided by the expert in the field of second language testing and assessment. Other associated documents, such as rubrics for writing and speaking, were also developed with a holistic explanation of what test takers can do under each score range (see Appendix A and B). Due to time and space constraints, it may be insufficient to explicitly illustrate the whole process of the standard-setting procedures. Instead, this paper highlights the collaborative effort among those involved scholars in language testing. It is evident that not only does it require international collaboration, but scholars' efforts in a domestic context with a valid understanding of and insights into the context of language testing and assessment, specifically in Thailand, can be used to redevelop, enhance, redesign, and validate the test.

Table 3

Alignment of TU-GET CBT Scores with CEFR Sevels and TOEFL iBT Scores

(Shin & Sanonguthai, 2022, for TOEFL iBT; Shin et al., 2022, for CEFR levels).

TU-GET CBT Scores	CEFR Levels
1–19	A1
20–32	A2
33–62	B1
63–97	B2
98 above	C1 or C2

TU-GET CBT Score	TOEFL iBT Score
0–10	0–4
11–20	5–13
21–30	14–25
31–40	26–34
41–50	35–47
51–60	48–58
61–70	59–71
71–80	72–75
81–90	76–82
91–97	83–94
98–120	95–120

TU-GET CBT Score	IELTS Band
0–36	0–4.5
37–48	5.0
49–57	5.5
58–63	6.0
64–73	6.5
74–86	7.0
87–94	7.5
95–102	8.0
103–120	8.5–9.0

Future Outlook

This test score alignment is considered a key steppingstone in the collaboration in testing and assessment, especially in the context of study or a Thai EFL context where a variety of in-house tests need to be standardized or aligned with the existing language standards or framework. In-service and novice English teachers can also benefit from such collaboration since they can use TU-GET CBT to gauge their students to determine learning and teaching needs. This may, in turn, have an impact on language education and testing and assessment research in Thailand. Additionally, interested scholars can take this collaborative project as a starting point to begin their localized test alignment. All empirical studies under the collaboration were also published to promote the exchange of collaborative practice and evidence-informed idea sharing that can be perceived as a local-to-global contribution to the field of language assessment. Notably, our success has resulted from significant people

involved in such a project, and this needs to be promoted in dyads, triads, and teams either in interdisciplinary or intradisciplinary settings.

Conclusion

Collaboration across disciplines is believed to help us identify potential problems that may have an impact on our lives. Such collaboration may also help us draw on various intra- and interdisciplinary approaches to strengthen our understanding of what we need to do. English language education can be considered an interdisciplinary practise, not solely concerning linguistics. Rather, this field concerns language pedagogy, communication, technology, psychology, among others. Establishing such a great impact on this field may involve various types of collaboration from involved stakeholders, ranging from teachers, practitioners, researchers, developers, assessors, educators, and administrators. As evident in three exemplified cases, the ESP teachers need to work together to design a course that best suits the real-world language needs of students and stakeholders. Researchers also need to collaborate with schoolteachers and administrators from the technology company, Microsoft Thailand, to bring cutting-edge technology to make an impact in the classroom. In addition, researchers, lecturers, and administrators need to work together to standardise an in-house test to be aligned with the world-recognized standards of CEFR levels. Although this paper considerably highlights the significance of collaboration in English language education, another issue that requires more attention and collaborative effort is how to sustain such collaboration in teaching, research, and testing to promote an optimal impact on students' language learning and the field of English language education across contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Speaking rubrics for TU GET CBT

Rubrics for TUGET (CBT) Speaking   TOTAL 30 POINTS

Score	Delivery	Language Use	Topic development
25-30	- Speaks fluently, effortlessly and confidently, with no hesitation or interference with communication and comprehension - Pronunciation and intonation are always very clear and accurate.	- Uses a variety of advanced vocabulary and expressions in an effective manner - Uses a variety of structures with no systemic or almost no grammatical errors	- The response is sustained and adequate to the task. - The response is very well-developed and coherent. - Ideas are very clear and well-connected.
19-24	- Speaks smoothly, with little hesitation or non-noticeable effort that does not interfere with communication and comprehension - Pronunciation and intonation are almost always very clear and accurate.	- Uses a variety of appropriate vocabulary and expressions - Uses a variety of structures with only occasional grammatical errors - May make frequent systemic errors with complex structures	- The response is adequate to the task. - The response is generally well-developed and coherent - Ideas are clear and well-connected.
13-18	- Speaks with some hesitation and a reasonable degree of effort, but it does not usually interfere with communication and comprehension - Pronunciation and intonation are usually clear and accurate with a few problem areas.	- Uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions, but makes some errors in word choice - Uses a variety of grammar structures, but makes some errors and may cause some comprehension problems	- The response is mostly coherent and conveys relevant ideas/information. - The development is limited, and lacks elaboration or specificity. - Ideas may at times not be immediately clear and not well-connected.
7-12	- Speaks with some hesitation or with great effort, which often interferes with communication and comprehension - Pronunciation and intonation errors sometimes make it difficult to understand the response.	- Uses limited vocabulary and expressions - Uses a variety of structures with frequent errors, or uses basic structures with only reasonable errors	- The response is connected to the task, but the development of ideas is limited. - Mostly basic ideas are expressed with limited elaboration and support. - Connections of ideas may be unclear or limited.
1-6	- Hesitates too often when speaking, which often interferes with communication and comprehension - Frequent problems with pronunciation and intonation - Unintelligible or repeating the question	- Uses only basic vocabulary and expressions - Uses basic structures and makes frequent errors - Makes attempt to speak, even resulting in isolated words	- The response expresses limited relevant content. - The response generally lacks support and elaboration. - Ideas are hardly connected.
0	The speaker provides no response OR the response is not related to the topic OR not clearly recorded.		

Appendix B: Writing rubrics of TU GET CBT

Rubrics for TUGET (CBT) Essay Writing　　　　　**TOTAL 30 POINTS**

Score	Thesis Statement, Topic Sentence (TS) and Conclusion	Essay Development	Vocabulary, Register and Language Use
25-30	-The thesis statement names the topic of the essay as directed by prompt and outlines all the main points to be discussed. -The TS clearly states the main idea of each supporting paragraph. -The conclusion is very strong and relates to the topic.	-Includes 2-3 pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, experiences) that support the thesis statement and TS -Development of ideas is very thorough and logical. -Transitions are appropriately used to show how ideas are connected. - The essay length is approximately 350 words.	-Excellent choice of words with very few errors -Appropriate academic register -Displays consistent facility in the use of language -Demonstrates syntactic variety -Very few errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation
19-24	-The thesis statement names the topic of the essay as directed by the prompt and outlines some points. -The TS of each supporting paragraph is strong. -The conclusion is strong and relates to the topic.	-Includes 2-3 pieces of evidence but one piece is not relevant -Development of ideas is thorough and logical. -Transitions are appropriately used most of the time. - The essay length is approximately 200-300 words.	-Good choice of words with few errors -Quite appropriate academic register -Displays facility in the use of language -Demonstrates some syntactic variety -Few errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation
13-18	-The thesis statement names the topic of the essay as directed by the prompt and outlines a few points. -The TS of each supporting paragraph adequately states the main idea. -The conclusion is recognizable but somewhat relates to the topic.	-Includes 2-3 pieces of evidence but one piece is not relevant -Development of ideas is quite thorough and somewhat logical. -Transitions are sometimes appropriately used. - The essay length is approximately 100-200 words.	-Fair choice of words with a few errors -Somewhat appropriate academic register -Displays facility in the use of language -Demonstrates some syntactic variety -A few errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation
7-12	-The thesis statement outlines some of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic. -The TS of each supporting paragraph weakly states the main idea. -The conclusion is barely recognizable and mostly unrelated to the topic.	-Includes 2-3 pieces of evidence but most is irrelevant -Development of ideas is somewhat thorough and logical. -Transitions are rarely appropriately used. - The essay length is approximately 75-100 words.	-Poor choice of words with many errors, especially with key words -Not quite academic register -Demonstrates limited syntactic variety -Some errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation
1-6	-The thesis statement does not name the topic and does not preview what will be discussed. -The TS of each supporting paragraph is unclear, or not stated. -No conclusion	-Includes only one relevant piece of evidence -Development of ideas is weak or illogical. -Transitions are barely used or often used incorrectly. - The essay length is approximately 50-75 words.	-Very poor choice of words with many vocabulary errors , especially with key words -Not academic register -Demonstrates very limited syntactic variety -So many errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation that hinder comprehension
0	The essay is not related to the topic OR only ONE paragraph is written OR no response.		

Remarks: -If the supporting paragraphs are extremely short (50 words or below), the score should not be more than 5.

- If the essay consists of three paragraphs, 5 points will be deducted. If the essay consists of two paragraphs, 10 points will be deducted.

- Any form of cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating, you will be given a score of 0 for all parts.

ELT Profession: Reframing Trans-Disciplinary Collaboration

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Abstract

Over the past few years, JACET has been reflecting on its roles in society. One of the major issues, which was raised at its 2019 international convention—the last face-to-face convention before the pandemic—was to redefine its role as an affiliate of AILA (International Association of Applied Linguistics) as a representative of Japan, following the recent developments of applied linguistics. In this paper, I will reflect on the changing position of ELT in applied linguistics in Japan and its impact on ELT professionals and discuss how professional organizations like JACET can make a more active contribution to the society.

Keywords: academia, applied linguistics, disciplinary discourse, mass media

The Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET) was established in 1962. The organization was founded with a strong ambition by those who thought that improving the state of English language education would require a forum for researchers and practitioners to share ideas in order to solve various problems related to English Language education in higher education as well as all other levels of the education system. In August 2021, JACET celebrated its 60th anniversary commemorative week, in which its summer seminar as well as international convention were held. During the last six decades, the landscape of English language education has changed dramatically. As the name suggests, the organization was established primarily by and for those who were teaching English at colleges, and the issues raised at the time of its foundation were mainly to improve the

teaching of English at the college level. It is evident that the scope of JACET has been broadened and its members have begun to engage in various activities, ranging from teacher education to research in second language acquisition, language policy, and/or educational technology (JACET 2021a, 2021b). In addition, JAAL (the Japan Association of Applied Linguistics) in JACET became an affiliate of AILA in 1984 and hosted its World congress for the first time in Asia in 1999. The AILA congress attracted applied linguists dealing with different languages and different areas of inquiry from all over the world and thus it helped the academic community recognize applied linguistics as a discipline big enough to be independent. In the meantime, JAAL remained within JACET. In other words, a professional national organization of applied linguistics became a part of an English language teaching organization for higher education. This does not mean that the position of JAAL in JACET excluded participation of scholars who do not deal with areas other than ELT. However, it certainly was regarded as an obstacle, particularly for those outside of ELT, as they needed to become JACET members to receive membership benefits from AILA, including the discount conference fees, participation in Research network activities, as well as a publication in AILA Review. Today, the scope of applied linguistics is far more diverse than what it was in 1999. As the title of this paper suggests, applied linguists include many of those specializing in ELT and need more trans-disciplinary collaboration in order to solve various language or communication related problems. The primary role of an academic organization, including JACET, therefore, is to encourage its members, most of whom are ELT professionals, to collaborate with academic disciplines other than their own. In this paper, therefore, I will discuss the future directions JACET as an academic organization should take by reviewing the landscape of ELT and applied linguistics and their historical developments, while focusing on some prevailing beliefs in the profession over the past few decades.

Position and Ideology of ELT in Japan

In the early 1990s, when I started teaching English in a Japanese university and became a JACET member, the landscape of ELT was far different from what it is now. Partly due to the strong economy in Japan in the late 80s, it was a time an increasing number of ELT professionals began to attend and present at international conferences including TESOL and IATEFL. In turn, new ideas on various aspects of ELT were imported more rapidly than ever, particularly from so-called "English-speaking countries." More ELT professionals began to apply these ideas to their own research as well as practices in Japan. In fact, most of the studies in applied linguistics which were 'visible' to JACET members were those related to ELT and/or those related to theories and methods originated from inner circle countries (Kachru 1992), notably the U.S. and the U.K. Reflecting on the way we had exchanged ideas on ELT internationally through conferences or publications in the early 1990s, it was apparent that a strong Center-Periphery dichotomy existed in the ELT profession. English was the de-facto academic lingua franca in ELT and applied linguistics. Therefore, scholars were required to publish and present in English to make their work widely known. At the same time, studies in applied linguistics other than those in ELT were rarely visible to the JAAL in JACET community. As a matter of fact, JACET began an independent annual JAAL in JACET conference in 2018 but a majority of presentations have been on ELT.

The discussion on the Center-Periphery dichotomy in ELT is not necessarily new. Phillipson (1992) in his book *Linguistic Imperialism* argues that the reality of ELT is "firmly anchored in Centre perception and structures" (1992, p. 181). Referring to the rapid growth of the ELT profession taking place in the 1960s, he states that many English teachers trained at postgraduate training programs in ELT or applied linguistics at British and perhaps American institutions, which were established to help them learn theoretical foundations of ELT, and consequently built a bridge between Center and Periphery. However, he then continues that

"[t]he laudable goal of Periphery countries becoming self-sufficient is made dependent on the authority and example of the Centre, whose agents are to occupy multiplier positions so that their impact is maximized" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 184).

In order to illustrate the problem, Phillipson talks about the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language which was held in Makerere, Uganda in 1961, in which priorities for ELT were decided. From the outcome of his document study, Phillipson formulated five key tenets which prevailed in the ELT profession, some of which still prevail in the profession in 2020s. They were as follows:

- English is best taught monolingually.

- The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker.

- The earlier English is taught, the better the results.

- The more English is taught, the better the results.

- If other languages are used much, standards of English will drop. (Phillipson, 1992, p. 185)

More recently, Kubota (2019) listed 10 misconceptions of different aspects of ELT in Japan. These illusions have been influential on educational practices because people believe them as 'true' but have never actually been confirmed. She states that illusions are present in the following issues: 1) Legitimate varieties of English, 2) Native speakerness, 3) Whiteness, 4) Euro- and US-centrism, 5) Cultural essentialism, 6) English as an International Language, 7) English competence for economic success, 8) Early learning of English, 9) The Monolingual approach, 10) The ideal learner and learning (Kubota, 2019, p. 11).

Some of the misconceptions Kubota (2019) listed are still prevalent. For example, 2) native speakerness, which includes a belief that native speakers are better teachers, and 9) The Monolingual approach, which includes a belief that English should be taught in English only,

correspond with what Phillipson (1992) also pointed out three decades ago. In other words, ELT professionals have never questioned the validity of these claims for more than 60 years (between the Commonwealth Conference in 1961 and now). These beliefs seem to have been institutionalized in the profession and serve as its default discourse.

The prevailing discourse among ELT professionals has had a great influence on the formation of beliefs by the general public as well. This is not necessarily a unique phenomenon in Japan. Mirhosseini (2014) in his discussion on ideology in ELT in Iran, states "[a] complex ideology of ELT emerges that, upon repeated encounters, becomes naturalized and influences the public opinion about what language education involves" (pp.13–14), which corresponds with the way in which prevailing beliefs about ELT such as "native speakers are better teachers" and/or "English should be taught in English only" have been institutionalized.

The role of professional organizations is to provide opportunities for their members to update their knowledge by disseminating relevant information. This involves constant reflection on what is going on in the field it covers. From the discussion above, it is apparent that some ideas about ELT have been around for a long time, and the community began to treat them as if these ideas had been the 'truth' without any justification. Therefore, academic organizations should take initiatives to review the validity of these ideas in context based more on factual information rather than the emotion or beliefs people already hold.

Academic Disciplines as Genres

Professional academic organizations, like JACET, play important roles in defining the scope of the academic disciplines to which they belong. An academic discipline may change its shape from time to time if necessary. As a result, what is considered relevant to the discipline will also change. Therefore, academic organizations must be capable of collecting information relevant to the discipline by constantly observing its state. When the academic discipline becomes big enough to be independent, a genre which is "the media through which scholars and scientists communicate with peers" (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995, p. 1) will be

created. According to Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995), genres are "intimately linked to a discipline's methodology, and they package information in ways that conform to a discipline's norms, values, and ideology" (p. 1).

JACET has contributed to this process for six decades, and I believe that its contribution to ELT and applied linguistics has been enormous. At the same time, however, there are some areas in which JACET should have been more actively involved in confirming the validity of ideas which are regarded as normal. In other words, the norm, value, and ideology of ELT and applied linguistics has not been adequately updated for many years. This includes the relationship between ELT and applied linguistics as well as the prevailing beliefs about ELT, both of which have been discussed earlier.

Let me present a few examples which may correspond with one of the misconceptions listed in Kubota (2019): 4) Euro- and US-centrism. For many years, 'the four skills' was a notion that appeared in discussions of ELT, especially teaching methods, materials, and tests. The concept was originally used by ELT professionals, but in recent years it has become more prevalent and familiar to the general public. The four skills generally involve reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, there is a prevailing value attached to the concept that a person who is proficient in a language means that all four skills are equally high and balanced. Even in 2023, the term 'four skills' appears as key notion in various presentations in ELT conferences as though it were a default notion. However, very few, if any, presenters provide a working definition appropriate to the context. Some scholars have actually pointed out the problem of this notion.

Holliday (2005) for example states that the notion of four skills is "a long standing cultural icon in English-speaking Western TESOL" (p. 43). He continues that the discourse of 'four skills' is often interpreted "as the natural, default mechanism for solving curriculum problems" (p. 43). In the context of ELT in higher education in Japan, Toh (2016) also

remarks that university English courses in Japan are designed to"invariably be broken down into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening components" (p. 141). This makes it easier for policy makers, schools, material developers, and textbook publishers to provide a plausible framework for their purposes. I am not completely denying the validity of the four skills. Despite such criticism, however, the notion and the framework it provides have rarely been revisited or questioned. Once the notion has been settled in the professional community, it begins to reach the general public, whose knowledge about ELT is usually even more limited. Consequently, the notion will be nativized among the general public and nobody will even want to doubt its validity for many years.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is another example. Recently, I had to serve as an examiner in an entrance exam interview at my university. At a point during the interview, I asked an examinee what his target goal of his English would be if he were enrolled in our program. He answered with confidence that his target would be CEFR B2 level. As I had not expected an 18-year-old high school student would talk about CEFR, I asked him to elaborate his answer. Specifically, I asked him how he would know whether or not he has achieved B2. He responded to my question without any hesitation, by saying that "I need to take a CEFR test." He seems to have thought that CEFR was one of the standardized tests he would have to take and believed that B2 was the level he was supposed to achieve, even though he has no idea about what they were. Over the past few years, I have encountered this type of statement not only from examinees but also from secondary school teachers. It seems that CEFR is currently regarded as a 'buzz word' in ELT. Over the past few years, CEFR has appeared as a topic for presentations at ELT conferences, including JACET, and in academic publications. It also appears as a benchmark in mass media when referring to language proficiency. Nevertheless, there is a big gap between the knowledge academia possesses and what is generally perceived outside of academia. This can be a negative product

of the developments of ELT and/or applied linguistics as an academic discipline. As stated earlier, ELT in Japan has changed its shape over the decades in the process of growth as an independent discipline despite the fact that its relationship with applied linguistics is still ambiguous, as mentioned earlier. Because ELT has matured as a discipline and become established as a genre, it possesses enough resources within the discipline to solve most of the problems that emerge. On the other hand, this has also caused a delay in communication with other disciplines as well as the general public.

Van Dijk (1998), in his discussion on access theory, points out that those with power often control the information disseminated. If the academia had rich information, for example, on ELT and selected information appropriate to policy makers, classroom teachers, and subsequently the learners, they would all benefit from such information. On the other hand, it would work negatively to each of the recipients of the information if those with power abused their positions and did not disseminate relevant information deliberately; the recipients would not even be aware of their presence. This applies to both the four skills example and the CEFR example above.

In the case of the four skills, academia should also discuss the weakness of the framework as an alternative view with which the recipients could make more valid decisions. The case of CEFR, however, is more complicated. As its name suggests, CEFR is a frame of reference learners and teachers of languages use to reflect on learning. It is neither a test nor a framework designed exclusively for English. For many learners, their teachers are a primary source of information concerning language learning. This is especially true for most of the learners in their early stages of learning foreign languages. Therefore, it is important for teachers to have sufficient information on ELT as it will enable them to re-disseminate these pieces of information to their students. The responsibility of academia, therefore, is to select and disseminate appropriate information to the general public as it is the essential information

for teachers and learners to make sound decisions on their learning of languages including English.

The Role of JACET for the Next Decades

At the JAAL in JACET symposium at the 58th JACET International Convention in Nagoya, in 2019, I talked about the developments of applied linguistics as an academic discipline in Japan and the involvement of JACET in its process, along with some proposals concerning what JACET can do to promote applied linguistics in Japan. In so doing, I listed four unique characteristics of the relationship between ELT and applied linguistics:

1. Courses in applied linguistics are often offered in Departments of English or Education in Japanese universities.
2. ELT is a dominant topic in applied linguistics.
3. The developments of applied linguistics have created many smaller sub-disciplines in which scholars stay comfortably and this resulted in discouraging interaction in the domain as a whole.
4. A majority of ideas in applied linguistics are coming from this so-called 'Inner-circle' (Kachru, 1992) and are accepted in the Japanese context without criticism.

As I discussed earlier, the role of academia, including academic organizations like JACET, is to help scholars, and subsequently the general public, solve various problems in language and communication they face in their daily lives. In so doing, the academic organization should serve as a resource hub for scholars who can take advantage of choices available as resources, consequently it would help teachers as well as learners of English. There are several steps that we have to take.

First, an academic organization like JACET should continuously reflect on the scope and development of the academic discipline it covers and update the resources it has for

scholars as discussed above. This is essential as any academic discipline constantly changes its shape as it develops. If we talked about the relationship between ELT and applied linguistics, which I talked about in the early part of this paper, we should realize that ELT is only one of the areas of inquiry in applied linguistics. As an organization of applied linguistics representing Japan, JACET needs to interact with scholars who deal with various problems in language and communication, including, but not limited to, those specialized in teaching languages other than English and those specialized in areas other than teaching. Perrin and Kramsch (2018) talk about the concept of 'transdisciplinarity' as follows:

> Transdisciplinarity aims to transcend the concept of discipline within academia as a sole principle for organizing and controlling academic knowledge (p. 2).

This concept, which Perrin and Kramsch (2018) call *TD1* refers to collaboration among different academic disciplines and fields. It does not mean that two academic disciplines are merely working together, but a new discipline is virtually created or renewed from collaboration among different academic disciplines, each of which may engage at various degrees. In other words, collaboration with various other academic disciplines is essential for the growth of applied linguistics and ELT. Perrin and Kramsch (2018) suggest that applied linguistics should become more transdisciplinary by collaborating with different academic disciplines. I believe that this would also apply to the Japanese context.

As discussed earlier, ELT research dealing with learning and/or teaching has been the dominant topic for JACET convention presentations or papers submitted to JACET publications. This has created a genre of applied linguistics within JACET, which does not necessarily correspond with the reality of the discipline. The definition of applied linguistics has been revisited several times, and it is perceived as "[t]he academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world" (Cook, 2003, p. 5). In other words, the primary objective of applied linguistics is to help people to

make decisions to solve various language or communication related problems in their lives.

Widdowson (2000) distinguishes between 'linguistics applied' and applied linguistics. He states that the former assumes that the problem "can be reformulated by the direct and unilateral application of concepts and terms deriving from linguistic inquiry itself" (p.5), while the latter refers to "a multilateral process which, of its nature, has to relate and reconcile different representations of reality, including that of linguistics without excluding others" (p. 5). This suggests that applied linguistics does not necessarily mean that linguistics must be applied to the solution of the problems. Instead, it is possible to say that studies in applied linguistics, including those aiming to solve problems in ELT from the perspectives of various disciplines, are encouraged. Thus academic organizations, including JACET, must be ready to accommodate them.

Second, JACET should take an active role to collaborate with the general public by sharing its expertise in ELT and applied linguistics with them. In order to deal with cases like 'four-skills' and CEFR discussed earlier, JACET can provide policy makers, teachers, and subsequently learners and the general public, with resources it has to help them make the right decisions. This is another concept of transdisciplinarity discussed in Perrin and Kramsch (2018) which they call *TD2*.

> Transdisciplinarity aims at transcending academia in general as the exclusive source of legitimate knowledge. As a result, TD2 argues for deep collaboration across and beyond academic and non-academic disciplines and fields. (pp. 2–3).

Communication with non-academics requires carefully planned deep collaboration. Academics need to be trained to transmit their messages clearly and comprehensibly enough to make non-academics perceive them as legitimate sources. JACET and other academic organizations may consider providing their members with opportunities to acquire skills in

this area.

Finally, JACET should find a way to facilitate its members to share their studies internationally, particularly in Asia, through conference presentations and publications. As I said earlier, we see a lot of Japan-based scholars actively participate in international ELT conferences, most of which are held in North America or Europe. However, we should also pay more attention to the benefits of sharing ideas with colleagues in Asia where we find contexts of ELT that are common with those in Japan. There are several regional organizations in ELT or applied linguistics with whom JACET has collaboration agreements, as well as Asia TEFL. It is worthwhile if Japan-based scholars can take advantage of their activities through which we can find scholars in the region who are working to find solutions for similar problems, and subsequently, it could develop various modes of collaboration relevant to local needs.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have reviewed the relationship between ELT and applied linguistics referring to the history of JACET over the last few decades. I have paid special attention to the situation in which JACET—an ELT organization—is representing applied linguistics professionals in Japan as an AILA affiliate. I have discussed the changing landscape of ELT and applied linguistics over the past few decades, and how the current structure—that is, applied linguistics organizations being a part of an ELT organization—has affected the shape of the genre of applied linguistics in Japan. Through my analysis, it has been apparent that the structure might have prevented applied linguistics from growing beyond ELT. In other words, studies involving languages other than English or those dealing with topics other than language teachings, are either very limited or invisible to those who belong to the ELT based applied linguistics community.

Nowadays, applied linguistics has become more transdisciplinary and thus more

collaboration with other academic disciplines is essential. The role of academic organizations is, therefore, to collect the latest information from a wide range of sources, organize it, and disseminate it as appropriate. This is why more collaboration with other academic disciplines is crucial. To achieve this mission, JACET needs to open its doors to the areas of applied linguistics which has been under explored in the organization, including the teaching of languages other than English and any non-teaching topics in applied linguistics.

*This paper is written based on my Presidential Plenary delivered in Japanese at the 62nd JACET International Convention (Tokyo, 2023).

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Selected Papers

Research Articles

Japanese Students' Identity Negotiation and Construction

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Abstract

This study explores the process of identity construction among Japanese students who engage in studying abroad, with a particular focus on the potential influence of their individual agency in shaping this process within intercultural interactions. The study used qualitative research methodologies to examine the processes of identity construction and negotiation among Japanese university students studying abroad. Specifically, the research focused on exploring the students' agencies, investment, and the ways in which they developed and negotiated their identities. Data for this study were obtained via semi-structured interviews and narrative journals from a sample of 11 students who had participated in study abroad programmes in English-speaking countries. Data analysis was conducted using the analytical lenses of learner agency, attitude and identity construction, and identity negotiation through intercultural conflicts. The findings indicated that the participants underwent identity reconstruction by actively engaging with their linguistic resources and practises, and by exercising their agency. The study abroad experiences of the participants provided them with novel opportunities to develop their approaches to language acquisition and utilisation, and their attitudes towards accents, and navigate their identities through intercultural conflicts. These experiences collectively influenced their reconstruction of their preconceived notions of native English speakers.

Keywords: study abroad, identity, investment, agency, Japan

The advent of globalisation has led to a heightened accessibility of educational opportunities for language learners to engage in their academic pursuits in international settings. The United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and Australia are commonly recognised as very desirable destinations for studying abroad, mostly because English is either their native language or extensively spoken. The concept of "English as a lingua franca" (ELF) refers to the use of the English language as a means of communication with non-native English speakers (Jenkins, 2015). According to Graddol (2006), the primary importance of English language learning for English Language Learners (ELL) does not lie in adhering to the native norm. The English language has undergone a process of evolution throughout its history. The prevailing perspective on language acquisition and usage by native speakers has been subject to scrutiny, prompting researchers to raise inquiries. The objective is to acknowledge and appreciate the presence of many linguistic and cultural variations with the aim of fostering a more fair and inclusive language ecology for all individuals (Baker & Fang, 2021).

According to Jenkins (2007), learners who speak English as a second language (EFL) may retain their L1 identities and employ a variety of valuable communication skills, thereby alleviating concerns regarding their L1 accents. Studying abroad provides students with the opportunity to engage with diverse languages and cultures. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the strategies employed by students in their efforts to navigate and construct their identities within these particular environments. The aforementioned outcome was derived by Darvin and Norton (2015) through the application of sociocultural theory in a broad sense based on Bourdieu's (1991) conceptualization of capital. It has been observed that an individual's values undergo transformation in accordance with the language to which they are exposed.

According to Norton (2013), the examination of the correlation between language acquisition and social conduct reveals that the importance of investment surpasses the impact

of motivational factors. Norton (2013) defines "investment" as the sociolinguistic strategy employed to develop language competency by assuming different roles. Learners optimise their freedom by allocating resources towards acquiring tools that facilitate the development of their identities and the establishment of new social collectives. The acquisition of a second language is commonly regarded as a communal endeavour, wherein learners allocate resources towards the fulfilment of their capabilities, as they forge new identities, establish social connections, and optimise their autonomy. Language learners enhance their own abilities by actively participating in the target language (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013). According to Norton (2013), individuals who are learning a language can effectively utilise a broader spectrum of symbolic and material resources, resulting in an enhanced ability to influence society and acquire cultural capital (p. 6). This implies that students who express a desire to attain proficiency in a second language (L2) may possess the motivation but may lack the commitment due to uncertainty over the effective utilisation of their symbolic and social resources within that context (Norton & Morgan, 2020).

There has been a shift in the perspective of language learners and their reasons for learning, transitioning from a psychological stance to a social standpoint. This shift is influenced by Norton's (2013) notion of investment. Cransch (2013) asserts that the notion of investment underscores the importance of students' autonomy and self-perception in the acquisition of both symbolic and tangible ways. Learners dedicate substantial effort to educational projects and activities as they recognise the possibility for augmenting their social capital and symbolic power (Darvin & Norton, 2017). Learners may opt to spend increased amounts of time and financial resources towards the learning of a second language with the aim of augmenting their social capital and obtaining extra physical and symbolic resources (Darvin & Norton, 2021).

Darvin (2019) argues that the nature of investment is characterised by a high degree of situational variability and adaptability. Alternatively, there exist circumstances wherein one may encounter limitations in utilising the resources and conventions of the target language. Nevertheless, one can engage in communication within a new social environment by engaging in conversations with speakers who are native in the English language. Based on the 2022 report conducted by JAOS agents, it was found that a number of 34,305 Japanese students, including those who pursued traditional as well as online learning, participated in study abroad programmes within the same year. Furthermore, the Japanese government has set a goal of enabling the engagement of 100,000 students in study abroad courses by the year 2027. Hence, it is intriguing to examine the manner in which these students construct their personal identities and allocate financial resources towards the acquisition of symbolic assets inside an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) context during their overseas educational pursuits (Baker & Fang, 2021; Jenkins, 2015). When students leave their home countries to pursue education in a foreign country and engage in conversations using a language different from their native tongue, they have the potential to cultivate new identities inside their study abroad countries. Thus, speakers who are native in the target language are required to recognise these students as fully integrated members of the community. This paper investigates the construction of identities by Japanese students during their international study experiences. The objective of the study was to determine the potential influence of students' personal agency on their identity construction through interactions with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. There is a gap in the existing body of literature pertaining to the responsibilities of learner agencies in such contexts, as well as the processes by which students construct and negotiate their identities in the face of intercultural challenges during their study abroad experiences.

Literature Review

The classifications of essentialist, nonessentialist, and constructivist viewpoints encompass a limited selection of the various frameworks utilised by individuals to conceptualise their self-identities. Virkkula and Nikula (2010) suggested that the notion of identity encompasses an individual's perception of self, distinguished by its distinctiveness and enduring nature. In contrast, contemporary academic investigations have drawn focus to the non-essentialist viewpoint, which argues that identity is distinguished by its capacity to change, adapt, and depend on many influences, rather than being essentially stable and immutable (Thorsen, 2018; Norton, 2013). From a specific perspective, the notion of identity is defined by its absence of enduringness and inflexibility, instead exhibiting a fluid quality that is prone to change and influenced by multiple circumstances. Norton (2013) pointed out that the notion of identity is characterised by its multidisciplinary nature, as it encompasses several academic disciplines including anthropology, sociology, language acquisition and instruction, and cultural studies. It is advisable to avoid framing the concept of identity in binary terms of motivated and unmotivated, especially when analysing it from a constructivist perspective. According to Norton and Morgan (2020), it is important to view language learners as social constructs who actively position themselves in relation to the tactics utilised to improve their linguistic ability. The function of language learners' proficiency in using the practises and tools of a specific language in a social setting is of utmost importance in influencing the development of their social identity (Darvin, 2018). Enrolling in an educational institution situated in a country where English is the predominant language can afford students access to a wide range of literary and non-literary materials that may not be available in their home country, should they desire to acquire proficiency in the language.

The notion of "investment" encompasses the complex interplay between a language learner's social identity and their motivation to attain proficiency in the target language (Clément & Norton, 2021). Darvin and Norton (2015) proposed that the notion of investment

encompasses two interconnected relationships between an individual's language and personality. In an alternative perspective, one may contend that individuals involved in the process of acquiring a language are not exclusively involved in the transmission of information when they interact with individuals from the community of the language being learned. Rather, they are actively involved in the construction and reconstruction of their social milieu and personal identity. This holds true regardless of whether the speaker is engaging in conversation with individuals who are learning the language or those who are native speakers. Upon realising the presence of additional symbolic resources at their disposal, learners tend to allocate a greater amount of time and effort towards acquiring proficiency in the target language. In other words, learners have the capacity to utilise the desired language in various contexts. According to Norton and De Costa (2018), learners may experience an expansion in their social network as they engage in educational pursuits and new interactions. According to Norton and Toohey (2011), it is possible that students' motivation to study a language may be affected if they have not yet fully adjusted to their new living environments. This apprehension stems from their concern that their peers may subject them to ridicule or critique due to their perceived inadequacy in language proficiency. When students encounter difficulties in expressing themselves in the language they are acquiring, they may experience concerns around potential negative perceptions from their peers.

Darvin and Norton (2021) suggested that learners' language acquisition process is heavily impacted by their objectives and negotiations, which ultimately dictate the extent of time and effort they allocate towards studying the target language. For instance, the act of negotiating with people who speak English may not appear to be a necessity prior to embarking on a study abroad programme. However, in the event if learners within the emerging community perceive a need to allocate resources and engage in English language activities to facilitate assimilation, it might potentially become a requisite measure. Norton

and De Costa (2018) argued that students possess the ability to get the required resources and instruments for cultivating a sense of identity, even in the absence of direct engagement within a social context. Learners often possess a strong sense of self due to the challenges they encounter while attempting to change their social relationships in order to access the skills, resources, and practises that are readily accessible within their current environment. According to Darvin and Norton (2021), providing students with supplementary opportunities to engage in reading, writing, and communication can significantly augment their language acquisition abilities. It is possible for students to participate in many communities, and the availability of materials and resources within these communities may vary. This discrepancy might potentially influence the way in which students navigate and construct their identities (Norton, 2016).

Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) noted that the establishment of agency and identity within the framework of language acquisition necessitates the presence of at least two interdependent actors. This group comprises individuals who are students and teachers. According to Gao (2010) and Mercer (2011), the concept of agency, which refers to an individual's volition to take action, has the potential to facilitate students in achieving their objectives. Code (2020) asserted that for the purpose of enhancing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes, it is imperative for students to assume responsibility for their own education (p. 1). Learners exhibit agency when they make deliberate choices and engage in cognitive processes that shape their actions and thoughts. In their study, Manyukhina and Wyse (2019) conducted an investigation on the significance of language-learning experiences in facilitating an understanding of the interplay between social settings and individual preferences. Nevertheless, critical realists have recognised the significance of social settings and the active involvement of individual students in the process of learning. According to Mercer (2011), and Manyukhina & Wyse (2019), the significance of contextual affordance

lies in its ability to empower students with agency over the range of learning opportunities accessible within certain contexts. The study employed an examination of the impact of social factors on the learning outcomes of all students, with the aim of understanding the influence of these circumstances on their educational experiences. The study concluded that studying abroad is a significant factor that can influence a learner's level of independence.

According to Korsgaard (2009), agency can be understood as a manifestation of an individual's complete self, while identity is formed through the choices and actions one undertakes (p. 18). The facilitation of learner agency is enhanced when students actively participate in processes of negotiation and engage in interpersonal relationships. For instance, the attitudes of the students could have been influenced by the varying learning settings they were exposed to. The possible outcome of this situation may result in a decrease in the rate at which students develop their learner identities, making it more difficult for them to showcase their ability to govern their behaviour. According to Teng (2019), learner beliefs, motivation, self-regulation, and strategic learning are widely recognised as integral components of an individual's agency system. Scholars in recent years have conducted research on the aforementioned subjects and have explored the relationship between learner agency and learning contexts (Gao, 2010; Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019; Mercer, 2011).

Muramatsu (2018) conducted a study wherein the L2 socialisation theory was employed to examine the process by which Japanese language learners formulated and achieved their individual learning objectives. Moreover, the researcher investigated the process through which students acquired a second language reassessed and reconstructed their personal identity. In a study conducted by Teng (2019), a significant correlation was found between students' identities, teachers' autonomy, and the approaches utilised in teaching and learning English as a second language. Based on the findings of this analysis, it can be inferred that the process of identification plays a crucial role in facilitating autonomy, which

in turn signifies a manifestation of power. The study examined the emotional aspects of instructors' identity rebuilding experiences in order to accomplish this objective. In contrast, the study exhibited a bias towards prioritising the teachers while neglecting to adequately consider the interplay between students' autonomy, agency, and identity.

Previous research has emphasised the need for additional investigation into the extent to which learner agency influences students' identities in various settings. Furthermore, it is imperative to expound upon the importance of learner agency and explore viable strategies for its reinstatement within the realm of global education. The main aim of this study was to examine the manner in which Japanese students who are studying abroad navigate and shape their identities in relation to language attitudes, learner autonomy, and cross-cultural communications. This study is exploratory by nature and examines the following research questions:

1. What are the mechanisms via which Japanese overseas students cultivate and navigate their identities during their engagement in study abroad initiatives?

2. To what extent do Japanese overseas students actively participate in the process of constructing and negotiating their identities throughout their study abroad endeavours?

Methodology

Participants and Data Collection

This investigation was carried out at a national university in Japan, situated in the city of Tokyo. The university boasts an enrolment of approximately 4,000 students and is dedicated to the pursuit of scholarly research and educational instruction in the realm of global languages and cultures. This commitment is reflected in the presence of 27 language departments, including the School of Language and Culture Studies, which caters to a student body of 1,480 students. The data for this study were obtained using a combination of semi-structured interviews and narrative journals. A total of 11 participants, all of whom had

previous study abroad experiences in English speaking countries, were included in the data collection process. The study sample consisted of undergraduate university students who had engaged in study abroad or internship programmes lasting between 3 and 12 months in countries where English is the primary language.

The researchers used the snowball sampling technique in order to select participants for the interviews (Noy, 2008). A subset of the students involved in the study were recommended to the researcher by a student who had previously engaged in an educational programme overseas at the same institution. Additional volunteers were recruited using online platforms by leveraging information-sharing networks (Table 1). The students involved in the study were undergraduate sophomore students Furthermore, prior to this, they had engaged in study abroad or internship initiatives that facilitated their immersion in English-speaking countries for durations ranging from three to 12 months as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Participants	Gender	Destination	Length of study
Student 1	Female	UK	4 months
Student 2	Male	US	4 months
Student 3	Female	Canada	4 months
Student 4	Female	Canada	5 months
Student 5	Female	Australia	7 months
Student 6	Male	Ireland	3 months
Student 7	Male	Ireland	3 months
Student 8	Female	Canada	6 months
Student 9	Male	Canada	8 months

Student 10	Male	UK	10 months
Student 11	Female	Australia	12 months

According to Seidman (2006), interviews provide researchers with the opportunity to gain access to the contextual factors around students' behaviour, therefore enabling a deeper understanding of the significance and interpretation of such behaviour. In contrast, according to Bashan and Holsblat (2017), reflective journal writing affords participants with increased autonomy to derive more profound insights from their diverse array of responses.

Interviews provide a valuable means of comprehending the significance of students' behaviour by granting access to the contextual backdrop against which their behaviour unfolds. This approach enables an examination of the strategies employed by study participants in navigating and reconstructing their identities within various contextual frameworks. The interviews were structured with the intention of examining three distinct themes: learner agency pertaining to imagined identity and investment, learner views about English accents, and intercultural conflicts. The interview questions (Appendix A) were derived from prior investigations (Gao, 2010). In conjunction with the conducted interviews, a self-selected group of five participants were extended an invitation to document their most notable intercultural encounters and experiences of intercultural conflict using the medium of narrative journals. These written accounts were required to span a length of 500 -1000 Japanese characters as shown in Appendix B. It should be noted that the students volunteered to provide their narrative journals were those spent longer time abroad than others, e.g., student 5, student 8, student 9, student 10 and student 11. This suggests a possible correlation between the length of staying abroad and the level of willingness to engage in voluntary self-reflection on study abroad.

The interviews were carried out in Japanese language using either the Microsoft Teams platform or through direct face-to-face interaction. The duration of each interview was approximately 30 to 40 minutes, during which audio recordings were made and afterwards transcribed. The author conducted a cross-check of the transcripts and subsequently returned them to the participants for peer verification for ensuring the accuracy of the data. Subsequently, the transcripts were translated into the English language and subjected to scrutiny by a scholar specialising in the field of translation studies at university level.

Data analysis

The qualitative analysis of the interview and narrative journal data was performed using NVivo 11 software, based on Richards (2003) as well as Miles and Huberman (1994). The construction of motifs for the study involved the utilisation of two distinct approaches: a top-down approach, which is theory-based, and a bottom-up approach, which is grounded on empirical facts. The study employed the application of the identity negotiation theory proposed by Norton (2013) and Ting-Toomey (2016) to categorise the codes into several themes during the process of recording.

The first phase of the investigation involved employing preliminary coding techniques to evaluate the significance of the data. The codes encompassed learner investment, learner initiative, identity construction, and learner perspectives on English dialects. The codes were generated based on the study questions. The codes that emerged from the data during the process of inductive coding were afterwards identified through careful examination and analysis of the records. The next stage was the categorization of specific patterns and relationships among the codes. Consequently, a thematic framework was established to align with the research inquiries. The paradigm encompassed the concepts of learner agency and imagined identity, altering attitudes and identity reconstruction, as well as intercultural tensions and identity negotiation. The lack of indication of the applicability of the results in

various circumstances may be attributed to the authors' awareness of subjectivity and the significance of reflexivity during the data collection process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), results can be relevant in comparable situations, given that the participants' cross-cultural encounters and the diverse study abroad settings are comprehensively elucidated.

Results

Learner agency, Notions of Imagined identity and Learner investment

The justifications presented by the participants for their involvement in the acquisition of the English language prior to pursuing education overseas encompassed their intrigue with the language and culture of English-speaking countries, their obligation to fulfil English coursework prerequisites, and their confidence in their academic abilities. The majority of participants reported that enhancing their proficiency in the English language, encompassing linguistic and cultural aspects, was a primary objective. This statement held true irrespective of their intentions to pursue international studies or participate in an exchange programme. However, they continued to hold the belief that the inclusion of English courses was essential for the completion of their academic degrees. In alternative terms, the students came to comprehend the need of maximising their time spent overseas and the challenges associated with assessing the advantages of studying English.

Extract 1

I figured it would be cool to be recognised as an English speaker. As a member of the new community, I was required to solve practical problems in English (interview with student 1).

Extract 2

While abroad, I utilised English in both social and academic settings. This was unlike how I learned English in Japan, where I was afraid to speak for fear of making others laugh.

Now that English is a part of my existence, I have a more positive opinion of myself. (Journal writing, student 11)

The learners ' perception of their ability to acquire English language skills through worldwide communication contributed to an enhanced sense of personal agency. As a consequence, they exhibited enhanced comprehension of their social and symbolic capital, alongside an increased awareness of their sense of agency. The adjustment resulted in a transformation of the learners ' perceived identities. The facilitation of their capacity to picture a future self-capable of acquiring English in multicultural circumstances was enabled by this. The consensus among participants was that, in the context of globalisation, the English language should be regarded as a means of facilitating communication. Moreover, a total of five students, specifically Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 6, Student 7 and Student 8, expressed that their preference to studying English over their international travels in order to achieve better examination results. However, after their short-term study that ranged from 3 to 6 months, they made the decision to enrol in more English language courses with the aim of expanding their understanding of diverse cultures.

Extract 3

My ultimate objective has shifted from simply conversing with others and learning about their cultures to sharing my own culture with others (interview, student 7).

Extract 4

I was able to comprehend that the purpose of learning English was not merely to earn excellent grades, but also to learn about culture, people, and critical thinking in order to become a better person and then to learn how to communicate effectively with others in the new community (interview, student 8).

The participants expressed their belief that studying abroad provided them with an opportunity to engage with local cultural groups and establish connections with people within

a new community, thereby augmenting their social capital. The unique approach to education exhibited by the participants elicited astonishment. In lieu of traditional memorization-cantered methodologies, they adopted a learning approach commonly referred to as "utilising English as a means of learning." As an illustration, the learners undertook the study of English with the aim of enhancing their communicative abilities and cultivating a broader perspective of a global landscape.

Extract 5

English teaches me not only the language, but also culture and literature. English is no longer just a language I use to communicate with others; it's also a tool I use in education and in my daily life (interview, student 6).

The pursuit of acquiring English language skills is often motivated by the pleasure derived from the learning process. For instance, the participants held the belief that they possessed a high level of proficiency in the language due to their successful acquisition of English language skills in Japan. This instilled in them the confidence to engage in longer time of study in foreign countries. Five out of eleven students (Student 5, Student 8, Student 9, Student 10, and Student 11) who engaged in international study programmes and had the opportunity to contact with individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds reported experiencing an increased sense of security.

Extract 6

In my English classes in Japan, I lacked confidence in my ability to convey my ideas through the English language because instructors would criticise inadequate responses. In Australia, for example, students with varying levels of English proficiency were able to discuss and communicate ideas in English in class (interview, student 11).

Extract 7

I believe that everyone abroad simply asks questions if they don't comprehend something. I think it's important to encourage this mindset; I tell myself I should get out of my comfort zone and talk to others (interview, student 10).

Transformation of Perspectives and the Reconstruction of Individual Identity

A prevalent behaviour observed among students prior to embarking on study abroad was the imitation of what they perceived as "standard English accents." Based on the perspectives shared by the participants, it was observed that the aforementioned accents exhibited a greater degree of realism, expressiveness, distinctiveness, and merit as compared to their own accents (Peterson, 2020). The impact of accents on the construction of identities among English language learners and users has been the subject of inquiry (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022). Conversely, each participant expressed that their own dialect exerted the most significant influence on their attitudes towards English usage, thereby affecting the manner in which they reconstructed their identities. This statement has validity despite the fact that the examination of dialect as a component of identity construction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) speakers has received considerable scholarly attention. Furthermore, Student 11 emphasised his preference for communicating in English and highlighted the advantage of his American and British accents in enhancing his fluency and native-like proficiency. Moreover, Student 2 observed that when students study English within their native nation, accents appear to significantly influence the perception of English proficiency among learners.

Extract 8

To be perceived as outstanding students and successful English learners, I believed that English majors should have standard accents. However, after studying abroad, I realised that people, including teachers, had various accents and were indifferent to them. I came to realise that communication, not accent imitation, is the objective (journal writing. student 5).

During their time in Japan, learners were instructed to acquire English accents that were referred to as "native-like." Upon their travels to various countries, the participants ceased prioritising the acquisition of American or British accents in their English language proficiency. As a result, their focus was primarily directed towards the syllabic structure and phonetic articulation rather than the nuances of accentuation. However, upon their relocation to a foreign country, their preference for standardised dialects diminished. Japanese English speakers exhibited a lower level of proficiency in navigating diverse English accents compared to learners who had prior experience with English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions. The students were provided with the option to engage in international study programmes, enabling them to acquire proficiency in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communication, therefore facilitating their acquisition of this knowledge. The objective was to alter learners' perspectives on accents with the aim of enhancing the efficacy of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communication.

Extract 9

I've discovered that while communicating with Americans, accents of speakers from other cultural backgrounds were not the most important feature. What mattered was what you could genuinely say, not how you spoke (interview with student 2).

Extract 10

As a student of English major, I thought that having a standard accent would show how committed we were to our studies and how proficient we were in the language. When I went abroad, I saw that everyone spoke with a different accent including teachers, suggesting that dialects were unimportant to them. After giving it some thought, I came to the conclusion that the main goal should be the dialogue rather than mimicking certain accents (interview with student 9).

Intercultural Conflicts and Identity Negotiation

The findings of the study indicate that the participants expressed a desire to address intercultural conflicts with the aim of safeguarding the image of Japanese people, promoting fair and inclusive relationships among different cultures, and ensuring their integration within their various social groupings. The aforementioned three conditions served as a source of inspiration for the participants in addressing challenges arising from cross-cultural differences. According to Ting-Toomey (2016), the motives of the participants in the study were indicative of their expectations for the outcomes of identity negotiation, namely, the attainment of understanding, acceptance, and recognition. During the discourse about intercultural conflicts, the participants also engaged in a discussion regarding the significance of safeguarding one's personal interests.

Extract 11

I did not experience any intercultural conflicts during my time in the UK, and communication was excellent. To secure one's own interests, I believe mutual respect and adherence to certain fundamental rules and principles are essential (interview with student 10).

When asked regarding the precise measures undertaken to tackle cross-cultural issues, the respondents indicated that they had adapted to the indigenous way of life and engaged with others whose language and culture diverged from their own. Several participants expressed their intention to engage in direct communication and avoid conflicts when confronted with multicultural barriers.

Extract 12

It is better to stay out of trouble. It is much easier to be mistreated than to solve issues after they arise. I'll start to doubt my capacity to resolve them if I can't clearly state my points. Language frequently gets in the way of my ability to resolve some problems (Student 3, interview).

Extract 13

I would simply go away before the situation becomes unpleasant. In the end, I am just an outsider (journal writing, student 9).

The participants expressed concerns on their ability to effectively engage with others from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds when confronted with various obstacles, owing to their extensive international experiences. Consequently, these learners opted to refrain from engaging in direct interpersonal communication with people from foreign countries. Aveni (2005) examined people who expressed challenges in openly addressing international conflicts due to her fear of speaking a foreign language. The individual engaged in the aforementioned behaviour due to feelings of anxiety stemming from the possibility of being misunderstood, which was exacerbated by the fact that she was communicating in a language that was not her native tongue. A significant number of participants expressed concerns about engaging in confrontations with people or from diverse cultural backgrounds due to feelings of insecurity and vulnerability during such interactions. The lack of self-confidence among learners led to their adoption of such behavioural patterns, hence resulting in a lack of trust in others. The learners in question showed a reluctance to assimilate into society and displayed a lack of interest in establishing deeper connections with the locals during conflicts.

Discussion

This study and research on investments show that the study abroad experience had two main impacts on participants' investment behaviour: first, they were introduced to new practices and resources in their new social milieu, and second, their interpersonal relationships changed, giving them more autonomy. Darvin (2019) claimed that studying abroad exposes students to a different social milieu, improving their English skills. According to Norton and De Costa (2018), participants worked hard during their study abroad

experiences to expand their social networks and social capital. Some students were better at building and keeping relationships with English language users in the new social milieu, with temporal and spatial differences. They did this with authority using English to participate in activities inspired by their interests, keep their friendships, and make new ones in the community of practice. Participants' increased awareness and enthusiasm in the course may explain the difference in investment levels before and during the study abroad programme. They found a correlation between the number of people they engaged with in the new society, the strength of those friendships, and their language skill. Therefore, the more opportunities they had to speak English in their new surroundings encouraged them to build social capital. The greater availability of symbolic materials strengthened their resolve to learn English (Baker and Fang, 2021). As they adjusted to the new social situation, they realised the results of their effort.

The new community warmly supported their learning, which motivated them to invest in the group's linguistic practices and resources. However, several students had investment before studying overseas. They kept doing so because they feared the unknown community would mock their English skills. Thus, students' independence in investing in their own interests inside the new group varied. According to Darvin and Norton (2021), language learners' goals, preferences, and negotiation skills affect how much time and effort they put into learning the target language. Negotiating with English-speakers was not always necessary before studying abroad. After entering the new community, this became clear. Participants believed they needed to invest in English language skills to fit into this new social group. A necessity or desire to assimilate into other cultures drove these students to improve their English language skills during their study abroad experiences. Different preferences for group engagement can affect how long and hard each member studies abroad. Thus, some students may have had different levels of interest in extracurricular activities than their peers. Due to

their participation in studying abroad, they had to spend extra time and money improving their English.

These findings suggest that students' self-perception as second language immersion (SLI) English learners and their experience studying overseas to learn English are related. Domestic students' study abroad experiences and educational courses may benefit from studying abroad's identity development and second language learning benefits. Teachers of English as a second language should provide students more chances to create their own identities. In English education, students must be taught English and encouraged to communicate in an ELF setting. The idea that a natural accent and first-language English fluency indicate superiority must also be challenged. This perspective may hinder students' English fluency (Boonsuk & Fang, 2022). English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers must also realise the importance of creating appropriate learning environments. This will increase student autonomy and enable full access to English-learning materials in an ELF context (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019). Students must be properly prepared for studying abroad by receiving the right education that focuses on improving students' cultural sensitivity and linguistic skills to handle cultural differences.

Conclusion

According to the research presented in this paper, Japanese university students who studied abroad learning English as a second language actively constructed and negotiated their own identities. The paper examined the impact of shifting learner agencies and linguistic attitudes towards English accents. Students had the ability to reconstruct their imagined identities of native speakers' language and devised strategies for transforming their own identities abroad. The findings additionally indicated that students' formation and adjustment of their identities are impacted by their participation in studying abroad within English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communities. However, this study is limited by the methodology used

in data collection. Consequently, caution should be exercised when generalising the results. Future research may explore both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in greater depth. Additionally, it is plausible that the individuals exhibited restraint in expressing their genuine sentiments on language dialects or concealed their emotions when the subject was explicitly addressed. Future research initiatives may include employing longitudinal or ethnographic methodologies to collect participant perspectives. Furthermore, due to the fact that all participants were interviewed upon their return to Japan from studying abroad, the findings may not provide sufficient depth into the process of identity transformation. Further investigation is necessary to analyse the psychological elements, such as learner autonomy, linguistic attitudes, and intercultural conflicts, that significantly influence the connection between study abroad experiences and the identities of second language learners. Subsequent research may investigate the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds, varying age groups, varied levels of English language proficiency, and varying durations of studying abroad.

Acknowledgments

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Please provide a concise overview of your academic history in the field of English studies, encompassing the English language courses and examinations you have satisfactorily accomplished? What is the underlying rationale behind your decision to acquire proficiency in the English language?

2. Please provide information regarding your study abroad experience including the country you visited, the duration of your stay. Did you have any problems encountered throughout your study abroad.

3. What are the objectives you have set for your English language learning endeavours? What factors contribute to the characterization of a learner as an accomplished learner of English language?

4. Can you assert that your proficiency in English is improving? Is there a relationship (correlation) between confidence and its impact on your ability to study and their perceived level of control over your education (learning performance and agency)?

5. How did you acquire proficiency in the language prior to studying in a foreign country? Did you feel that was an improvement in your proficiency in English? Did you experienced an increase in self-assurance regarding your personal worth, integrity, or capacity to make informed choices (learning agency)? Did you have difficulty in engaging with others, acquiring new knowledge, or establishing new social connections?

6. Are you planning to improve your pronunciation in order to better emulate native English speakers? Do you have any plans to keep your accent unaltered? What are the factors that influenced your decision?

7. What methods can be employed to assess one's accent in the English language? Are you capable of assessing the accents of others when speaking in English? Is accented English seen as superior in quality in comparison to standardised English?

8. In the event that someone erroneously assumes that you are a native speaker and possess English as your native language, what course of action would you do in response? Have you ever experienced such a situation during your time overseas?

9. To what extent do you believe that one's accent influences the acquisition of English language skills, the formation of social connections, and interpersonal interactions, as seen by others?

10. Have you ever encountered any intercultures conflicts abroad? What could potentially be the underlying cause of this occurrence? What were your initial perceptions or thoughts?

11. How was this disagreement resolved? Did you employ the identical methodology or approach as the one previously utilised? Was the task successful? If not, what alterations or concessions were made during the conflict resolution process?

Appendix B

Narrative Journals

When reflecting over your experiences abroad, it is vital to elucidate any instances of engaging with locals including classmates, teachers, neighbours, or any unfamiliar people. Misunderstandings and conflicts may arise due to a range of factors, such as preexisting assumptions, disparities in cultural backgrounds, limitations in language proficiency, and/or other similar factors. The task at hand requires the description of a pivotal event during your study abroad in a minimum of 500-1000 Japanese characters. Did you experience any problems? What was your response to that situation? Did you attempt to use a strategy to

effectively address and resolve this problem? Did you successfully achieve your intended

goal? Why or why not? What were your initial perceptions or thoughts?

Effects of Personality Traits and Affective Factors on English Prosodic Features in Japanese University Students: Acoustic and Physiological Analyses

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Abstract

There is a substantial body of work focused on the effect of affective factors on L2 learning. Most of these studies, however, are based on questionnaires and self-reports. This study aims to objectively explore the effects of trait-anxiety on state-anxiety by measuring heart rate and pitch changes during L2 oral reading tasks. Fifty-four university students read a passage in the following sequence: first in English, then in Japanese, and in English again. The heart rate and pitch changes at the sentence level were compared between the first and second English readings. Results showed that participants with higher affective factors did not exhibit significant difference in heart rate, whereas those with lower affective factors indicated a significantly higher heart rate during the first reading compared to the second. Similarly, participants with higher affective factors did not show a significant difference in maximum f_o between the first and second readings while those with lower affective factors demonstrated a significantly higher maximum f_o during the first reading than the second. Furthermore, f_o range was narrower for the high affective group than the low affective group. These findings highlight the impact of both trait-anxiety and state-anxiety on L2 speaking.

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Keywords: communication apprehension, shyness, L2 anxiety, pitch, heart rate

Quite a few studies have reported Japanese learners' poor reactions to communicative English classes (Cutrone, 2009; Doyon, 2000; Miller, 1995; Norman, 2012). Japanese university students indicated higher levels of communication apprehension (hereafter CA) and shyness compared to their Asian peers (Klopf, 1984; McCroskey, Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1985; Nakamura et al., 2013; Zimbardo, 1977). As a consequence of the nation-wide desire to improve oral proficiency in English, students with high levels of affective factors such as CA and shyness often feel reticent to participate in speaking activities. Attention on affective factors has led researchers to examine the influence of anxiety on L2 speaking among Japanese university students (Araki, 2014; King & Smith, 2017; Osboe et al., 2007; Wang, 2013; Yashima, 1998). There is consensus that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking activity among the L2 four skills (Horwitz et al., 1986; Jee, 2018; Phillips, 1992). Though affective factors influence L2 speaking, few studies have examined the association between affective factors when using L1 and L2 (Nakamura et al., 2013).

Both CA and shyness are part of social anxiety (Kanemasa, 2021). According to McCroskey (1984), CA is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p.13); he described four types of CA: trait-like, context-based, audience-based, and situational as the four points of the continuum. Shyness, as articulated by Leary and Schlenker (1981) is "a subjective experience which is exhibited as nervousness and apprehension in interpersonal encounters (p.356)".

Distinguishing between trait anxiety and state anxiety, the former is a personality trait, the latter is transient anxiety state as described by Spielberger (1972). For instance, while some people naturally feel anxiety in any social interactions (trait-anxiety), but some others get anxious only when they give a speech in front of others (state-anxiety). Paying attention to

the stable and transient nature of CA, shyness, and L2 anxiety, this study will explore the relationship between personality traits and L2 communication apprehension (henceforth L2CA) and investigate the effects of trait anxiety on state anxiety by examining both physiological factors and acoustic correlates of prosodic features of English in oral reading tasks.

There have been few acoustic studies on L2 anxiety, and most of the research on L2 anxiety is based on quantitative studies and self-reports (Mora et al., 2023). The purpose of the present study is to objectively explore the effects of personality traits and affective factors on prosodic features of Japanese university students based on acoustic and physiological analyses. We also consider the difference between trait anxiety measured by questionnaires and state anxiety created by oral reading tasks.

Literature Review

L2 Speaking Anxiety

Extensive research exists on the effect of anxiety on L2 learning (Aida, 1994; Al-Shboul et al., 2013; Clément et al., 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1994; Osboe et al., 2007). Studies on L2 anxiety were initially conducted on students studying English in the US and Canada, and more recently, attention has been directed to EFL learners in many other areas including Asia and Arabic countries (Bensalem, 2017; Williams & Andrade, 2008). Horwitz et al. (1986) developed a scale to measure L2 anxiety known as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). It considers three performance anxieties: CA, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. L2 anxiety affects four skills of English and among them, L2 anxiety has the most debilitating effect on L2 speaking (King & Smith, 2017; Phillips, 1992). L2 speaking anxiety observed in the EFL classroom in Japan was reported by scholars teaching English at the college level (Doyon, 2000; Miller, 1995; Norman, 2012).

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Communication Apprehension (CA) and shyness

Japanese demonstrated higher levels of CA (Klopf, 1984; McCroskey, 1985) and higher levels of shyness (Zimbardo, 1977) than their peers from different cultures. CA is regarded as part of a person's overall personality, and it is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1984, p.13). McCroskey et al. (1985) examined CA among Japanese university students in speaking Japanese and English and reported extremely high levels of CA in both cases. Shyness, which Zimbardo (1977) considered to be "a fuzzy concept," is difficult to define. Definitions suggested by researchers include "a source of social anxiety which interferes with one's ability to function in social situation" (Jones & Russell, 1982); and "a subjective experience which is exhibited as nervousness and apprehension in interpersonal encounters" (Leary & Schlenker, 1981). Zimbardo (1977) conducted a cross-cultural comparison of shyness among American, Taiwanese, German, Mexican, Indian, and Israeli students and reported that the Japanese showed the highest level of shyness among them. More recently, Inagaki et al. (2017) investigated the difference in shyness between American and Japanese university students; Japanese students indicated higher shyness than their American peers. These cross-cultural studies showed higher levels of CA and shyness among Japanese university students. However, there have been a limited number of studies that examined the relationship between personality traits and L2 anxiety among Japanese university students. Nakamura et al. (2013) conducted a cross-cultural study on the relationship between CA and L2 anxiety in Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese students and found that participants who reportedly had a higher level of CA were associated with higher L2 anxiety. It was also shown that Japanese demonstrated a higher level of CA than their Asian peers. In this study, we address both CA and shyness as personality traits and affective factors that might affect L2 speaking.

Trait anxiety and state anxiety

CA and shyness are categorized as social anxiety as mentioned in the previous section. According to Spielberger et al. (1971), anxiety is "an emotional state, which consists of feelings of tension and apprehension and heightened autonomic nervous system activity (p.146)." Spielberger et al. (1971) make a distinction between "trait-anxiety" and "state-anxiety": the former is a stable disposition as a personal trait; the latter, a transient feeling of anxiety or fear "influenced by transitory situational stress" (p. 145). Similar distinctions apply for CA, shyness, and L2 anxiety.

McCroskey (1984) considers CA to have a continuum-like nature—ranging from the extreme trait pole to the state pole (Richmond et al., 1992). McCroskey (1984) developed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) to measure trait-like CA, which was defined as "a relatively enduring, personality-type orientation toward a given mode of communication across a wide variety of contexts" (McCroskey, 1984, p. 16).

Trait shyness is viewed as a stable personality trait, whereas state shyness manifests only in specific social situations (Aikawa, 1991). Aikawa (1991) developed the Trait Shyness Scale (TSS) for Japanese people based on several scales that has been mainly utilized in the field of psychology. Aikawa (1991) defined shyness as "an affective-behavioral syndrome characterized by both social anxiety and inhibition that can occur beyond any specific social situation (p. 150)."

L2 anxiety has also been investigated in terms of its relation to personality traits and a variety of situations (Cutrone, 2009). Many studies have shown that L2 anxiety has a stable, as well as a transient, nature (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2008), and accordingly, L2 anxiety has been regarded as a situation-specific apprehension defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with L2 contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 297).

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Variables associated with L2 anxiety include proficiency. Many studies on L2 anxiety analyzed the data at different proficiency levels (MacIntyre et al., 1997; Woodrow, 2006) reporting a negative relationship between anxiety and proficiency. The current study likewise examines the association between anxiety and oral proficiency. It explores the possible differences in f_0 parameters in oral reading considering the distinction between the stable and the transient natures of CA, shyness, and L2 anxiety.

Effects of anxiety on prosodic features

Prosodic features differ from segmental features: "the prosodic features of a language are variations larger than individual segments. They are overlaid upon a word, phrase, or sentence" (Borden & Harris 1984, p. 131). The basic elements of prosody are pitch, duration, and loudness. The major acoustic correlates of prosodic features are f_0, duration, and intensity. Prosodic features have been regarded as significant factors contributing to the enhancement of intelligibility and comprehensibility of utterances in communication (Derwing & Rossiter 2003; Yamane, 2019; Yamato, 2012). Derwing and Rossiter (2003) reported that teaching with a focus on prosody was more effective in increasing intelligibility compared to teaching pronunciation of sounds.

Several researchers have reported on the effects of L2 anxiety on segmental and prosodic features (Baran-Łucarz, 2011; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Szyszka, 2011; Young, 1991). Derwing and Rossiter (2002) investigated pronunciation difficulties in L2 learners' communication breakdown of different language groups including Polish, Spanish, Cantonese, and Japanese. They conducted a survey on pronunciation problems and strategies used when faced with difficulties in communication. The results showed that 60% of the respondents perceived a change in their accent when nervous, which implies that L2 anxiety has a greater influence on the prosodic aspects of language than segmental features. The present study explores the effects of personality traits and affective factors on prosodic

features, especially changes in pitch regarding sentence stress.

Physiological and acoustic studies on the effects of anxiety

Numerous studies have investigated the physiological and acoustic parameters associated with emotion (Mori et al., 2014). The physiological effects of shyness and CA include changes in heart rate, blood pressure, and cutaneous temperature. According to Kondo and Yang (1995), results for the relationship between CA and heart rate were not consistent. McCroskey (1984) suggested that trait-like CA is not highly associated with heart rate, though several studies reported significant relationship between heart rate and levels of state CA (Behnke & Beatty, 1981). Later studies conducted by Beatty and Behnke (1991) and Salvo and Schmidt (2020) reported a positive correlation between affective factors (speaking anxiety) and heart rate. In the current study, heart rate is measured as a physiological factor to objectively examine how trait anxiety affects state anxiety.

f_o parameters have been among the most frequently investigated acoustic correlates related to emotions (Scherer, 1986; Tolkmitt & Scherer, 1986). These findings on anxiety, however, are not consistent. Laukka et al. (2008) examined acoustic correlates of anxiety and identified that the values of mean f_o and maximum f_o were higher in an anxiety-provoking situation. A similar result was obtained by Jones et al. (2011), who reported an increase in mean f_o and reduction in f_o range. In contrast, a study by Tolkmitt and Scherer (1996) found little increase in mean f_o, but an increase in minimum f_o under anxiety-provoking situations. The present study explores the effects of trait anxiety on f_o parameters that indicate state anxiety when speaking English.

L2 anxiety has been reported to be mainly associated with oral performance (Horwitz et al., 1986; Woodrow, 2006). Woodrow (2006) developed the second language speaking anxiety scale and found that L2 speaking anxiety was a significant predictor of oral proficiency. However, there have been a limited number of acoustic studies on L2 anxiety,

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with most research on affective factors being quantitative. Nakamura et al. (2020) compared the f_o parameters of speech produced by Japanese university students between their rehearsal and real speaking performance, and examined the influence of anxiety on f_o values. Participants also completed two structured closed-ended questionnaires, the PRCA, and the FLCAS. One dimension of the PRCA measures CA in public speaking. The results revealed a significant difference in mean f_o between the rehearsal and real performance. Mean f_o showed a significant positive correlation with CA in public speech. These results indicated that students tended to show higher L2 speaking anxiety in a real performance setting, and this was also reflected by a higher mean f_o. The current study will provide further acoustic evidence regarding the effect of anxiety on prosodic features.

Research Questions

The present study aims to explore the effect of personality traits and affective factors on English prosodic features in Japanese university students based on physiological and acoustic measurements. It also investigates whether there is any difference in acoustic measurements according to oral proficiency. The following research questions are addressed:

1. Are personality traits and affective factors of Japanese university students related to L2 speaking anxiety?

2. Do personality traits and affective factors of Japanese university students affect heart rate in an oral reading task?

3. Do personality traits and affective factors of Japanese university students affect fundamental frequency (f_o) in an oral reading task?

4. Are there any differences in f_o parameters between high oral proficiency English learners and those with low oral proficiency?

Method

The data collection comprises three sections: 1. Conducting questionnaires 2. Recording oral reading and heart rate 3. Administering an online test to assess oral English

proficiency.

Participants

Fifty-four Japanese university students (15 males and 39 females) from three different universities participated in this study. Twenty-four were English majors, and 30 were non-English majors. Ages ranged from 18 to 21 years, averaging 19.3 years old. Their oral proficiency level ranged from CEFR A2 to B2. Only one had stayed in an English-speaking country longer than a month. We did not exclude this participant because her score was within the CEFR B2 level. Each participant was seated in a quiet, isolated room in the research building and signed a consent form regarding their personal information. Each received payment in return for their participation.

Materials and Instruments

Materials used in this study included oral reading tasks, three scales of questionnaires, and an English oral proficiency test.

Oral speaking tasks

The material the participants were asked to read was the following passage from *The Happy Prince* (Wilde, 2023).

> The Happy Prince was not happy at all. The tears were running down his golden
>
> face. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow felt very
>
> sorry. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am the Happy Prince." "Why are you crying
>
> then?" asked the Swallow.

Questionnaires

The participants were then asked to complete three self-assessment surveys related to their perceived levels of anxiety:

1. TSS: Trait shyness scale (Aikawa, 1991)

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2. PRCA: Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1970), four situations: two-person conversation (PD), group discussion (PG), classroom discussion (PC), public speech (PPS)

3. FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986), eight items considering communication apprehension (L2CA)

Oral English Test

Finally, participants were required to take a VERSANT speaking test within one week after finishing their recording. The oral proficiency level of the participants ranged from A2 to B2. Developed by Pearson, VERSANT is an online speaking test that consists of six sections to evaluate vocabulary, pronunciation, complexity, and fluency.

Instruments

A smartwatch (POLAR, UNITE) was used to record each participant's heart rate (HR) during the oral reading section. A condenser microphone (Plantronics, Encorepro515) and a linear PCM recorder (SONY, PCM-D10) were used for audio recording.

Procedures

To determine the sequence of heart rate measurements, recordings and implement of three questionnaires, we conducted preliminary recordings with three additional students. Based on their mean heart rate, we found students were more nervous at the session's beginning than the end. Therefore, the recordings preceded the implementation of the questionnaires. The procedure for each session for one participant was as follows:

1. The participant put on the smart watch.

2. They read the English text as soon as they started their HR measurements.
   (First English oral reading)

3. They read the Japanese version of the text (Japanese oral reading)

4. They read the English text again. (Second English oral reading)

5. They filled out the questionnaires (during rest)

6. They removed the watch.

Data analyses

The acoustic measurements targeted the word "happy" and the WH-question "Who are you?" In this paper, we focus on results for the sentence level. "Who are you?" was selected to determine the pitch range in a sentence as this question has three words and one intonation phrase while "Why are you crying then?" has five words and some participants read the sentence with the two intonation phrases. The measurements for the target sentence are as follows:

Target sentence "Who are you?"

1) Mean f_0 for the whole sentence.

2) f_0 range for the whole sentence (maximum f_0 - minimum f_0)

We analyzed mean f_0 and f_0 range for the whole sentence to examine the differences in f_0 parameters between the first and second English oral reading exploring the effect of affective factors and oral proficiency. The f_0 range (the differences between maximum f_0 and minimum f_0) was of particular interest due to unclear association with anxiety, as previously mentioned (Kent, 1997; Jones et al., 2011). We compared the two English readings, presuming better comprehension after reading the Japanese version.

Audio recordings of each sentence obtained for each participant were analyzed acoustically using *Praat* software, version: 6.1.08 (Boersma & Weenink, 2021). The f_0 measurements, converted to semitones (st), accounted for pitch differences between genders. For statistical analyses, we employed SPSS (version 28) and *Langtest* (Mizumoto, 2022).

Results

Results for Research Question 1

Table 1 shows the mean scores, standard deviation (*SD*), and the range (highest and

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lowest score) for the Trait Shyness Scale (TSS), for the four situations of PRCA: Two-person

conversation (PD), Group discussion (PG), Classroom (PC), and Public speaking (PPS) and

for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Personality Traits and Affective Factors (N = 54)

	TSS	PD	PG	PC	PPS	FLCAS
Mean	2.69	2.41	2.50	3.19	3.60	2.92
SD	0.74	0.77	0.77	0.62	0.69	0.87
Max	4.13	4.33	4.17	4.33	4.83	4.63
Min	1.69	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	1.11

A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in the means of the six affective

factors ($F(53, 212.45) = 32.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .378$). PPS was notably higher than the other

five variables, and post hoc multiple comparison tests confirmed significant differences

between PPS and the other five affective factors ($p < .001$).

To determine the relationship among the six factors, Spearman's rank correlations were

computed. Table 2 shows these correlations.

Table 2

Intercorrelations for Affective Factors (N = 54)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
FLCAS	–					
TSS	.435**	–				
PD	.394*	.493***				
PG	.253	.570***	.510***	–		
PC	.443**	.562***	.219	.458***	–	
PPS	.465**	.494***	.241	.285	.687***	–

Note. *p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

TSS and the three PRCA factors (PD, PC, & PSS) showed moderate positive

correlations with FLCAS. TSS showed moderate to strong positive correlations with all four

CA situations (PD, PG, PC, and PPS).

Results for Research Question 2

Figure 1 indicates the mean heart rates (HR) for the four sessions: English oral reading

1, Japanese reading, English reading 2, and during rest.

Figure 1

Average Heart Rate for Each Session (N =54)
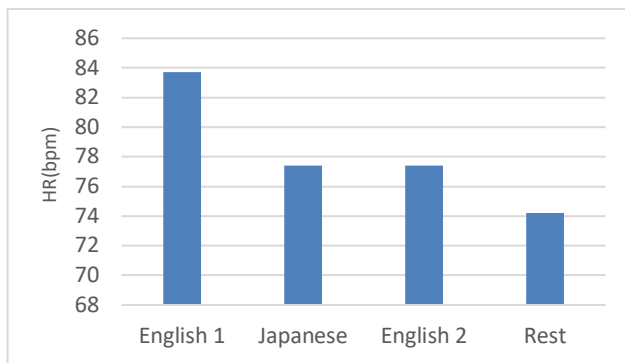
A one-way ANOVA compared the average HR for each session. There was a significant

difference among the four sessions ($F(3, 159) = 25.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .325$). Post hoc

multiple comparison tests showed that the average HR of the first English reading was higher

than the other sessions ($p < .01$), but there were no significant differences between the

Japanese reading and the second English reading.

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed the HR of the first reading was significantly

higher than that of the second reading ($z = 4.815$, $p < .001$, $r = .463$). Figure 2 shows the

means and the HR distribution in the first English reading (HR1) and in the second English

reading (HR2). The mean HR value for the first and second reading was 83.67 ($SD = 13.47$)

and 77. 35 ($SD = 14.97$), respectively.

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Figure 2

Distributions of HR1 and HR2 with Bars of Means and Standard Deviations (N = 54)
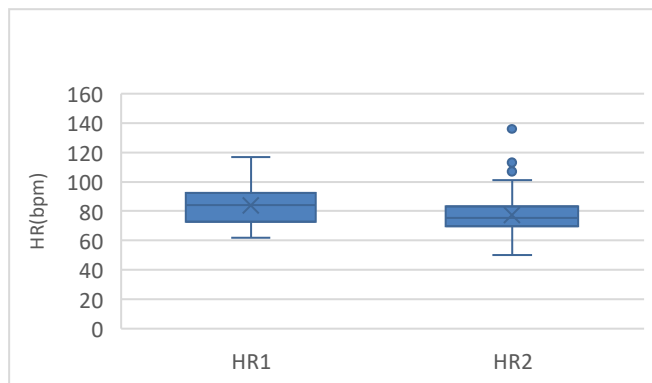
Table 3

Intercorrelations between Affective Factors and HR Ratio (N = 54)

Variable pair		r	p
TSS	HR Ratio	-.346	.010[*]
PD	HR Ratio	-.361	.007[**]
PG	HR Ratio	-.371	.006[**]

Note. ** $p < .001$. * $p < .05$.

Table 3 illustrates moderate negative correlations between shyness and HR ratio (E1/E2), between PD and HR ratio, and between PG and HR ratio. In order to examine the differences according to the level of PD, participants were divided into two groups at the median score "High Group" (consisting of participants whose PD scores were higher) and "Low Group" (consisting of participants whose PD scores were lower). Regarding shyness and PG, participants could not be split at the median. Figure 3 displays the HR ratio for both groups regarding PD ($z = 4.231$, $p < .001$, $r = .576$).

Figure 3

Ratio of HR between first and second oral reading for PD High(H) and Low(L) Group

(N = 54)
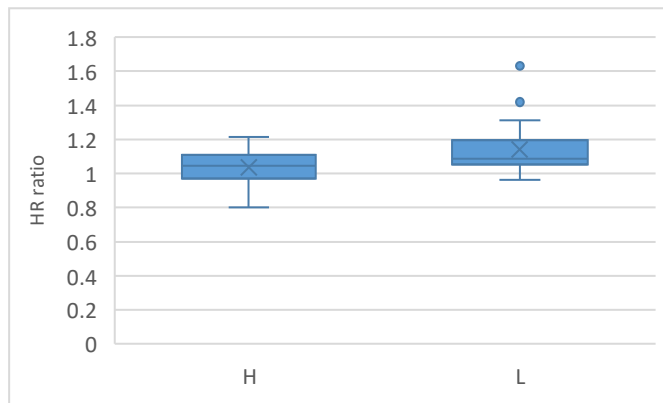
Table 4

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Analyses for HR for the Two Groups of TSS, PD, and PG (N = 54)

Variable	English 1 HR (*SD*)	English 2 HR (*SD*)	*n*	*p*	*r*
High Group					
TSS	86.12 (15.01)	81.54 (17.20)	24	.032	.258
PD	83.04 (14.29)	78.26 (16.51)	27	.012	.342
PG	84.92 (12.76)	78.71 (17.39)	28	.002	.405
Low Group					
TSS	81.70 (11.99)	74.00 (12.20)	30	.000	.594
PD	84.30 (11.66)	76.44 (12.37)	27	.000	.585
PG	82.92 (12.76)	75.88 (13.28)	26	.000	.521

Results for Research Question 3

For the sentence "Who are you?", a total of 108 samples were analyzed. The average mean f_o values for the first and second English oral reading were 11.93 (*SD* = 5.05) and 11.75 (*SD* = 5.12), respectively. Mean f_o value of the sentence was slightly higher in the first reading than the second reading. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed no significant difference in these values (z = 0.926, p = .3547, r = .089). The average maximum f_o value of the sentence was 15.94 (*SD* = 5.55) for the first reading and 15.61 (*SD* = 5.31) for the second. The maximum f_o value of the sentence was slightly higher in the first reading than the second reading. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed the difference was significant (z = 2.036, p = .042, r = .196). The average minimum f_o values of the sentence were 7.27 (*SD* = 5.40) for

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the first reading and 7.58 (SD = 5.72) for the second reading. The minimum f_o value of the sentence was slightly higher in the second reading than the first reading. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test demonstrated the difference was significant (z = 2.158, p = .031, r = .208). The average f_o range value of the sentence was 8.67 (SD = 3.84) for the first reading and 9.06 (SD = 4.75) for the second reading. The f_o range value of the sentence was slightly higher in the second reading than the first reading. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated the difference was not significant (z = 0.022, p = .990, r = .022).

A series of Spearman's rank correlations was performed. Table 5 presents correlations between f_o parameters and affective variables. Among six variables of affective factors, PD and PG showed moderate negative correlations with differences in maximum f_o. The PC also indicates the moderate negative correlation with difference in f_o range between the first and second readings.

Table 5

Intercorrelations between Affective Factors and f_o Parameters (N = 54)

Variable		r	p
PD	Differences in maximum f_o	-289	.034[*]
PG	Differences in maximum f_o	-.305	.025[*]
PC	Differences in f_o range	-.288	.027[*]

Note. *p < .05.

To examine the correlations further, the participants were divided into the "High Group" and "Low Group" according to the mean score of the affective factors (PD, PC, and PC). The average values of maximum f_o, (Table 6) and f_o Range (Table 7) with the results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test for the both groups are shown in Table 6 and Table 7, respectively.

Table 6

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Analyses for Maximum f_o Values in the First and Second Readings

(st) between the High and Low Groups of PD and PG (N = 54)

Variable	Reading 1 Max f_o (SD)	Reading 2 Max f_o (SD)	n	p	r
High Group					
PD	15.95 (5.01)	15.87 (4.95)	27	.562	.079
PG	16.36 (5.01)	16.30 (4.88)	28	.582	.073
Low Group					
PD	16.38 (6.16)	15.75 (5.81)	27	.013	.338
PG	15.96 (6.21)	15.28 (5.86)	26	.007	.376

Table 7

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Analyses for f_o Range Values in the First and Second Readings

(st)between the High and Low Groups of PC (N = 54)

Variable	Reading 1 f_o range (SD)	Reading 2 f_o range (SD)	n	p	r
High Group					
PC	7.97 (2.95)	9.32 (4.62)	31	.125	.195
Low Group					
PC	9.60 (4.69)	8.71 (5.00)	23	.048	.291

Results for Research Question 4

This section reports the results for the differences in f_o parameters (mean f_o, maximum f_o, minimum f_o, and f_o range) between the high oral proficiency group and the low oral proficiency group. The association between each affective factor and oral proficiency score revealed a moderate negative correlation with oral proficiency scores ($r = -.305$, $p = .025$). Participants were divided into the "High Group" and "Low Group" based on the median score of oral proficiency test. Table 8 presents the average values of mean f_o, maximum f_o minimum f_o, and f_o range standard deviations, and the results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test for the both groups.

Table 8

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Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Analyses for Average f_o Values in the First and Second Readings

(st)between the High and Low Proficiency Groups (N = 54)

Variable	Reading 1 f_o Average (SD)	Reading 2 f_o Average (SD)	n	p	r
High Group					
mean f_o	13.14 (4.14)	12.94 (4.32)	27	.578	.076
maximum f_o	17.66 (4.35)	16.94 (4.43)	27	.007	.367
minimum f_o	7.18 (5.42)	7.98 (5.62)	27	.035	.287
f_o range	10.29 (4.37)	11.01 (5.78)	27	.822	.031
Low Group					
mean f_o	10.73 (5.65)	10.56 (5.64)	27	.594	.072
maximum f_o	14.22 (6.14)	14.29 (5.85)	27	.859	.024
minimum f_o	7.18 (5.47)	7.19 (5.91)	27	.441	.105
f_o range	7.04 (2.32)	7.10 (2.15)	27	.897	.018

In the first reading, the average values were significantly higher in the High group than in the Low group for mean f_o ($z = 2.095$, $p = .036$, $r = .285$), for maximum f_o ($z = 2.643$, $p = .008$, $r = .360$), and f_o range ($z = 2.510$, $p = .012$, $r = .342$). In the second reading, the average values were also significantly higher in the High group than in the Low group for mean f_o ($z = 2.095$, $p = .036$, $r = .285$), for maximum f_o ($z = 2.223$, $p = .026$, $r = .302$), and f_o range ($z = 2.563$, $p = .010$, $r = .349$). Figure 4 presents the mean and distribution of f_o range in the first reading and in the second reading for High group ($z = 2.51$, $p = .012$, $r = .342$) and Low group ($z = 2.563$, $p = .010$, $r = .349$).

Figure 4

Distribution of f_o Range in the First Oral Reading for High(H) and Low (L) Proficiency

Groups (N = 54)   First Reading   Second Reading
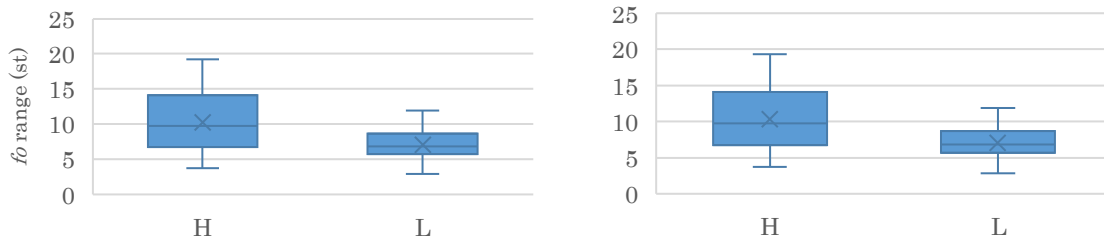
Discussion

Research Question 1

Research question 1 addressed the effect of personality traits and affective factors on L2 speaking anxiety. The results imply a connection between shyness, CA and L2CA. This result is consistent with the previous study (Nakamura, 2021), suggesting that personality traits and affective factors affect L2 speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom. Only CA in group discussion (PG) were not associated with L2 speaking anxiety. One possible reason for this result is that even those who do not feel nervous in a group discussion in their mother tongue could demonstrate anxiety in EFL classes. Cutrone (2009) explored the reasons Japanese EFL learners feel anxiety when performing oral tasks based on the previous studies and identified CA as one of the causes along with social evaluation and inter-learner competition. CA as personal traits and affective factors seem to affect L2 speaking anxiety. The findings also indicated that shyness was associated with CA. Shyness and CA are closely related each other. According to McCroskey and Richmond (1982), CA and shyness were once viewed as "conceptual twins". The current study demonstrated both shyness and CA as personality traits affect L2 speaking anxiety.

Research Question 2

In research question 2, the effect of personality traits and affective factors on a physiological factor in an oral reading task was investigated. The results indicated that self-reported shyness, CA in two-person conversation, and CA in a group discussion were

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negatively correlated with heart rate. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2, the analyses by levels of affective factors revealed that heart rate ratio between the first and second oral readings was significantly smaller in participants with higher affective factors than participants with lower affective factors. This result suggests persistent nervousness both in the first and second readings for participants with higher affective factors.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 focused on how personality traits and affective factors influence f_o parameters during oral reading tasks. The results indicated that the average value of maximum f_o was larger in the first reading than the second while the average value of minimum f_o was smaller in the first reading than the second. There were no changes in mean f_o and f_o range between the first and second oral reading. Protoppapas and Lieberman (1997) suggested that maximum f_o might be an indicator of perceived speaker anxiety, which is in line with higher f_o among participants with higher affective factors in the present study.

Considering the correlation between affective factors and f_o parameters, self-reported CA in a two-person conversation and in a group discussion were negatively correlated with the differences in maximum f_o between the first and second oral reading. This result was partly consistent with the study by Laukka et al. (2008) that showed an increase in the mean f_o and maximum f_o in an anxiety-provoking situation. Similarly, self-reported CA in classroom discussion was negatively correlated with f_o range. This result is consonant with the research conducted by Jones et al. (2011) that reported reduction in f_o range in a situation of inducing anxiety. The analyses by levels of these affective factors also showed that the average values in maximum f_o and f_o range were significantly higher in the first reading than the second reading for lower affective groups, while the average values in maximum f_o and f_o range did not change between the first and second reading for higher affective groups. These results imply that participants with lower affective factors might decrease their nervousness in the

second reading whereas participants with higher affective factors might feel nervous both in the first and second English oral reading. It seems both groups of participants felt nervous in the first English oral reading, but only participants with lower affective factors could reduce their nervousness in the second English oral reading.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 aimed to explore the differences in f_o parameters based on the participants' levels of oral proficiency. The results for the higher oral proficiency group indicated that the average value of maximum f_o was significantly higher in the first oral reading than in the second reading whereas the average minimum f_o range was higher in the second reading than the first reading. These results might support the idea that the maximum f_o can be an indicator of nervousness as shown in the results for Research Question 3. For the lower proficiency group, there were no differences in f_o parameters between the first and the second parameters. Interestingly, the average values of mean f_o, maximum f_o, and f_o range were higher for the high proficiency group than the lower proficiency group both in the first and second oral readings. These results seem to imply that proficiency in sentence stress is higher among participants with higher oral proficiency than those with lower proficiency.

The current paper's scope was restricted to sentence-level samples. Future inquiries will include the word-level data and delve into the potential impact of affective factors on word stress by examining f_o parameters of the word "happy" in this context.

Conclusion

This study illuminated how specific personality traits and affective factors influence L2 speaking anxiety. Both physiological and acoustic measurements underscored the effect of these factors on pitch changes during English oral readings. The research also highlights the effect of trait anxiety on state anxiety based on the physiological and acoustic data. The data suggests that only participants with lower anxiety levels overcome their nervousness during a second reading in front of an English teacher. We also demonstrated that participants with

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higher affective factors and lower oral proficiency spoke with a narrower pitch range.

Overall, the present study has brought to light the effect of affective factors on prosodic features, especially pitch range in a WH question. Future research will analyze the data at the word level and explore the possible effect of trait anxiety on state anxiety. In terms of pedagogical implications, it is important to pay more attention to teaching the prosodic features of English, especially pitch change both in word and sentence levels for increasing intelligibility. Future studies will probe whether increasing prosodic proficiency can alleviate anxiety.

Acknowledgements

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Appendices

Appendix A: Personal Report of Communication Apprehension

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA, McCroskey, 1977	
1	I dislike participating in group discussion.
2	Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussion.
3	I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussion.
4	I like to get involved in group discussion.
5	Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
6	I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussion.
7	Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
8	Usually, I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.
9	I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.
10	I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
11.	Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
12	I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
13	While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
14	I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
15	Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
16	While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
17	Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
18	I am afraid to speak up in conversations.
19	I have no fear of giving a speech.
20	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while I am giving a speech.
21	I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
22	My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
23	I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
24	While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Appendix B: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS, Horwitz et al.,1986)	
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
3	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
4	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
5	It embarrassed me to volunteer answers in my language class.
6	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
7	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
8	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language classes.

Appendix C: Trait Shyness Scale

Trait Shyness Scale (TSS, Aikawa, 1991)	
1	I make new friends easily.
2	I tend to withdraw from people.
3	I am shy and withdrawn.
4	I often feel on edge when I am with a group of people.
5	I like to widely socialize with people.
6	It is difficult for me to gather thoughts in the presence of others.
7	I am reserved.
8	I talk a lot with anyone else.
9	I rarely take an initiative in making friends.
10	I am shy.
11	It does not take me long to overcome my shyness in new situations.
12	I start to panic when I speak in front of others.
13	I am usually a person who initiates conversation.
14	I do not like to stand out in a social situation.
15	I can talk easily with strangers.
16	I feel embarrassed talking in front of people.

English Training Needs of Japanese University Students Participating in the Hiroshima-Hawaii Cultural Exchange Project:
A Task-Based Needs Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates the communication needs of Japanese university students participating in the Hiroshima-Hawaii Cultural Exchange Project. The students spend several months studying Hawaiian culture and history before traveling to Hawaii; however, no English language training has been provided to participants since the project's inception in 2013. To address this gap, a needs analysis (NA) was conducted to inform the development of a task-based English curriculum tailored to the participants' language requirements. Data were collected from various stakeholders, including students, coordinators, administrators, and domain experts, through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. A thematic analysis of 22 interviews identified 10 target tasks relevant to students' communicative goals, focusing on Hawaiian culture, history, and practical skills. A subsequent questionnaire assessed task difficulty and priority. The results revealed that students sought increased interaction and listening practice, prioritizing practical tasks such as using public transportation and making *okonomiyaki*. In contrast, faculty members emphasized fundamental aspects, such as self-introductions and small talk. Notably, students who had visited Hawaii emphasized different tasks than those who had not. This study recommends specific target tasks for exchange programs within a task-based language teaching syllabus and underscores the significance of NA in syllabus design, advocating its systematic implementation.

Keywords: Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), Needs Analysis (NA), target tasks,

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cultural exchange programs, syllabus design

The Hiroshima-Hawaii Cultural Exchange Project (HHP) was established at a private university in Hiroshima in 2013. Historically, Hiroshima and Hawaii share a deep connection. Among the immigrants who moved from Japan to Hawaii at the end of the 19th century, those originating from Hiroshima Prefecture constituted the largest group. The primary objective of this project is to support young people in Hiroshima and Hawaii in cultural exchanges by facilitating the sharing of the histories of these two regions and cultivating an environment that fosters mutual interest in, and understanding of, different cultures. The project comprises two main phases: a summer trip from Hiroshima to Hawaii and a spring exchange visit from Hawaii to Hiroshima. However, since its inception in 2013, the program has not provided English training to its participants.

Consequently, students who returned from their trip to Hawaii often shared feedback along the lines of, "I should have dedicated more time to studying English. Improved language skills would have enabled me to engage in more profound interactions with the local people." Project coordinators have also expressed the desire for students to engage in conversations on everyday topics, extending beyond mere self-introductions. Additionally, high school teachers in Hawaii have expressed their wish for Japanese university students to undergo training, as their English pronunciation, influenced by Japanese, was often challenging for Hawaiian students to comprehend. Various stakeholders have expressed the need to implement English language training programs for the HHP.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is particularly suitable for English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as opposed to English for General Purposes (EGP). TBLT is an approach that focuses on meaning over merely emphasizing language forms, such as grammar and vocabulary. It requires learners to apply language in situations resembling real-world

scenarios to achieve specific purposes (Ellis, 2003). In the HHP, these specific purposes involve intercultural exchange and the sharing of histories between Hiroshima and Hawaii. Furthermore, the program emphasizes meaning and involves communication and negotiation in English in authentic, real-world exchange situations in Hawaii and Hiroshima. Therefore, the introduction of TBLT into the HHP is highly appropriate. To address the absence of English training in the HHP, this study conducted a needs analysis (NA).

Literature Review

The general process of designing a TBLT syllabus begins with identifying learners' needs, determining target tasks and task types based on these needs, and creating and sequencing pedagogic tasks for classroom use (Long, 2005). Task types may encompass jigsaw, information gap, problem-solving, decision-making, and opinion exchange activities (Pica et al., 2009). Once the specific target tasks have been established, pedagogic tasks, including pre-task, while-task, and post-task activities, are devised to effectively teach learners by adjusting difficulty and task type (Long, 2005, 2015).

It is crucial to emphasize that a one-size-fits-all approach, often observed in grammar-centered instruction, cannot adequately address learners' diverse needs (Long, 2005). Therefore, NA plays a pivotal role in the development of task-based syllabi, with the identification of real-world target tasks being a direct outcome of this analysis (Long & Crookes, 1992, 1993). The practical application of NA to real-world situations was demonstrated by identifying the public speaking needs of US foreign service officers in Japan (Kobayashi Hillman & Long, 2020). Collecting data from learners, teachers, schools, and societal factors through NA, including situational and communicative NA, is fundamental to program design (Richards, 1990). Programs catering to students' needs tend to be more motivating, efficient, and successful (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Therefore, NA is an essential starting point for syllabus design in TBLT (Long, 2005, 2015). However, educational specialists and curriculum designers often overlook this crucial stage owing to

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time and resource constraints (Iizuka, 2019).

Therefore, this study examined the communication needs of Japanese university students participating in the HHP. The research questions for this study were as follows:

RQ1. What target tasks are necessary for the HHP?

RQ2: Which English language skills are difficult and necessary for HHP students?

RQ3: Which target tasks are difficult and important?

Method

An NA was conducted to investigate the development of a task-based English syllabus that aligns with participants' language requirements. During the NA, data were collected from various stakeholders, including students, coordinators, administrators, and domain experts, utilizing multiple methods, such as semi-structured interviews and questionnaires (Long, 2015).

Procedure

The procedures for the NA were adapted from Serafini et al. (2015) and are outlined below:

Step 0: Accompanied the HHP participants on a one-day excursion to Honolulu to engage in free conversations about their project activities in September 2022.

Step 1: Researched past activities from the "Project Annual Report" to determine interview questions and obtained IRB approval from Hiroshima University (https://www.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/gshs/research-ethics).

Step 2: Obtained informed consent from participants, addressed potential risks or concerns, and conducted semi-structured interviews in November 2022.

Step 3: Conducted questionnaire surveys in December 2022 based on the interview results.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams and were audio-recorded; each session lasted approximately one hour. A total of 22 participants were included from triangulated data sources and categorized as follows: eleven faculty/staff members, comprising seven university staff members, coordinators, and other faculty members (4 of whom had previously traveled to Hawaii), four faculty members in Hawaii and English education specialists (3 of whom had previously traveled to Hawaii); and eleven students (5 from 1st year, 3 from 2nd year, and 3 from 3rd and 4th years, who have already graduated), six of whom had previously traveled to Hawaii. Their self-rated English levels ranged from A1.1 to B1.1 (A1.1: 3, A1.3: 1, A2.1: 5, A2.2: 1, and B1.1: 1), averaging at A2.1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Japanese version (CEFR-J).

Interview questions (see Appendix A) included such inquiries as "Please list as many individuals as you can think of with whom you might interact in English"; "Can you identify situations where you might face challenges or encounter problems and misunderstandings owing to a lack of English proficiency or cultural knowledge? Please provide a detailed description of the situation"; "What English language skills and cultural knowledge do you believe you need to acquire to interact with the people you are visiting?"; and "What preparations do you believe are necessary in advance for hosting visitors from Hawaii?"

The analysis involved the examination of 22 interview transcriptions, totaling approximately 22 hours.

Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was administered via Microsoft Forms to assess the difficulty and priority of the 10 target tasks selected from the interview results. The response time was approximately five minutes. The questions were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. There were 37 participants in total: 16 faculty/staff members (5 faculty/staff members and 11 English teachers, 7 of whom were interviewees) and 21 HHP students (11 of whom were

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interviewees).

Question items are listed in Appendix B. Questions regarding the difficulty and necessity of English language skills were posed only to students (n=21).

Results

Semi-structured interviews

To answer RQ1—What target tasks are necessary for the HHP?—the target tasks were identified by extracting and thematically categorizing the content. This process involved consolidating similar content from the initial 23 target tasks, resulting in the selection of 10 target tasks deemed relevant to the communication objectives of HHP students. For instance, tasks such as introducing oneself and inquiring about an exchange partner were merged into a single category encompassing name, hometown, and hobbies. Tasks unrelated to HHP activities, such as ordering at restaurants or cafés and interactions with hotel staff, as well as scenarios where Japanese is commonly understood because of Hawaii's unique status as a tourist destination, were excluded. Additionally, tasks related to various communication media, such as Line, email, and Zoom interactions, were omitted. The final set comprised the following 10 target tasks:

1. Name, hometown, and hobbies.

2. University majors and interests.

3. Culture and history of Japan and Hiroshima.

4. Hawaiian culture and immigration history.

5. How to conduct icebreakers and games.

6. How to utilize on-campus and lodging facilities.

7. How to navigate public transportation.

8. Procedures for making *okonomiyaki*.

9. Familiarity with famous landmarks in Hiroshima (e.g., Peace Memorial Park and Miyajima).

10. Information on topics and places of interest for young people.

During the interviews, participants who had previously traveled to Hawaii offered intriguing insights into the required English language skills and their difficulty level. For example, in real interactions, they often encountered challenges in comprehending their exchange partners' English and struggled to organize their thoughts to express themselves effectively. The A2.1 level (interaction) of CEFR-J, which is "I can get across basic information and exchange simple opinions, using pictures or objects to help me," was not sufficient. The participants needed the B1.1 level (interaction), which is "I can maintain a social conversation about concrete topics of personal interest, using a wide range of simple English."

Other comments addressed psychological factors. For instance, the issue of mindset was significant. Some students felt they could not speak English, partially resigning themselves to this belief, which reinforced their perceptions of their incapability. Participants keenly recognized their language-learning challenges and limited English proficiency, which led to feelings of embarrassment. Regardless of the language, Japanese people tend to struggle with self-disclosure. Even if they practice engaging in conversations with someone they just met and getting to know them, there is often a psychological hurdle to encouraging and achieving self-disclosure.

Some participants also commented on the preparations required before learning English. They mentioned that, regarding the immigration history between Hiroshima and Hawaii, they had engaged in preparatory activities such as attending lectures and visiting museums, to acquire knowledge in the Japanese language. This pre-existing knowledge in Japanese facilitated their comprehension of explanations provided in English at Hawaiian museums. They stressed the importance of being proficient in Japanese before attempting to

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do so in English, asserting that if they could not communicate effectively in Japanese, they could not do so in English either.

Questionnaire

The results revealed several key findings from the quantitative answers to RQ2: Which English language skills are difficult and necessary for HHP students? and RQ3: Which target tasks are difficult and important?

Figure 1 shows that the majority of HHP students (n=21) identified presentation (71%) and interaction (72%) skills as the most challenging aspects of English language acquisition. By contrast, receptive skills, such as reading and listening, were generally perceived as less difficult, with 33% of respondents finding reading challenging and 29% facing difficulties with listening. More specifically, 38% of participants struggled with presentation skills, while 29% found interaction to be challenging.

Figure 1

Challenges in English proficiency among HHP students
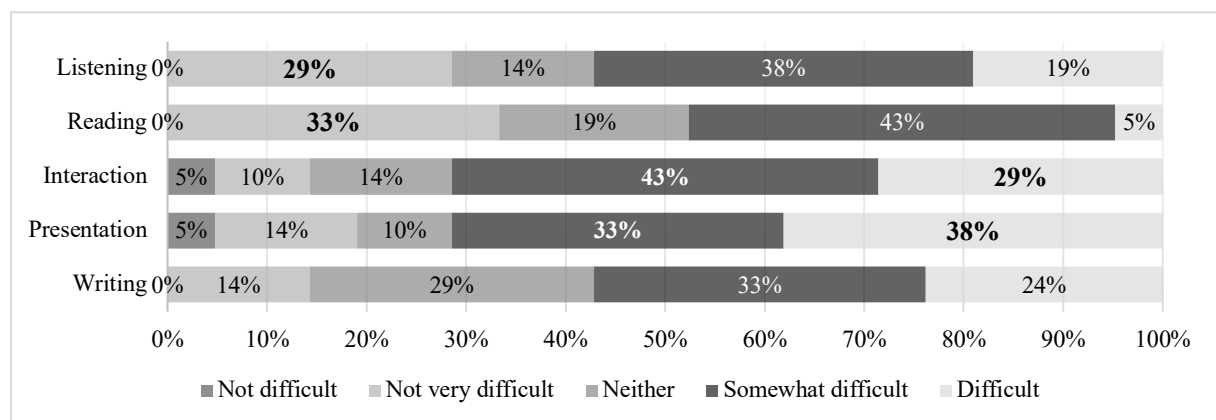
Figure 2 illustrates the necessity of English language skills for HHP students. Notably, although all skills are necessary, a significant majority (81%) emphasized the necessity of listening and interaction skills in their language learning journey.

Figure 2

Necessity of English language skills for HHP students
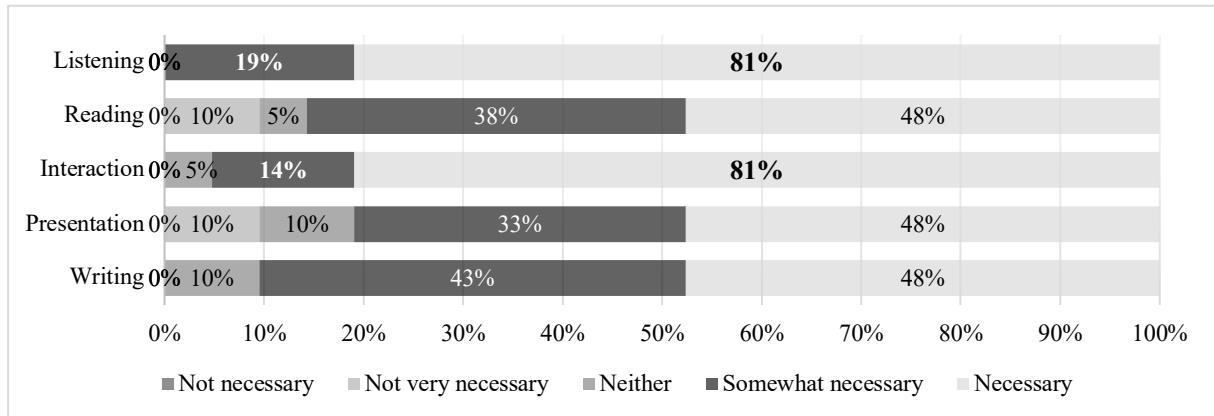
According to Figure 3, tasks related to personal information, such as name, hometown, and hobbies, were perceived as the easiest by the participants (n=37). Conversely, understanding Hawaiian culture and immigration history was considered the most difficult task.

Figure 3

Difficulty of the 10 target tasks

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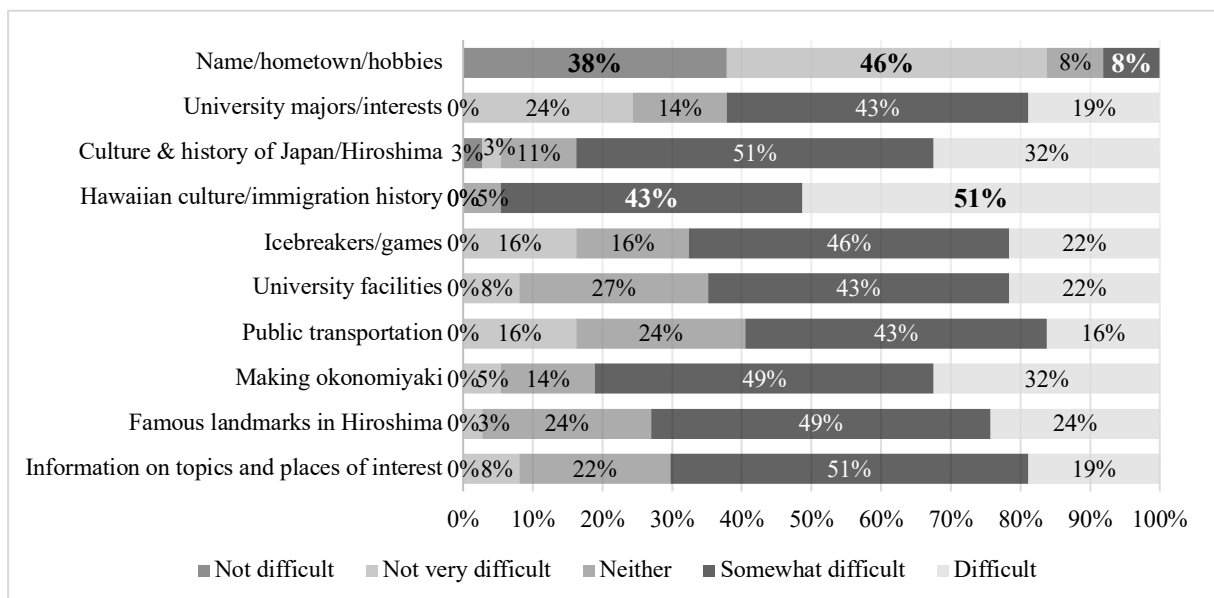
There was a noticeable difference in priorities between faculty/staff members and students in terms of selecting the top three priorities from the list of 10 target tasks (see Figure 4). The most significant difference was regarding the culture and history of Japan/Hiroshima. Faculty and staff members tended to prioritize tasks related to students, such as sharing information on their names, hometown, and hobbies and university majors and interests. In contrast, students emphasized practical tasks that enabled them to experience real-life situations independently of their English language skills, such as exploring famous landmarks in Hiroshima, learning how to use transportation, familiarizing themselves with university facilities, and making *okonomiyaki*.

Figure 4

Faculty/staff members' and students' prioritization of the 10 target tasks
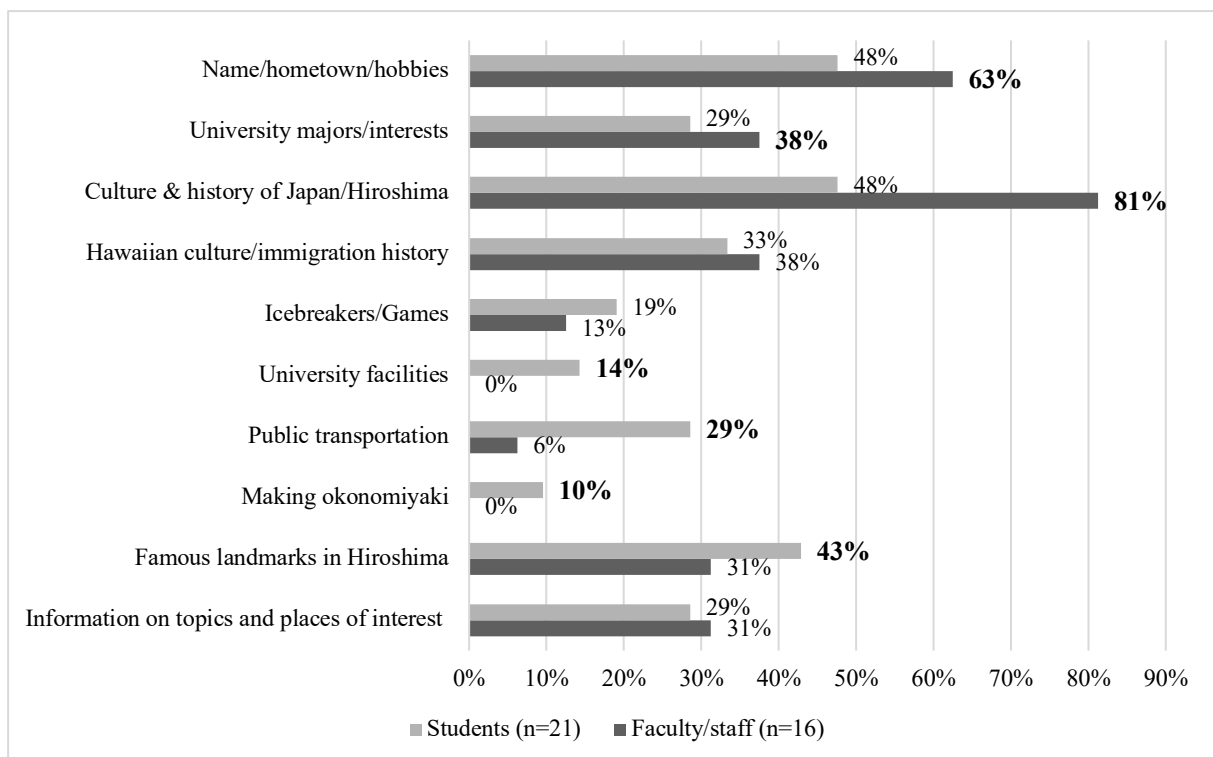
Figure 5 illustrates the priority of the 10 target tasks for both those who have and have not been to Hawaii. Participants who had traveled to Hawaii emphasized tasks that required more detailed information, including one's major and interests and information on topics and places suitable for young people. For those who had never been to Hawaii, these percentages were less than half; they prioritized public transportation, Hawaiian culture, and immigration history.

Figure 5

Prioritization of the 10 target tasks for those who have and have not been to Hawaii
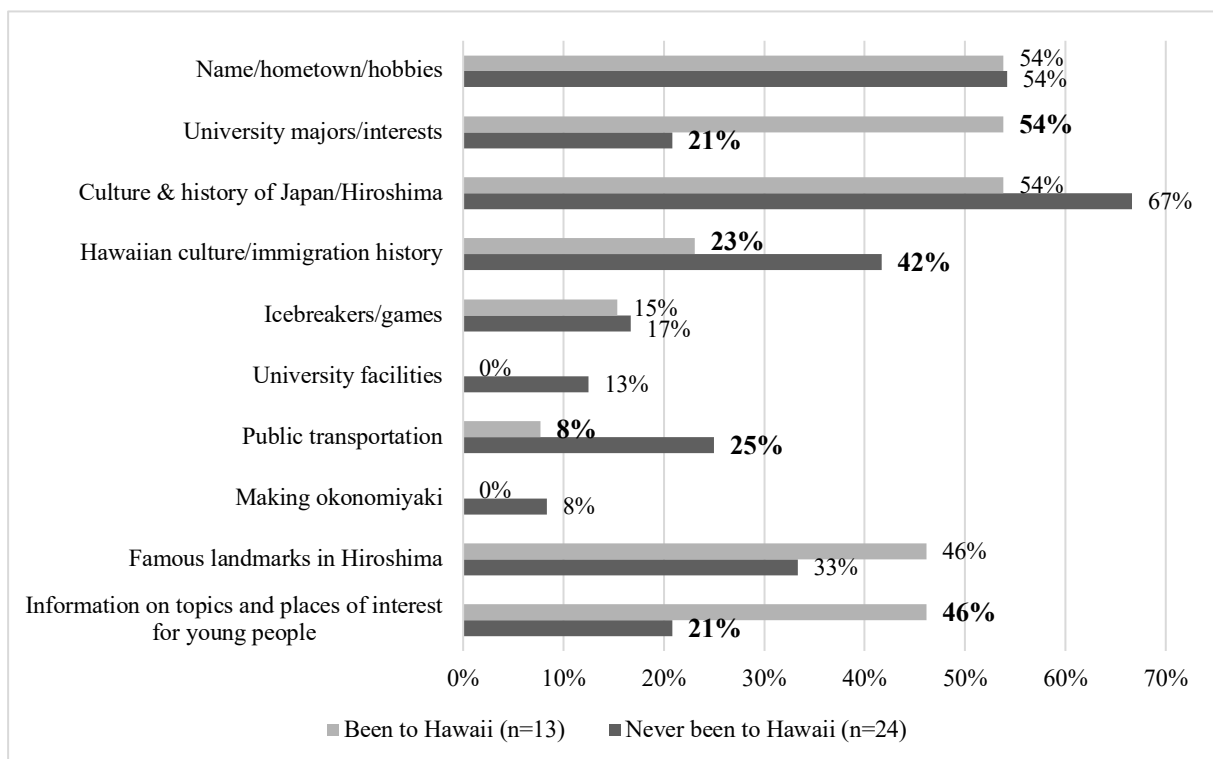
Discussion

Based on the results obtained through semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire, listening and interaction skills were identified as the most crucial English language skills. Although reading and listening skills were relatively less challenging, presentation and interaction skills were the most demanding. Participants who had experienced real-life

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exchange programs highlighted that these situations, which required on-the-spot responses, were more challenging than prepared presentations. To facilitate effective exchange programs, it would be beneficial to prepare topics and questions in advance, allowing participants to engage more comfortably.

In terms of the difficulty of specific target tasks, aspects such as communicating one's name, hometown, hobbies, university majors, and interests posed fewer challenges, whereas understanding Hawaiian culture and immigration history proved more difficult. Overall, both Japanese/Hiroshima and Hawaiian cultures and histories were considered highly important, aligning with the primary objectives of HHP activities.

A suggested approach is to begin with relatively easier topics such as name, hometown, and hobbies (A1 and A2 levels), and gradually progress to more complex subjects such as university majors and interests (B1 level). Given the complexity of topics such as Hawaiian culture and immigration history, it is advisable for participants to first deepen their comprehension in their native language (L1), which is Japanese, and focus on receptive skills such as listening and reading, rather than exclusively on productive skills. Subsequently, they can progress to a level where they can engage in English-language discussions and pose questions confidently. It is essential to provide training to help lower psychological barriers for participants.

Faculty and staff members aimed to equip students with the ability to communicate fundamental aspects, such as self-introductions and small talk, recognizing this as a crucial step. They expect to further develop this skill, leading to deeper and more engaging conversations. In contrast, students prioritized practical tasks that enabled them to engage in real-life situations without relying solely on their English proficiency. To better meet students' needs, it would be effective and motivating to incorporate more practical tasks, particularly in preparation for hosting HHP visitors from Hawaii. This can include learning

how to use public transportation, familiarizing themselves with notable landmarks in Hiroshima, and acquiring information about topics and places of interest for young people. These preparations are vital to ensure a smooth and enriching exchange experience.

Participants who had visited Hawaii emphasized tasks that required a deeper level of information, such as discussing their majors and interests or sharing information about topics and places of interest to young people, regardless of their English levels. They often saw themselves as hosts welcoming students from Hawaii, and their perspectives differed from those of typical sightseeing tours. They aimed to provide valuable insights and information about the best spots, given their shared status as HHP participants and young people of the same age group.

The relatively small sample size of this study limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Although the results provide valuable insights into the specific context of the HHP, it is important to exercise caution when applying these findings to other contexts. To develop syllabi that align more closely with the various needs and English levels of stakeholders, additional follow-up interviews and the use of a high-spec English test such as TOEIC are necessary.

Conclusion

This study identified the crucial English language needs of HHP students, emphasizing the importance of listening and interaction skills, while highlighting the challenges they faced during presentations. To address these needs, a structured progression from simple to complex topics is recommended. This progression should be backed by bolstering comprehension in the students' native language (Japanese) and emphasizing receptive skills, thereby boosting students' confidence in English-language discussions.

There was a divergence in priorities between faculty/staff members and students, as the former focused on fundamental aspects, while the latter prioritized practical skills. The inclusion of various stakeholders in NA, including students, coordinators, administrators, and

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domain experts, underscores the comprehensiveness of the research. Preparing to host visitors from Hawaii was identified as a crucial aspect of this practical orientation. Participants with prior experience in Hawaii offered a unique perspective, focusing on tasks demanding in-depth information. They aimed to provide valuable insights when welcoming students from Hawaii.

The next step involves creating and sequencing pedagogic tasks, devising pre-, while-, and post-tasks, and designing syllabi while adjusting difficulty and task types by referring to CEFR-J. Future research could focus on developing and implementing task-based English curriculums based on the identified target tasks. Further investigations could explore the impact of specific teaching methods on students' language proficiency in the context of cultural exchange programs.

Acknowledgments

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Background (for students)

1. Please state your academic year and major.

2. Can you please share when you joined the HHP, what motivated you to join, and what your objectives are?

3. Could you share your prior experiences with learning English, including when you began, the duration, and your self-assessment of your English proficiency using the CEFR-J scale? (http://cefr-j.org/cefrj.html).

Background (for faculty/staff members)

1. Could you kindly inform me about your involvement in the overseas project, what motivated you to participate, and your goals?

2. State the school you are affiliated with.

Visiting Hawaii (for both students and faculty/staff members)

1. Have you ever visited Hawaii as part of the project? If so, please describe the visit and share your most memorable experience.

2. Do you plan to visit Hawaii as part of the project? If yes, please explain the purpose and planned activities.

3. What preparations do you think are necessary (for HHP students) before visiting Hawaii?

4. Please list as many individuals as you can think of with whom you (HHP students) may interact in English.

5. Can you identify situations where you (HHP students) may face challenges or encounter problems and misunderstandings owing to a lack of English proficiency or cultural knowledge? Please provide a detailed description of these scenarios.

6. To enhance interactions with people during your visit, what level of English proficiency and cultural knowledge do you think you (HHP students) need to acquire?

7. What English language skills and cultural knowledge do you believe you (HHP students) must acquire to interact with the people you (they) are visiting?"

Hosting visitors from Hawaii (for both students and faculty/staff members)

1. Have you ever hosted visitors from Hawaii as part of this project? If so, please describe the visit and share your most memorable experience.

2. Do you plan to host visitors from Hawaii as part of the project? If yes, please explain the purpose and activities involved.

3. What preparations do you believe are necessary in advance for hosting visitors from Hawaii?

4. Please list individuals with whom you (HHP students) anticipate communicating in English.

5. Can you think of situations where communication may be challenging or where issues and misunderstandings could arise owing to a lack of English proficiency or cultural knowledge? Please provide detailed examples.

6. To foster deeper interactions with people from Hawaii in the future, what level of English proficiency and cultural knowledge do you believe you (HHP students) must acquire?

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

Question 1 (for students only): How **<u>difficult</u>** is it for you to improve the following English language skills? Please choose one answer for each item.

	Not difficult	Not very difficult	Neither	Somewhat difficult	Difficult
Listening	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Interaction	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5

Question 2 (for students only): How **<u>necessary</u>** is it for you to improve the following English language skills? Please choose one answer for each item.

	Not necessary	Not very necessary	Neither	Somewhat necessary	Necessary
Listening	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Interaction	1	2	3	4	5
Presentation	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5

Question 3: How **<u>difficult</u>** is it for you to learn to communicate in English regarding the following 10 target tasks? Please choose one answer for each item.

	Not difficult	Not very difficult	Neither	Somewhat difficult	Difficult
Name/hometown/hobbies	1	2	3	4	5
University majors/interests	1	2	3	4	5
Culture & history of Japan/Hiroshima	1	2	3	4	5
Hawaiian culture/ immigration history	1	2	3	4	5
Icebreakers/games	1	2	3	4	5
University facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Public transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Making *okonimiyaki*	1	2	3	4	5
Famous landmarks in Hiroshima	1	2	3	4	5
Information on topics and places of interest	1	2	3	4	5

Question 4: How **<u>important</u>** is it for you to learn to communicate in English regarding the

following 10 target tasks? Please choose one answer for each item.

	Not important	Not very important	Neither	Somewhat important	Important
Name/hometown/hobbies	1	2	3	4	5
University majors/interests	1	2	3	4	5
Culture & history of Japan/Hiroshima	1	2	3	4	5
Hawaiian culture/ immigration history	1	2	3	4	5
Icebreakers/games	1	2	3	4	5
University facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Public transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Making *okonimiyaki*	1	2	3	4	5
Famous landmarks in Hiroshima	1	2	3	4	5
Information on topics and places of interest	1	2	3	4	5

Question 5: Please select **<u>the top three priorities</u>** from the following 10 target tasks to be

able to communicate in English.

10 Target Tasks
Name/hometown/hobbies
University majors/interests
Culture and history of Japan and Hiroshima
Hawaiian culture and immigration history
How to conduct icebreakers and games
How to utilize on-campus and lodging facilities
How to navigate public transportation
Procedures for making *okonomiyaki*
Familiarity with famous landmarks in Hiroshima (e.g., Peace Memorial Park and Miyajima)
Information on topics and places of interest for young people

Engaging in Cross-Cultural Exchanges:

Analysis of EFL Textbook Dialogues and Authentic Interactions

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, in its current Curriculum Standards for high school English, emphasizes the development of Japanese EFL learners' attitudes towards cross-cultural understanding. The present research aims to provide insights to enhance learners' interaction skills in fostering cross-cultural understanding. Drawing on prior findings on government-approved textbooks and learner-native speaker interaction, two studies were conducted: one on written dialogue models in textbooks and another on authentic spoken interactions where topics related to the interlocutors' cultural backgrounds were discussed. Study One investigates the design of dialogues in textbooks. The results indicate that these dialogues often rely excessively on a question-answer pair format, causing them to appear as contrived, formal interviews based on simplified categories of nationalities. Study Two examines face-to-face, spontaneous conversations between Japanese EFL learners and native English speakers from the United Kingdom. The results reveal that while question-answer pairs are also prevalent in these naturally-occurring exchanges, learners tend to be less reactive when listening and less coherent or collaborative in topic management. These findings offer implications for the future development of teaching materials.

Keywords: cross-cultural exchange, textbook, conversation, interaction skills

In response to increasing globalization and migration, it is one of the key issues in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan to enable learners to function in and contribute to multicultural communities. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has set it as a goal in its Curriculum Standards for foreign language education at the upper-secondary level to "enhance learners' understanding of cultures behind foreign language(s) and develop their attitudes to communicate in the language(s) as independent and autonomous language users with consideration for their listeners, readers, speakers, and writers" (2018, p. 460).[1]

As the national curriculum places importance on understanding the cultures of a target language, it seems reasonable to expect that government-approved foreign language textbooks will introduce attainable models of communication in cross-cultural settings. It is virtually impossible for most of EFL learners in Japan to enjoy frequent and consistent exposure to authentic interactions in English, and textbooks therefore serve as the primary source of input. However, it remains unclear whether and how current textbooks successfully provide Japanese EFL learners with conversation models to improve their communication skills in English. It also remains unexplored how learners engage in real-life, face-to-face conversations with people from different cultural backgrounds, and what challenges they may face when learning about such foreign cultures.

The present research examines dialogue models in MEXT-approved high school textbooks and authentic conversations between Japanese EFL learners and native speakers of English. An observation of written discourses in textbooks shows the types of interactions that are presented as an ideal model. The observation of spontaneous spoken discourses reveals the prevalent patterns and failures of interactions in a cross-cultural setting. The research focuses on exchanges in which characters in textbooks and participants in conversations discuss their cultural backgrounds. In particular, it examines exchanges that center around the

following topics, which have been stipulated in MEXT's Standards since 1973: a) daily life and routines, b) social life, c) customs and traditions, d) geography and history, e) science and technology, and f) miscellaneous issues pertinent to understanding the target country.

The following research questions (RQs) have been formulated:

RQ 1: Do MEXT-approved English textbooks for high school students in Japan provide conversation models for cross-cultural exchanges? If so, how have these models been designed?

RQ 2: How do Japanese EFL learners and native English speakers engage in cross-cultural exchanges during spontaneous and impromptu conversations?

Each of the two RQs was addressed in Studies One and Two respectively. Through these two investigations, this research provides insights on which to base the future development of teaching materials, instructions, and syllabi that enhance the cross-cultural communication skills of EFL learners in Japan.

Literature Review

Interaction Skills in Language Textbooks

The MEXT's Curriculum Standards, implemented in 2022, emphasize the interactional aspects of communication and improvisations. Despite the emphasis on spontaneity in language use, studies on MEXT-approved textbooks have predominantly focused on the lexical and syntactic properties of reading segments. Empirical studies examining interactions presented in recent textbook series are relatively scarce.

Wakaari (2023) explored the authenticity of dialogue models in MEXT-approved textbooks on high school English. The findings of his quantitative analysis suggest that the contrived models in textbooks contain several features of natural conversations, yet they fall short in presenting interactional phenomena such as overlaps and repetitions, as well as linguistic devices (e.g., hesitation markers and backchannels). Igarashi (2023) showed that

MEXT-approved textbooks contain a wide variety of topics related to different countries, including Japan. However, her quantitative investigation also suggests that the textbooks need improvement to better prepare learners to cope with misunderstandings in conversations.

The quantitative approaches highlighted the (in)adequacy of textbooks from interactional perspectives. However, there has been little attention given to the nature of dialogue models as dynamic social practices in which pairs or groups of characters in a textbook enact their roles. In particular, the interactional repertoires and sequential organizations of the dialogues, as well as roles assigned to characters, remain largely unexamined.

Conversations between Learners and Native Speakers

When language learners and native speakers of the target language interact, native speakers often employ what is called "foreigner talk" (Ferguson, 1971, 1975). They tend to speak slowly with simplified lexicons and short sentence structures, repeat their words, and check learners' comprehension. Learners are likely to rely on conversation styles from their first language (Murata, 2015). Conversation styles include the use of backchannels (White, 1989), turn-taking practices, and topic management (Otani, 2007a, b).

In an informal, non-institutional setting with no specific tasks or goals, participants in a conversation are allowed discretion in choosing topics to discuss. One of the common topics is their native countries. Sekizaki (2016) observed conversations of six groups, each made of Japanese students and foreign students, and showed that all groups discussed topics related to foreign students' home countries. An observation of conversations between Americans and Japanese indicated that Americans were more inclined to talk about their families, jobs, and personal experiences (Iwata, 2010).

Regarding topic management, empirical studies have been conducted on how learners and native speakers introduce and develop a conversation topic. Hayano (2014) examined

dyads in which Japanese English learners participated, revealing that the learners and their interlocutors relied on question-answer adjacency pairs to introduce a new topic.[2] Morris-Adams (2013) found that side sequences occurred frequently in conversations between native speakers of English and students from non-English-speaking countries.[3] Their side sequences were to confirm the comprehension of the interlocutor, determine if their background knowledge was mutually shared, and check the intelligibility of pronunciations.

It has also been pointed out that native speakers bear a heavier burden of topic management than learners. Barron and Black (2015) examined conversations between learners and native speakers of English, arguing that learners' behaviors leave an interactional burden on native speakers. Long suggested that topics are by and large initiated by native speakers (1983), and that they "accept more readily new and abrupt topic introductions" than learners do (1981, pp. 135-136).

These findings hold significance for the present study as they offer insights into how language learners and their interlocutors navigate cross-cultural exchanges. The majority of the findings are derived from elicited spoken data, such as role plays and task-oriented discussions occurring in relatively formal settings or from ready-made corpora. However, evidence from spontaneous, unprompted, face-to-face conversations remains scarce. The current study contributes to the research landscape on Japanese EFL learner-native speaker interactions by collecting, describing, and analyzing their authentic, unprompted conversations in an informal setting.

Method

Data

Textbooks for Study One

Study One investigated dialogue models in textbooks published for Japanese high school students. Among the 24 titles of the MEXT-approved textbooks for an "English

Communication" course, seven titles were randomly selected.[4] As each title has three volumes (I, II, and III for the first-, second-, and third-year curricula, respectively, as of 2022), a total of 21 textbooks were analyzed. Table 1 lists the textbook titles and publishers.[5]

Table 1

The Examined Textbooks

Title	Publisher
All Aboard! I/II/III	Tokyo Shuppan
Comet English Communication I/II/III	Suken Shuppan
Crown English Communication I/II/III	Sanseido
Element I/II/III	Keirinkan
My Way English Communication I/II/III	Sanseido
Vista English Communication I/II/III	Sanseido
Vivid English Communication I/II/III	Daiichi Gakushusha

Conversations for Study Two

The data used in Study Two were sourced from a compilation of four small-group conversations recorded in an informal setting. Each group comprised two or three Japanese learners of English (JS) and a native English speaker (ES). The ESs were not acquainted with the JSs, while the JSs in each group were classmates. The JSs and ESs were asked to communicate in English, beginning with a brief introduction to each other. There was no suggested or recommended agenda or task to cover during the encounters, and the choice of conversation topics was at the discretion of the participants.

Each group was initially allocated a minimum of 20 minutes to interact. The total duration of the conversation was approximately 108 minutes. The conversations were video- and audio-recorded throughout, and all utterances by the JSs and ESs were transcribed for analysis (see Appendix for transcription conventions).

Participants

Japanese Learners of English (JSs)

Ten JSs participated in the study (two pairs and two groups of three). All were females who had been born and raised in Japan. At the time of recording, they were students (18-22 years of age) at a private university in Tokyo, majoring in English or International Studies. Seven of them were in their first year of university studies, and three were fourth-year students with experience of studying at a language school in the United States for approximately five months. The JSs' TOEIC® L&W scores ranged from 445 to 890 (median 644.4, *SD* 150.2).

Native Speakers (ESs)

Two ESs participated in this study. They were both 18-year-old females from the United Kingdom, staying in Japan on a gap-year program after graduating from high school. At the time of recording, they had lived in the greater Tokyo area for approximately six months, volunteering to teach in language classrooms at private elementary and secondary schools. Their Japanese proficiency was not tested using the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test or any equivalent assessments, but both were at the beginner level.

Each ES participated in two rounds of recordings. The first round was with a pair of JSs, and the second round was with a group of three JSs.

Procedure

The textbooks and transcribed conversation recordings underwent the same steps in the analysis: first, instances of cross-cultural exchanges were identified and excerpted; then, the instances were examined individually. What were identified and excerpted as cross-cultural exchanges were written (textbook) and spoken (authentic conversation) discourses with two or more speakers discussing topics that fit into the MEXT's suggested six categories of a regional or ethnic culture topics (see Introduction for the categorization).

The sequence of utterances in each instance was separated into three parts, following Otani (2015): opening, main body, and closing. An opening sequence is defined as turns that introduce and mutually establish a new topic; a main body as subsequent turns that develop (maintain and elaborate) the topic; and a closing sequence as turns that follow the main body and terminate the current topic and/or introduce a new topic.

The analysis was conducted primarily from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective. It adopted such terms and concepts as turn taking, adjacency pairs, and side sequences from Conversation Analysis to identify repeated and prevalent patterns and deviational cases.

Results

Study One: Textbook Dialogues

Among the textbook collections, five lessons from four titles were found to present dialogue models between or among characters about their home cultures. Table 2 summarizes the topics covered in the models. In the textbooks, two of the five lessons focused on Japan (e.g., manga and kimonos), while three lessons dealt with rituals, social circumstances, and unique practices in other countries (e.g., routines at school and celebrating birthdays).

Table 2

The Models of Cross-Cultural Exchanges in Textbooks

Title	Lesson	Character (home country)
All Aboard!	I: Lesson 3 Cool Culture from Japan	Yui (Japan), Jack (Australia), Sophie (France)
Comet	I: Lesson 4 My School, Your School	Takeru and Yuki (Japan), Emily (New Zealand), Alberto (Peru)
Vista	II: Lesson 1 Birthdays, Here and There	Mr. Brown (Unidentified), Aya (Japan), Bob (US), Anna (Denmark), Nam (Vietnam)
Vivid	II: Listen & Speak 2 Nihon Bunka II: Listen & Speak 4 Kaigai de no Gakko Seikatsu	Sayaka (Japan), Eric (New Zealand)

Opening

The textbook analysis suggests that there are three patterns according to which characters initiate cross-cultural exchanges. The first pattern is to invite a story by asking a question. The second pattern occurs when a character is assigned the role of chair. The chairing character determines who is the first to speak and what topic to discuss. The third pattern is characterized by the use of "look" by one of the characters, with a prop at hand or available on the spot. These three patterns are illustrated in (1), (2), and (3), respectively.

(1) *Comet I*, Lesson 4 [My School, Your School]

```
1      Takeru:    Hi, Emily. I want to ask you a question.
2→                What do you like about your school?
3      Emily:     I love Interval. It's a 25-minute break after the second class.
```

(2) *Vista II*, Lesson 1 [Birthdays, Here and There]

```
1      Mr. Brown:  Today, we'll chat with three high school students online.
2→                 First, Bob in the US.
3      Bob:        Hello, everyone.
```

(3) *All Aboard! I*, Lesson 3 [Cool Culture from Japan]

```
1→     Jack:      Yui, look at this comic book.
2      Yui:       Wow! Japanese manga in English.
3      Jack:      Yes. Japanese manga are very popular among kids and adults
4                 in Australia.
```

In (1), Takeru, after a brief greeting to Emily and an explicit preface ("I want to ask you a question"), starts asking a question in line 2 to invite her to talk about her school life in New Zealand. In (2), the teacher, Mr. Brown, is about to start an online meeting with four high school students from different countries. He requests Bob, in line 2, to be the first speaker to

initiate a talk about birthday celebrations in his country. Contrary to (1) and (2), Dialogue (3) starts without a question or a speaker assignment but with a request to "look" at something. In line 1, Jack tells Yui and Sophie to look at a comic book, which he points at in a picture on the page, then he describes the popularity of Japanese manga in Australia. A "look" was found in another textbook model too in a similar context, and it seems that textbook writers take advantage of the word in elaborating dialogue models to appear more natural.

Main Body

In textbooks, the main body of a cross-cultural exchange tends to be very short. After a question-answer pair initiates a topic, only a few more turns follow, and the topic remains undeveloped. An exception to this tendency is (4), which includes an extended discussion that delves into the topic.

(4) *Vivid II*, Listening &Speaking 2 [Nihon Bunka]

1	Eric:	When do you wear them?
2	Sayaka:	Well, some people, especially women wear yukatas to ...
3	Eric:	What are yukatas?
4	Sayaka:	A yukata is a kind of kimono ....
5	Eric:	Why don't people usually wear kimonos?
6	Sayaka:	Because kimonos are expensive, and ...
7	Eric:	... wearing a kimono is a special event even for Japanese
8		people now?
9	Sayaka:	That's right.

(4) is the subsequent part of an opening question-answer pair. The two characters discuss Japanese kimonos over eight turns. It should be noted that their whole exchange is formatted by question-answer adjacency pairs.

Closure

The closing sequences in textbooks dialogues are similar in that a Japanese character or a chairing character takes the final turn. In general, the final turn highlights the differences or

similarities (or sometimes universalities) across their cultures.

(5) *Comet I*, Lesson 4 [My School, Your School]

| 1 | Alberto: | ... We share the same school buildings with them. |
| 2→ | Yuki: | That's very different! |

(6) *Comet I*, Lesson 4 [My School, Your School]

1	Nam:	... But now many young people celebrate their birthdays
2		on birthdates.
3→	Mr. Brown:	So customs are different,
4→		but birthday celebrations make people happy everywhere.
5		Thank you, everybody.

In (5), Alberto talks with Yuki about his school life in Peru. Yuki replies in line 2, "That's very different!" in response to his description of double-shift schooling in his country. Although the model ends without an overt mention of Japanese schools, her comment is interpreted as comparing Peru and Japan and highlighting the significant difference between their school systems. In (6), Nam, a Vietnamese student, shares the customs of birthday in Vietnam. The meeting chair, Mr. Brown concludes the whole exchange by first mentioning the differences across their countries in line 3, and then wrapping up with a broad generalization ("everywhere") in line 4.

Study Two: Authentic Interactions

In the authentic conversation data, there were 19 instances of cross-cultural exchanges between JSs and ESs, of which 14 were about British cultures, and five were about Japanese ones. That is, ESs were more likely to be in a position to talk about their own cultures than JSs.

Opening

An examination of the first few turns of cross-cultural exchanges in conversations

revealed that 11 of the 19 cross-cultural exchanges began with question-answer adjacency

pairs. (7) and (8) commence with an information-seeking question from a JS and an ES,

respectively.

(7) Japanese Noodles in the UK

1	Ryo:	I like Kansai. [My taste.]
2	Kanae:	[((laughs))]
3	Tina:	Yeah
4	Ryo:	Yes, mild [taste.]
5→	Kanae:	[Yeah ((laughs))] Can you eat ramen in UK? Scotland?
6→	Tina:	Ehm (1.5) there are a few (0.5) Japanese uhm like,
7→		Wagamama and [Yo-Sushi.]
8	Kanae:	[Wagamama?]

(8) Electives Offered in UK and Japanese High Schools

1	Mirai:	That's interesting [((laughs))]
2	Elly:	[((laughs))]
3	Mirai:	Envy. ((laughs))
4	ALL:	((laughs))
5→	Elly:	Do you not get to choose, in Japan?
6	Aiko:	We, we can't choose.

In (7), the JSs, Ryo and Kanae, have been talking with Tina about their favorite noodles (e.g.,

udon and ramen). In line 5, Kanae asks if ramen is available in the UK, which Tina answers in

lines 6 and 7 with specific restaurants' names. Tina then talks about the food diversity in the

UK. In (8), the three JSs discuss the high school curricula with Elly. After Mirai shows

jealousy of a wide range of elective courses offered at a UK high school in line 3 ("(I) Envy

(you)."), Elly changes topics in line 5 by asking whether Japanese high schools allow their

students to select courses based on their interests. Her question leads to a JS's story of having

very limited course options in Japanese high schools.

      Even though question-answer pairs are prevalent in the opening, not every question

immediately receives an answer. Another question-answer pair can be inserted after the

question. When a JS asks a question that is irrelevant to an ongoing topic, an ES must request

for clarification before answering the first question.

(9) School Life in the UK

1	Elly:	And then I can speak a bit of Japanese.
2		I should study more while I'm here, but I'm always t::ired.
3		So, I go to work and then I come ho:me and I think I should study,
4	Mirai:	A::
5	Elly:	but I'm so tired.
6	ALL:	[(((laughs))]
7→	Mirai:	What, what do you usually do in British school.
8→	Elly:	Mm what in (1.0) when I'm studying?
9→	Mirai:	What do you do, like every weekdays?
10	Elly:	Oh. Um. So you normally come into school from eight thirty
11		till about three thirty.

In (9), Elly has been describing herself as being lazy and slow in learning Japanese, even

though she now has plenty of opportunities and resources to learn the language. Although the

ongoing topic is Elly's language learning in Japan, Mirai attempts to introduce an irrelevant,

new topic in line 7: high schools in the UK. Mirai's abrupt topic change from "here and now

in Japan" to "then and there back in the UK," along with her error in a verb tense ("do"

instead of "did"), seems to confuse Elly. She counter-questions Mirai in line 8 for

clarification. Mirai answers Elly's counter-question and asks again about the typical daily

schedule of a UK high school in line 9.

Main Body

A significant difference in the amount of speech was found between JSs and ESs. After

a topic is introduced, ESs tend to produce longer turns, whereas JSs often provide minimal

backchannels to ESs if not remaining silent.

(10) London's Best-Known Tourist Attractions

1	Elly:	Uhm famous places. Like, the London Eye.
2		Do you know the London Eye?
3	Hazuki:	Like (1.0)
4	Elly:	The big Ferris wheels. [the]
5	Hazuki:	[((laughs)) Un un]
6	Elly:	The big Ferris wheel, that goes around really=
7	Arisa:	=A: a:
8	Elly:	slowly like that. That is really famous.
9		And, and near the London Eye, near the London Eye is the Big Ben?
10	Hazuki:	[Mm]
11	Arisa:	[A:]
12	Elly:	Do you know the Big Ben? Yeah. The big clock.

In (10), Elly, asked by Hazuki to introduce major sight-seeing spots in London, mentions several attractions (i.e., the London Eye, Big Ben, and double-decker bus). Hazuki and Arisa's contributions to this ongoing topic have become less prominent. To illustrate the quantitative gap between the two JSs and Elly in terms of their contributions, the number of words in each turn was counted.

Figure 1

Word Count per Turn: (10) London's Best-Known Tourist Attractions
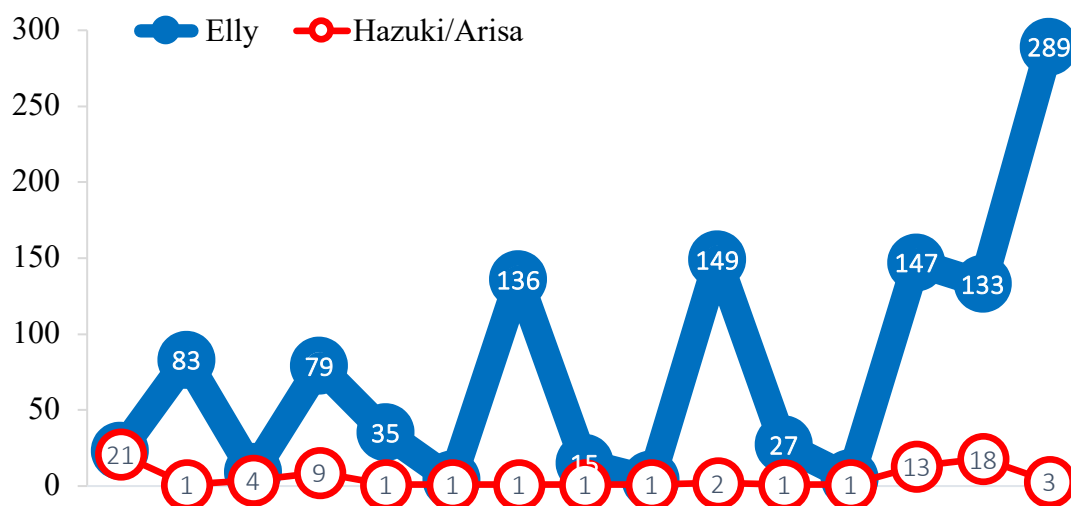
As indicated in Figure 1, Elly is the dominant speaker, whereas Hazuki and Arisa remain reserved listeners. As their conversation unfolds (from left to right in the line graph), Elly's turns become longer, ending up with 289 words within one single turn; the JSs only provide her with occasional backchannels (e.g., "un un", "A:", and "mm").

Closing

Two patterns were observed in the closing sequences. One prevalent pattern is that listeners provide positive feedback on the topic being discussed and then make comparisons with their own cultures. The other pattern is an abrupt topic shift without any acknowledgement on the current topic.

(11) High School Prom Parties in the UK and No Equivalent Events in Japan

```
1      Elly:      That was really fun though. Even though I couldn't drink.
2                 ((shows her smartphones to Mirai and Ai))
3→     Mirai:     [((looks at Elly's phone)) A: looks fun.
4      Ai:        [((looks at Elly's phone)) A::
5      Elly:      ((turns to Aiko with her smartphone in hand))
6→     Aiko:      ((leans over to Elly's smartphone)) A::. iine.
7      ALL:       ((laughs))
8→     Mirai:     I wonder why Japan doesn't do that? ((laughs))
9      (Ai):      [Yeah ((laughs))]
10     (Aiko):    [Mmm ((laughs))]
11     Elly:      [Yeah, you just you just start it.]
```

(12) Scotland is Part of the UK

```
1      Tina:      And I was like I am from Scotland. [((laughs))]
2      Ruri:      [Mm ((laughs))]
3      Tina:      It is a place.
4→     ALL:       ((unwrap a pack of cookies and taking a bite))
5      Mayu:      Mm delicious. (3.0) Mm!
6      ALL:       ((eat cookies)) (10.0)
7      Ruri:      ((laughs))
```

8	Ruri:	(nice) cookie.
9		(3.0)
10	Sumire:	Delicious. ((laughs))
11→	Ruri:	Food fighter. We are food fighter.
12	Mayu:	I'm a food fighter.
13	Sumire:	((laughs))
14		(14.0)
15→	Mayu:	What food do you like?
16→	Tina:	What food?
17	Mayu:	Food. Food.

In (11), exchanges about a prom party in the UK end smoothly. Elly's episode closes with JSs' compliments in lines 3 and 6 (i.e., "Looks fun," and "A:: iine" [Oh that's nice]), and it seamlessly shifts to a complaint about the lack of such parties in Japan from line 8. By contrast, (12) shows an awkward closure. Tina has been explaining that the UK is made up of four countries, and that she grew up in Scotland. Although her explanation started upon a request from a JS, the three JSs did not provide any feedback to her but began enjoying the cookies served at the recording site (from line 4 onward). Ruri then tries to introduce a new topic of being big eaters ("food fighter") in line 11, which Tina does not catch up with. After a 14-second silence, in line 15, Mayu attempts to introduce another topic by asking Tina about her favorite food. However, Tina does not immediately answer this question; In the following line, she counters with "What food?" seeking clarification from Mayu. It appears that Tina is not ready for topic changes because the previous exchange about her country has not received any acknowledgement or comments from the JSs at all.

Discussion

The results of Study One are summarized as follows: several textbooks present models of cross-cultural exchanges between/among people from different cultural backgrounds; These models typically start with a question and end with a comment by a Japanese character (or a chair) focusing on the differences, similarities, or universalities between their cultures;

Some models include a linguistic device "look," which seems to enable speakers to introduce a topic and make written, invented discourses appear as if it were an informal, real-life interaction between friends.

The findings suggest that textbook dialogues have limitations in terms of authenticity. They rely heavily on the question-answer pair format, similar to formal structured interview sessions. To enable learners to become more active listeners, models need to include more varieties of sequential structures and expressions. For instance, a question-answer pair can be followed not by another question, but by a news-receipt token such as "Interesting" or "I've never heard anything like that."

Another suggestion from Study One is that the presentation of characters requires careful consideration, too. The characters in the textbooks are mostly treated as ambassadors of their home countries. Labeling individuals by pre-existing categories of their nationalities and expecting them to be walking encyclopedias that can answer incessant questions may over-emphasize the binary framework of Japanese versus non-Japanese. This categorization has been criticized as problematic in the field of teaching Japanese to foreign-born residents in Japan. Sugihara's micro-ethnographic study (2010) pointed out that an overly simplified categorization by nationality leads to minoritizing and depersonalizing non-Japanese interlocutors, and that questions emphasizing their foreignness may obstruct a more nuanced understanding.

The results of Study Two are summarized as follows: ESs talked more about their culture than JSs; Their cross-cultural exchanges tend to begin with a question from a JS; Improvised exchanges may be disrupted at openings and closings when JSs initiate another topic without properly acknowledging ES's ongoing story. Also found was a significant gap in word counts between JSs and an ES, indicating that JSs tend to refrain from taking turns but continue listening with minimal backchannels during an ES's story about her own cultures.

These findings suggest that face-to-face, informal cross-cultural exchanges parallel textbook models in terms of their pairwise organization with question-answer adjacency pairs to introduce topics. However, it has become clear that some real-life exchanges fail to flow as smoothly as in textbook models. In openings, for example, a question by a JS may be countered by another question from an ES because the JS's question is problematic, either for being incoherent with the previous topic or being ambiguous as a result of a grammatical error. JSs' uncollaborative, disjunctive topic introduction/change may be interpreted as rudeness by an ES and can have a negative impact on building interpersonal relationships. More attention should be paid to developing learners' awareness and skills in topic management.

The results also show that, by and large, JSs make limited contributions to the conversation, except for backchannels, once ESs start describing their own cultures. The JSs' reserved attitudes might be accepted as a sign of modesty and courtesy if they were interacting with other Japanese, but it may be interpreted negatively in different settings. Therefore, it seems critical to develop JSs' skills to remain collaborative even when not speaking because becoming active listeners will reduce their risk of being misunderstood in cross-cultural settings.

A major limitation of the present research is its small sample size. In view of the importance of textbooks in the Japanese EFL context, more exploration is needed on textbook dialogues and naturally-occurring, spontaneous interactions. In particular, studies that exhaustively examine MEXT-approved textbooks and a larger corpus of learner-native speaker conversations will provide empirically-based recommendations for the design of dialogue models in textbooks and activities to improve learners' capabilities in sociocultural domains. Another limitation pertains to the unparalleled nature of the datasets examined in this study. The dialogues in the textbooks and the spontaneous, impromptu conversations

between JSs and ESs are not completely identical in terms of their settings and speakers'
backgrounds. It would be beneficial for future studies to investigate how cross-cultural
exchanges unfold between Japanese EFL learners and non-native speakers of English, (i.e., in
ELF —English as a Lingua Franca— settings).

Conclusion

This research examined dialogue models in MEXT-approved textbooks for high school
English in Japan and informal face-to-face interactions between Japanese college students
learning English as a foreign language and native English speakers from the UK. The analysis
of the textbooks shows that several titles present models of cross-cultural communication by
characters from different cultural backgrounds, and that the models are composed mostly of
question-answer pairs, ending with an emphasis on cultural diversities or similarities. The
analysis of the authentic interactions shows that impromptu cross-cultural exchanges also
often begin with question-answer pairs, but Japanese EFL learners tend to remain inactive
when listening about other cultures. They also fail to collaborate with native speakers in the
introduction and establishment of conversation topics.

These observations from the written and spoken discourses have the following
implications: a) dialogue models in textbooks should demonstrate sequential structures of
interactions other than question-answer pairs and should also provide contexts that avoid a
too-simplified categorization of foreign characters; and b) Japanese EFL learners need to be
better equipped with skills for active and engaged listening and collaborative, impromptu
topic management.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Translated by author.

2. Adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) are sequences of two related utterances given by two different speakers. Typical examples of adjacency pairs include question-answer, greeting-greeting, compliment-thanks, and request-acceptance/refusal.

3. Side sequences (Jefferson, 1972) are another type of sequences of utterances. A side sequence occurs in a context (but not limited to) where speakers deal with misunderstandings, request clarification, and negotiate topics with each other.

4. Due to the limited accessibility of several titles, this study did not exhaustively cover all titles of approved high school English textbooks in use in Academic Year 2022.

5. High school English Communication I/II/III textbooks exhibit variations in terms of readability, vocabulary size, and target learners. Referring to Sakurai (2022) and Keirinkan's website, the seven titles under examination in this study have been classified into three categories: Level 1 (Foundation), Level 2 (Intermediate), and Level 3 (Advanced). Specifically, *All Aboard!*, *Comet English Communication*, and *Vista English Communication* fall into Level 1; *My Way English Communication* and *Vivid English Communication* are categorized as Level 2; and *Element* and *Crown English Communication* are Level 3.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

→   line discussed in text

[ ]   overlap

=   latching

?   final rising intonation

.   final falling intonation

,   continuing intonation

:   elongation

(#.#)   timed pause (in seconds)

(( ))   vocal or nonvocal, nonlexical phenomenon

( )   unsure hearings

…   omitted utterance(s)

Selected Papers

Practitioner Reports

Practical Report on Collaborative Online International Learning in High Schools

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Abstract

In response to the global pandemic, the adoption of online communication systems for distance learning has become increasingly prevalent. This paper explores the implementation of the Student Meet Internationally through Language Education (SMILE) project, which harnessed the capabilities of Zoom, an online communication platform, to facilitate collaborative online learning between two high schools in Tokyo, Japan, and Bangkok, Thailand. Over the course of four meetings held between November 2022 and February 2023, 20 Japanese students and 16 Thai students engaged in the project. The lessons were tailored to match students' proficiency levels and familiarity with the subject matter, focusing on self-introductions, discussions about their respective cultures, and challenging the Japanese students with slideshow presentations detailing their school science projects. Despite encountering challenges such as unreliable internet connections and occasional student absences, participants actively overcame these hurdles, deriving a sense of accomplishment from their online interactions. This paper provides insights into the preparations, methods of implementation, and students' feedback and practices during the collaborative online lessons.

Keywords: COIL, Collaborative Online International Learning, English as a Lingua Franca, Intercultural Competence, Interactional Competence

With the widespread availability of the Internet and the increased use of online devices in classrooms, opportunities for English communication practices in schools have expanded. The aim of this article is to present a series of international collaborative online lessons conducted between November 2022 and February 2023 as part of the SMILE project (Student Meet Internationally through Language Education). This global education initiative offers Japanese students and others learning English as a foreign language the chance to interact using English as a lingua franca.

This case study seeks to share insights gathered from a sequence of collaborative online lessons, focusing particularly on students' perceptions of their English communication skills and the experiences they gained through Collaborative Online International Learning (Rubin, 2017). Utilizing English as a lingua franca poses challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners; misunderstandings can arise due to differing cultural backgrounds. Moreover, varying levels of English proficiency among non-native speakers mean that mutual understanding is not always guaranteed in their interactions, potentially leading to misunderstandings (Kaur, 2011).

This practical report explores how high school EFL speakers in Japan and Thailand perceived their experiences in online collaborative lessons and aims to describe the impact these interactions had on student feedback regarding the project.

Literature Review

The Origins of COIL and Its Implementation in Japan

Collaborative Online International Learning or COIL (Rubin, 2017) involves pedagogical activities utilizing technology to connect classrooms and students in geographically distant locations through coursework. Various terms such as virtual exchange, virtual mobility, globally networked learning, telecollaboration, and online intercultural exchange are used interchangeably to describe this activity. The State University of New

York established the SUNY COIL center in the early 2000s, aiming to provide effective pedagogy for students in multicultural societies. In 2011, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) initiated funding for the development and implementation of COIL in university courses (MEXT, 2018). Notably, three Japanese universities—Sophia University, Ochanomizu University, and the University of Shizuoka—conducted collaborative lessons through coursework.

Intercultural Competence and Interactional Competence

For EFL students in Japan not accustomed to daily English communication, conversing with English-speaking people involves more than recalling learned lessons. Particularly for beginners or those at intermediate levels, receptive knowledge acquired does not always translate directly into productive knowledge. English communication becomes a process of trial and error, utilizing their foreign language knowledge. Moreover, such experiences have been found to enhance participants' intercultural competence (Hackett et al., 2023). According to Deardorff (2006), intercultural competence refers to "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 247). Researchers have sought to define intercultural competence and develop frameworks for its investigation. While agreement on a single definition and framework remains elusive, scholars acknowledge certain facets within intercultural competence, including cultural knowledge, critical thinking skills, respectful attitudes toward others, and the ability to empathize with others' perspectives (Deardorff, 2011).

In the realm of communicating in English as a lingua franca, another vital dimension lies in the ability to navigate conversations through pragmatic instances such as turn-taking and repair (Markee, 2019). To gain insights into the strategies employed in human interactions, Schegloff (1989) introduced conversational analysis to ethnomethodologically

describe one's ability to engage in communication, eventually researched under the term Interactional Competence. It is noteworthy that Interactional Competence applies to communication in both native and non-native or second languages. Regardless of language type (native/foreign/second), Interactional Competence encompasses numerous aspects, including culture, personality, native languages, participants' relationships, and more.

In summary, the intricate concepts of intercultural competence and Interactional Competence emphasize the nuanced nature of effective communication. While scholars grapple with defining these constructs, the acknowledged elements of cultural knowledge, critical thinking, and empathy underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to communication. Engaging in English as a lingua franca not only requires linguistic proficiency but also a keen understanding of pragmatic elements. Effectual communication, as revealed through these dimensions, goes beyond language barriers, necessitating a profound appreciation for cultural diversity, interpersonal dynamics, and the complexities of human interaction.

Overview

The SMILE project (Student Meet Internationally through Language Education) was launched in 2020 through the efforts of a general incorporated association, The Workshop Initiative for Language Learning(https://kotoba-kobo.jp/en/top-2/). Since its inception, the program has been implemented in over 34 schools, primarily in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

A distinctive feature of this program is its provision of opportunities for high school students to engage with their foreign counterparts using English as a Lingua Franca. While EFL students acquire English language skills in the classroom, the exposure to English input and the chances for interactions in English are often limited. Moreover, considering the globalized nature of the world, it is more plausible for students to communicate with non-

native English speakers in their future endeavors than with native English speakers from inner-circle countries such as the U.S. or the U.K. The curriculum typically comprises four lessons, spaced one month apart, which are structured by teachers. The subjects and topics are chosen based on students' interests and the objectives of the collaborative lessons.

One notable aspect of the SMILE project is its meticulous record-keeping (Wakabayashi et al., 2023). All goals, tasks, achievements, and evaluation rubrics are documented and can be systematically reviewed on the project's original online platform, Dialogbook (Iio, 2023). This structured approach ensures a comprehensive and organized learning experience for students participating in the program. Within Dialogbook, teachers can evaluate students' self-assessments based on pre-registered rubrics. Moreover, the messaging function in Dialogbook facilitates meaningful interactions and feedback exchanges between a teacher and students. For students, these opportunities to reflect on their Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) sessions contribute to an enhanced awareness of their proficiency in English communication with non-native speakers.

Participants

Two groups of high school students participated in this program: 16 students (Grade 10 to 12) from Bangkok, Thailand, and 20 students (Grade 10) from a girls' school in Tokyo, Japan. In Bangkok, all the Thai students were part of a specialized program focusing on mathematics, science, technology, and English communication. On the other hand, the Japanese school in Tokyo had been designated as a Super Science High (SSH) school by MEXT. Participation in this program was voluntary, and two female teachers from each school served as organizers and curriculum planners for the collaborative lessons, alongside a coordinator (the author).

Curriculum Planning

To establish a shared understanding of motivations for participation from both schools and to plan the collaboration project's curriculum, the two teachers and the coordinator held three online meetings prior to the program. During these meetings, the teachers' motivations for enrolling in the project were discussed. The primary objective was to provide their students with opportunities to make presentations to new audiences. Additionally, the teachers aimed to expose their students to another country, culture, and people. Following two online sessions and numerous email correspondences, the teachers reached a consensus on the discussion topics for each of the four collaborative lessons, as well as the lesson dates, which are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Discussion Topics Chosen for the Collaboration Project

Lesson	Date	Objectives
1	November 8th , 2022	Introducing themselves to the group members
2	November 29th, 2022	Presentation on some cultural aspects of their countries or life routines (such as typical high school students' daily routines or national celebrations, such as the coming-of-age day)
3	January 24th, 2023	Presentation on topics of choice by Thai students
4	February 7th, 2023	Presentation on science projects by Japanese students

Note: The original planned date for Lesson 4 was on January 31; however, it was postponed due to the schedule change of the Japanese school.

Preparation

In preparation for successful communication during the collaborative lessons, several phases were undertaken involving students and teachers:

1. Orientation and Mock-up Session

Students participated in an orientation session conducted by the coordinator and teachers. During this orientation, students were instructed in basic ICT skills related to the usage of Zoom. They learned fundamental functions, including how to sign up, send invitations, share screens, and start video. As students needed to handle these Zoom functions during the actual interactions with foreign students, mock-up practice sessions with Zoom were essential.

2. Presentation Preparation

Students were instructed to prepare for their presentations by creating written notes on the topics they wished to discuss. They were also advised to create simple PowerPoint slides to aid in sharing their ideas. Students were encouraged to gather relevant visual materials, such as photos and images, on their gadgets to enhance their presentations.

3. Effective Presentation Strategies

To optimize the limited time of collaborative lessons, students received prior advice on delivering effective presentations. Given that the lessons were conducted online, students were urged to adjust their speaking speed, considering potential time lags and delays in responses from their partners. Proper time management was emphasized, particularly regarding the length of their presentations and the subsequent question-and-answer sessions. Japanese students were advised to tailor their scientific research presentations for a diverse audience, recognizing that partner school students might have different educational backgrounds.

Main Events

Following these preparations and guidance from teachers and the coordinator, students engaged in four collaborative sessions. Each lesson date comprised two sessions of 20 minutes each, with a 5-minute interval in between. In these sessions, the leading role alternated between the two schools. The lesson contents are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

The Contents of Four Collaborative Lessons

Lesson	Contents
1	・Self-introduction
	・Free discussions
2	・ Japanese students' presentations on Japanese culture, Q and A
	・ Thai students' presentations on Thai culture, Q and A
3	・ Thai students' presentations on topics of their interests and discussions
4	・ Japanese students' presentations on their science projects

Questionnaires

After the four collaborative sessions, the coordinator (the author) administered a feedback questionnaire to the participants. A total of 31 students responded to the feedback, with 16 from Japan and 15 from Thailand. The questionnaire was divided into two categories:

Category 1: Investigating students' perceptions of English communication during the collaborative lessons, with two questions:

1. What difficulties did you encounter when communicating in English?

2. How did you perceive your English communication abilities in the   context of this project?

Category 2: Exploring students' experiences gained through the COIL project, with three questions:

1. How did you find the four collaborative lessons? Please provide comments on English communication, presentation skills, interaction, new knowledge, difficulties, fun, etc.

2. How did you find your presentations and the subsequent free discussions?

3. Please share the most memorable episode from this project and explain why it was memorable.

The responses were coded and analyzed to identify the types of experiences and perceptions students had during the project.

Results

Category 1: Students' Perception of English Communication During Lessons

The first question aimed to understand the difficulties students encountered in their conversations. Ten students in total, five from each school, expressed challenges related to understanding accented English. Some were pessimistic about their low listening skills, while others acknowledged that accents on both sides occasionally hindered smooth communication. Interestingly, a Thai student noted adapting to accented English, which improved their understanding.

The second notable difficulty concerned spontaneous English phrase output. Seven Japanese students and one Thai student admitted struggling in this area. The responses from Japanese students revealed they had ideas but found it challenging to express themselves with the words they knew. Two Japanese students specifically mentioned difficulties in structuring sentences. One student found translating simplified Japanese sentences to English problematic, while another cited a lack of grammatical knowledge as the issue. Additionally, students from both countries highlighted the challenge of engaging in dual-way communication. One student from each country found it tough to formulate questions in English while simultaneously listening to their partners' talk.

Another question in this category sought to understand students' perceptions of their English performance. Interestingly, the results from the two schools presented markedly opposing viewpoints.

Students from Thailand generally displayed positive self-evaluations of their English communication skills. They perceived their abilities positively, with responses from the questionnaire indicating that Thai students considered themselves "Very good" or "Good" English speakers who "communicated well." Some students even expressed feeling "more confident" about their communication abilities.

In contrast, Japanese respondents held a less optimistic view of their English proficiency, with the majority rating their skills as relatively low and insufficient for international communication. While about one-fourth of Japanese respondents appeared to become more at ease communicating in English over time, the evident contrast in self-assessment underscores varying levels of confidence and self-perception between students from the two schools.

Category 2: Students' Experiences through the COIL Project

Feedback from the students was coded, leading to the identification of five key themes:

1. Enjoyment of Intercultural Interaction

Students expressed delight in engaging in real-time English communication over computers. They found value in interacting with Japanese peers, appreciating the opportunity to see and hear things not typically available on the Internet. Free discussions on various topics with peers of the same age were particularly enjoyable. Many students taught each other simple phrases in Japanese and Thai, attempting to use these phrases during the lessons. These interactions were frequently mentioned in students' memorable episodes.

2. Sharing a Sence of Global Citizenship

Students mentioned the enjoyment derived from free discussions, recognizing the liveliness during the sessions. Some Japanese students realized that their peers from an unfamiliar nation were similar to them, sharing emotions, ideas, and thoughts despite the limited four sessions. This recognition led to the understanding that beyond nationalities, they were all humans, fostering a deeper appreciation for differences.

3. Overcoming Difficulties

Students reflected on their English proficiency and encountered challenges during the sessions. Some students faced issues like unstable internet connections, limiting their participation in certain sessions. Additionally, students' lack of experience in using English for communication and low confidence in their foreign language proficiency hindered dedicated interaction. However, these challenges led to mutual support and helped students break free from the "learner" mindset, fostering self-assertiveness, particularly noted by a Thai student.

4. Renewed Perception about English as a Common Language

While students participated voluntarily, some initially found English communication challenging. However, their experiences led to a shift in perception. For example, a Japanese student expressed gratitude for English, recognizing its crucial role in international communication. Engaging with people from diverse cultures became enjoyable, and the student found value in learning various cultures through English communication.

5. Acknowledgment of English Proficiency

Despite some Japanese students initially underestimating their English proficiency, engaging in challenges like making presentations boosted their confidence. Students acknowledged their ability to present their academic pursuits in English, gaining confidence in expressing themselves. These experiences were considered unique and valuable, providing opportunities beyond the scope of their typical school life.

The comments from students revealed that the COIL project offered transformative experiences, enhancing their confidence, intercultural understanding, and communication skills. These experiences went beyond traditional classroom learning, providing a rich and meaningful educational encounter for the participants.

Discussion

The study delved into students' perceptions of English communication within a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project. The analysis of questionnaires focused on two distinct categories. In the first category, which explored students' perceptions of English communication during lessons, various challenges in communication emerged. Notably, difficulties in identifying accented English and the rapid structuring of English sentences were highlighted. The dual-way nature of communication, where reception and production of information occur simultaneously in interactions, posed a challenge. While both Japanese and Thai students shared similar difficulties, the self-evaluation results from the questionnaires revealed a stark contrast: Japanese students considered their English abilities low, whereas all Thai students recognized their self-efficacy in English communication.

The second category shed light on students' experiences within the COIL project, encompassing real-time English communication via computers, engaging in free discussions, and fostering a sense of global citizenship. However, students encountered hurdles, including limited lesson time, insufficient proficiency to express their thoughts fully, and unstable internet connections. Both groups exhibited a fear of using English in actual conversations, which, to some extent, was overcome by wholehearted engagement in communication, with a focus on the content of interactions.

While the study underscored the importance of understanding and surmounting challenges in English communication, it also acknowledged limitations. The questionnaires, designed to capture students' feedback on COIL project participation, did not provide insights

into specific instances where communication led to changes in students' perceptions, as indicated in Category 2 results. To unlock the full potential of COIL experiences, a detailed exploration of how COIL, utilizing English as a lingua franca, influences communication is imperative. The current study did not delve into the actual conversations of students, thus missing the opportunity to elucidate how particular interactions could foster the development of intercultural and interactional competence—crucial factors for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Future studies should consider how non-native speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds communicate in COIL settings through discourse analyses. Moreover, researchers should investigate how these competencies can be effectively cultivated in foreign language education within their respective home countries.

Conclusion

The present study examines the design and implementation of a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) educational program, encompassing four online lessons, for two groups of students learning English as a foreign language. Feedback from these collaborative lessons strongly suggested the effectiveness of COIL in facilitating international communication within their home country. Additionally, the study revealed that interactions with students utilizing English as a lingua franca not only positively influenced students' motivation but also served as a valuable tool for self-reflection on their current English proficiency levels.

To further explore the ways in which COIL can enhance the process of learning English at home, conversational analyses could provide additional insights into the impact that COIL has on language learning progress.

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Submission Guidelines

JACET International Convention Selected Papers, Vol. 10

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    Submission Form Open: September 20, 2023

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2.   All manuscripts must be written in English.

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    3.2 Use 12-point Times New Roman font.

    3.3 Leave margins of 2.5 cm on all sides of every page (A4 size, 210 mm × 297 mm or 8.27 in × 11.7 in). There are 26 lines to a page.

    3.4 Do not justify right margins.

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    3.6 For anonymity in the peer review process, submit papers without the author name(s).

    3.7 Include the title, an abstract (no more than 200 words), and keywords (no more than five keywords; a multiple-word key phrase can be counted as one keyword).

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