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Contents

Invited Papers*

Enhancing EIL Pronunciation Teacher Capabilities for a New Era	Low Ee Ling	3–29
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------	------

Selected Papers

Research Articles

Computer-Mediated Communication: Synchronous Versus Asynchronous Written Corrective Feedback	Adam Christopher	31–60
Global Englishes vs. Native English: Learner Preferences and Their Effects on Oral Proficiency Development	Noriko Nakanishi	61–79
Understanding Belief–Need Relationships in English Peer Tutoring: A Pilot Study with Eight Japanese University Students	Namiko Sakoda Nagako Matsumiya	81–109
Native English-speaking Teachers’ Pragmatic Norms and Identities in Japan: A Narrative Analysis of ELF Workplace Discourse	Atsumi Yamaguchi	110–140

Practitioner Reports

CLIL and Gender Issues: A Pathway to Critical Engagement and Cognitive Growth	Yuri Ichikawa	142–158
Academic Writing Workshop for Students Aiming to Study Abroad	Mari Morooka Akiko Fukao	159–176
Implementing CLIL in a University English Curriculum: Practices, Perspectives, and Future Directions	Ikuko Ueno	177–194

Submission Guidelines		196
------------------------------	--	-----

***Plenary Lectures**

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aurelio Vilbar
(August 27) | Bridging Classroom and Teacher Communities: Exploring the Dual Impact of Hybrid and Face-to-Face Service Learning on Students' and Local Teachers' Action Research Skills |
| Tetsuo Baba
(August 28) | 日本の英語教育における指導と評価：課題と今後の方向性
(Instruction and Assessment in English Education in Japan: Challenges and Future Directions) |
| Ee Ling Low
(August 29) | Enhancing EIL Pronunciation Teacher Capabilities for a New Era |

Invited Paper

Enhancing EIL Pronunciation Teacher Capabilities for a New Era

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Abstract

The new era has been significantly shaped by artificial intelligence (AI), particularly through large language models (LLMs). AI's impact on language teacher education has been profound and far-reaching. This paper synthesizes and expands upon the content of a recent keynote to articulate a clear, research-informed, and practical path forward for EIL pronunciation language education and teacher capabilities in this new era. While AI's advantages such as personalized adaptive learning systems and virtual tutoring are exciting, its challenges and concerns are less frequently discussed. One concern includes the need to teach ethical EL communication skills for linguistic diversity, equity, and inclusion. Another is how dominant languages used in training LLMs may contribute to the extinction of other languages and varieties. This paper explores potential ethical applications of AI in language and teacher education and addresses the importance of equitable access to AI through a case study of Singapore's language teacher education. It concludes by introducing the Cline of Glocality (see Low, 2025a, 2025b; Low & Pakir, forthcoming) and suggests the application of Gardner's (2008) Five Minds, with two additional minds posited, for the future of EIL pronunciation teaching to navigate the present complex and unpredictable era.

Keywords: English as an International Language (EIL), Cline of Glocality, language teacher pronunciation capabilities, glocal realities

1. Charting the New Linguistic and Technological Landscape

The present era is characterized by an unprecedented degree of hyper-connectivity, driven by rapid technological advancement, expansive economic globalization, and increased human mobility. This hyper-connected reality has resulted in an increasingly complex, multilingual, multicultural, and multi-LLM (large language models) global ecosystem. Within this dynamic context, the role and nature of English as an International Language (EIL) continues to undergo profound evolution, moving decisively away from the hegemony of what Kachru (1985) termed the inner circle, native-speaker norms towards more pluricentric norms and much more dynamic and diverse modes of global communication. This paradigm shift presents both profound challenges and exciting opportunities for the field of EIL pronunciation pedagogy, particularly in an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is dramatically transforming the world. The central challenge for the global educational community lies in equipping teachers with the sophisticated capabilities required to navigate this complex terrain that demands a careful balancing of the practical need for achieving international intelligibility while respectfully acknowledging the existence of local linguistic identities and negotiating the transformative potential of integrating AI into pedagogical practice.

This paper synthesizes and expands upon the content of a recent keynote address (Low, 2025b) to articulate a clear, research-informed, and practical path forward for EIL teacher professional development in this new era. It begins by considering the current multicultural and multilingual realities and deconstructing the persistent native-speaker fallacy, drawing on empirical evidence from the latest research in the field. It then examines the burgeoning research trends and real-world applications of AI in education, with a focus on the implications for pronunciation teaching and learning. Using Singapore's unique

sociolinguistic context as an in-depth case study, the paper then illustrates the practical realities of balancing global competence and local realities of language use and showcases well-managed multilingualism. Finally, the paper proposes a model for future-ready EIL teacher capabilities. This model integrates technological pedagogical knowledge and proficiency with deep pedagogical, sociolinguistic, and ethical understanding, preparing educators not merely to adapt reactively to the new era but also to lead proactively within it, thus shaping the future of this new era.

2. Literature Review: Research Trends of AI in Language Education

2.1 An Increasingly Multilingual, Multicultural and Multi-LLM World

The contemporary global linguistic landscape, while featuring thousands of languages, is numerically dominated by a handful of major world languages. Recent data from *Statista* (2025b) provides a clear snapshot, listing English as the most spoken language worldwide with an estimated 1.528 billion speakers, followed closely by Mandarin Chinese (1.184 billion), Hindi (609.1 million), and Spanish (558.5 million). French, Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Russian, and Urdu then follow to form the top 10 most spoken languages globally each with at least 252 million users. English commonly serves as the medium for global communication between native and non-native speakers.

Furthermore, within the communities and nations of today's world, multilingual and multicultural interactions are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Global cities are microcosms of this diversity, with speakers of different first languages (L1s) interacting in shared social, professional, and educational spaces. This reality demands a fundamental reorientation in our pedagogical approaches to EIL. The traditional goal of striving to attain a near-native speaker accent becomes not only impractical but also undesirable. Instead, the focus must shift towards prioritizing successful, mutually intelligible communication between

speakers of diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Pronunciation pedagogy, therefore, must move away from accent reduction and towards accent addition, equipping learners with the skills to make themselves understood by speakers of English from diverse language and cultural backgrounds (i.e., listener-dominated norms) and with the ability to understand a wide variety of English accents spoken around the world.

2.2 Debate on NESTs versus NNESTs

A significant and enduring barrier to adopting this communicative, pluralistic approach is what Phillipson terms the “native speaker fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992). This is the belief that native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are inherently superior models and instructors by virtue of their birthright, and the assumption that they possess an intuitive command of the language that non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) can never fully acquire.

Empirical evidence from the fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) consistently and robustly contradicts this view. Research evidence confirms that student learning outcomes, including pronunciation gains, communicative competence, and overall proficiency are not significantly affected by the nativeness of the instructor, while factors such as teaching qualification, pedagogical skill, professional experience and empathy for the learner are far more reliable predictors of teaching effectiveness (Kamhi-Steinet et al., 2004; Levis et al., 2016; Mahboob, 2004; Phillipson, 1992; Tsou & Chen, 2017). Despite this compelling evidence, a preference for NESTs persists among students, administrators and hiring committees globally, confirming the deep-seated, ideological nature of this fallacy (Clark & Paran, 2007). This bias is not monolithic; it is further complicated by intersecting factors such as students’ own language proficiency, native language, race, and preconceived notions about nationality and authority that the native-speaking teacher is perceived to exude (Tsuchiya, 2020).

This fallacy has been critically analyzed through a post-colonial lens. Scholars like Badinjki (2019) argue that it constitutes a new colonialism of modern times, where linguistic power dynamics perpetuate global inequities. The preference for the native speaker reinforces a hierarchy that privileges certain nations and cultures while marginalizing others, effectively maintaining a centre versus periphery model in global ELT. This has tangible professional consequences. For instance, research by Low (2015) highlighted that in intensive ELT programs in the United States, 92.1% of teachers were NESTs, with NNESTs largely confined to precarious, part-time roles, often regardless of their qualifications. This systemic hiring bias fosters career anxieties and a sense of professional illegitimacy among NNESTs, who report being treated as ‘second-class’ professionals within their own field (Rajagopalan, 2005).

This fallacy unjustly overlooks the distinct and unique advantages that NNESTs bring to the language classroom. As successful learners of English themselves, NNESTs possess deep metalinguistic insights into the language acquisition process. They have consciously internalized the grammar, phonology, and pragmatics of English, making them exceptionally well-equipped to anticipate learner difficulties, explain complex rules, and provide practical, successful language learning strategies. They often feel compelled to acquire higher formal qualifications than NESTs to distinguish themselves and gain legitimacy in a biased job market (Badinjki, 2019). Perhaps most importantly, they can empathize profoundly with their students’ struggles, frustrations, and triumphs as language learners, and are committed to fostering a supportive and understanding classroom environment that is highly conducive to learning (Reves & Medgyes, 1994). Their very identity embodies the goal of achieving high proficiency in an additional language, serving as living proof that the native speaker is not the most ideal nor relevant model for successful language learning.

2.3 Communicative Intelligibility: A Listener-Oriented Paradigm

In a world characterized by diverse English speakers interacting as a lingua franca, the paramount goal of pronunciation teaching must shift decisively from the unattainable and undesirable ideal of “nativeness” to the practical and communicative goal of “intelligibility”. The nativeness principle, championed by figures like Lenneberg (1967) and Scovel (1994), posits that acquiring a native-like accent is biologically constrained to a critical pre-adolescent age and places an unnecessary burden on post-pubescent learners. Low (2015) reframed this debate entirely, arguing that the goal is not to choose a single, privileged native accent to emulate but to foster a culture of mutual accommodation where all speakers – whether native or non-native – develop the skills and willingness to adjust their speech to ensure understanding in both intra-national and international communication. The question is not “How native do you sound?” but rather “How effectively can you make yourself understood to your specific interlocutor?”

The intelligibility principle, therefore, becomes the indispensable cornerstone of EIL pedagogy. It focuses on identifying and teaching the specific phonological “features that promote understanding” while consciously de-emphasizing those “that are least helpful” for comprehension. This represents a move from a focus on accent to a focus on clear communication. This model is fundamentally listener-oriented, in which the goal of the speaker is to make themselves intelligible to the targeted listeners. Research by Major et al. (2005) demonstrated that intelligibility is a complex construct influenced by a host of factors far beyond mere segmental phonetics (individual sounds). These include the rate of speech, in which speeds that are either too fast or too slow can hinder comprehension; accent familiarity, where listeners understand accents they are frequently exposed to more easily; dialect and topic familiarity, where knowledge of the subject matter and expected discourse patterns aids

comprehension; and grammatical and discourse features, where sentence structure and coherence can significantly impact understanding.

In successful cross-cultural communication, intelligibility is a two-way process. Listeners play an active and productive role; they are not passive recipients of the message but co-constructors of meaning. They employ strategies to accommodate the speaker, using contextual cues and world knowledge to fill in potential phonological gaps. This shared responsibility for communication is a critical concept that must be integrated into pronunciation teaching, empowering learners to strive towards being both clear speakers and strategic listeners.

2.4 Generative AI in the Linguistic Landscape

The rapid rise of generative AI introduces a powerful new dimension to global linguistic power dynamics, with significant implications for EIL. LLMs like *ChatGPT*, *Google Gemini*, and others require vast, unprecedented amounts of textual and spoken data for training. This technological requirement inherently privileges resource-rich languages or those with massive digital footprints (Heimisdóttir, 2024). English is a prime example. It is already dominant in key spheres like science, mathematics, academic publishing, international business, and administration, and is especially prevalent on the internet, constituting 49.4% of all web content as of February 2025 (*Statista*, 2025a), further entrenching it as the primary language of the AI revolution. The algorithms that power the world's most advanced technologies are being built on and for English.

As AI tools become more sophisticated in English, they attract more users, generating even more data that further improves the models for English, thereby widening the gap with other languages. This technological bias threatens what are termed “resource-poor” languages – those with smaller speaker populations or limited digital presence – making them prone to

“digital language death” and exacerbating global digital and linguistic inequities

(Heimisdóttir, 2024). While this is exciting, the promise of AI-powered pronunciation tools is currently most readily available for learners targeting mainstream native accents, potentially reinforcing old biases.

This stark reality underscores the profound urgency for an EIL pedagogy that consciously and actively champions linguistic diversity, equity, and inclusion as a non-negotiable principle of sustainability. The goal must be to ensure that effective communication skills are valued in all their diverse forms and that educational technologies are developed and deployed to support a pluricentric model of English, rather than assessed against a single, technologically reinforced standard. The ethical EIL teacher must therefore be not only a pedagogue but also a critic and advocate, questioning the biases embedded in technology and working to ensure it serves the goal of multilingualism, not monolingualism.

2.5 Research Trends and Real-world Applications of AI in Education

The integration of AI into education is no longer a futuristic concept but a rapidly expanding and maturing field of academic research and practical innovation. A systematic literature review by Wang et al. (2024), analyzing 2,223 relevant publications with keyword searches of “artificial intelligence” and “education,” provides a comprehensive map of this landscape, revealing its exponential growth trajectory. The annual scientific production shows a dramatic upsurge post-2015, which saw 47 publications increasing to 104 in 2016 before skyrocketing to 545 in 2022 alone. These likely coincided with breakthroughs in deep learning and neural networks. Keyword co-occurrence analyses from such studies highlight a focus on several interconnected clusters of concepts (Wang et al., 2024). After the topmost searched word “education” was “artificial intelligence,” providing evidence of the growing interest in AI. In terms of keyword co-occurrence network analysis, Wang et al. found four

broad groups of which “AI in education impact (AIED Impact)” was one, along with “big data analytics,” “user behaviors,” and “design science.” AIED Impact describes the influence of AI on learner skills, quality and experiences.

Conducting my own search on the *Web of Science* (WoS) using “artificial intelligence” and “pronunciation” as key search words, it was found that 129 publications had been published between 2017 and 2025 (Low, 2025b). A similar upward trend was seen. While there were fewer than 10 publications released from 2017 to 2021, there was an annual average of almost 23 publications from 2022 to 2025. Of greater interest though was the increase in the number of citations per year. While the five publications in 2020 garnered 17 citations, the nine publications in 2021 garnered 54 citations – a more than 300% increase. From 2022 to 2025, the citations averaged 230.25 citations annually.

In the real-world “eduscape” or educational landscape, AI is already actively transforming the theory and practice of EIL pronunciation teaching. In the context of the nativeness vs intelligibility principle (Lenneberg, 1967; Low, 2015; Major et al., 2005; Scovel, 1994), AI in EIL education is moving beyond simple rote drills to offer personalized, interactive and data-rich learning experiences. The work of Pena-Acuna & Durão (2024) further provides a useful taxonomy of eduscape applications occurring today.

- AI-powered pronunciation tools: Specialized apps like *Elsa Speak* and *EnglishCentral* utilize advanced speech recognition and pattern analysis to provide learners with instantaneous, granular feedback. These tools can analyze a learner’s production at the segmental level (individual vowel and consonant sounds) and suprasegmental level (intonation, stress, rhythm, and fluency), offering a level of individualized, repetitive practice that is logistically impossible to achieve in a traditional classroom setting. This allows users to refine their spoken English in real-time, often through engaging, goal-oriented exercises.

- Chatbots for conversational practice: Generative AI-powered tools like *ChatGPT*, and dedicated language learning platforms like *Duolingo* and *LingoChamp*, can simulate open-ended, real-life conversations. These provide learners with a safe, low-risk, interactive and adaptive environment to practice pronunciation within a meaningful communicative context, thereby building not only accuracy but also fluency and confidence. The AI interlocutor never tires, judges nor gets frustrated, allowing for unlimited practice.
- Speech recognition and NLP integration: The integration of Natural Language Processing (NLP) and sophisticated speech recognition technologies into Learning Management Systems (LMS) and assessment platforms allows for the automated, detailed evaluation of oral skills. This can range from scoring reading-aloud tasks to providing feedback on pronunciation accuracy, pacing and overall fluency, potentially freeing teachers from routine assessment to focus on more complex instructional interventions.
- Gamification and motivation: Apps like *Memrise* and *Duolingo* use game-like elements – badges, points, leaderboards, and interactive stories – to make the often-tedious process of pronunciation practice more engaging and motivating. This leverages principles of behavioral psychology to support long-term engagement and retention of correct phonological patterns.

The pedagogical benefits of these tools are significant and extend beyond mere accuracy. Research by Fathi et al. (2024) indicated that AI-enhanced practice can substantially enhance learners' willingness to communicate, a key affective variable in language acquisition and pronunciation. This is achieved through several mechanisms: real-time feedback that enhances accuracy and builds learner self-efficacy; a private, low-pressure

practice environment that reduces anxiety and language defensiveness; and the integration of pronunciation into diverse, meaningful and contextual communicative activities that demonstrate the practical utility of clear speech.

It is crucial, however, to recognize that AI's impact is not solely pedagogical; it is also profoundly disruptive to traditional language-related industries and, by extension, the goals of language education itself. A news article from *China Daily* (2025) serves as a stark and illustrative example of this disruption. It reported that AI-based translation and interpretation tools, offering over 95% accuracy for general texts at a fraction (estimated 1%) of the cost of human services, have already captured over 40% of the general translation market. This rapid technological adoption has led to a steep decline in demand for basic human translators and a corresponding drop in enrolment for traditional English majors at Chinese universities, as students perceived diminished career prospects. Instead, there was found an increase in emerging new roles. The market is simultaneously creating new, hybrid roles that require human-AI collaboration. These include AI trainers (who fine-tune models for specific domains), cultural adapters (who ensure translations are culturally appropriate and nuanced), and translation managers (who oversee AI-generated content and handle complex, creative or sensitive texts).

This shift necessitates a fundamental rethinking of the goals of university-level language education. The curriculum can no longer focus primarily on producing graduates with basic transactional skills (such as translation and interpretation) since AI can perform more cheaply and quickly. Instead, it must pivot towards fostering higher-order, uniquely human competencies: advanced cultural literacy, creative thinking, critical analysis, ethical reasoning, and the ability to manage, critique and collaborate with AI systems. The future language teaching professional will need to learn how to master human-AI synergy rather than compete against AI. They will also need to learn how to balance global competences and

local realities of language use while helping to develop and sustain linguistic diversity, equity, and inclusion.

4. A Case Study in Balancing Global Competence and Local Realities

Singapore's unique and meticulously managed sociolinguistic journey provides an invaluable, real-world case study in navigating the tensions between global competence and local realities in this new era where AI is gaining prevalence. Its experience offers critical insights into policy implementation, educational outcomes and emergent sociolinguistic realities.

4.1 Background

Singapore has been a multiracial and multilingual nation since it achieved independence in 1965. Its population has maintained a diverse yet stable ethnic composition, with the Chinese majority (78.8% in 1970 to 74.3% in 2023) coexisting with significant Malay (14.1% to 15.1%) and Indian (6.0% to 7.6%) communities, alongside a small but growing number of "Other" ethnic groups (*SingStats*, 2020). This demographic diversity is directly reflected in its national language policy and its resulting linguistic landscape. The 2020 census (*SingStats*, 2020), which is taken every 10 years, revealed a landmark sociolinguistic shift: for the first time, English is now the most frequently spoken language at home for 48.3% of the resident population. This is a dramatic increase from 32.3% in 2010. Crucially, this shift is not towards just English. The data shows that most of these English-speaking households are functionally bilingual, using a mother tongue language (Mandarin, Malay, or Tamil) as a second most frequently spoken or secondary language in the home. This bilingual repertoire is a defining feature of Singaporean society, creating a population that can operate in multiple linguistic codes depending on context, interlocutor, and purpose and are referred to as

English-knowing bilinguals (Low & Pakir, forthcoming; Pakir, 1991) which was the result of deliberate language planning policies and will be elaborated upon in the next section.

4.2 English-knowing Bilingualism: A Deliberate National Strategy

The outcome of English-knowing bilingualism is not accidental but a deliberate, long-term national policy established at independence. Since 1987, English has been the medium of instruction (MOI) across all primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions. It was chosen as a neutral, pragmatic language that would provide all ethnic groups with equal access to education, government, and the global economy, while avoiding the ethnic tensions that might arise from privileging one community's language (Mandarin, Malay, or Tamil) over the others.

Concurrently, a compulsory mother-tongue language policy ensures that all students learn their designated ethnic language as a subject in order to ensure that they maintain their cultural ballast. This bilingual education policy created what Pakir (1991) termed English-knowing bilinguals, i.e., individuals who are highly proficient in English (the language of government, commerce, science and global connection in the country) while maintaining a working knowledge of their ethnic language (the language of cultural heritage, ethnicity and family). The success of this policy is evident as 74.3% of Singapore's resident population aged 15 and over are literate in two or more languages (*SingStats*, 2020). Furthermore, this linguistic achievement correlates strongly with high academic achievement as measured by internationally benchmarked tests of student performance, suggesting that the cognitive benefits of bilingualism contribute to the overall educational success of Singaporean students (Low, 2017).

4.3 The Cline of Glocality: Navigating Singapore English Varieties

The “top-down” bilingual education policy has given rise to a “bottom-up” uniquely “glocal” linguistic environment where Singaporeans must navigate minimally between two established varieties of Singapore English. At the formal end is Singapore Standard English (SSE), which is grammatically aligned with international standards and used in domains such as education, government, business, and the media. SSE is associated with global competence and formality. At the informal end is Singlish or Singapore Colloquial English (SCE), a vibrant and creative variety that allows Singaporeans to express their local identities. Singlish incorporates lexical borrowings from Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, and Tamil, creating a variety that is a source of both national pride and governmental concern. The dynamic interplay between these varieties of Singapore English was documented by Jain (2021), who noted the rise of languages like Hindi and Bengali due to new immigration, the de-prominence of Chinese dialects like Hokkien and Teochew among the younger generation, and the enduring, prominent role of Singlish as a powerful marker of local, Singaporean identity.

Singaporeans are able to possess what Pakir (1991) described as the Expanding Triangles of English Expression, where their speech varies across a cline of formality (from formal to intimate) that is delimited only by their cline of proficiency (from rudimentary to advanced). The ability to code-switch appropriately between SSE and Singlish is a key to effective communication in Singapore. A sample survey of senior civil servants and literary experts in Singapore confirmed this perception. The results from the survey highlighted that variety choice is dictated by proficiency and context, comfort with the variety used is high, perceptions of Singlish are complex (viewed as culturally valuable but sometimes professionally limiting), and that most Singaporeans possess the ability to code-switch

between languages and English varieties, and that there is ownership of both the English language and varieties of English spoken in the country.

This situation exemplifies the dual orientation of English amongst Singaporeans (Pakir, 2014). Outwardly, English serves as a global language for trade, diplomacy, and science, and has to adhere to international and standardized norms. Inwardly, it serves as a local *lingua franca* for interethnic communication, developing unique linguistic and discourse features that characterize its local speakers and foster a sense of national identity. The tension between these global and local forces results in the emergence of glocal English – a variety that is both internationally intelligible yet locally appropriate, and locally oriented yet globally understood. A Singaporean might use SSE in a boardroom negotiation with international clients and seamlessly switch to Singlish for a coffee-shop conversation with friends, embodying this dual orientation perfectly.

Low (2022, 2025a) introduced the Cline of Glocality Model (Low & Pakir, forthcoming) that “posits that present-day speakers of Singapore English are able to determine the variety to be used according to purpose, setting and audience” (Low & Pakir, forthcoming). An interview of 37 expert users was conducted in 2018 to examine the linguistic landscape in which the varieties of SSE and Singlish were used. All respondents possessed Bachelor’s to doctoral degrees and were aged between 36 and 85 at the point of interview. One group was civil servants holding Director-level equivalent positions in different sectors and another group were established literary experts in Singapore who had published extensively in their career. There were 20 male and 17 female respondents, who were able to “capably and flexibly shift between SSE and Singlish depending on whether they wish to use English for global competence or to demonstrate the ability to adjust to the sociolinguistic local realities” (Low, 2025a, p. 8). The third cline of glocality is an addition to Pakir’s two-dimensional model which consists only of the clines of formality and proficiency.

This third cline accounts for the “shifting between the varieties of Singapore English that are motivated by either a global or local orientation by the speakers” (Low, 2025a, p. 8). This calls for a repositioning of English language education and teacher education to accommodate the global and local dual-orientations. In terms of EIL pronunciation, this new model further needs to also consider the growth and dominance of AI in the Singapore eduscape.

4.4 Singapore’s AI-integrated Future: The Smart Nation 2.0 Initiative

Singapore is not merely observing global technological trends but is proactively seeking to integrate AI through the Smart Nation Initiative 2.0 (MDDI, 2024). This is a comprehensive national strategy aimed at building a digital future for all its citizens, anchored in three core pillars: Trust (reliable and safe digital systems), Growth (using technology to empower people and enterprises), and Community (using technology to strengthen social bonds).

The implications for education are outlined in the EdTech Masterplan 2030. This plan seeks to move beyond merely providing digital access to fundamentally enhancing the teaching and learning of digital and AI-related skills, preparing students for a future where human-AI collaboration is the norm. The pervasiveness of AI in the language space for community-level impact is evident in the following few examples:

- AI Singapore’s Speech Lab has developed a Singlish-savvy LLM, acknowledging the importance of local varieties of English for important frontline work in the medical field. This model is being deployed in public clinics to help patients, particularly the elderly, fill in digital forms, and is tested with the Singapore Civil Defence Force to transcribe emergency calls and ask initial triage-type questions, potentially quickening appropriate medical attention is given and saving lives (Chia, 2024).

- The SoundKeepers research program uses AI to analyze vocal acoustic properties (e.g., stress, pitch, tone, intonation patterns) to detect early signs of subsyndromal depression in seniors, demonstrating the application of speech AI in another important medical field like mental health (Syarafana Shafeeq, 2024).
- In schools, “AI for Fun” modules are being piloted in 82 primary and secondary schools, covering topics like Neuro Linguistic Programme (NLP) and Generative AI. Students use GenAI to brainstorm ideas and program microcontrollers with computer vision capabilities, while teachers use AI-enabled tools like the Short Answer Feedback Assistant residing on the national Student Learning Space (SLS) platform to provide personalized feedback and explicitly teach students to critique and understand the limitations of AI-generated content (MDDI, 2024).
- A six-month fellowship for senior teachers and specialists to deepen their understanding of digital issues, ensuring that the teaching force itself is future-ready and possesses the competencies to lead this transformation from within the classroom.

This holistic approach demonstrates a national commitment to harnessing AI not as a replacement for human talent, but as a tool to uplift the public, enhance economic competitiveness and improve educational outcomes, while leveraging the country’s unique multilingual and multicultural composition.

5. EIL Teacher Capabilities for a New Era

The complex, AI-integrated and multilingual landscape demands enhanced competencies and capabilities for EIL teachers.

5.1 Foundational Competencies and the TPACK Framework

The foundation of effective teaching remains rooted in the importance of Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK), Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and Knowledge of Context (Professional preparation). For language teachers, SMK includes grammatical/linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discursal competence, and strategic competence, all underpinned by a solid foundation in pedagogically-relevant applied linguistics. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework describes the complex interplay between the core knowledge domains. It is no longer sufficient to know the subject matter (SMK) and how to teach it (PCK); a teacher must know how technology can help to enhance teaching and learning outcomes (TPACK).

Furthermore, in a multilingual world, multicultural competence must be upheld as the underpinning goal of building teacher capabilities for a new era. This entails developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable teachers to effectively navigate, respect, and leverage the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds present in their classrooms, creating an inclusive learning environment where all varieties of English spoken are treated as valuable resources and not viewed as being deficient in any way.

5.2 EIL Teacher Education for Future-readiness

The National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, the sole teacher preparation institute in the country, has developed an enhanced Teacher Education for the 21st Century (TE²¹) Model (NIE, 2025a) built on three core values that serve as a professional compass for teachers: V1: Commitment to the Learner, V2: Commitment to the Profession, and V3: Commitment to the Community. These values underpin a comprehensive body of knowledge (encompassing understanding of self, the learner, subject content, pedagogy, educational foundations, curriculum, multicultural

literacy, and global and environmental awareness) and a diverse set of Skills (including critical thinking, reflective practice, socio-emotional skills, creativity, communication, facilitation, and crucially, digital, research, and administrative literacy) across three competency dimensions viz. professional practice, personal growth and development, leadership, and agency. This model ensures that Singapore's teachers are empowered with the values and competencies to prepare their students for the future.

To produce future-ready teachers, there is a need for teacher educators to possess future-ready attributes (NIE, 2025b). Future-ready faculty should exemplify what it means to be role models of professional values, exemplars of lifelong learning mindsets and dispositions, designers of innovative and engaging blended learning spaces, experts of interdisciplinary breadth and disciplinary depth, and inspirational mentors. It is envisioned that these attributes will help teacher educators to develop their student teachers to be shapers of character, facilitators of learning, architects of learning environments, creators of knowledge and agents of educational change (Low, 2022, 2025a) which “set the foundation of the person the teacher needs to be” (2022, p. 180).

To elaborate on the attributes that future-ready teachers need to possess as articulated in Low (2022, 2025a), they should aim to create knowledge either by conducting independent research in their field or drawing on the latest research evidence to enhance their teaching practices. As facilitators of learning they ought to embrace and exemplify lifelong learning. Being capable of designing a resource-rich virtual or physical learning environment is another future-ready attribute of teachers. They also need to be shapers of characters as they are preservers and custodians of societal values and must role-model these values especially against the backdrop of a tumultuous geo-political landscape. They need to both explicitly teach and implicitly infuse character and citizenship education into the content and delivery of their discipline-specific lessons. Finally, as agents of educational change, future-ready

teachers must strive to be active contributors to their local and global communities within which they live and work.

Mapping future-ready attributes to language teachers, language teachers must cultivate specific cognitive dispositions. Adapted from Howard Gardner's (2008) *Five Minds for the Future*, Low envisions the seven minds that future-ready language teachers must possess (Low, 2022, 2025a). Building on Gardner's five minds viz. a disciplined, synthesising, creating, respectful, ethical mind, Low introduces the sixth mind, a digitally literate and a seventh, the adaptive and solutioning mind. In her opinion, these minds make explicit the essential competencies that future-ready English language teachers need to have to prepare their learners for a complex, uncertain and unpredictable future (Low, 2022, 2025a). According to Low (2022, 2025a), a disciplined mind entails subject matter mastery and pedagogical knowledge in the field. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) is drawn from Shulman's (1986) work and it underscores the importance of teachers to be both digitally literate and adept in the event of needing to pivot to virtual teaching platforms. The importance of Gardner's synthesizing mind for language teachers is essentially about information discernment in an age of an information overload in multiple modes and platforms. A creating mind resonates earlier with the future-ready attribute of "creators of knowledge" earlier described and educators must not be afraid of creating their own digital tools to enhance their students' learning experiences and outcomes. Referring back to the cline of glocality earlier introduced, it is important for future-ready language teachers to create their own curriculum materials in order to introduce both the local and global functions of languages and language varieties. A respectful mind requires EL teachers to respect the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in their classrooms. The final three minds are particularly critical in the age of AI. The Ethical Mind guides the responsible use of GenAI such as by ensuring proper acknowledgement, avoiding plagiarism, and ensuring a

focus on equity and diversity. The Digitally Savvy Mind reminds teachers to be perpetual learners who stay abreast of the latest AI affordances and their pedagogical potential. The Adaptive and Solutioning Mind empowers teachers to be tinkerers and designers to experiment with AI to address specific classroom challenges, such as using AI to provide differentiated pronunciation feedback based on a learner's L1 or personal goals, rather than against a monolithic native standard.

The seven minds can be operationalized through seven actionable habits, adapted from Stephen Covey's (1994) seminal work and customized for the EIL context by Low (2025b):

- Habit 1: Be Proactive: Be the agents of pronunciation modeling change in your classroom.
- Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind: Articulate the vision of the EIL future-ready learner and design practical ways to implement this in the classroom.
- Habit 3: Put First Things First: Personalize pronunciation teaching and learning with the help of GenAI. Prioritize high-impact teaching activities. Use AI to automate administrative tasks (grading quizzes, generating routine materials) to free up invaluable time for meaningful, human-centric student interaction and personalized guidance.
- Habit 4: Think Win-Win: Focus on who we want to interact with and for what end-goals. Bear in mind the listener-dominated focus as our communicative goals.
- Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood: Realize that effective communication is the key goal. Apply listener-dominated norms in the classroom but also inculcate respectful speaker-listener communication dynamics.
- Habit 6: Synergize: Explore synergies between the latest research in different disciplines in enhancing learning and apply relevant ideas in the EIL classroom

- Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw: Hone our EIL disciplinary depth and widen our interdisciplinary breadth by either engaging in research ourselves or keeping abreast of latest research in the field.

6. Conclusion

The landscape of EIL pronunciation teaching is undergoing a seismic shift, driven by the powerful, converging forces of globalization, multilingualism and GenAI. We are facing unprecedented challenges and new opportunities with the advent of GenAI in our classrooms and societies. Low (2022, 2025a) re-schematized the Cline of Glocality model to incorporate both the attributes of future-ready English language teachers and the seven minds for future-ready language teachers and repositioned it as the Cline of Glocality Model for Future-ready Language Teacher Education.

Recent worldwide disruptions such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the pandemic have forced a re-think about the length of one's education journey. Previously, it had been assumed to have begun at grade one foundational levels and stopped upon graduation from university and/or entry into the workforce. It has become clear that the education journey needs to be re-positioned in at least two ways: the first is to view learning as a lifelong journey and the second is to consider the multiple stakeholders in the education journey to include not just teachers but teacher educators and policymakers in the entire education ecosystem (Low, 2022, 2025a). As Low (2025b) states powerfully: "As educators, we have the responsibility and the high calling to ensure that we provide our learners with a holistic education that develops their whole being. It is a mistake to think that we are working alone or just within our school. There is a whole education ecology which is connected with other aspects of society that forms an entire ecosystem. As a fraternity and society, locally

and internationally, we have to help each child reach his or her fullest potential and in doing so, contribute to building resilient nations globally.”

Ultimately, as EIL language educators, our role is to keep languages alive so that the humans who use them can flourish with their use. We therefore need to educate teachers who can prepare our learners to co-exist ethically with AI to ensure linguistic diversity, equity and inclusivity in a sustainable way.

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Selected Papers

Research Articles

Computer-Mediated Communication: Synchronous Versus Asynchronous Written Corrective Feedback

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Abstract

The current literature encompasses various studies on writing corrective feedback (WCF); nevertheless, there has been insufficient emphasis on the timing of this practice. This paper employed a quasi-experimental approach to examine the impact of SWCF and AWCF on the language proficiency and attitudes of Japanese EFL students. Three university English classes were divided into three groups: the SWCF group ($n = 20$), the AWCF group ($n = 20$), and the control group ($n = 22$). The two treatment groups participated in 10 sessions of mid-focused direct WCF within a computer-mediated communication (CMC) setting, whereas the comparison group received no feedback. The treatment included three writing evaluations: a pretest, a posttest, and a delayed posttest. The results indicated that both treatment groups significantly improved their linguistic accuracy. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 7 participants from each treatment cohort, encompassing students who received SWCF and AWCF. Students reported positive perceptions regarding the effectiveness of both SWCF and AWCF. The paper provides strong evidence for the beneficial effects of mid-focused direct SWCF on EFL learners' writing accuracy, along with other pedagogical implications.

Keywords: synchronous corrective feedback (SWCF), asynchronous corrective feedback (AWCF), EFL writing

Educational institutions that teach English as a foreign language (EFL) extensively use writing corrective feedback (WCF) as a fundamental pedagogical tool. WCF encompasses providing feedback on linguistic errors (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012) and is extensively utilised in foreign language writing courses (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). This popularity has positioned it at the forefront of foreign language writing studies, where it presently represents the most significant domain. The interest of researchers in the utility of WCF has markedly increased over the past few decades. This is particularly relevant to Truscott's (1996) assertion that written corrective feedback (WCF) does not contribute to enhancing L2 accuracy. However, Kang and Han (2015) indicated that the majority of researchers concur that WCF enhances students' accuracy and precision in foreign language writing.

Researchers have examined various methods for delivering WCF (both direct and indirect) and numerous categories of WCF scope including comprehensive and focused WCF, to ascertain the most effective utilisation (Rahimi, 2021). Despite the growing body of research on WCF, further investigation is necessary to comprehensively grasp the time of feedback (Kim et al., 2020). Upon finishing their writing assignments, students in the majority of foreign language writing courses obtain WCF. This type of feedback is sometimes referred to as asynchronous WCF (AWCF) (Bitchener & Storch, 2016).

Due to the success of educational technologies and the increasing acceptability of technology-enhanced education, educators and learners now possess improved access to collaborative editing tools and writing platforms. This fact indicates that educators can now offer feedback on students' writing during the writing process. This synchronous corrective feedback is referred to as SWCF, or online writing feedback (Kim et al., 2020), in contrast to

asynchronous corrective feedback, AWCF. According to Kim et al. (2020), the primary distinction between SWCF and AWCF lies in their usage rates. Nevertheless, in contrast to AWCF, scholars have devoted significantly less attention to SWCF (Shintani & Aubrey, 2016). This explains why we lack knowledge regarding the impact of SWCF and AWCF on foreign language learners' attitudes and language proficiency. To address this gap, this study used computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to provide a quasi-experimental setting to investigate the impacts of SWCF and AWCF on the language proficiency of Japanese EFL students. The objectives were to ascertain the impact of WCF on accuracy, syntactic complexity, and fluency, as well as to evaluate students' perceptions of its use in two distinct contexts.

Literature Review

Given that direct feedback and delayed feedback possess distinct theoretical foundations, there exists a theoretical dispute over the proper timing for delivering input. Behaviourism (Skinner, 1953) posits that learning occurs through the formation of habits. Feedback should be provided promptly to rectify errors. These practices will also facilitate the development of productive behaviours. Conversely, delayed introduction of input may result in the development of detrimental habits (Fu & Li, 2022). Various second language acquisition (SLA) theories endorse the immediate delivery of teacher input. According to the interaction hypothesis (Long, 2007), the interaction between students and teachers plays a crucial role in the learning process. Long (2015) contends that rapid input, such as feedback, can assist students in establishing the relationship between form and function in language acquisition. This benefit is due to the provision of contextual information regarding the target linguistic structure, assisting students in rectifying their grammatical errors during communication (Long, 2007, p. 77).

The interactionist perspective initiated the discourse on oral corrective feedback (CF). According to Bitchener and Ferris (2012), it can also be used for WCF, particularly SWCF. Students receive both verbal and SWCF feedback when completing their activities (Shintani, 2016). Moreover, direct feedback is endorsed by the Skill Acquisition Theory, which posits that declarative knowledge can be transformed into procedural or automatic knowledge through repetitive practice (DeKeyser, 2007). Receiving direct feedback upon committing an error enables students to avoid repeating the same errors throughout practice, a phenomenon referred to as *error fossilization*. Certain grammatical errors may not be readily apparent, which is particularly significant since, as DeKeyser (2007) pointed out, direct feedback is optimal. Conversely, researchers adhering to other academic perspectives are more inclined to prefer feedback provided at a later stage. Proponents of the Guidance Hypothesis argue that direct feedback should be withheld from students since it may foster an excessive reliance on such feedback, hence hindering their ability to independently identify and rectify errors, whether autonomously or with assistance. Furthermore, processing direct information necessitates greater attentional resources and imposes increased demands on students' working memories compared to processing delayed feedback. "Insufficient working memory may hinder concurrent tasks related to writing" (Shintani & Aubrey, 2016, p. 299). Students in this context struggle to process input effectively. Ultimately, due to the dynamic nature of interlanguage, errors are inevitable (Ellis, 2015). As students advance to increasingly challenging educational levels, they will avoid making certain errors due to enhanced comprehension. In this instance, educators may not provide direct correction of students' errors to ensure fairness.

WCF in second language writing has been extensively researched over the past several decades. To refute Truscott's assertion that AWCF does not facilitate second language acquisition, numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate its efficacy. AWCF has

demonstrated an enhancement in L2 accuracy in both new and revised writing (Benson & DeKeyser, 2019). Researchers are exploring several methods to enhance the functionality of AWCF. Both direct and indirect methods may be employed to implement these ideas. Indirect corrections comprise teachers identifying and documenting students' errors without providing the proper answers, whereas direct corrections consist of teachers rectifying students' errors explicitly (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). There is a discrepancy in the reported research regarding the effectiveness of direct versus indirect WCF. L2 learners can enhance their processing of feedback and comprehension of errors through the application of indirect WCF. Ultimately, this practice may enhance their proficiency in the second language. Proponents of direct feedback contend that it provides students with outstanding input, enabling them to rectify their grammar and prevent misunderstandings (Storch, 2010). Meta-analysis by Kang and Han (2015) demonstrated that direct written corrective feedback is more effective in enhancing the accuracy of second language writing.

Researchers have focused on the scope of WCF, or how much WCF should be provided, in addition to WCF methodologies. More specifically, there are three types of WCF: comprehensive WCF on all errors, mid-focused WCF on five or six errors, and highly-focused WCF on only one linguistic error (Liu & Brown, 2015). Due to its theoretical and empirical support, highly-focused WCF is recommended in contrast to mid-focused and comprehensive WCF. Theoretically, it allows students to use additional attentional resources to comprehend new information without cognitively overloading them (Sheen, 2007). According to several empirical investigations, highly-focused WCF can increase the accuracy of a particular language feature (Guo & Barrot, 2019). Nonetheless, the form of Whole Class Feedback (WCF) is not particularly beneficial for authentic second language writing in educational settings, where instructors typically provide WCF for various errors (Storch, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010). Consequently, numerous studies have investigated the efficacy

of comprehensive WCF on L2 writing, revealing that it can enhance students' overall writing accuracy in second language acquisition (Van Beuningen et al., 2012). While comprehensive WCF is efficacious in practical applications, it occupies greater cognitive resources and imposes a heavier burden on the working memory of second language learners compared to the alternative forms of corrective feedback (Lee, 2017). Using mid-focused WCF to resolve this issue is recommended, as it is specifically designed to accommodate diverse linguistic forms (Lee et al., 2021).

As previously mentioned, SWCF has received less scrutiny compared to AWCF, which has been the focus of the majority of studies. The results of the limited research now available are, nonetheless, highly intriguing. Shintani (2016) used a case study methodology to investigate language learners' responses to SWCF and AWCF, accessible via Google Docs. She found that students actively participated in both SWCF and AWCF, using stimulated recall for data collection. This activity enhanced their comprehension of the metalinguistic function of the target structures. Kim et al. (2020) examined the impact of direct and indirect SWCF on the writing outcomes and perspectives of students collaborating on a project. Upon examining data from semi-structured interviews and written assessments, they determined that direct SWCF was more effective than indirect SWCF in enhancing the grammar of students commencing their Korean language studies. The students indicated that they held the same views regarding the two types of SWCF.

In 2016, Shintani and Aubrey conducted a pivotal study relevant to this research. This paper is the sole study that has examined the efficacy of SWCF and AWCF in enhancing the grammatical accuracy of second language learners' writing. In a computer-mediated environment, they utilised Google Docs to conduct two sessions of direct written corrective feedback contact with the participants. This study examined the writing evaluations of respondents and discovered that, while addressing questions with hypothetical conditions, the

subjects who received AWCF and SWCF surpassed the comparison group in performance. Nonetheless, SWCF enhanced the accuracy of the goal structure more efficiently than AWCF. Irrespective of the extent to which the study enhances our existing understanding of the subject, certain concerns persist. Initially, this study examined only one type of grammatical structure in SWCF and AWCF. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to other contexts. The feedback scope served as a mediator, resulting in limited knowledge regarding the precise effects of mid-focused/comprehensive SWCF and AWCF on students. The study examined the impact of WCF on accuracy. When assessing the impacts of WCF, it is crucial to consider the proficiency of language use, including factors such as syntactic complexity and fluency. The possibility of a trade-off accounts for this (Nassaji, 2020). Ultimately, due to an absence of qualitative insights on students' perceptions of the WCF, quantitative data were employed to address the research objectives. Consequently, we are unaware of the students' views on WCF. This type of qualitative data may offer a more comprehensive understanding of WCF's effects (Storch, 2010).

Skehan's (1998, 2009) Trade-off Hypothesis is a crucial concept in the study of second language acquisition (SLA), as it aids in determining the most effective approach. Working memory offers the basis for the concept. Furthermore, it enables us to predict the impact of task performance on L2 formation (Xu et al., 2022). The Trade-off Hypothesis posits that due to constrained cognitive resources, second language learners can focus on and enhance one of the three language components, complexity, accuracy, or fluency (CAF) at any given time (Skehan, 2009). Consequently, there is competition among these aspects.

The objective of both SWCF and AWCF is to rectify the grammatical errors made by students acquiring a second language in their writing. This principle is particularly applicable to WCF. Providing WCF may enable students to concentrate more on accuracy while diminishing their attentional resources allocated to fluency and complexity. Such a situation

may impede the growth and development of these two L2 output regions. Nassaji (2020) posits that WCF may enhance writing accuracy, although at the expense of its fluency and complexity. Truscott (2007) also addressed this issue. He believed that WCF would motivate students to enhance their writing by making it more concise and less complex. To date, most WCF research has concentrated on accuracy. Less attention has been paid to complexity and fluency (Rahimi, 2021). The Trade-off Hypothesis posits that individuals using WCF to enhance their writing quality in a second language (L2) may forfeit the opportunity to write with more complexity and fluency. Upon reviewing the aforementioned reasoning derived from the trade-off hypothesis, this conclusion can be drawn. To enhance knowledge of writing accuracy, it is essential that studies investigating the impacts of WCF use metrics of fluency and complexity alongside accuracy (Nassaji, 2020). This study addressed these shortcomings by examining the following overarching question: What are the distinctions between SWCF and AWCF, and how do they influence the language skills and cognitive processes of Japanese EFL students? In particular:

1. What are the impacts of SWCF and AWCF on the accuracy, syntactic complexity, and fluency of Japanese EFL learners?
2. What are the perceptions of Japanese EFL learners regarding the utility of SWCF and AWCF?

Methodology

Participants and Data Collection

This study examines the impact of SWCF and AWCF on three distinct aspects of writing quality: fluency, accuracy, and syntactic complexity. Biber et al. (1998) proposed calculating the total number of errors in each of the five objective structures by dividing it by the entire word count of the text and thereafter multiplying the result by 100 to evaluate accuracy. To assess the complexity of the syntax, the researcher employed the ratio of clauses

per T-unit (RCT) and the mean length of T-units (MLT). Fluency was assessed by tallying the total word count produced in a 30-minute interval. Fluency is defined by Skehan and Foster (1999) as "the capacity to employ language in real time" (p. 97). Sixty-two second-year students from three classes of a Tokyo institution were selected. This process is referred to as the convenience sample approach (Dörnyei, 2007). Participants were randomly allocated to one of three groups: the comparison group (CG) ($n = 22$), the AWCF group ($n = 20$), or the SWCF group ($n = 20$). All participants were required to enroll in a course conducted by the same instructor during the data collection period. The primary objective of the course was to enhance students' writing proficiency in English. The students attended the course in a classroom equipped with 30 computers and were given the same English homework both during and outside class. The data collection methods included three writing assessments and semi-structured interviews. The participants had studied English in Japan for at least ten years. The average TOEIC "L&R" test score of the participants ranged from 550–780 points.

Writing Assessment

The study included three writing assessments: a pretest in the first week, a posttest in week 11, and a delayed posttest in week 14. The evaluations were classified as exposition, a category frequently employed to assess the writing proficiency of students acquiring English as a foreign language (Teng & Zhang, 2020). The written objectives of the three examinations were selected to enhance the students' existing knowledge, ensuring that the test-takers had some familiarity with the topics. Each student was required to complete a 150-word writing assignment within 30 minutes designated for the test. They were ineligible to seek assistance from external sources throughout the examination.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In this investigation of student responses to SWCF or AWCF forms, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with a selected group of students who had received

either SWCF or AWCF (Appendix A). A total of 14 students were selected to participate in this qualitative phase of data collection to gain a more profound understanding of the results related to the impacts of SWCF and AWCF. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven participants from each treatment cohort, encompassing students who received SWCF and AWCF shortly after the posttest. All interviews in this study were performed in Japanese to prevent misunderstandings and maximize information retrieval. The length of each interview was approximately 30 minutes.

Intervention Procedures

The study was completed in a total of 14 weeks. Participants in the treatment groups engaged in 10 intervention sessions over this period, with one session occurring each week. A computer-assisted language learning environment was used for these sessions. Table 1 lists the essential elements of the intervention. Participants in both intervention groups of the study received mid-focused WCF. The use of direct feedback was warranted for three reasons. The literature review indicates that the direct feedback strategy has numerous advantages. Studies indicate that direct WCF is more effective than indirect WCF in enhancing the accuracy of second language writing, particularly for learners at low to intermediate proficiency levels (Bitchener & Storch, 2016). A meta-analysis by Kang and Han (2015) indicated that direct WCF enhances L2 learners' spelling and grammar more effectively than indirect WCF. Moreover, the immediate WCF necessitated participants to concentrate on five distinct linguistic structures during the SWCF writing phase, resulting in a significant impact in this study. Highly-focused WCF has been criticized for its ecological inaccuracy, since it fails to accurately depict the reality of second language writing sessions when teachers address various problems. Nevertheless, the process of providing comprehensive WCF is labour-intensive and time-consuming, particularly at the SWCF level. Consequently, the optimal

approach to achieve equilibrium between the effort required for WCF to provide ecological accuracy and the workload involved is to implement mid-focused WCF.

Table 1

The Intervention Process

Week	SWCF Group	AWCF Group	Control Group
1	Pretest	Pretest	Pretest
	Writing task 1 and receiving WCF while writing and revising	Writing task 1 and receiving WCF during the next class and revising	Writing task 1 self-revising text 1
2–10	Writing tasks and receiving WCF while writing and revising	Writing tasks and receiving WCF during the next class and revising	Writing and self-revising texts
11	Posttest	Posttest	Posttest
14	Delayed Posttest	Delayed Posttest	Delayed Posttest

Target Structures

This study examined five types of errors: subject-verb agreement, run-on sentences, singular/plural forms, prepositions, and word and phrase selection. The selection of these structures took into account a variety of criteria. Ferris (2010) stated that the initial three errors can be rectified as they adhere to established standards; however, the last two errors are distinct and cannot be elucidated by these rules. A comprehensive assessment of the impacts of WCF can be achieved by including both amendable and unamenable errors (Guo & Barrot, 2019). Secondly, such errors frequently create difficulties for individuals acquiring English as a second language in Japan. According to research, these errors are the most prevalent. The

course instructor underscored this point as well. The subjects in this study had either fully or partially acquired these linguistic tendencies. Ellis et al. (2008) assert that written corrective feedback is more effective for previously acquired structures than for entirely novel linguistic elements. Prior to the intervention, the primary educator and an EFL instructor with over a decade of experience concurred on the five objective structures and the methodology for delivering WCF. Twenty-one first-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, not participating in the study, were instructed to complete two writing assignments following practice. This measure was implemented to guarantee the reliability of the WCF procedure. Each of the five targeted structures in WCF was tackled differently by each instructor. Half of the students in each experimental group received WCF from the researcher. The other EFL instructor provided written corrective feedback to the remaining students according to the class schedule. The free software application referred to as WPS, or Word Processing System, facilitated the sharing and storage of information in the cloud. All three groups successfully completed their writing projects efficiently and effectively with the assistance of WPS. The level of concordance was 0.96 under SWCF settings and 0.97 under AWCF conditions.

The SWCF Group

The students in the SWCF group were instructed to complete their revisions based on the SWCF they received during the task. They were asked to revise their texts at any point during the writing process. Subsequently, they used their individual accounts to access WPS to compose the essays and extended an invitation to the two EFL instructors to provide WCF. During the provision of WCF, the two educators examined the writing samples of their students. Upon detection of any errors related to the target structures, the instructors utilized the comment function in WPS to highlight the errors and subsequently offered the students

the correct answers directly. The tasks were assigned to the participants for a total of 45 minutes.

The AWCF Group

Within this group, participants were granted a 30-minute time frame to complete their writing assignments without interruption. Once they had finished, they saved and uploaded their writing. Next, the two EFL teachers who were involved in the study provided the students with WCF that focused on the target structures. This procedure was done by utilizing comment boxes in WPS. Students were able to revise their texts following the receipt of their feedback in the next class in 15 minutes.

The Control Group

After completing the same tasks in 30 minutes, the control group participants were encouraged to revise their writing independently for an additional 15 minutes. This group was provided with their WCF after the intervention.

Evaluation of Students' Language Proficiency

Accuracy was determined through manual calculation. The author quantified and coded the errors associated with the target features in accordance with Geng's (2017) guidelines, as this methodology offered comprehensive explanations for coding such errors. To improve the reliability of error coding, the two teachers randomly selected approximately 10% of the writing samples in the three groups across the three exams, and they were subsequently coded separately with a threshold of 0.8 that was achieved by the inter-coder reliability of 0.95 (Fleiss & Cohen, 1973). The data were automatically generated using the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyser (Lu, 2011) for syntactic complexity and fluency. A series of statistical analyses were conducted on the measures of fluency, syntactic complexity, and accuracy. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to investigate interaction effects after verifying that the data were normally distributed. This led to ascertaining whether specific

group conditions exerted significantly divergent effects on linguistic performance over time.

The independent variables were time and feedback conditions, and the dependent variables were the indices of the three dimensions. Furthermore, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was implemented to investigate the within-group variations and whether there were substantial variations in fluency measurements, syntactic complexity, and accuracy among tests within each group.

Students' Perspectives

The data were subsequently coded by the author through a recursive and iterative process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). First, temporary IDs were created, and each copy was carefully reviewed, line by line. Comparing the codes to find similarities was the next phase, and because of these similarities, the numbers were further divided into different themes. After this painstaking classification procedure, several themes started to surface from the data. These themes include the feelings and ideas of students about SWCF and AWCF (e.g., "I was thankful for the feedback and the teacher"); the particular benefits of SWCF (e.g., "SWCF helped me understand and use the right forms"); and the elements that affect the usefulness of WCF (e.g., "low-proficiency L2 learners find it difficult to understand WCF"). The second instructor was requested to co-code the analysis to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The author and co-coder independently coded approximately 25% of the transcript data. Each disagreement was examined thoroughly until resolution was achieved.

Results

The Impact of SWCF and AWCF

Table 2 presents comprehensive data regarding the flow, precision, and complexity of the syntax. The subsequent figures pertain to three distinct categories: pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for each measure to evaluate the comparability of the groups' pre-intervention baseline levels. No significant

differences were observed among the three groups in any of the three dimensions assessed in the pretest.

Table 2

Quantitative Data Across Time

Items	Group	Pretest		Posttest		Delayed Posttest	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
MLT	SWCF	13.520	3.100	13.631	2.944	13.685	2.773
	AWCF	13.870	2.971	13.989	3.066	13.975	3.289
	Control Group	13.745	3.045	13.750	3.350	13.881	3.567
RCT	SWCF	1.720	0.288	1.666	0.285	1.675	0.288
	AWCF	1.630	0.220	1.650	0.507	1.761	0.271
	Control Group	1.732	0.245	1.731	0.240	1.655	0.260
Accuracy	SWCF	6.350	1.810	4.277	1.223	4.050	1.211
	AWCF	6.480	1.870	5.430	1.740	5.222	2.140
	Control Group	6.640	1.975	6.590	2.340	6.580	2.180
Fluency	SWCF	149.420	28.480	151.235	27.890	151.340	26.690
	AWCF	147.822	25.650	149.240	26.440	149.850	27.250
	Control Group	148.150	25.340	148.680	27.370	149.040	24.740

This study employed two metrics to assess syntactic complexity: mean length of T-unit (MLT) and the ratio of clauses per T-unit (RCT). The interaction between time and group factors was not significant, as indicated by the two-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). This indicates that there were no significant alterations in the MLT of the three groups over time. The posttest and the delayed posttest indicated no statistically

significant differences between the SWCF and AWCF groups, as per the Tukey post hoc pairwise comparisons. No significant differences were observed among the three groups in any of the three tests using the one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ratio of clauses per T-unit (RCT) revealed no significant interaction between time and group. This indicated that there were no significant differences between the groups or assessments in the RCT. Both the posttest and the delayed posttest indicated no significant differences between the AWCF and SWCF groups, as per Tukey's comparisons. The researcher observed no notable enhancement in RCT across all three metrics for the SWCF group, the AWCF group, and the control group.

A significant interaction effect between group and time was seen in a two-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). This indicated significant disparities in the methods by which the three groups enhanced their accuracy for the five linguistic objectives. The posttest results and the delayed posttest results indicated that the SWCF and AWCF groups significantly surpassed the control group in both instances, as determined by paired tests. Furthermore, in both the posttest and the delayed posttest, the SWCF group continuously exhibited significantly fewer errors on the target structures compared to the AWCF group. A one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to ascertain the variables that affected the disparities among the groups. The results indicated that the SWCF group's accuracy was markedly superior across all assessments. The SWCF group significantly surpassed the pretest group in this metric from the pre-test to the post-test, and they sustained their robust performance on the delayed post-test, as indicated by further data analysis. The AWCF group exhibited substantial differences. AWCF significantly reduced the number of errors made by Japanese students learning English as a second language across five language domains in the posttest and the delayed posttest, as indicated by subsequent research. The CG results, however, indicated no significant changes in the test accuracy.

A two-way repeated measures analysis of variance was employed to determine whether there was a significant difference in language changes among the groups and tests. The results indicated that the group by time interaction effect was not statistically significant. This indicates that the fluency levels of the three groups did not see substantial changes over time. Fluency on the posttest and the delayed posttest did not exhibit significant differences between the SWCF group and the AWCF group, as determined by Tukey's post hoc analysis. One-way repeated measures ANOVAs for SWCF, AWCF, and CG revealed no significant differences among the three groups. This pertains to the disparities that existed among the groups.

Students' Thoughts on SWCF/AWCF

The interview findings indicate that the majority of participants in both treatment groups appreciated the use of SWCF and AWCF (SWCF: 6/7; AWCF: 6/7). They comprehended the significance of the feedback they received as follows:

I was glad to receive comments from the teacher (Student 1, AWCF).

The teacher's feedback was much appreciated. (Student 1, SWCF)

I appreciated the teacher taking the time to give me comments. (Student 2, AWCF)

I was grateful that the instructor took the time to comment on my work. (Student 2, SWCF)

Giving students comments while they were writing was a good way to teach. (Student 3, SWCF)

One effective teaching strategy was to provide feedback to us as we were writing. (Student 4, SWCF)

Students provided two justifications for their favourable evaluations. SWCF and AWCF offered incentives that prioritised the quality of their work. Moreover, the two types of

WCF provided insights about the errors and challenges encountered throughout their work, along with suggestions for future growth. For example, following the immediate feedback from the instructors, student 3 (SWCF) acknowledged that his writing issues stemmed from poor word selection and run-on sentences. He also recognised the necessity of concentrating more intently on these errors in future writing assignments. Similarly, student 1 (AWCF) stated, “I often made mistakes with prepositions and run-on sentences, so I had to focus more on these areas, which would help my writing.”

Notably, two students were unable to properly comprehend the varieties of WCF they encountered (SWCF: 1/7; AWCF: 1/7) due to the intricacies associated with each type. For example, student 7 (AWCF) struggled to recall and understand the rationale for his errors. Consequently, he merely reiterated a limited number of statements without contributing additional insights. Moreover, Student 7 demonstrated the deficiencies of the technique regarding SWCF, stating, “This kind of feedback kept drawing my attention away from what I was writing, so I wasn’t used to getting it. Getting feedback and revising my work at the same time was hard for me, and the writing assignments were very demanding.” The interviews indicate that SWCF poses challenges for individuals acquiring English as a second language, as it necessitates the incorporation of feedback and revisions during the initial drafting process. Consequently, it appeared that the participants of the SWCF state were experiencing difficulties with their cognitive processes.

Six students favored SWCF due to their ability to identify three distinct organizational errors. All six students asserted initially that this form of WCF enabled them to identify and rectify their errors immediately. Student 5 provided an illustration to exemplify this concept:

When I was in the SWCF class, I quickly understood and used the right forms, which made my work better. (Student 5, SWCF)

The coordinated functioning of SWCF resulted in this benefit. The availability of SWCF during the writing process enabled the students to promptly identify their errors and comprehend the correct forms. The students indicated that SWCF facilitated the use of appropriate language in their writing. This was an additional advantage they noted:

I was able to avoid similar mistakes and increase my accuracy by using the same grammar points to express my views in the same text while referring to the previous feedback that was given because the teacher provided it during the task. (Student 6, SWCF)

I used the old SWCF to find and fix other similar mistakes I made while writing new lines before the teacher pointed them out. (Student 4, SWCF)

The explanations indicated that students appeared to engage with SWCF and their writing process through cognitive and metacognitive processes such as connection and monitoring. This enabled students to effectively utilise the comments, comprehend the lessons intended, and enhance their grammar to complete the writing assignments. SWCF, an online platform facilitating connections between educators and learners, enables teachers to monitor their students' writing and editing processes (Shintani, 2016).

Discussion

This study assessed student language ability through the measurement of accuracy, syntactic complexity, and fluency. Both treatment groups greatly surpassed the control group in overall accuracy concerning the five structures. The accuracy of L2 learners in the posttest and delayed posttest was significantly improved via SWCF and AWCF. Prior research on focused WCF (Benson & DeKeyser, 2019; Li & Roshan, 2019) and unfocused WCF (Cheng & Zhang, 2021; Van Beuningen et al., 2012) has consistently underscored the beneficial impact of AWCF on accuracy. Moreover, the advantageous effects of SWCF align with the findings of Shintani and Aubrey (2016) and Kim et al. (2020).

This study's findings enhance prior research by examining the efficacy of mid-focused SWCF on accuracy, a domain in L2 writing research that has been insufficiently explored in the literature. The study demonstrated that SWCF surpassed AWCF in enhancing writing accuracy on both the posttest and the delayed posttest. In this context, SWCF appears to exert a more profound and enduring influence than AWCF. SWCF offers the benefit of immediacy, unlike AWCF, which is delivered post-writing (Kim et al., 2020). Two measures, namely MLT and RCT, were employed to evaluate syntactic complexity; nevertheless, they exhibited no significant differences between groups or tests.

Previous studies indicate that straight mid-focused SWCF and AWCF appear to exert negligible influence on syntactic complexity (Cheng & Zhang, 2021; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). This study demonstrates that while SWCF and AWCF receivers enhanced accuracy, syntactic complexity remained the same. The limited cognitive capacity of L2 learners undermines the Trade-off Hypothesis, which asserts a compromise between accuracy and grammatical complexity (Skehan, 1998). This data indicate that students did not condense sentences to circumvent or reduce grammatical problems due to WCF. Consequently, it refutes Truscott's (2007) claim that providing written corrective feedback may lead to simplified writing for the sake of enhancing accuracy, thereby hindering the development of syntactic complexity in L2 learners. Both within-subject and between-subject comparisons regarding fluency demonstrated no significant improvements over time among the three groups, suggesting that WCF had no influence on writing fluency irrespective of its timing.

This study demonstrated that the enhancement in accuracy facilitated by WCF did not lead to a reduction in the length of students' written texts or a decline in their writing fluency, as evidenced by their performance in accuracy and fluency metrics. This contradicts the Trade-off hypothesis, which posits a competition between fluency and accuracy (Skehan, 1998). The data also contradict the idea that WCF L2 learners may produce writing samples

with many fewer words to ensure accuracy (Truscott, 2007). The students' perceptions, as qualitative data, elucidated the quantitative findings of this investigation. The qualitative results provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of WCF in writing evaluations. This advances the methodology of WCF research in this manner. Further mixed-methods research is necessary to examine how students, as insiders, perceive the effects of WCF to attain a more profound comprehension of the WCF mechanism, as indicated by numerous past studies (e.g., Liu & Brown, 2015; Storch, 2010).

The study's results for syntactic complexity were compelling yet anticipated, with two plausible explanations for this phenomenon. Initially, neither SWCF nor AWCF instructed students on how to extend and diversify sentences in their writing; rather, they focused on errors in the target language structures. Consequently, it is plausible that the feedback did not enhance their comprehension in this domain. Students struggle to progress in syntactic complexity without an extensive knowledge base in this domain. Moreover, the participants' L2 proficiency may influence the results. The subjects of this study were categorized as intermediate L2 learners. Xu et al. (2023) assert that the progression of syntactic complexity in L2 students is often deferred until they attain advanced learner status.

Despite the potentially advantageous role of SWCF, there exists a substantial pedagogical concern with this method, as evidenced by both quantitative and qualitative data. It is understandable that delivering SWCF is challenging for educators, as they must rapidly review their students' writing to identify and rectify errors immediately. Consequently, delivering SWCF involves a significant workload and time limitation (Kim et al., 2020). Several variables, including L2 proficiency, the severity of the errors addressed by SWCF, and classroom size, affect the workload involved in utilising SWCF. L2 writing instructors may need to change the traditional approach to providing WCF addressing all or most errors to reduce their effort. Alternatively, they may employ mid-focused WCF, emphasising a

limited range of error types throughout SWCF implementation. Shintani and Aubrey (2016) advised that educators in large classrooms promote collaborative writing among students to reduce the amount of writing teachers need to monitor and alleviate time pressures. These selections are expected to assist educators in surmounting their challenges and positioning SWCF as a viable alternative to AWCF in real classroom environments.

Ultimately, SWCF urged L2 learners to explore WCF more thoroughly. The WCF was interactive due to the synchronous capability of SWCF, enabling online communication between teachers and students (Shintani, 2016). Students meticulously observed the WCF, facilitating their internalization and application of language structures in an autonomous manner. Educators monitored students' assimilation of the WCF and their modifications. AWCF, conversely, constituted offline feedback provided post-completion of writing projects, precluding teachers from monitoring students' revisions. Consequently, they often refrained from engaging with AWCF and chose to overlook it (Arroyo & Yilmaz, 2018). Given that students are more inclined to apply the teacher feedback in future writing after striving to understand it, the assertion that SWCF was more effective in enhancing L2 learners' engagement is highly encouraging. Moreover, the immediate nature of SWCF facilitated the creation of an environment where the completion of writing projects and the receipt of feedback occurred simultaneously. Students in this scenario received immediate direct WCF, facilitating their recognition of errors and the internalisation of correct forms. They subsequently had the opportunity to employ identical linguistic structures while formulating new phrases within the same text (consolidation) and rectified their errors immediately (modification). Consequently, learners could engage in these three stages of acquisition recursively due to SWCF as contextualised feedback. AWCF, however, was decontextualised, dissociating the generation of new texts from the reception of feedback. This reduced the likelihood of students acquiring linguistic patterns, as internalisation,

modification, and consolidation occurred independently and without scepticism (Shintani, 2016). In comparison to decontextualised WCF in the AWCF condition, contextualised WCF in the SWCF condition showed more efficacy in this aspect.

Conclusion

This study analyzed two types of WCF in a technology-enhanced setting and examined the impact of SWCF and AWCF on the language proficiency of EFL students at a Japanese university. The study contributes to the existing literature primarily focused on the effects of AWCF by providing empirical evidence regarding the efficacy and utility of SWCF, an innovative feedback method stemming from technology-enhanced education that offers students more supportive and engaging WCF. Compared to AWCF, SWCF markedly enhanced the overall accuracy of five language targets, as demonstrated in this study. The results indicated that written corrective feedback did not influence grammatical complexity or fluency, irrespective of the timing of the feedback provided. Moreover, the majority of students regarded SWCF and AWCF positively.

This study presents several significant implications for English writing programs. Initially, it presents compelling evidence that SWCF enhances accuracy in second language writers. Therefore, SWCF, the novel WCF mode, warrants further attention and research. The pedagogy of second language writing instructors should significantly integrate SWCF. The workload associated with providing SWCF may raise concerns regarding the viability of this technology. The study indicates that educators may employ mid-focused SWCF in the classroom to address this issue. This should facilitate achieving a balance between SWCF utilization and workload. Moreover, neither SWCF nor AWCF had a significant impact on L2 learners' performance in syntactic complexity. This indicates that second language writing programs ought to integrate instruction on complex sentence structure into their curricula. Teachers should not only provide WCF to assist students in developing fundamental sentence

structures but also implement techniques such as sentence reformulation and sentence combination. The participants ultimately affirmed that the efficacy of WCF was influenced by L2 proficiency, motivation, and agency. When adopting WCF, second language educators must consider student variety, as individualized feedback is crucial to the strategy's efficacy.

The study's shortcomings encompass its restricted examination of only five linguistic patterns and its rationale for the deployment of mid-focused written corrective feedback. Consequently, the limited number of errors examined may have contributed to the accuracy-enhancing benefits of SWCF and AWCF. Given that target linguistic aspects affect the impact of WCF on accuracy, future studies should examine the impacts of SWCF and AWCF aimed at various linguistic structures to reach a more definitive conclusion on their effectiveness in improving accuracy (Bitchener & Storch, 2016; Shintani, 2016). The study employed two widely recognized metrics for assessing syntactic complexity, specifically MLT and RCT (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). According to systemic functional linguistics, T-units may be more suited to spoken language than written language, as academic genres typically include nominalized sentences. Consequently, results should be interpreted with caution when evaluating the impact of SWCF and AWCF on syntactic complexity as quantified by MLT and RCT.

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Appendix A. Interview questions

1. Could you tell me about your experiences with learning English?
2. Could you share your experiences with learning to write in English and the feedback you received?
3. How do you feel about the feedback you received in this study?
4. Would you like to receive feedback? What is the reason behind that?
5. Are you able to comprehend the feedback you were given?
6. How did you feel upon receiving the feedback?
7. What steps do you take to reflect on the feedback you have been given?
8. In what ways do you utilise the feedback you've received to enhance your revision and writing tasks?
9. What elements do you believe impact how effective feedback can be?
10. What approaches did you use to refine your writings?

Global Englishes vs. Native English: Learner Preferences and Their Effects on Oral Proficiency Development

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Abstract

This longitudinal study investigates the impact of learner preference for Native English (NE) or Global Englishes (GE) training on oral proficiency development among low-proficiency students (CEFR A1–A2). Recognizing that English functions as a global lingua franca, the study addresses concerns that NE bias persists in ELT, potentially hindering necessary GE exposure. Participants ($n = 41$) were divided into NE-oriented ($n = 20$) and GE-oriented ($n = 21$) groups based on their preference survey responses. Their proficiency was measured in Winter 2023 and Winter 2024 using TOEIC Listening and Versant Speaking Test (VST) subscores. Two-way ANOVAs revealed that both groups improved Listening, VST Sentence, and VST Vocabulary scores. Crucially, a significant interaction effect was found in VST Fluency: the GE-oriented group, despite starting lower, demonstrated a significant increase over one year. VST Pronunciation showed no significant change for either group, indicating GE exposure does not cause harm. These findings suggest that GE listening training can significantly contribute to improved speaking fluency and should be incorporated into language instruction.

Keywords: Global Englishes (GE), learner preferences, oral fluency, longitudinal study

English now functions as a global lingua franca, making it essential for learners to comprehend not only Native English (NE) speakers but also speakers of diverse Global

Englishes (GE). Despite this reality, the majority of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) textbooks and pedagogical practices maintain a strong preference for NE accents, often driven by concerns that GE exposure might be too challenging for lower-proficiency learners or could negatively impact their pronunciation development. This persistent NE bias fails to reflect the reality of global communication and runs counter to the objectives of GELT (Global Englishes Language Teaching). While a precursor study indicated that students with higher proficiency (CEFR A2+) were more likely to prefer GE training, reflecting a greater awareness of varieties and communication needs, it remains unclear whether this preference actually translates into measurable proficiency gains over time. While previous studies on Global Englishes have predominantly focused on learners' attitudes, awareness, and perceptions, empirical evidence linking learner preference to longitudinal development in objectively measured oral proficiency remains limited. This study addresses this gap by examining whether learners' stated preferences are associated with differential trajectories in listening and speaking proficiency over a one-year period.

Research Background

The Context of Global Englishes (GE) in EFL

English has rapidly solidified its position as the global lingua franca, transforming from a language primarily associated with its native-speaking countries (L1) into a language used by speakers of various linguistic backgrounds worldwide. In this context, effective listening instruction must evolve to develop learners' ability to comprehend not only Native English (NE) speakers but also speakers of Global Englishes (GE). While GE encompasses complex interactions and fluid norms, this study focuses specifically on the dimension of accent exposure as a pedagogical entry point for examining how tolerance toward accent variability relates to oral proficiency development.

The complex landscape of English varieties is frequently mapped using Kachru's (1985) model of the three concentric circles: the Inner Circle (L1 countries like the USA and UK), the Outer Circle (countries where English serves an institutional role, such as India or Singapore), and the Expanding Circle (EFL countries like Japan). Subsequent analysis predicted that the balance would shift toward L2 speakers, with substantial growth in the Outer and Expanding Circles by the early 21st century (Crystal, 1997). While the term World Englishes (WE), heavily influenced by Kachru's work, emphasizes the pluralistic nature of English (Sadeghpour & D'Angelo, 2022), contrasting native versus non-native speakers (Oda, 2022), the more recent paradigm of Global Englishes (GE) offers a wider scope. GE acknowledges issues such as globalization, language policy, and the complex interactions between native and non-native varieties (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2011). Although GE is the broader framework, both WE and GE paradigms are relevant as studies influencing this research originate in both.

The Persistence of Native English Bias in ELT

Despite the global realities of English usage, a strong bias persists in education toward using NE as the primary listening and speaking model. This bias is rooted in the concept of native speakerism (Phillipson, 2024), which advocates for the prioritization of L1 speaker norms, failing to reflect the diverse linguistic environments where English is used.

This ideological preference manifests clearly in pedagogical materials. Research indicates that the majority of audio content in textbooks, including MEXT-certified materials used in Japan, is recorded primarily in American or British English. Studies analyzing EFL coursebooks used globally found a heavy reliance on Inner-Circle voices (Naji Meidani & Pishghadam, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2021). Also in the Japanese context, even when junior high school textbooks depicted characters from diverse backgrounds, the accompanying audio

recordings exclusively featured North American, British, or Australian accents (Sugimoto & Uchida, 2016).

This persistent NE bias is often rationalized by two primary concerns: that exposure to GE may be too difficult for lower-proficiency learners and that it may hinder the acquisition of “correct” pronunciation. Furthermore, learners themselves may prioritize NE, associating L1 varieties with social prestige (Rubin, 2012; Yuwita & Ambarwati, 2023).

To combat these issues, higher education institutions bear the responsibility of familiarizing learners with GE. This shift aligns with the principles of Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) (Rose et al., 2021). Key GELT proposals include increasing WE and ELF exposure and raising awareness of linguistic diversity. Ultimately, fostering a culture of listeners who are tolerant towards GE accents is viewed as a form of social justice, recognizing the diverse linguistic profiles of speakers often overlooked by traditional ELT models (Rubin, 2012).

Precursor Study: Learner Perceptions and Preferences

Prior to implementing the current study on proficiency, understanding learner attitudes toward GE training is crucial. Our precursor study (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025), which examined the perceived effects and preferences of 175 university students, addressed this topic. The participants were exposed to GE listening training using materials provided by Nakanishi et al. (2023), featuring accents from diverse regions, including Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries (e.g., USA, UK, Singapore, India, Russia, Brazil, China, Egypt, and Rwanda).

The survey posed questions regarding which training they found most useful for improving oral proficiency and which they preferred for future learning. The results showed that approximately half of the students (55.4%, $n = 97$) appreciated GE listening training.

Crucially, Nakanishi and Musty (2025) revealed that preference for GE listening training correlated with learners' proficiency level: students at the higher CEFR level (A2 or above, $n = 86$) were significantly more likely to choose GE training for the future than those at the A1 level ($\chi^2(1) = 4.17, p = .041, \phi = .15$). The reasons provided by GE-preferring students centered on an awareness of linguistic varieties, a need for GE communication, and curiosity towards unfamiliar accents. Conversely, those preferring NE focused on their interest in Inner-Circle countries and the need for basic conversation skills in standard varieties.

These findings confirmed that students with sufficient exposure and a basic level of English (A2+) could develop positive attitudes towards GE. However, the precursor study was limited to self-reported perceptions and preferences, leaving a critical question unanswered: Do these preferences and positive attitudes toward GE training actually translate into tangible, measured improvement in listening and speaking proficiency over time?

The Current Longitudinal Study and Research Questions

The current study aims to verify the relationship between learner preference (NE-oriented vs. GE-oriented) and actual oral proficiency development by employing a longitudinal design. Participants (CEFR A1–A2) were enrolled in a two-year conversation course utilizing GE-inclusive materials (Nakanishi et al., 2023). Based on their preference survey responses (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025), participants were retrospectively divided into the NE-oriented group ($n = 20$) and the GE-oriented group ($n = 21$). Their proficiency was assessed one year apart (Winter 2023 and Winter 2024).

The following research questions guided this investigation into the longitudinal effects of learner preference on objective proficiency measures:

RQ1: What effect did learners' GE/NE preference have on listening ability (TOEIC Listening score) after one year of training?

RQ2: What effect did learners' GE/NE preference have on speaking ability (Versant Speaking Test subscores: Fluency, Pronunciation, Sentence Mastery, Vocabulary) after one year of training?

Method

Participants and Context

The participants in this longitudinal study were drawn from a larger cohort of university students ($N = 175$) who participated in the precursor survey concerning perceived effects and preferences (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025). All participants were enrolled in required English conversation classes at a university in the Kansai region of Japan, with 94% of the students classified within the CEFR A1 to A2 range.

The initial analysis conducted by Nakanishi and Musty (2025) included both first- and second-year students. However, for the present study, the sample was refined according to two specific criteria to ensure a fair comparison of proficiency development over one year. First, all students who were in their second year during the 2023 academic year were excluded. This exclusion was necessary because these students were scheduled to participate in mandatory overseas language training in 2024, which would have introduced a confounding variable and undermined the validity of the longitudinal comparison. Second, only students who were in their first year in 2023 and who had completed both the pre-treatment assessments (TOEIC Listening and Versant Speaking Test) in Winter 2023 and the post-treatment assessments in Winter 2024 were retained. After applying these criteria, the final analytical sample for this longitudinal study comprised 41 participants.

Course and Materials (Intervention)

Participants were tracked over one year (2023–2024) during their two-year required English Conversation course.

Course Structure

The course was conducted twice a week, with class procedures designed as consecutive steps following a flipped learning method (Lee & Wallace, 2018). Students were required to complete various pre-class assignments via an LMS, including listening comprehension, manuscript writing, checking pronunciation using customized ASR software (Nakanishi, 2019), and recording shadowing and reading-aloud activities (Nakanishi et al., 2022). Classroom instructions were delivered entirely in English.

Global Englishes Materials

The curriculum incorporated exposure to various accents through the mandatory textbooks (Nakanishi et al., 2023). The materials introduced a variety of accents to scaffold learner exposure. The countries of origin featured in the audio content included Inner-Circle countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, and New Zealand; Outer-Circle countries such as Singapore and India; and Expanding-Circle countries such as Russia, Brazil, China, Egypt, and Rwanda.

When tasks were presented, emphasis was placed on listening comprehension, and students were explicitly instructed that imitating the speaker's accent was unnecessary. In-class conversation activities instead focused on message conveyance, fluency, and task completion, aligning with a communicative rather than imitative orientation to oral production. By the time the preference survey was conducted in winter 2023, the first-year students (the subjects of this longitudinal study) had completed Unit 12 of Book 1 and had experienced listening training for all of the English variant accents listed above.

Grouping Based on Learner Preference

The participants were retrospectively categorized into two groups based on their self-reported preference collected in the precursor study questionnaire (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025). The relevant question asked participants which training they preferred for the

following semester: “Which listening training would you like to work on in the next semester? (Multiple answers allowed.)”. Table 1 illustrates the grouping criteria based on the answers to this question. This grouping was used to test the hypothesis that self-reported preference (NE vs. GE) would influence subsequent actual proficiency development.

Table 1
Grouping Criteria and Number of Participants

Group	<i>n</i>	Preference
NE-oriented Group	20	Participants who selected only the “Inner-circle variety” option
GE-oriented Group	21	Participants who selected any combination that included “Outer-circle variety” and/or “Expanding-circle variety”

Procedures

Assessment Schedule and Dependent Variables

In this study, “oral proficiency” is operationally defined as a composite of listening comprehension measured by TOEIC and speaking skills measured by the Versant Speaking Test (fluency, pronunciation, sentence mastery, and vocabulary). This operationalization reflects a psycholinguistic view of oral proficiency that emphasizes processing efficiency, production fluency, and lexical–syntactic control. Proficiency was measured at two time points: Baseline (Time 1) in Winter 2023, and Post-treatment (Time 2) in Winter 2024, following one year of GE-inclusive instruction. Although both TOEIC Listening and VST are grounded in standardized assessment frameworks, they are employed here to track relative developmental change over time within the same assessment system.

Data Analysis

Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the five dependent variables. The factors were: Preference (NE-oriented vs. GE-oriented, between-subjects) and Year (2023 vs. 2024, within-subjects).

Since the grouping was retrospective and based on self-reported preference rather than random assignment, the two groups' oral proficiencies were not assumed to be equivalent at baseline (Winter 2023). The two-way ANOVA was chosen as the appropriate statistical method to analyze the interaction effect (Preference \times Year) on proficiency changes over time, while accounting for potential initial differences in the five scores. The results of the ANOVA, including baseline comparability, will be reported in the next section.

Results

The effects of preference (NE-oriented vs. GE-oriented) and time (Year 2023 vs. Year 2024) on the five proficiency scores were analyzed using Two-way repeated-measures ANOVA. Descriptive statistics for all five dependent variables at both assessment points are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Proficiency Scores by Preference Group and Year

Score	Group	Year 2023		Year 2024	
		<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>
TOEIC Listening	NE-oriented	230.25	(71.72)	251.75	(89.78)
	GE-oriented	248.33	(61.31)	293.10	(70.60)
VST Fluency	NE-oriented	31.05	(11.70)	30.45	(11.51)
	GE-oriented	26.05	(4.96)	28.71	(4.79)
VST Pronunciation	NE-oriented	30.65	(8.97)	31.10	(7.67)
	GE-oriented	29.10	(3.67)	31.10	(3.91)
VST Sentence Mastery	NE-oriented	35.60	(10.22)	37.15	(11.03)
	GE-oriented	35.24	(5.79)	38.43	(3.96)
VST Vocabulary	NE-oriented	32.95	(9.07)	34.90	(9.72)
	GE-oriented	35.38	(3.75)	38.19	(7.75)

Note. NE-oriented group ($n = 20$) preferred inner-circle variety only. GE-oriented group ($n = 21$) preferred outer-circle and/or expanding-circle varieties. VST = Versant Speaking Test.

RQ1: Effect on Listening Proficiency (TOEIC Listening Score)

To address RQ1, the TOEIC Listening score was analyzed. The ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of Preference ($F(1, 39) = 1.93, p = .173$) or the interaction effect

(Preference \times Year) ($F(1, 39) = 1.79, p = .188, \eta^2_p = .044$). In contrast, a strong and significant main effect of Year ($F(1, 39) = 14.56, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .272$) was shown. Both the NE-oriented group (2023 $M = 230.25$ to 2024 $M = 251.75$) and the GE-oriented group (2023 $M = 248.33$ to 2024 $M = 293.10$) demonstrated improvement in general listening ability over the one-year period. This indicates that while both groups benefited similarly in overall listening comprehension, the learners' self-reported preference for NE or GE orientation did not significantly differentiate their gains in the TOEIC listening score.

RQ2: Effect on Speaking Proficiency (VST Subscores)

The four subscores of the Versant Speaking Test (VST) were analyzed to address RQ2 regarding the effect of training preference on speaking ability.

VST Fluency

Analysis of the Versant Speaking Test (VST) Fluency scores revealed a significant interaction between Preference and Year ($F(1, 39) = 4.72, p = .036, \eta^2_p = .108$). To interpret this interaction, simple effects analyses were conducted. At baseline (Winter 2023), there was a trend toward a significant difference between the two groups, with the GE-oriented group ($M = 26.05, SD = 4.96$) scoring slightly lower than the NE-oriented group ($M = 31.05, SD = 11.70$), ($F(1, 39) = 3.23, p = .080, \eta^2_p = .077$). Over the one-year period, the GE-oriented group showed a significant improvement in Fluency scores ($F(1, 20) = 8.87, p = .007, \eta^2_p = .307$), whereas the NE-oriented group demonstrated no statistically significant change ($F(1, 19) = 0.24, p = .629, \eta^2_p = .013$). By the end of the one-year intervention (Winter 2024), the difference in Fluency scores between the two groups was no longer statistically significant ($F(1, 39) = 0.40, p = .529, \eta^2_p = .010$). These results suggest that although the GE-oriented group initially scored lower, they exhibited greater developmental gains in fluency over time compared to the NE-oriented group.

VST Pronunciation

The analysis of VST Pronunciation scores yielded no significant effects. The ANOVA showed no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 39) = 1.08, p = .305, \eta^2_p = .027$), no significant main effect of Year ($F(1, 39) = 2.70, p = .108, \eta^2_p = .065$), and no significant main effect of Preference ($F(1, 39) = 0.17, p = .678, \eta^2_p = .005$). Specifically, both the NE-oriented group (2023 $M = 30.65$ to 2024 $M = 31.10$) and the GE-oriented group (2023 $M = 29.10$ to 2024 $M = 31.10$) showed a lack of significant change in their pronunciation ability over the year. This finding is important as it suggests that exposure to GE listening training did not negatively impact pronunciation development.

VST Sentence Mastery

For VST Sentence Mastery, the ANOVA revealed no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 39) = 0.71, p = .406, \eta^2_p = .018$) or main effect of Preference ($F(1, 39) = 0.04, p = .848, \eta^2_p = .001$). However, a significant main effect of Year ($F(1, 39) = 5.89, p = .020, \eta^2_p = .131$) was observed, indicating that both groups demonstrated statistically significant improvement in this area. Both the NE-oriented group and the GE-oriented group benefited similarly from the instruction, showing gains in sentence construction and usage.

VST Vocabulary

For VST Vocabulary, neither the interaction effect ($F(1, 39) = 0.13, p = .719, \eta^2_p = .003$) nor the main effect of Preference ($F(1, 39) = 1.76, p = .193, \eta^2_p = .043$) was significant. Meanwhile, the ANOVA showed a trend toward a significant main effect of Year ($F(1, 39) = 4.04, p = .051, \eta^2_p = .094$). This indicates a general increase in vocabulary knowledge across the study population. Similar to Sentence Mastery, both preference groups appeared to benefit comparably in terms of vocabulary acquisition over the year.

Discussion

This study aimed to verify whether learners' self-reported preference for either Native English (NE) or Global Englishes (GE) training, established in a precursor survey (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025), influenced their actual proficiency development over a one-year period of GE-inclusive instruction. The findings, particularly the interaction observed in speaking fluency, offer significant implications for Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT).

Interpretation of Foundational Skill Development

The analysis of the TOEIC Listening scores demonstrated a strong main effect of Year. Both the NE-oriented and GE-oriented groups showed significant improvement in general listening comprehension over the one-year period. Similarly, VST Sentence Mastery and VST Vocabulary showed overall gains for both cohorts. These results confirm the general effectiveness of the two-year conversation course that offered GE listening training regardless of learner preference.

Crucially, the lack of a significant Preference main effect or Interaction effect for the TOEIC Listening score suggests that a learner's pre-existing preference for a specific English variety model does not substantially differentiate their development in general listening comprehension as measured by standardized tests like the TOEIC.

The Relationship Between GE Preference and Speaking Fluency

The most striking finding of this study relates to VST Fluency, where a significant interaction effect was observed between Preference and Year. At baseline (Winter 2023), the GE-oriented group scored numerically lower in Fluency compared to the NE-oriented group. However, over the following year, the GE-oriented group demonstrated a significant increase in their Fluency score, while the NE-oriented group showed no significant change. By the post-treatment assessment (Winter 2024), the initial difference between the two groups was no longer significant.

This finding suggests that the self-reported preference for GE training may reflect a specific mindset or motivation that benefits oral production, particularly fluency. The precursor survey revealed that students preferring GE cited reasons such as “Awareness of varieties other than NE,” “Needs for WE communication,” and “Curiosity towards unknown accents.” Learners who prioritized preparing for communication with non-native speakers and expressed curiosity likely approached the GE-inclusive course materials with a broader definition of acceptable input and output. This open perspective on linguistic varieties may have reduced self-monitoring and hesitation during production, thereby fostering fluency gains. Despite the GE-oriented group potentially starting at a lower proficiency level in fluency, their intrinsic motivation, reflected by their preference, appeared to drive greater developmental growth over the one-year period, effectively catching up to the NE-oriented group.

Challenging the Native English Bias: The Pronunciation Finding

One of the persistent arguments against incorporating GE listening training, especially for lower-proficiency learners (CEFR A1–A2), is the concern that exposure to diverse accents may hinder the acquisition of “correct” pronunciation.

The results of the VST Pronunciation analysis directly challenge this long-held concern. The ANOVA showed no significant main effects or interaction effects for Pronunciation scores. Both the NE-oriented group and the GE-oriented group showed no significant change in their VST Pronunciation scores over the year. This null finding suggests that the GE-inclusive curriculum—which exposed learners to accents from the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles, while explicitly instructing students that imitating accents was unnecessary—did not negatively impact the development of their pronunciation ability. This provides empirical support for the GELT proposals (Rose et al., 2021), which advocate for

increasing WE and ELF exposure in language curricula. The data indicates that GE input is safe and does not introduce harm to the phonological domain for A1–A2 learners.

Synthesis with Precursor Findings and Pedagogical Implications

The longitudinal outcomes integrate seamlessly with the findings of the precursor preference survey (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025). The survey indicated that higher proficiency learners (CEFR A2+) were more likely to prefer GE training than A1 learners. The current longitudinal data, focusing on this A1–A2 cohort, suggests that the GE preference, even among beginners, serves as a proxy for high intrinsic motivation and a willingness to engage with linguistic diversity.

This underscores the need for educators to acknowledge the specific needs of different learner groups. For learners who are already aware of the diverse nature of English (i.e., the GE-oriented group), providing GE training capitalizes on their motivation, leading to superior gains in communicative fluency.

Furthermore, these findings reinforce the responsibility of higher education institutions to equip students with the ability to communicate with speakers of various linguistic backgrounds. Given that many students in this study will encounter non-native speakers during study abroad, particularly in ESL classes, fostering tolerance towards GE accents is a necessary pedagogical goal, viewed by some as a matter of social justice (Rubin, 2012). By incorporating diverse audio materials (e.g., Nakanishi et al., 2023), educators can help bridge the gap between textbook representation (often NE-biased) and real-world English usage.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite providing novel insights through a longitudinal perspective, this study has several limitations that suggest directions for future work.

First, the sample size for the longitudinal study was relatively small ($n = 41$). While the two-way ANOVA detected significant effects, replicating these findings with a larger, more diverse sample would enhance generalizability.

Second, the preference grouping was retrospective and self-reported, meaning the GE-oriented group may represent learners who were already highly motivated or possessed unmeasured traits that contributed to their fluency gains. Future research could utilize a longer-term trajectory study and perhaps incorporate direct measures of motivation.

Third, this study lacked a true control group that received only NE instruction, due to ethical considerations and the need to expose all students to GE before mandatory study abroad. Future studies could explore comparing outcomes between groups receiving structured GE training versus unstructured GE exposure.

Finally, while VST Pronunciation scores were not negatively affected, future work should delve deeper into the impact of GE exposure on intelligibility—a factor determined not only by accent but also by features such as background noise and repetition (Levis & Silpachai, 2022). Investigating the effects of exposure to a wider range of GE speakers (beyond one speaker per country in the current materials) is also warranted.

Conclusion

This longitudinal study investigated the relationship between university students' self-reported preference for Native English (NE) versus Global Englishes (GE) listening training and their subsequent development in oral proficiency over one year of GE-inclusive instruction. The findings verify the link between learner attitude and linguistic outcomes, offering empirical support for integrating Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) principles into EFL curricula.

In addressing the research questions, the analysis demonstrated significant overall improvement across the cohort in general measures, including TOEIC Listening, VST

Sentence Mastery, and VST Vocabulary (trending toward significance). However, the most critical finding was the significant interaction effect observed in VST Fluency. The GE-oriented group ($n = 21$), categorized by their preference for Outer- or Expanding-circle varieties, experienced a significant gain in fluency over the year. Although this group showed a trend toward lower fluency scores at baseline, their preference for GE training appears to reflect an intrinsic motivation or communication readiness that fueled greater developmental growth in productive speaking skills compared to the NE-oriented group.

Furthermore, the results directly confront a major pedagogical concern associated with incorporating GE: the fear that GE exposure may hinder the acquisition of “correct” pronunciation. The VST Pronunciation scores showed no significant change for either preference group over the one-year period. This null finding is paramount, suggesting that incorporating diverse GE accents into the curriculum, particularly when learners are explicitly instructed not to focus on imitation, does not negatively impact the development of pronunciation readiness.

The findings, when synthesized with the precursor survey (Nakanishi & Musty, 2025), suggest that GE listening training is not only safe but also beneficial. The precursor survey indicated that students of higher proficiency (CEFR A2+) were more likely to prefer GE training. This longitudinal verification suggests that a learner's preference for GE may serve as a proxy for an awareness of linguistic diversity and a commitment to communication needs, which subsequently translates into tangible gains in communicative fluency.

These results yield two essential recommendations for English language pedagogy. First, reflective material selection is crucial. Educators should recognize the specific motivational profiles of their students. While fundamental skills training, such as that offered by NE-focused materials, remains essential, instructors are encouraged to expose learners to a range of English accents. Doing so allows teachers to build on learners’ intrinsic motivation

and better prepare them to communicate with speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds in global contexts. Moreover, incorporating such diversity contributes to the pursuit of social justice by acknowledging and legitimizing the linguistic identities of Global English (GE) speakers. Second, publisher transparency should be promoted. Producers of educational materials are encouraged to clearly indicate their GE credentials, signaling to educators and learners the scope and significance of accent diversity represented in the materials. The inclusion of speakers from the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles (e.g., Nakanishi et al., 2023) allows students to engage with authentic accents and culturally grounded topics from across the world, thereby expanding their understanding of English as a truly global language.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that self-reported preference for GE listening training among low-proficiency learners is associated with superior subsequent gains in speaking fluency, without compromising pronunciation development. Educators must provide learners with increased opportunities to experience GE, cultivating an environment in which accents are not seen as hurdles, but rather as integral parts of communication in the global lingua franca.

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Understanding Belief–Need Relationships in English Peer Tutoring: A Pilot Study with Eight Japanese University Students

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Abstract

Peer tutoring programs demonstrate effectiveness. However, substantial individual variations in outcomes remain unexplained. Although research has examined standardized interventions, limited attention has been paid to how individual psychological factors, particularly learning beliefs, influence sustained engagement and support needs. This pilot study explored the relationship between students' learning beliefs and expressed support needs in peer tutoring contexts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Japanese university students who participated in multiple sessions (4–14) and were analyzed using Ichikawa's Cognitive Counseling Framework. The analysis revealed multidimensional needs, including process-methodological and emotional-relational needs, which represented 91 of the 201 coded segments (approximately half). A preliminary analysis identified possible patterns between belief orientations and need expressions. Cognitive beliefs appeared to be linked to conceptual understanding needs, non-cognitive beliefs to practice optimization, and mixed beliefs to individualized support. Thematic analysis suggested two consistent learner configurations (coherent belief–need–goal patterns)—Pragmatic Credential-Seekers and Future-Oriented Skill Builders—and a third pattern that requires further investigation. These findings suggest directions for future research on belief-responsive tutoring approaches and highlight the importance of addressing multidimensional needs through quality peer

relationships. Given the small sample size and exploratory nature of this study, these hypothesis-generating findings require validation through larger-scale research.

Keywords: peer tutoring, belief–need relationships, learner needs, cognitive counseling, individual differences

Peer-assisted learning, which encompasses various forms of peer tutoring and educational support, has become increasingly prevalent in higher education as institutions seek cost-effective approaches to support diverse student populations (Topping & Ehly, 1998). When implemented through appropriate consultation frameworks (Topping & Ehly, 2001), peer tutoring in English language learning contexts can offer structured student-to-student academic support characterized by horizontal relationships that reduce anxiety and provide bidirectional benefits. Research consistently demonstrates positive outcomes, with meta-analyses revealing effect sizes ranging from 0.4 to 0.6 (Cohen et al., 1982; Rohrbeck et al., 2003), as well as improvements in accuracy, fluency, and authentic communication in second language learning contexts (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Liu & Hansen, 2002).

However, considerable differences in individual outcomes remain unexplained (Fuchs et al., 1997). Current research focuses primarily on standardized program interventions that examine direct tutoring–outcome relationships and whether consistent approaches similarly benefit students. However, this approach overlooks the influence of individual psychological factors, particularly learning beliefs, on differential effectiveness.

This variation becomes particularly significant in Japanese contexts, where cultural and educational backgrounds shape fundamental learning beliefs. Universal access to higher education has created student populations with widely varying academic preparation; by Grade 12, more than half of students (58%) find English difficult (Benesse Educational Research Institute, 2022). These differing backgrounds may fundamentally shape perceived

support needs, creating misalignment with peer tutoring approaches.

This pilot study addresses this gap by exploring the relationships between individual learning beliefs and expressed learning needs within sustained tutoring relationships in Japanese higher education, and by investigating belief–need patterns that could inform individualized tutoring approaches. Specifically, this study examines a peer tutoring program that implements Ichikawa’s Cognitive Counseling (CC) framework (Ichikawa, 1993, 2014), which systematically addresses learners’ metacognitive beliefs and learning strategies, distinguishing between cognitive beliefs (emphasizing elaborative processing and strategic learning) and non-cognitive beliefs (focusing on rote memorization and practice quantity).

Literature Review

Peer Tutoring Effectiveness and Individual Variation

While meta-analytic research consistently establishes the effectiveness of peer tutoring ($g = 0.480$) on college students’ academic performance (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2025), marked variations in individual outcomes have been recognized (Fuchs et al., 1997). Research on tutoring mechanisms suggests that effectiveness depends not only on pedagogical techniques but also on participants’ underlying cognitive orientations. Roscoe and Chi (2007) identified the cognitive mechanisms underlying tutor learning, suggesting that effective tutoring requires both knowledge-telling and knowledge-building processes, which are differentially accessible depending on epistemological orientations. While their work focused on tutors, it suggests that tutees’ beliefs may similarly influence their engagement and outcomes. Min (2006) and Liu and Hansen (2002) found that tutor–tutee matching and cultural background significantly affect effectiveness.

Learning Beliefs and Their Cultural Context

Among the various psychological factors that influence learning, this study focuses on learning beliefs because they function as perceptual filters that determine what learners

recognize as effective support (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). Unlike motivation or self-efficacy, beliefs shape learners' fundamental assumptions about what constitutes learning itself—whether learning requires understanding versus memorization or strategic thinking versus practice quantity. Beliefs demonstrate cultural embeddedness (Schommer, 1990) while remaining malleable through experiential evidence (Dweck, 2006), making peer tutoring contexts potentially powerful sites for belief evolution.

Students' beliefs about learning fundamentally influence their academic performance, strategy use, and help-seeking behaviors. Dweck's (2006) mindset theory and Schommer's (1990) work on epistemological beliefs established this foundational link. Ryan and Pintrich (1997) found that students who view abilities as developable are more open to seeking help. Hofer and Pintrich (1997) established that epistemological beliefs operate both as domain-general cognitive frameworks and domain-specific orientations. This distinction is particularly relevant in English learning contexts, where students may hold different beliefs about language acquisition compared to other academic domains (Muis et al., 2006).

Uesaka et al. (2009) refined this understanding by distinguishing between cognitive beliefs (elaborative processing and strategic learning) and non-cognitive beliefs (rote memorization and practice quantity) in Japanese settings. They demonstrated that students with learning difficulties often emphasize non-cognitive beliefs, suggesting that different belief orientations require fundamentally different support approaches.

Japanese educational traditions, particularly entrance examination systems, reinforce specific learning approaches that prioritize rote memorization, practice quantity, and test results (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017). This examination-focused pedagogy systematically shapes students' epistemological beliefs about what constitutes effective learning (Terasawa & Segawa, 2025). When students encounter peer tutoring contexts designed for collaborative process-oriented learning, their culturally shaped belief

systems may create fundamental misalignments between their perceived needs and the support approaches offered.

Theoretical Framework: Ichikawa's Cognitive Counseling in Peer Tutoring Contexts

Ichikawa's framework (Ichikawa, 1993, 2014) provides a systematic structure for understanding how belief orientations manifest as distinct learning–need expressions. The framework operates through three interconnected phases: (1) diagnosis of students' underlying beliefs about learning; (2) explanation of the connections between beliefs and current difficulties; and (3) reflection on how belief systems influence learning approaches.

The theoretical foundation rests on the distinction between two belief orientations. Cognitive beliefs emphasize elaborative processing, thinking processes, strategic learning, and productive use of failure. Non-cognitive beliefs focus on rote memorization, external results, practice quantity, and environmental factors. Students with cognitive beliefs tend to prioritize strategic learning and view errors as learning opportunities, whereas those with non-cognitive beliefs emphasize practice quantity and external validation (Uesaka et al., 2009).

Integrating Ichikawa's framework with peer tutoring raises a fundamental question: Should tutors align support with tutees' existing belief orientations, or guide learners toward more cognitively oriented beliefs? Alignment-focused approaches suggest matching support to learners' current epistemological frameworks (Uesaka et al., 2009), whereas transformation-focused approaches emphasize strategically challenging non-cognitive orientations (Dweck, 2006).

This tension is particularly relevant in peer tutoring, where tutees' belief systems shape what they perceive as helpful support. While originally designed for individual counseling, Ichikawa's framework, when adapted for peer tutoring, offers opportunities to examine how this tension exists within horizontal, collaborative relationships. Integrating Ichikawa's framework with Hofer and Pintrich's (1997) domain-specific epistemology and Roscoe and

Chi's (2007) knowledge-building mechanisms provides a foundation for understanding how belief orientations influence peer tutoring effectiveness.

This study addresses critical gaps: (1) limited examination of how belief systems influence peer tutoring effectiveness; (2) minimal research on cultural factors shaping support needs; and (3) insufficient application of learning-belief frameworks to peer tutoring. The study explores whether successful engagement emerges from belief-responsive alignment, transformative guidance, or dynamic combinations.

Method

Research Questions

This pilot study addresses the following three exploratory questions:

RQ1: What learning needs quantitatively and qualitatively characterize students who participated in peer tutoring over multiple sessions?

RQ2: How are individual belief systems (cognitive vs. non-cognitive) associated with the prioritization and expression of these learning needs?

RQ3: What configurations ¹⁾ of beliefs, needs, and goals are observable among participants, and how do these inform hypotheses for future research on individualized tutoring approaches?

Research Design and Setting

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design integrates quantitative code-frequency analysis with qualitative theme extraction (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The design proceeded in two phases: (1) quantitative coding generated frequency distributions (Tables 2–4) identifying prevalent need patterns and distinctive belief–need combinations; and (2) qualitative analysis explained these patterns by examining how participants articulated belief–need connections. Integration occurred through purposeful case selection based on distinctive quantitative patterns.

This study was conducted at a private university in western Japan. The peer tutoring program offers 45-minute individual consultations to implement the CC framework. Ten trained student tutors (second–fourth year) provided consultations based on scheduling availability, and all received identical training to ensure consistency.

The tutors implemented three steps: (1) exploring the tutees’ beliefs through guided questioning, (2) connecting beliefs to current difficulties, and (3) facilitating reflection on how beliefs influence learning approaches. The sessions were conducted in Japanese, with tutors documenting belief expressions and needs.

Participants

The participants were recruited through announcements made during peer tutoring sessions and follow-up emails sent to students attending multiple sessions. Eight students volunteered to participate and provided informed consent. All interviews were conducted after the participants had completed their tutoring sessions for the academic term.

Eight tutees participated in this study (Table 1). The sample included six freshmen and two sophomores, reflecting varying session attendance (4–14 sessions).

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Participant	Year	Enrollment Status	Sessions	Interview Date
P01	Freshman	Regular	4	Feb. 2022
P02	Freshman	Regular	14	Feb. 2022
P03	Freshman	Regular	10	Feb. 2022
P04	Freshman	Regular	10	Feb. 2022
P05	Freshman	Regular	9	Feb. 2022
P06	Freshman	Regular	8	Feb. 2023
P07	Sophomore	Regular/Retake	4/5	Jan. 2024
P08	Sophomore	Retake	5	Jan. 2024

Note. P07 attended four sessions during the initial course of enrollment and five sessions while retaking the course.

The selection criterion for sustained engagement (defined as 4–14 sessions) means that the findings broadly reflect successful tutor–tutee matching rather than peer tutoring experiences overall. Students who discontinued after initial sessions were excluded. Consequently, this study describes belief–need configurations observable among sustained participants but cannot identify factors distinguishing continued from discontinued participation. This approach prioritizes depth of understanding of successful engagement over breadth of representation. Readers should interpret the findings as characterizing sustained participants specifically rather than peer tutoring users generally.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews (approximately 40–60 minutes) were based on Ichikawa’s CC framework and followed a structured protocol with core questions addressing three domains: (1) beliefs about effective English learning (e.g., “What do you think is most important for improving English?”), (2) learning needs, self-perceptions, and motivation (e.g., “What kind of support did you need?”), and (3) tutoring experiences and perceived changes (e.g., “Did your study methods change through the consultations?”). Follow-up probes explored the responses in depth, particularly regarding changes in beliefs, methods, and motivations.

All sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Key quotations were preserved in their original Japanese forms with English translations (see Appendix B). The first author translated all quotations, and the second author verified the translations for accuracy. Both authors are specialists in English education. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

Data Analysis

The data analysis employed a systematic framework using *Taguette*, a free, open-source software for coding.

Phase 1: Codebook Development

An integrated codebook was developed through iterative hybrid coding, combining

deductive codes from Ichikawa's framework with inductive codes from the eight transcripts. The initial 28-code framework was refined by consolidating overlapping categories, resulting in 13 codes across six categories (see Appendix A, Table A1).

Phase 2: Initial Coding

The transcripts were systematically coded. Segments were defined as meaning units, that is, semantically complete expressions of a single need or belief. Segment boundaries were determined using three criteria: (1) topic shifts in the type of need or belief expressed; (2) prompt boundaries of the interviewer; and (3) semantic completeness.

Within-segment repetitions were coded only once. Cross-context recurrences (i.e., the same needs or beliefs in different conversational contexts) were coded separately to reflect salience. Examples are provided in Appendix C.

Belief indicators (BI.01 Cognitive, BI.02 Non-cognitive, BI.03 Mixed) were coded according to Ichikawa's framework (see Appendix A). Participant-level belief orientation was determined through frequency dominance (≥ 2 -segment difference) and qualitative assessment of experiential salience. Balanced frequencies or belief integration indicated mixed (BI.03) orientations.

Phase 3: Thematic Clustering

Coded data were clustered into themes based on depth of meaning, experiential significance, and consistency (Braun & Clarke, 2006), leading to the development of learner configurations.

Phase 4: Reliability Testing

Intra-rater reliability was assessed through test–retest coding of 30% of the randomly selected transcripts (P02, P06, P07) three weeks after initial coding. The coder independently read the transcripts and identified segments without reference to the first coding round. Rounds 1 and 2 identified 87 and 88 segments, respectively. A total of 72 segments demonstrated positional agreement, resulting in a segment identification agreement rate of

81.8% (72/88).

For the 72 positionally matched segments, the unit of analysis was a segment-level code assignment, with codes treated as single-label, mutually exclusive categories. Among these, 56 segments received identical codes, yielding an observed agreement (p_o) of 77.8% (56/72). We calculated a “simplified” Cohen’s kappa, defined in this study as the kappa coefficient computed exclusively for segments with positional agreement. This approach isolates coding consistency from unitizing (segmentation) reliability. Based on a 13×13 contingency table and standard chance-agreement assumptions, the resulting kappa value was $k = .74$, indicating substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

A segment identification agreement rate of 81.8% indicates good reliability in determining segment boundaries, whereas the code assignment agreement rate of 77.8% reflects moderate consistency in applying the codebook definitions to the identified segments. The absence of an inter-rater reliability assessment is acknowledged as a methodological limitation, as single-coder analysis increases the risk of bias. Inconsistencies in both segment identification and code assignment were resolved through systematic examination with reference to codebook definitions and discourse contexts.

Phase 5: Pattern Analysis

Cross-case analysis integrates quantitative frequency data with qualitative typologies to examine belief–need relationships.

Belief–Need Relationship Analysis

The analysis examined how code-frequency distributions are related to three belief indicators—Cognitive (BI.01), Non-cognitive (BI.02), and Mixed (BI.03)—mapping onto different learning-need expressions. This integration of qualitative depth and quantitative breadth enables the identification of patterns across learners while accounting for their underlying experiences.

Ethical Considerations

This study received approval from the Institutional Review Board, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, and all data were anonymized to protect confidentiality.

Results

Analysis of the eight interview transcripts yielded 250 coded segments (201 need expressions and 49 belief indicators).

RQ1: Learning Needs of Multi-Session Participants

The multi-session peer tutoring participants expressed 201 need instances distributed across five categories (Table 2). Process-methodological ($n = 47$) and emotional-relational ($n = 44$) needs together represented 91 coded segments, suggesting that strategic and relational aspects accounted for nearly half of what multi-session participants sought from peer tutoring. The three most frequent individual codes—ER.01 Interpersonal Relations ($n = 28$), PM.01 Learning Strategies ($n = 27$), and PE.01 Confidence & Motivation ($n = 25$)—suggest that participants sought support beyond content mastery.

Table 2

Learning Need Distribution (N = 201 coded segments)

Need Category	Frequency	Individual Codes
Process & Method (PM)	47	PM.01 Learning Strategies ($n = 27$) PM.02 Individual Support ($n = 20$)
Environmental & Relational (ER)	44	ER.01 Interpersonal Relations ($n = 28$) ER.02 System & Resources ($n = 16$)
Psychological & Emotional (PE)	41	PE.01 Confidence & Motivation ($n = 25$) PE.02 Anxiety Reduction ($n = 16$)
Goal & Purpose (GP)	38	GP.01 Short/Mid-term Goals ($n = 21$) GP.02 Long-term Goals ($n = 17$)
Content & Skill (CS)	31	CS.01 Basic Knowledge ($n = 20$) CS.02 Applied Skills ($n = 11$)
Total	201	

Note. Learning needs expressed by eight participants across sustained peer tutoring

engagements (4–14 sessions). Code definitions are provided in Table A1 of Appendix A.

Themes

Four primary themes characterized learning needs:

Theme 1: Peer Relationship as Universal Facilitator (ER.01, n = 28)

The peer structure emerged as the most frequently expressed need. Learners consistently emphasized reduced hierarchical distance, creating comfortable questioning environments. As P03 articulated, starting without the teacher–student wall enabled more open communication.

Theme 2: Learning Strategy Development (PM.01, n = 27)

Substantial needs emerged for learning strategies beyond coursework, including memorization techniques, time management approaches, and personalized study methods.

Theme 3: Confidence Building (PE.01, n = 25)

Positive emotional shifts followed peer tutoring sessions, reduced perceived difficulty, and increased self-efficacy.

Theme 4: Goal-Oriented Content Focus (GP.01 and CS.01, n = 41 combined)

Despite developmental needs, immediate goals and content mastery remained central. Participants sought support for test preparation and content clarification, balancing performance requirements with broader learning goals.

RQ2: Belief Systems and Learning–Needs Relationships

Belief Indicator Distribution

The analysis yielded 49 belief indicators distributed across three categories (Table 3), indicating epistemological diversity among multi-session peer tutoring users.

The nearly equal distribution of BI.02 ($n = 19$) and BI.03 ($n = 18$) suggests that the multi-session participants maintained practice-based foundations while developing integrated epistemologies. Individual participant profiles showed heterogeneity: four participants

exhibited BI.03-dominance or balance, three showed BI.02 dominance, and all participants expressed at least two types of belief indicators.

Table 3

Belief Indicator Distribution

Belief Indicator	Frequency	Orientation
BI.02 Non-cognitive Beliefs	19	Practice-based, repetition-focused
BI.03 Mixed Beliefs	18	Integrated, adaptive strategies
BI.01 Cognitive Beliefs	12	Understanding-oriented, meaning-making
Total	49	

Note. Eight participants provided belief indicators. All participants expressed at least two types of belief indicators, demonstrating epistemological heterogeneity.

Table 4

Individual Participant Need Code Distribution

Code	P01	P02	P03	P04	P05	P06	P07	P08	Total
Content & Skill									
CS.01	3	4	2	3	4	2	2	0	20
CS.02	2	1	2	2	0	2	0	2	11
Environmental & Relational									
ER.01	3	4	5	3	3	3	4	3	28
ER.02	2	3	2	2	3	3	0	1	16
Goal & Purpose									
GP.01	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	21
GP.02	2	1	1	4	3	4	1	1	17
Psychological & Emotional									
PE.01	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	2	25
PE.02	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	16
Process & Method									
PM.01	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	27
PM.02	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	4	20
Total	25	29	27	28	27	24	21	20	201

Note. This table displays the frequency distribution of need codes across individual participants, enabling examination of individual variation in need-expression patterns. Values represent the number of coded segments for each subcategory for each participant. Code definitions are provided in Table A1 of Appendix A.

Pattern Identification Approach

To explore potential belief–need relationships, individual code–frequency distributions (Table 4) were examined in conjunction with the qualitative interview content. Rather than applying arbitrary frequency thresholds, patterns were identified through iterative cross-case comparisons, focusing on cases in which certain need categories appeared to be notably concentrated among participants with particular belief orientations. Pattern identification integrates quantitative distributions with qualitative interpretation of how participants articulated connections between their beliefs and needs. Given the small sample size ($n = 8$), these patterns represent tentative rather than statistically validated relationships.

Systematic Belief–Need Relationship Patterns

A cross-case examination suggested two tentative patterns linking belief indicators to need expressions, with a third pattern showing weaker evidence.

Pattern 1: Cognitive Beliefs and Conceptual Learning Needs

Participants expressing BI.01 beliefs showed elevated CS.01 codes focused on meaning clarification and structural understanding (e.g., P02, P05: CS.01 = 4). These learners sought conceptual scaffolding to enable self-directed application.

Pattern 2: Non-Cognitive Beliefs and Repetition-Based Support Needs

Participants with BI.02 beliefs showed concentrated PM codes focused on optimizing practice efficiency (e.g., P03: PM.01 = 4; P08: PM.02 = 4). These learners sought optimized practice structures and immediate feedback rather than explanatory teaching.

Pattern 3 (Exploratory): Mixed Beliefs and Flexible Individualized Needs

Participants with BI.03 beliefs showed more varied need distributions across categories. While some emphasis on PM.02 Individual Support was observed (e.g., P04: PM.02 = 3), this pattern was less consistent than Patterns 1 and 2. These learners appeared to seek responsive and personalized instruction, adapting to multimodal preferences and contextual constraints, although further research with larger samples is required to confirm this tentative observation.

Integration: From Needs and Beliefs to Configurations

The RQ1 and RQ2 findings indicate complementary dimensions of sustained engagement. Learning needs extended across five categories, with process-methodological ($n = 47$) and emotional-relational ($n = 44$) needs nearly equaling content-focused needs ($n = 31$). RQ2 suggests that these needs may be systematically patterned by belief orientations, with cognitive beliefs appearing to be linked to conceptual understanding needs, non-cognitive beliefs to practice optimization, and mixed beliefs to individualized support approaches.

Critically, belief–need relationships appeared bidirectional: beliefs filter which needs become salient, while peer tutoring responses reshape belief systems through experiential evidence. This dynamic suggests that ongoing involvement emerges not from isolated factors but from coherent configurations that integrate belief orientations, need expressions, and learning goals. RQ3 examines whether such configurations can be identified within the participant sample and what patterns characterize sustained peer tutoring users.

RQ3: Observable Learner Configurations Among Multi-Session Participants

Building on the integrated understanding of needs and belief–need relationships, thematic clustering identified two consistent configurations and one individual pattern (Table 5). Given $n = 8$, these represent hypothesis-generating observations rather than established typologies.

Configuration 1: Pragmatic Credential-Seekers ($n = 3$)

Three participants (P03, P07, and P08) demonstrated grade-focused, crisis-driven patterns of strategic peer tutoring use. Their motivation centered on credit acquisition, generating concentrated GP.01 codes and elevated PE.02 codes. These participants displayed instrumental belief adaptation, adopting approaches proven to be efficient for their grades. Outcomes were centered on anxiety reduction through grade security.

Configuration 2: Future-Oriented Skill Builders ($n = 4$)

Four participants (P01, P02, P04, and P05) exhibited career-focused and

developmentally oriented patterns. Their motivation connected English with future instrumental goals beyond immediate requirements. These participants exhibited belief system expansion and added new approaches to existing frameworks. Peer tutoring focused on capacity building and relationship investment. Outcomes encompassed immediate performance improvement and the development of long-term capabilities.

Table 5

Observable Learner Configurations and Individual Pattern (Exploratory, n = 8)

Configuration	n	Participants	Belief Pattern	Primary Needs	Key Features
Pragmatic Credential-Seekers	3	P03, P07, P08	Initially BI.02-dominant, showing flexibility	GP.01, PE.02, PM.02	Crisis-driven, belief-flexible
Future-Oriented Skill Builders	4	P01, P02, P04, P05	BI.03 or balanced across types	GP.02, PM.01, ER.01	Career-focused, developmental
Intrinsically Motivated Learners	1	P06	BI.02-based with selective integration	CS.02, GP.02, ER.01	Identity-driven, experiential

Note. These configurations represent exploratory observations from thematic clustering ($n = 8$) and require validation with larger samples. Configurations 1 and 2 show consistency across multiple participants, whereas Pattern 3 represents a coherent but single-case observation documented as a hypothesis for future investigation. See Appendix B for detailed profiles.

Individual Pattern 3: Intrinsically Motivated Learners (n = 1)

One participant (P06) displayed a distinct pattern characterized by intrinsic motivation and identity-integrated learning. Engagement stemmed from personal interests and aspirations to study abroad. This pattern suggested belief stability with selective refinement, maintaining strong BI.02 foundations. Peer tutoring focused on cultural exchange and experiential learning, with outcomes centered on identity development.

Although coherent, the single-case limitation prevented this pattern from being proposed as a distinct configuration. This observation is presented as a hypothesis for future

studies.

Discussion

This pilot study explored how learning beliefs relate to support needs among Japanese university students sustaining peer tutoring engagement (4–14 sessions). The study identified multidimensional need patterns, potential belief–need relationships, and two configurations alongside one individual pattern, contributing preliminary insights toward understanding individual variation in peer tutoring effectiveness.

Principal Findings and Theoretical Contributions

The findings provide preliminary insights into how beliefs and needs interact to shape sustained engagement. RQ1 suggests that learning needs extend beyond content mastery. Process and Method (PM, $n = 47$) and Environmental and Relational (ER, $n = 44$) needs together represent 91 of the 201 coded segments, with ER.01 Interpersonal Relations ($n = 28$) emerging as the single most frequent code. This multidimensionality suggests that assumptions that struggling students primarily require content remediation may be overly narrow, potentially explaining why standardized interventions produce variable outcomes (Fuchs et al., 1997): programs emphasizing single dimensions may not fully address the comprehensive support requirements necessary for continued participation.

The analysis of belief–need relationships (RQ2) indicates potential patterns. Two patterns show relative consistency (cognitive to conceptual, non-cognitive to repetition-based), whereas a third pattern (mixed to flexible) requires further investigation with larger samples. These patterns suggest that beliefs may function as perceptual filters that determine which forms of support are recognized as helpful. This filtering mechanism may help explain Liu and Hansen’s (2002) finding that cultural backgrounds create differential effectiveness: culturally shaped beliefs may systematically influence the support approaches students find valuable.

Critically, the analysis suggests two distinct functional roles of peer tutoring in relation

to learners' belief systems. For some learners, particularly those with initially strong BI.02 orientations, peer tutoring appeared to function as a belief catalyst, introducing contradictory evidence that facilitated epistemological evolution (e.g., P03's shift from "memorization by force" to "understanding-based memorization"). For other learners, peer tutoring appeared to function as a belief validator, confirming existing effective beliefs. These dual functions suggest that belief–need relationships operate bidirectionally, with peer tutoring responses potentially iteratively reshaping belief systems.

The nearly equal distribution of non-cognitive ($n = 19$) and mixed ($n = 18$) beliefs among the sustained participants challenges the assumption that only students with cognitive beliefs benefit from peer tutoring. Here, "benefit" is operationalized as sustained engagement (4–14 sessions), indicating perceived value rather than measured learning outcomes. This pattern suggests that multi-session participation may emerge when tutoring approaches flexibly accommodate diverse belief orientations while facilitating gradual evolution rather than requiring initial cognitive orientations.

The thematic clustering of participants (RQ3) identified two consistent configurations and one individual pattern, each representing a coherent combination of belief orientations, need expressions, and learning goals. Future-Oriented Skill Builders ($n = 4$) exhibited developmental engagement characterized by belief expansion and a capacity-building orientation, resembling Ryan and Pintrich's (1997) concept of adaptive help-seeking. Pragmatic Credential-Seekers ($n = 3$) displayed crisis-intervention patterns with instrumental belief flexibility, suggesting that even non-cognitive beliefs may not preclude effectiveness when support is aligned with crisis-driven urgency. The individual pattern observed in one participant suggests the potential existence of intrinsically motivated, identity-integrated learning approaches, although this requires validation with additional cases. These configurations indicate that effective support requires recognizing coherent patterns rather than addressing isolated dimensions.

The findings must be interpreted within the context of Japanese higher education, where entrance examination traditions systematically shape belief orientations (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017). The prevalence of non-cognitive beliefs among sustained participants likely reflects this cultural-educational legacy. Importantly, the finding that students with strong non-cognitive orientations sustain engagement suggests that deficit interpretations may be inappropriate, indicating that these beliefs represent culturally shaped epistemologies that can be productively engaged when tutoring approaches provide appropriate entry points. However, this cultural specificity limits direct generalizability to Western systems emphasizing discovery learning, which may produce different belief distributions.

Practical Implications

The two configurations inform differentiated tutor-training approaches, although implementation requires validation. Tutors can develop diagnostic capabilities and adaptive repertoires for appropriate support. For Pragmatic Credential-Seekers, tutors can prioritize efficiency and connect learning to immediate goals. For Future-Oriented Skill Builders, tutors can emphasize exploratory learning and model metacognitive strategies. Culturally situated experiential learning may be beneficial for intrinsically motivated learners.

Belief-responsive session structuring may adapt to tutees' orientations while strategically introducing productive epistemological disruptions. P03's evolution illustrates this principle: tutors initially provided practice-focused support aligned with non-cognitive beliefs and then introduced understanding-based approaches through experiential evidence, catalyzing belief evolution.

At the institutional level, programs should consider brief belief-orientation assessments to enable strategic tutor-tutee matching, differentiated session formats, and evaluation of belief evolution alongside academic outcomes.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. These substantially constrain the interpretive scope and require transparent acknowledgment.

Sample Size and Selection Bias

The eight-participant sample enables intensive qualitative exploration but precludes statistical generalization. The configurations identified are based on thematic patterns, and the single-participant pattern lacks an empirical foundation. The frequency distributions (Table 2) describe the specific dataset but cannot be extrapolated to broader populations. Additionally, focusing exclusively on sustained participants (4–14 sessions) creates a fundamental selection bias. This study describes belief–need configurations associated with successful engagement but cannot identify factors predicting early disengagement. The belief–need patterns identified in RQ2 rest on cross-case qualitative comparisons rather than statistical analysis. Although Table 4 provides transparency regarding individual code distributions, the patterns represent interpretive observations that require validation through systematic quantitative analysis with larger samples.

Methodological Constraints

The single-coder analysis lacks inter-rater validation and increases the risk of systematic bias. The test–retest reliability assessment revealed good segment consistency (81.8% agreement) and substantial code-assignment agreement ($k = .74$). Although acceptable for exploratory research, these indices underscore the need for inter-rater validation and codebook refinement.

The retrospective, cross-sectional interview design captured reflective accounts rather than real-time dynamics, introducing potential recall bias and post-hoc rationalization. Although participants were asked to reflect on changes in their beliefs and study methods through tutoring, the single-time-point design prevents verification of the timing or sequence of these changes through direct observation. Future research employing longitudinal

measurements at multiple points throughout the tutoring process would enable more precise tracking of belief evolution.

The lack of session observations prevents verification of participants' self-reported experiences, and the absence of outcome assessment means that it is not possible to examine whether different configurations achieve different learning gains. The program's scheduling-based tutor assignment means that tutees may work with multiple tutors. While this reduces tutor-specific effects, it may limit sustained relationships, thereby constraining opportunities for deeper belief exploration.

Future Research Directions

Future research should employ larger samples ($n \geq 50$), include discontinued participants, track belief evolution longitudinally, verify inter-rater reliability, observe sessions directly, measure learning outcomes, and replicate findings across cultural contexts.

Conclusion

This exploratory study examined the relationship between learning beliefs and support needs among eight Japanese university students sustaining peer tutoring engagement. While substantial methodological limitations—particularly small sample size, selection bias, and single-coder analysis—preclude definitive conclusions, the findings generate several hypotheses that warrant systematic investigation.

First, sustained participants expressed multidimensional needs extending beyond content mastery, with process-methodological and emotional-relational dimensions appearing particularly prominent. Second, the preliminary analysis suggested possible associations between belief orientations and need-expression patterns, although causal relationships remain unestablished. Third, thematic clustering suggested two potentially replicable learner configurations—Pragmatic Credential-Seekers and Future-Oriented Skill Builders—along with individual variations that require further study.

If validated through larger samples employing statistical clustering and longitudinal

designs, these patterns could inform differentiated tutor-training approaches. Rather than treating diverse belief orientations as deficiencies requiring correction, peer tutoring programs should develop diagnostic capabilities to identify learner configurations and adaptive repertoires to provide appropriately differentiated support.

These findings are presented not as established conclusions but as hypothesis-generating observations that map directions for future investigation. As higher education serves an increasingly diverse population, understanding individual variation in the effectiveness of peer tutoring has become critical. This pilot study suggests that belief–need alignment may constitute a factor influencing sustained engagement, offering tentative findings as a preliminary contribution to a research agenda requiring substantial further development.

Notes

- 1) In this exploratory study, “learner configuration” refers to coherent, recurring combinations of belief orientations, need expressions, and learning goals observed within individual cases. Unlike validated typologies derived from statistical clustering, these configurations represent thematic patterns identified through qualitative analysis of a small sample ($n = 8$). “Configurations” (multidimensional belief–need–goal combinations characteristic of individual learners) are distinguished from “patterns” (specific belief–need relationships observable across cases).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Codebook and Analysis Framework

Table A1

Integrated Codebook for Learning Needs and Belief Indicators

Code	Subcode	Definition	Application Examples
CS: Content & Skill Needs	CS.01: Basic Knowledge	Needs to understand and consolidate fundamental English elements such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation	“I want to solidify grammar basics”; “I want to improve my pronunciation”
	CS.02: Applied Skills	Needs to apply acquired basic knowledge to practical skills, such as reading comprehension and communication	“I want to be able to read English texts”; “I want to use what I’ve learned in real life”
PM: Process & Method Needs	PM.01: Learning Strategies	Needs to find suitable learning methods, plan learning systematically, and self-evaluate or adjust learning progress	“I don’t know how to study”; “I don’t know which learning method suits me”
	PM.02: Individual Support	Needs for detailed support tailored to individual learning levels and characteristics	“I want to proceed according to my understanding level”; “I want to proceed step by step”
PE: Psychological & Emotional Needs	PE.01: Confidence & Motivation	Needs to build confidence in learning and maintain motivation	“I want successful experiences”; “I want to learn enjoyably”
	PE.02: Anxiety Reduction	Needs to alleviate negative attitudes toward English learning and fear of making mistakes	“I’m afraid of making mistakes and can’t speak”; “I want to learn without tension”
ER: Environmental & Relational Needs	ER.01: Interpersonal Relations	Needs to build trusting relationships with instructors and peers, seeking relationships that allow comfortable learning	“It’s easy to talk because they’re fellow students”; “An atmosphere where questions are easy to ask”
	ER.02: System & Resources	Needs related to physical and institutional aspects, such as systems, time, places, and materials that support learning	“An easily accessible environment”; “Materials are insufficient”
GP: Goal & Purpose Needs	GP.01: Short and Medium- term Goals	Specific learning goals to be achieved on a semester or yearly basis	“I want to get good test scores”; “I want to secure credits”
	GP.02: Long-term & Development Goals	Goals related to long-term prospects, such as future career, life, or supporting others	“I want to study abroad”; “I want to get used to international environments”
BI: Belief Indicators	BI.01: Cognitive Beliefs	Statements showing strategic learning views that emphasize understanding, logic, and process	“I want to understand why it’s like that”; “I want to think of efficient methods”
	BI.02: Non-cognitive Beliefs	Statements showing practical learning views that emphasize memorization, practice quantity, and results	“Just practice a lot and it’ll be fine”; “If I memorize a lot, I’ll manage somehow”
	BI.03: Mixed & Adaptive Beliefs	Flexible statements showing different learning views depending on the situation or containing elements of both	“I use different approaches depending on the situation”; “My way of thinking has changed”

Note. This codebook was developed through iterative hybrid coding, combining deductive codes from the CC framework with inductive codes from eight interview transcripts. The initial 28-code framework was refined through consolidation of overlapping categories, resulting in the final 13 codes across six categories. Code notation (e.g., CS.01, PM.01) aligns with usage in the main text.

Appendix B: Individual Learner Profiles

Table B1

Individual Profiles and Exemplar Quotations by Participant

P#	Learner Configuration	Prominent Needs	Key Qualitative Themes and Representative Quotations
P01	Future-Oriented Skill Builder	ER.01 (4)	Visual Learning: 「図とかで説明されるとすごく理解がしやすかった」 (“It was easy to understand when explained with diagrams.”) Collaborative Approach: 「私と一緒にこう...同じ目線から一緒にやってくれて」 (“...worked with me from the same viewpoint.”)
P02	Future-Oriented Skill Builder	PE.01 (5), ER.01 (4), PM.01 (4), CS.01 (4)	Auditory Strategy: 「声に出して読んだ方が頭に入ってきた」 (“...helped me remember by reading out loud.”) Achievement Motivation: 「問題解けたらやっぱ嬉しいですし、あそこの達成感から」 (“I’m happy when I can solve a problem, and that sense of accomplishment motivates me.”)
P03	Pragmatic Credential-Seeker	ER.01 (5), PM.01 (4)	Grade-Focused Pragmatism: 「ただただ点数です」 (“It’s simply about scores.”) Peer Relationship Value: 「先生に聞くってなるとどうしても...硬くなりがちなんですよね...ただ学生ってなると」 (“Asking a teacher tends to be stiff... but with a student...”)
P04	Future-Oriented Skill Builder	PM.01 (4), GP.02 (4)	Strategic Flexibility: 「TOEIC だったら、書いて覚えるよりかは見て覚える方が」 (“For TOEIC, I think looking and remembering is better than writing.”) Long-term Vision: 「高得点でいい点数を取って卒業したいな」 (“I want to graduate with a good, high score.”)
P05	Future-Oriented Skill Builder	CS.01 (4), PM.01 (4)	Efficiency Orientation: 「圧倒的に効率がいいと思ってます...書いて15分かかっていたのが、5分くらいで終わったり」 (“I think it’s overwhelmingly more efficient... something that took 15 minutes writing now takes about 5 minutes.”) Visual-Structural Preference: 「図があった方が、その思い出そうとした時に思い出しやすい感じがします」 (“I find it easier to remember if there are diagrams.”)
P06	Intrinsically Motivated Learner	GP.02 (4)	Study Abroad Aspiration: 「私の場合だったら留学とかまでしてみたいのもあるんで、それに向けてちょっと英語を身につけたいな」 (“For me, I want to study abroad, so I want to acquire English skills for that purpose.”) Concrete Timeline: 「できれば今年ですね。来年度ですね。二年生のうちに」 (“If possible, this year. Next year. While I’m a sophomore.”)
P07	Pragmatic Credential-Seeker	None (max. 3 per category)	Crisis-Driven Motivation: 「いかんと単位が危なかった...これテストだけじゃ無理だなって思って行きました」 (“My credit was in danger, so I went, thinking I couldn’t manage just with tests.”) Repetition-Based Practice: 「ひたすらイヤホンで聞いて書いて違ったらもう1回書いての繰り返し」 (“Just listening with headphones, writing, and repeating if it was wrong.”)
P08	Pragmatic Credential-Seeker	PM.02 (4)	Authentic Communication Need: 「バーでバイトしてるんです...外人さんがもしカウンターに座ったとしたら、コミュニケーション取って」 (“I work at a bar... if a foreigner sits at the counter, I need to communicate.”) / Method Uncertainty: 「覚え方って言われてもそれが覚えてなくて、結局点数が取れてないから」 (“I don’t know how to memorize, so I can’t get good scores.”)

Note. Configuration classifications are based on thematic clustering analysis integrating belief

indicators, need patterns, and qualitative themes. Prominent needs are subcategories with notably elevated frequencies or qualitative emphasis. Representative quotations were selected to illustrate key characteristics of each participant's learning approach and belief orientation. All quotations are presented in the original Japanese with English translations.

Appendix C: Segmentation Examples

Examples from the interview transcripts (see Appendix B, Table B1) illustrate the segmentation rules described in Phase 2.

Example 1: Single Segment with Internal Contrast

P04 discussing study methods: 「TOEIC だったら、書いて覚えるよりかは見て覚える方が」 (“For TOEIC, I think looking and remembering is better than writing.”)

Decision: ONE segment (PM.01 Learning Strategies) – Although the statement includes an internal contrast (writing vs. looking), it expresses a single coherent strategic preference.

Example 2: Multiple Segments Due to Topic Shift

P02 discussing tutoring benefits: 「声に出して読んだ方が頭に入ってきた」 (“Reading out loud helped me remember”), followed by 「問題解けたらやっぱ嬉しいですし、あそこの達成感から」 (“I’m happy when I can solve problems, and that sense of accomplishment motivates me.”)

Decision: TWO segments—PM.01 (auditory learning strategy) and PE.01 (achievement motivation)—marked by a shift from methodological to psychological needs.

Example 3: Belief Evolution Within an Interview

P07 discussing dictation practice at different points in the interview:

Early mention (BI.02): 「ひたすらイヤホンで聞いて書いて違ったらもう 1 回書いての繰り返し」 (“Just listening with headphones, writing, and repeating if it was wrong.”)

Later reflection (BI.03): 「何回も聞いていくと、そのこういったんだなと思いながら書けるようになった」 (“By listening repeatedly, I became able to write while thinking ‘this is what they said.’”)

Decision: TWO segments with different belief codes. The first emphasizes mechanical repetition (BI.02), whereas the second reflects understanding-oriented practices (BI.03). Although both excerpts discuss dictation, they represent different epistemological orientations, illustrating how the same activity can be conceptualized differently and how belief articulation can evolve during reflective interviews.

Native English-speaking Teachers' Pragmatic Norms and Identities in Japan: A Narrative Analysis of ELF Workplace Discourse

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Abstract

This paper explores the extent to which in-service native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), working as members of an intercultural team at a Japanese university, embody pragmatic assumptions characteristic of English as a lingua franca (ELF) from a translingual perspective (Canagarajah, 2013). Drawing on narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2004), the study examines what pragmatic norms NESTs perceive as appropriate in relation to their identities, and how their orientations to language and communication emerge in the process of narrating workplace interactions. The findings reveal three main points: (1) although not always explicitly articulated, participants largely perceived conventional pragmatic norms as appropriate; (2) only those with hybrid translingual identities demonstrated greater agency in accommodating to diverse pragmatic norms; and (3) both translingual and monolingual orientations manifested not only in the content of the narratives but also in the process of narrative construction. Finally, the study provides implications for future research and ways for NESTs to challenge multilayered monolingual ideologies circulating within higher education in Japan.

Keywords: ELF, intercultural pragmatics, translingual identity, grounding, narrative analysis

Higher education in Japan is increasingly multicultural and multilingual. Since the launch of the Global 30 Project (MEXT, 2008), colleges and universities have been hiring more academics from outside Japan, accelerating the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF)¹

in higher education (Iino, 2019), within academic settings. ELF is aligned with translanguaging orientations (Canagarajah, 2013, 2018) due to its adaptability to diverse communicative contexts and purposes (Widdowson, 2017). Individuals with such orientations regard language norms as flexible, prioritizing a functional approach to meaning-making over rigid adherence to form (Zhang & Looney, 2024). On the other hand, pervasive monolingual ideologies privileging standard varieties of English, such as “native-speakerism” (Holliday, 2006) circulate in English language learning (ELL) and English language teaching (ELT) (Heller, 2010). Zhang and Looney (2024), drawing on Canagarajah (2013), describe these ideological perspectives as monolingual orientations, in which form is emphasized and named languages are understood as belonging to certain communities. Thus, ELT professionals in higher education are situated within these paradoxical orientations, constantly negotiating their identities along a continuum of these opposing orientations in their social interactions and teaching practices.

The pragmatic choices ELT professionals make in the workplace, and the way they interpret their interlocutors’ pragmatic choices, presumably reflect their underlying orientations toward English and communication, and their identities as English users and English teachers. Notably, business English as a lingua franca (BELF) research suggests that native English speakers (NESs) are less capable of accommodating to other speakers than non-native English-speakers (NNESSs) (e.g., Sweeney & Hua, 2010). However, little research explores whether multilingual native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) in non-English

contexts also dismiss accommodating to divergent pragmatic practices. This is a critical question because the extent to which NESTs embrace a plurality of pragmatic norms can significantly affect their teaching practices (Sifakis, 2019). By investigating NESTs' metapragmatic accounts of their intercultural workplace discourse, this study aims to uncover NESTs' deeply embedded pragmatic assumptions.

Literature Review

Pragmatics in ELF

Pragmatics has become a central focus of ELF research since around 2010. Taguchi and Roever (2017) define pragmatics as the link between linguistic forms and their use in social contexts to perform communicative acts (p. 3). In conventional L2 pragmatics, pragmatic behaviors and knowledge are often discussed within a framework of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic forms needed for communicative speech acts while sociopragmatics pertains to the social appropriateness of communicative behavior in relation to contextualized social norms. L2 learners are typically expected to adapt to the pragmatic norms of their target communities, which are often based on Inner Circle (English as a mother tongue) (Kachru, 1985) norms (e.g., Riddiford & Holmes, 2015). However, in ELF interactions, where pragmatic norms are undecided or unclear, determining whose sociocultural norms to follow becomes ambiguous. Taguchi and Ishihara's (2018) synthesis study of ELF pragmatics highlights several core competencies relevant to ELF communication among ELF speakers. According to them, a successful ELF pragmatic act involves speakers constantly adjusting not only their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources but also other linguistic and semiotic resources to the context and interlocutor in order to attain their communicative goals. Likewise, BELF speakers tend to be more open to cultural, linguistic, and pragmatic diversity

while effectively utilizing accommodation strategies. As part of these strategies, (B)ELF users engage in translanguaging to negotiate sociocultural differences (Cogo, 2016, 2020) and also effectively utilize parenthetical remarks, such as exemplifying, comparing, contrasting, and explaining, in order to ensure effective communication (Ishihara & Prado, 2021; Kaur, 2017).

While (B)ELF users' collaborative efforts in communication have been widely discussed, scholars have noted that the burden of linguistic accommodation often falls disproportionately on NNEs (Sweeney & Hua, 2010). Such imbalance raises important questions about the pragmatic assumptions held by NNEs in ELF contexts, yet this issue has received little scholarly attention. To address this gap, the author has employed a framework of "core common ground" and "emergent common ground" (Kecskes & Zhang, 2009, p. 331). Core common ground is constituted by prior community experience, such as conventions and common beliefs, while emergent common ground is created dynamically in communication. They are used together to create "a dialectical socio-cultural background for communication" (Kecskes & Zhang, 2009, p. 331). Successful pragmatic acts require both interlocutors to co-construct an emergent common ground because core common ground is often limited or absent in intercultural communication (Kecskes, 2014). In this view, interactants engage in the "grounding" process in which they update common ground and incorporate new information into it (Clark & Brennan, 1991). Skillful ELF interactants engage in grounding, locally negotiating pragmatic norms to ensure interactional robustness and rapport management.

The Interplay between Identities, Pragmatics, and Orientations to Language

This study considers identity to be multi-faceted, fluid, and dynamic, drawing on poststructuralist perspectives (Peirce, 1995). It is also considered discursively (re)constructed within particular professional, social, political, and cultural contexts (Duff & Uchida, 1997). In this respect, teachers navigate their identities in complex and paradoxical discourses,

situated in macro (societal), meso (institutional), and micro (social) contexts. Furthermore, language practices and identities are mutually constitutive. Pragmatic choices index and symbolize identities, which in turn influence pragmatic aspects of use. Indeed, studies suggest that L2 speakers intentionally diverge from perceived L2 pragmatic norms when encountering contradictory sociocultural norms while also negotiating their identities (e.g., Chen, 2022). This implies that successful ELF communication requires speakers to negotiate their multiple identities, in ways that allow them to engage in accommodation. However, there has been limited exploration into whether tensions arise when NESTs engage in ELF communication.

Furthermore, both pragmatic awareness and metapragmatic awareness are deemed indispensable for co-constructing mutual norms that are appropriate and acceptable in a given situation. The former is necessary to understand and negotiate meaning by taking into account the context and social factors of language use, while the latter refers to a higher-order awareness that allows for the conscious analysis and evaluation of the pragmatic behaviors and choices of oneself and others (Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2022). Ishihara (2024) discusses how multilingual speakers with metapragmatic awareness take functional orientations to pragmatics and effectively exercise multilingual agency². Ishihara et al. (2018) document examples of multilingual NESTs in Japan who exercise great awareness of local sociocultural practices and conform to them. They view this act of alignment as part of translingual practice.

The extent to which NESTs align with translingual pragmatic choices should be further explored. The present study aims to unveil the participants' emic perspectives toward pragmatic use in an academic workplace in Japan. The author pays special attention to how their ingrained pragmatic norms and identities are constructed in their narratives.

To achieve these aims, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What pragmatic norms are discursively constructed as appropriate in the participants' narratives?
2. How do the participants' evolving identities intersect with their pragmatic norms?
3. How are their orientations to the English language reflected in these narratives?

Methodology

Analytical Framework

The author applies Wenger's (1998) communities of practice (CoP) framework to the intercultural team in which the participants are enrolled (cf., Cogo, 2016; Ehrenreich, 2010). It embodies the three dimensions of CoP: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). Specifically, team members regularly met at university-affiliated self-access centers called "Global Commons" (GC), shared the objectives of enhancing learners' English proficiency and English language learning skills outside the classroom, and utilized shared linguistic resources including the names of the services and spaces that the GC provided.

The present study is also autoethnographic in nature because the author was a GC team member and either directly or indirectly experienced the social interactions within the GC. While some may argue that the author's position compromises her objectivity, her insider experience and insights offer a richer, more direct account of the CoP being studied (Poulos, 2021). In addition to her field observations, the primary data source for this study centers on interview narratives about interactional troubles involving interactional friction with participants' colleagues. This approach has been chosen because Zhang and Looney (2024) note the co-existence of monolingual and translingual orientations in interview narratives provided by Chinese bilinguals. They contend that monolingual orientations emerged in narratives associating prestige with Inner Circle English, particularly regarding accents, whereas translingual orientations surfaced in those valuing the multimodal use of semiotic

resources and an openness to diversity in their day-to-day workplace interaction; thus, these orientations were topic-dependent. One limitation is that they primarily examined the content of their narratives, which may not have fully revealed latent and deep-seated norms and ideologies beyond conscious awareness.

Narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2004; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012) is employed to uncover the participants' explicit and implicit pragmatic norms, which reflect their underlying sociocultural norms (Hill, 2005), and emerging identities. Bamberg (2004) conceptualizes narratives as interactional practices where storytellers evaluate and reconstruct storied worlds in the here and now; accordingly, this study distinguishes between the storied world and the storytelling world. Building on this distinction, the participants' narratives are examined as ELF interactions co-constructed between the interviewer and the interviewees in the storytelling world. Investigating how, why, when, and where narrators use language to construct their stories and position themselves relative to the other characters enables the identification of the participants' evaluative stances towards the diverse sociocultural norms presented in their narratives.

More specifically, this study employs positioning analysis (Bamberg, 1997, 2004, 2006) that operates on three levels of identity construction within narratives. Level 1 examines how the characters are positioned in relation to one another. Level 2 considers how speakers position themselves against the actual or imagined audience. Finally, level 3 explores how narrators claim to be true or relevant to the normative discourses beyond their local contexts.

The study also draws on the small story perspective (Bamberg, 2004; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) because small stories (used as an umbrella term) provide important insights into the identities that emerge, are negotiated, and are reconstructed in the process of narrative construction. It highlights not only traditional big stories but also the relatively

smaller units of telling. Examples include “tellings of ongoing events,” “future or hypothetical events,” “shared events,” “allusions to (previous) tellings,” “deferrals of tellings,” and “refusals to tell” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 116).

Table 1

Participants’ profiles and experiences

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country of origin	L1	L2	Position	L2 experience (with who)
Anthony	47	M	America	English	Japanese/Vietnamese	Full-time Learning Advisor	18 years (Japanese wife)
Luca	34	M	England	English	Japanese	Full-time Learning Advisor	13 years (former Japanese colleagues & wife)
Aiden	65	M	America	English	Japanese	Part-time teacher	26 years (Japanese students & wife)
Daniel	54	M	Canada	English	Japanese	Part-time teacher	27 years (Japanese colleagues & wife)
Jules	38	F	America	English	Japanese	Part-time teacher	3 years (a Japanese drama circle)
Mason	40	M	America	English	Japanese	Part-time teacher	13 years (Japanese friends & former Japanese colleagues)
Maverick	N/A	M	England	English	Japanese/French	Part-time teacher	30 years (Japanese classmates, teachers & colleagues)

Note. Learning Advisors were responsible for providing booked or drop-in language advising sessions for students whereas part-time teachers facilitated English-medium conversation practice in the GC conversation area.

Participants and Context

The data presented here are part of a larger autoethnographic case study examining how English speakers from Inner Circle, Outer Circle (English as an additional institutionalized

language), and Expanding Circle (EFL) contexts (Kachru, 1985) conceptualize appropriate pragmatic use within a multicultural team that operates an English language learning program in Japan. The program set English as the official medium of communication, and English was regularly used with both colleagues and students. As part of this broader study, Yamaguchi (2024) has shown how Japanese L2 users encounter challenges arising from pragmatic differences with their NEST colleagues. The present paper, on the other hand, focuses on seven Inner Circle NESTs (see Table 1) who were selected through purposeful sampling.

In addition to the seven NESTs, the project team included one NNEST from the Philippines, a Japanese Learning Advisor (the author) and two Japanese administrative staff at the time of data collection. All of them had English proficiency levels of CEFR C1 or higher. Because the author was a member of the team, she had already established a certain degree of rapport with the participants by the time of data collection. Moreover, having studied in Canada and the U.S., the author was already somewhat familiar with North American norms and conventions.

Data Collection

In 2019–2020, following a background survey, the author conducted in-depth individual semi-structured interviews with each participant in English. Informed consent was obtained and pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identities. The timing of the data collection was carefully planned to ensure that the participants could discuss their personal relational experiences with their colleagues in a more relaxed and open manner. The core interview questions were adapted from Murray (2017) (see Appendix A). The interview took place in an enclosed room or in the GC conversation area, ensuring that no one else was present for privacy. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. After transcribing the data, the author reviewed the recordings, focusing on narratives that addressed misunderstandings, miscommunications, and conflicts with their NNEST colleagues, based on the assumption that

less common ground existed. Narratives that were relevant to the research questions were then identified and extracted for further analysis.

Data Analysis

Initially, a content analysis of the participants’ narratives revealed that most pragmatic issues discussed in the interviews were sociopragmatic in nature, in line with results from prior research on L2 learners (e.g., Yates, 2010). Only one instance involved pragmalinguistic concerns. Unexpectedly, the pragmatic differences between NESTs and NNESs were not as salient as those between NESTs themselves (see Table 2). The two full-time Learning Advisors, Anthony and Luca, who had more frequent interactions with NNES colleagues, exceptionally reported a few cases of miscommunication. This implies that (1) differences in pragmatic norms between NESTs and NNESs did not significantly disrupt ELF communication within the focal CoP; or (2) whereas NNES colleagues may have perceived pragmatic issues, NESTs failed to recognize them because of the asymmetrical power dynamics that positioned them in a superior role.

Table 2

Participants’ references to communication-related problems

	With NNES colleagues	With NESTs
Anthony	yes	yes
Luca	yes	yes
Aiden	no	yes
Daniel	no	no
Jules	no	yes
Mason	no	no
Maverick	no	no

Note. “Yes” denotes that the participant mentioned misunderstandings, non-understandings, and other communication-related conflicts, whereas “No” denotes that they did not.

To examine these possibilities, the following sections will present a detailed analysis of interview extracts from Anthony, Luca, and Mason. Due to space limitations, the author selectively discusses the interactional troubles recounted by them because the levels of their metapragmatic awareness and their orientations showed a clear contrast.

A NEST with More Evidence of Translingual Orientations

Anthony's narratives displayed a translingual orientation, demonstrating his willingness to accommodate to diverse pragmatic norms. His narratives often signaled a "sociocultural in-betweenness" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 3), defined as a strategic capacity to shuttle between diverse cultural communities. For example, Excerpt 1 demonstrates Anthony's position as an intercultural mediator. Uniquely among all of the seven participants, he was the only one to describe a miscommunication that occurred among his colleagues. He recounts a conflict involving humor, a sociocultural pragmatic strategy, between the NEST director, Max (pseudonym), originally from the U.S., and Japanese assistant managers responsible for administrative management at the GC.

Excerpt 1

A: Anthony I: Interviewer (author)

- 1 A and so that (.) there's a couple interesting things about that
2 I mean obviously he's trying to use humor to relax them
3 but they're not familiar with that
4 I m-hm
5 A strategy and you're fired is very strong language
6 he also said it in front of other people
7 I right
8 A which made them feel embarrassed
9 I [m-hm
10 A [and they didn't know how to react to it
11 I m-hm
12 A so::and I think (.) so there's a lot of interesting things
13 happening (.) there
14 but I think one of his problems (.) was that

15 he didn't recognize that
16 I actually told him this
17 I m-hm
18 A we met after work one time
19 and I explained that this was really upsetting
20 to both assistant managers
21 and (.) apparently he stopped doing it after that
22 I m-hm
23 A but he didn't realize (.) so: I felt like
24 he was not very good at understanding people's feelings
25 I m-hm
26 A and (.) how to adjust his communication

In line 1, Anthony begins a story with “so,” signaling that a significant point is about to be made (Bolden, 2009). He then evaluates the misunderstanding among colleagues as “interesting.” In lines 2-10, he explains that the sarcastic humor, “you’re fired³,” Max said to relax the administrative staff was unintentionally taken literally, thereby upsetting them. Anthony identifies the sociopragmatic problem of timing, noting that Max “said it in front of other people” (line 6). This shows Anthony’s metapragmatic awareness that the joke threatened the face of the administrative staff, particularly because the Japanese students working part-time nearby might also interpret it literally. In these lines, Anthony employs accommodation strategies of comparing and explaining to illustrate both perspectives: Max’s intent behind the “you’re fired” joke, assumed to be core common ground for Americans (line 2), and the Japanese colleagues’ interpretation (lines 3 & 8). In doing so, he provides a neutral evaluation of both sociocultural norms. In line 12, again prefacing with “so,” Anthony shifts to his understanding of the cause of the problem. He attributes it to the sociopragmatic inappropriateness of Max’s joke and Max’s inability to recognize this. He then inserts another small story (lines 16–20), in which he met Max after work to explain the Japanese colleagues’ frustration. From lines 21–26, in yet another small story, he recounts that Max subsequently

stopped using the joke, but still did not grasp the underlying causes of the problem—namely, his inability to interpret paralinguistic cues and adjust his communicative style.

Examining the interactional aspects, Anthony appears to carefully select his words while constructing the narrative, as indicated by brief pauses at regular intervals (lines 1, 12, 14, 21, & 26). In uttering his analysis on the cause of the problem, his use of hedges such as “I think” (lines 12 & 14), which function to make statements less absolute (Baumgarten & House, 2010), signals an objective, neutral, and unassertive stance, hinting at his position within a state of sociocultural in-betweenness. In addition, Anthony accommodates the interviewer’s use of the *kyowa* style (Mizutani, 1983), a discourse style characterized by short utterances and frequent back-channelling, typical of Japanese conversational norms. This can be seen as part of the emergent common ground co-constructed between Anthony and the interviewer in the interactional space.

Anthony appears to have developed his translingual practices through his teaching practices. A while after Excerpt 1, when asked how he had learned to understand paralinguistic cues, he attributed it to his earlier failures in interpreting the level of his students’ satisfaction with his lessons. Just before Excerpt 2, he recalls that although he initially assumed he was performing well, he eventually realized that his “students were not happy” with his lessons.

Excerpt 2

- 1 A and (.) so (.) that situation told me (.)
2 I’m not properly reading their their faces
3 I m-hm
4 A or their body languages
5 I right
6 A because they’re not happy
7 I m-hm
8 A so I thought (.) maybe unconsciously I thought

9 I have to do a better job of reading my students
10 to understand whether they're happy or not
11 I okay
12 A so maybe I tried I started to notice (.)

Again, by prefacing his statement with “so” (Bolden, 2009), Anthony signals that an important point is forthcoming. He admits that he had been unaware of paralinguistic resources such as facial expressions and body language (lines 2–4). He then explains that he came to recognize the importance of attending to his students’ paralinguistic cues in order to better gauge their satisfaction with his lessons, and that this realization ultimately enabled him to do so (lines 9–12). Crucially, he is not depicted as a teacher who imposes native-speaker norms, such as the expectation of proactively verbalizing opinions, but rather as one who accommodates himself to his students for communicative effectiveness. Examining the interactional aspects, Anthony’s narrative of this excerpt includes more pauses (lines 1, 8, & 12) and repetition (lines 2 & 8). This hints that he is reconstructing the story by deeply reflecting on and reinterpreting his experience in the here and now. Moreover, he does not negatively evaluate his students’ L1-based sociocultural norms, which discourage voicing disagreement with socially higher individuals (Ide et al., 1986). His use of the auxiliary verb “have to” (line 9) indexes a sense of responsibility as a teacher committed to meeting students’ needs, even if it requires suspending his own core common ground.

To summarize the analysis in Excerpts 1 and 2, in the first positioning level, Anthony is positioned as a teacher and professional whose translingual orientation developed through his teaching practices and who now employs it to mediate pragmatic gaps for colleagues. In the second positioning level, a successful ELF pragmatic act is observed in that he effectively uses accommodation strategies while shuttling across different linguacultural positions to co-construct narratives. Based on these, in the third level of positioning, Anthony is positioned as a translingual and hybrid individual who detaches himself from his L1 norms and engages in

“pragmatic translanguaging⁴” (Ishihara, 2024, p. 7) to achieve mutual understanding and rapport management.

A NEST with Less Evidence of Translingual Orientations

Luca’s narratives reflected less evidence of translingual orientations and metapragmatic awareness than Anthony’s. His accounts also illustrate how deeply monolingual ideologies can be internalized. Although he described himself as “very Japanese” in other parts of the interview, a closer examination of his narratives reveals the prominence of his British identity. In Excerpt 3, Luca describes a “miscommunication” that occurred between him and Haru (pseudonym), one of the Japanese assistant managers. Haru was an advanced L2 user in his 20s with a total of 11 months of study abroad experience in the U.K. and Australia. In the interview, Luca evaluated Haru’s manner of speaking with students at the GC counter as overly “strict.” According to Luca, Haru justified this “rude” behavior as a way of preparing students for unfriendly encounters in English-speaking countries.

Excerpt 3

L: Luca I: Interviewer (author)

1 L I was like okay that’s interesting
2 but I said what about beginner students (.) who are nervous?
3 you’re not considering the fact that they’re a student
4 this isn’t a real-world situation
5 this is a this is a construct
6 this is not a >real< place as such
7 we create the Global Commons
8 ah they might be nervous if you’re strict with them
9 or rude with them
10 the first time they come (.) they might not come again
11 I mm
12 L (.) and I guess it wasn’t quite a miscommunication as such
13 as (.) we both had completely polar opposite approaches to
14 students

In line 1, Luca represents Haru's justification as "interesting" in his reported thought, yet immediately overturns this evaluation in direct reported speech (lines 2–10). As Holt (2000) explains, direct reported speech does not necessarily reproduce a former locution verbatim but can also convey the speaker's stance. From this perspective, Luca's negative evaluation of Haru becomes evident. Haru, a non-ELT practitioner, is depicted as relatively inexperienced in pedagogy, with limited awareness that the GC was not intended to simulate "a real-world situation" (line 4) but to serve as a mock space. The use of the academic term "construct" in line 5, for instance, underscores Luca's academic authority over Haru. In line 13, he further evaluates the interaction, framing it not as "quite a miscommunication" (line 12) but as a case of "completely polar opposite approaches" (line 13). In constructing this story, Luca only describes his perspectives, which is a clear contrast with Anthony's neutral provision of both parties' interpretations. In fact, it is possible that the way Luca pointed out Haru's perceived inappropriate behavior was too direct given Haru's L1-based pragmatic norms, which prioritize conflict avoidance (Fujii, 2005, 2008). Moreover, Luca's act of voicing disagreement itself may have been sociopragmatically inappropriate for Haru, particularly as Japanese culture often discourages juniors from openly contradicting seniors (Hill et al., 1986). Haru might have expected Luca, as a less experienced GC colleague, not to voice an oppositional opinion. Luca's failure to explore this interactional trouble through a pragmatic lens suggests his limited metapragmatic awareness. Examining the interactional aspects, Luca does not accommodate to the interviewer as Anthony did, delivering his narrative quickly with far fewer pauses. This indexes Luca's monolingual orientation to British⁵ pragmatic norms, in which backchanneling is less frequent (Otsuka, 2015). It also suggests Luca's limited agency to re-evaluate his initial interpretation of Haru's actions while reconstructing the narrative.

Excerpt 4, taken from the latter part of the interview, sheds light on the driver of Luca's monolithic perspective. When asked which norms he had been exercising in the GC, he could not straightforwardly answer the question. However, he suddenly referred to an argument between himself and the interviewer regarding his disregard for the GC's reservation system.

Excerpt 4

- 1 L I just (1.4) made sure I was available for students
2 all the time even if it was against (.) the actual job
3 I think that's (.) I think definitely did that (.)
4 and I don't know what value that is
5 but I (.) I guess I did a British kind of thing
6 I sort of made sure that they know that I worked (.) or
7 know that I try to get involved
8 I mm
9 L even though actually(.) it (.) we do have a system in place (.)
10 oh::I don't know what value that is but (.)
11 yeah I don't know to be honest with that one
12 mm
13 L The Global Commons does change things though, doesn't it?
14 It does it's in Japan but it (.)
15 we are supposed to represent (.) a global (.) atmosphere

In lines 1–2, Luca constructs a small story recounting an instance where he made himself available to students beyond the scope of his official duties. This narrative serves as an illustrative anecdote intended to ground his abstract argument in concrete experience. Following this, he states that he does not fully grasp the “value” (line 4) or the specific sociocultural norms he was enacting at that moment. He eventually characterizes this behavior as “a British kind of thing” (line 5), thereby explicitly linking his actions to his perceived British sociocultural norms. In line 9, Luca introduces a contrasting perspective, which was not observed in Excerpt 3, presumably that of the interviewer, which dictates that he should strictly adhere to the “system in place” (line 9) regarding reservations. He then

incorporates small stories of “deferrals of tellings” (lines 10 & 11). This discursive move implies that he is actively negotiating his sociocultural norms and professional identities within the interactional space, grappling with the tension between his core common ground and norms diverging from his own. Notably, line 13 marks a topical shift from a retrospective view of norms adopted in the past to a prospective view of which norms should be prioritized. By inserting a small story of ongoing events (lines 13–15) to underscore his point, Luca justifies his adherence to British sociocultural norms. He frames this adherence as an institutional obligation to embody the privileged Inner Circle British variety and culture, arguing that this is necessary to foster “a global atmosphere” (line 15) within the GC.

From an interactional standpoint, Luca’s delivery contrasts with Excerpt 3. Here, he frequently relies on hedges such as “I think” (line 3), “I guess” (line 5), and “sort of” (line 6), alongside fillers like “yeah” (line 11) and repeated pauses throughout the excerpt. These hesitation markers signal not only his engagement in metapragmatically analyzing the interactional trouble but also his struggle with “recontextualization” (Lu & Horner, 2013), defined as conforming to the cultural and institutional norms of the host environment. He appears caught between the institutional reservation system that reflects local structure and the meso- and macro-level discourses shaped by native-speaker ideologies that privilege his British identity.

Based on Excerpts 3 and 4, in the first level, Luca positions himself as an experienced British teacher committed to his institutional duties. In the second level, he struggles to negotiate applicable sociocultural norms amidst his emerging metapragmatic awareness, despite his initial certainty in constructing a narrative that relies solely on his own interpretation. Yet, he continues to justify foregrounding a British self, overlooking this emerging metapragmatic awareness. In the third level, his identity as a speaker of a privileged English variety becomes salient, backgrounding his ELF user identity, which prioritizes

accommodation. Unlike Anthony, Luca's imagined teacher identity manifests monolingual orientations.

A NEST with a Predominance of Monolingual Orientations

Mason's narratives signaled a stronger inclination towards monolingual orientations. Unlike the other participants, Mason, a part-time teacher from New York City, provided significantly fewer metapragmatic accounts. Unable to elicit these narratives, the interviewer directly asked him to describe interactional friction experienced with GC colleagues.

Excerpt 5

M: Mason I: Interviewer (author)

1 M >none that come to the top of my head<
2 I [okay
3 M [right now
4 can we pass and then come back to it?
5 >if [xxx<
6 I [ah:: yeah=
7 M =is that okay?
8 I well I don't know it it's right for [me
9 M [mm
10 I to bring it up but...ah::=
11 M =>please please do<
12 I once (.) I remember that you had the (.)
13 little heated conversation (.)
14 M [m-hm
15 I [with Haru at *** about ah::=
16 M =>I don't remember that<=
17 I =about lunchtime conversation no lunchtime conversation
18 M [right
19 I [practice with students=
20 M =right I heard about that
21 maybe he took offense but I was never offended (.) [or
22 I [m-hm
23 M I I I think you need two people for a fight
24 I m-[hm

25 M [and and I am very peaceful and sort of relaxed
 26 in the situation where people get tense
 27 I tend to go I understand
 28 I [m-hm
 29 M [I have been there myself before [so
 30 I [mm
 31 as long as we can avoid two people doing that
 32 doing that at the same time
 33 I think we are coming out successful at the end of the day

Mason asserts that he had no interactional problems with colleagues (line 1). His utterances in lines 1, 4, 5, and 6 serve as small stories of “refusals to tell,” an interactional practice employed here to protect his face as a legitimate professional. However, the interviewer challenges this refusal in line 8, hesitantly raising his argument with Haru, saying a “little heated conversation” (line 13). Despite her prompting to view the incident pragmatically, Mason adopts a distanced third-party stance, claiming “I heard about that” (line 20) as if he were an outsider. In the subsequent small story (line 21), he positions himself as the unoffended party and Haru as the offended one, thereby implying a negative evaluation. Unlike Anthony, who acknowledged multiple perspectives by employing a comparing strategy, Mason presents a unilateral interpretation of the interactional trouble. His invoking of emotional terms like “offense” and “offended” (line 21) evidences a failure to analyze the issue through a pragmatic lens. This contrasts with Luca, who began to metapragmatically address the interactional trouble with the interviewer and to notice his own linguacultural position in the interactional space. He further employs a small story (lines 23–33), a telling of ongoing events, to reinforce his claim of being unoffended.

Interactionally, Mason speaks rapidly (lines 1, 5, 11, & 16), interrupts (lines 3 & 6), and engages in ratcheting (lines 7 & 11), contrasting sharply with Anthony’s accommodation to the *kyōwa style*. Instead, Mason leverages the symbolic power of native-speaker norms to reconfigure the interview’s power dynamics. The interviewer’s self-repair and fragmented

utterances (lines 17 & 19) suggest Mason's overlaps disrupted her flow. Oblivious to these multimodal signals, he persists in using a New York speech style characterized by cooperative overlap, participatory listenership, and faster turn-taking (Tannen, 1981). If he applied this style to Haru, it possibly accelerated the friction with him, who complained about Mason in an interview: "*mukou wa jibun no kangae o shutyo shite bakkari de* [The other side just kept insisting on their own ideas]."

In the first level of positioning, Mason is portrayed as a professional who distances himself from relational problems. In the second level, he constructs a competent professional identity by leveraging the symbolic power of native-speaker norms. In the third level, Mason's identity as a speaker of a privileged English variety backgrounds his identity as an ELF user.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate multilingual NESTs' assumed pragmatic norms and their relationship to identities and orientations toward English. While all three focal participants regarded Inner Circle norms as appropriate, their willingness to conform to other varieties' norms varied depending on the identities emerging in their narratives. Only Anthony, who constructed a hybrid translingual identity, acknowledged the validity of diverse norms and signaled agency for accommodation. In contrast, participants who foregrounded identities as speakers of privileged varieties prioritized idealized Inner Circle norms. Notably, Luca's "British teacher" positioning sustained a monolithic view of English, overriding his evolving metapragmatic awareness of locally accepted sociocultural practices. Thus, the capacity for recontextualization appears to be a key factor in achieving accommodation amidst intersecting ideological discourses.

Regarding orientations to English, evidence of Anthony's translingual orientations emerged consistently across both the storied and storytelling worlds. In the storied world, he

objectively articulated colleagues' "non-standard" norms and constructed a pragmatic translanguaging self. In the storytelling world, he accommodated the interviewer's discourse style and deployed accommodation strategies for intelligibility.

Conversely, evidence of monolingual orientations predominantly emerged in both the storied and storytelling worlds of the extracts from Luca and Mason. In the storied world, they attached negative evaluations to the sociocultural norms diverging from their own, explaining events solely through their own core common ground. In the storytelling world, they adhered to their L1-based discourse styles without accommodating to the interviewer. However, it should be noted that within Luca's narrative elsewhere, he mentioned stopping his sarcastic humor after observing Haru's "stony face." This hints at latent multimodal awareness and accommodation. Thus, while not static, his monolingual orientations likely surface more frequently than in ELF users like Anthony. NESTs' orientations to English appear to be dynamically negotiated within various interactional contexts, where one or the other becomes salient.

To address the question of why the pragmatic differences between NESTs and NNEs were not as salient, perhaps the first implication is relevant to NESTs whose narratives signaled high metapragmatic awareness. In contrast, the second implication is likely more relevant to those whose metapragmatic awareness was low. This is because the analysis has shown that multilingual NESTs' pragmatic norms are often unconscious and deeply ingrained, and that they may leverage their symbolic power. Therefore, analyzing only explicit statements is insufficient to capture the sociopragmatic dynamics within the intercultural workplace. While acknowledging this, it must be noted that this study was limited by space to selected extracts. Future research should expand the dataset.

Finally, multi-layered monolithic discourses likely fuel asymmetrical power relations in Japanese higher education. Foregrounding hybrid identities and facilitating metapragmatic

reflexivity offer a pathway to challenge these monolingual orientations. Teacher training should incorporate dialogic reflection on, and discourse analysis of, their own ELF interactions to assist ELT professionals of all backgrounds in recognizing their own pragmatic assumptions and linguacultural positions. By fostering awareness of the fluid nature of ELF interactions, ELT professionals can better navigate pragmatic instruction that advocates for mutual accommodation.

Notes

¹ This study refers to ELF as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 7).

² Agency is defined “not as a static individual property but defined as a dynamically negotiated capacity to act, assume new identities, or resist certain positionings actively and purposefully” (Ishihara et al., 2018, p. 82).

³ “You’re fired!” is known as a catchphrase used by Donald Trump in the reality show, “The Apprentice,” broadcasted on NBC from 2004-2017. The catchphrase has been repeatedly used on social media

⁴ “Pragmatic translanguaging” refers to making pragmatic choices across norms associated with named languages, such as blending a pragmatic practice of the local language with that of one’s first language (Ishihara, 2024).

⁵ Because Luca is originally from England, the author refers to “British” as British Standard English (BrSE), which is used in professional communication in Britain and taught in British schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. What values do you appreciate from the conventions and norms of your L1 country?
2. What values do you disregard from the conventions and norms of your L1 country?
3. What values do you appreciate from the conventions and norms of your L2 country?
4. What values do you disregard from the conventions and norms of your L2 country?

Now think back on your work-related experience at the self-access learning center.

5. On what kind of occasions have you experienced conflicts/problems from the way you and your colleagues communicate? Please describe specific episodes that demonstrate such experiences.
6. Have you encountered situations where you and your colleagues had different ideas about what (im)polite communication means? Please describe specific episodes that demonstrate such experiences.
7. Do you think there is a perception gap between English L1 speakers and Japanese L1 speakers regarding Q6?
8. Have you ever considered the utterance of a speaker whose L1 is different from yours to be impolite or polite in English? Please describe specific episodes that demonstrate such experiences.
9. Do you think being (im)polite means something different in Japan and your motherland? If so, how? Please describe specific episodes that demonstrate such an idea.
10. Regarding Q9, what influenced you to think this way about (im)politeness?
11. Can your perception of being (im)polite change, depending on who you talk to and/or where you are located? For example, when you communicate with Japanese professionals,

with other English L1 speakers in Japan, or when you talk with your family and friends back in your home country. Please describe specific episodes.

Appendix B

Transcription Conventions

[the point of overlap onset
]	the point of overlap termination
=	no discernible pause between two speakers
(.)	pause under 1.0 seconds
(1.0)	pause of 1.0 seconds or more
:	lengthy sound
?	question
—	emphasis
¥¥	speech with laughter
<>	slower speech
><	faster speech
@	laugher

Selected Papers

Practitioner Reports

CLIL and Gender Issues: A Pathway to Critical Engagement and Cognitive Growth

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Abstract

This study explores the pedagogical potential of integrating gender issues into Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to foster students' critical engagement. CLIL is a promising approach for understanding social issues, enhancing proficiency in the target language, and incorporating the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). While gender issues have long been discussed, it is still challenging to deal with in a male-dominated educational context, often provoking backlash from male students or becoming too personal for individuals to express their own ideas. The study details a practice involving collaborative inquiry and video production activities. These activities enhanced learners' awareness of gender bias and increased their commitment to a problem-solving task. A subsequent survey investigated the transformation in students' perceptions throughout the project. The findings suggest that embedding socially relevant content into language instruction not only promotes critical thinking and pragmatic competence but also fosters communicative agency and intercultural sensitivity. This approach demonstrates the value of CLIL in addressing social themes and highlights its effectiveness in cultivating awareness and cognitive development among learners.

Keywords: gender bias, CLIL, ESD, awareness, cognitive development

The intersection of language education and social issues has emerged as a fertile ground for cultivating higher-order thinking skills and communicative competence. Since the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) introduced the concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2017 Course of Study based on the

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Promotion Guidebook (2016), increasing attention has been given to how to cultivate globally minded individuals who possess both the qualities necessary to understand diversity and collaborate with people from various backgrounds, and sufficient language proficiency for effective communication. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) offers a framework for integrating content knowledge with language acquisition, thereby enabling learners to engage with complex topics in a target language (Izumi et al., 2012).

Although a growing number of educational practices have been implemented in relation to SDGs, their educational significance varies depending on learners' ages and learning environments. Therefore, such practices should not be considered fixed models but rather evolving approaches that require ongoing revision. In particular, educational practices concerning gender issues have undergone significant changes since discussions surrounding LGBTQ+ topics began to gain attention. However, these issues are deeply rooted in traditional values and personal beliefs; they must be addressed with careful consideration. Therefore, demonstrating how to associate gender issues with oneself, especially those of gender inequality in the workplace, women's participation in politics, and unequal division of household and care work, can be another significant contribution to the educational field.

The purpose of the study was to explore how the project fostered learners' cognitive development in dealing with gender issues and to reveal the significance of addressing gender issues in educational settings.

Background

According to the model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), language learning should not be viewed merely as the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the transmission of information, but rather as an opportunity to foster interpersonal relationships across cultures (Byram, 2021). Global issues and SDG-related topics are often explored in

CLIL practice, which can promote learners' awareness and transformation regarding global citizenship, with a focus on diversity, social justice, and collaborative engagement (Kudo, 2019). When discussing ESD, imparting knowledge to students is not enough. The principle of ESD seeks to cultivate transformative changes in values, attitudes, and behaviors that contribute to resolving global issues (UNESCO, 2020). This paper examines how gender issues, when embedded in CLIL pedagogy, can serve as a conduit for cognitive engagement.

Difficulty of Personalization of Gender Issues

In practices for ESD, “personalization” is crucial; it encourages students to recognize issues as their own and fosters behavioral transformation (Harada, 2021; Ichikawa, 2025; Sakamoto, 2024; Shirai & Koibuchi, 2021). Gender issues have long been discussed, yet educators still find it challenging when addressing these topics in educational settings, particularly in male-dominated environments like technical colleges in Japan. At National Institutions of Technology (KOSEN) in Japan, where male students constitute the overwhelming majority (approximately 80%), gender issues are seldom discussed in daily life or in class. This does not mean female students are treated unequally. In fact, there is no noticeable gender gap in school life, and students embrace the environment and its school culture. Nevertheless, it does not mean there is no “gender bias” that may have unconsciously developed in their minds over the years, affecting both male and female individuals.

According to Cundiff (2023), bias is understood as a preference or tendency to respond in a particular direction, and it manifests as prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. These forms of bias operate on the basis of social categories, such as gender or ethnicity. Therefore, in this framework, gender bias refers to distortions in cognition, emotion, and behavior that arise from categorizing individuals by gender. Gender Equality Bureau (2022) used the term “unconscious bias” to describe gender-based assumptions derived from gender roles in the home, community, and workplace. In this paper, the term “gender bias” is employed

hereafter; however, when citing other works, the terminology employed in the respective literature is followed.

In educational settings, visible gender gaps are narrowing; many more schools have adopted gender-neutral uniforms and mixed-gender class registers (which used to be divided into two sections: one for boys and one for girls, and boys were listed first). Nevertheless, gender inequality persists in the areas of the marriage system, career choice, the workplace, and politics (Gender Equality Bureau, 2025). Previous research has shown that gender (unconscious) bias, such as gender roles and expectations, is reproduced in the workplace and at home, explaining why gender inequality persists (Gender Equality Bureau, 2022; Suzuki, 2017).

As noted above, gender bias is rooted in traditional values and is formed unconsciously. This invisibility poses a challenge for educators seeking to cultivate critical awareness among students. In such settings, careful consideration is required when discussing these topics, as backlash from male students, which is often observed in Japanese society, can undermine the quality of education. Therefore, one significant aspect of this study is exploring how students can relate gender issues to their own experiences, thereby contributing to the field of education.

Personalization in Language Use

Personalizing the issues can also encourage students to use the target language on their own. According to Swain (2006), the concept of languaging suggests that collaborative tasks in language learning facilitate peer scaffolding and negotiation of meaning, contributing to deeper language acquisition. The researcher demonstrated how collaborative inquiry and scripting activities, such as drama playing or video making, can develop understanding of the language and enhance their commitment to the practice (Ichikawa, 2020, 2022). The findings indicated that those role-playing activities where students scripted text material would provide

a deep grasp of the subject matter and a sense of commitment, as if they were experiencing it firsthand (Ichikawa, 2025). This is why educational programs that incorporate drama-creating practices have been implemented as part of MEXT's initiative to promote communication education (Hirata, 2012). The study will also employ this approach, where students create scripts and perform them, to foster learners' development.

In summary, engaging with gender issues aims to raise awareness of gender bias that is deeply rooted and internalized within individuals, which is essential for ESD. Gender issues in schools were once addressed by uniforms. However, in recent years, driven by concerns regarding transgender individuals, there has been a rapid push toward implementing gender-neutral uniforms. Addressing gender issues is entering a new phase, which can be incorporated into a holistic approach to ESD.

Method

The project on gender issues was nurtured by the practitioner over several years to develop the current approach. This approach features two main components: Analysis and Crafting. Students start by analyzing data to familiarize themselves with the facts related to gender issues and then complete a video production as a problem-solving task to personalize gender issues.

Participants

Participants in the study ($N=45$; 40 male and 5 female students) comprised first-year students enrolled in the two-year advanced course of technical college (equivalent to third-year university students), 21 students in 2023, and 24 of them in 2024, all of whom attended Comprehensive English I as a compulsory subject. Their English proficiency ranged from CEFR A1 to B2, and the average score in TOEIC-IP was 521. Six of them studied abroad for nine months in the third year (at the age of 18) in the five-year basic course.

Prior to commencing the study, the purpose and procedures were approved by the institute's research ethics committee. Students were verbally informed about the nature of the research and assured that their participation, or lack thereof, would have no effect on their grades. Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of students' personal information and responses, with identifiers removed and data securely stored.

Objectives of the Project

Project-based learning was employed throughout the course of Comprehensive English I, where the CLIL approach was implemented to develop students' English proficiency and cognitive engagement. The project on gender issues was designed to achieve three interrelated objectives: (1) to familiarize students with the terminology of gender issues in English, (2) to develop an understanding of gender-related content, and (3) to raise awareness of gender bias through collaborative inquiry and video production.

Leveraging Students' Advantages

To begin with the project, the practitioner gave careful consideration to avoid backlash or reluctance from both male and female students. In fact, the quick survey in the class before the project showed that 80% of the students hardly had an opportunity to learn about gender issues in school, and 80% of them did not talk about them with their family or friends. As the survey from Gender Equality Bureau (2022) suggests, men may be unaware that they themselves are bound by traditional role perceptions because they have fewer experiences of being directly told about gender-based roles or indirectly exposed to them through words, actions, or attitudes, compared to women.

Therefore, the practitioner did not mention or ask about personal experiences at the beginning to avoid situations in which male students might feel blamed. Students focused on the data from the Global Gender Gap Report (2023, 2024) to understand how gender issues are addressed and what indicators are used to measure the gender gaps. This approach

leveraged the expertise of engineering students in handling large datasets (Analysis Part).

Although they had not previously investigated data related to gender issues, they had enough experience dealing with statistical data as engineering students. This enabled students to view the issues objectively and to explore the question: why do the gaps arise?

In the meantime, a more proactive approach was to create a video. The students were good at crafting and working in groups. While these two skills were not exclusive to students at technical colleges, they possessed a comparative advantage in applying their routine practices to domains in which they were less proficient, such as gender issues.

As such, leveraging students' advantages successfully alleviated their aversion to discussing gender issues among both male and female students.

Analysis Part

As stated above, the project on gender issues was divided into two parts: Analysis and Crafting (Table 1). In the first part, students analyzed the facts or phenomena to understand how gender bias is internalized to the point where it is not even noticed, resulting in a gender gap and the creation of social norms, or vice versa.

First, students analyzed the data from the Global Gender Gap Report, seeing subindexes such as political empowerment and economic participation, thereby grounding their discussions in objective evidence. For instance, they investigated the ratio of male to female politicians in Japan and other countries to understand why Nordic countries were ranked highly in political empowerment. They also examined why Japan remained at a lower rank in economic participation, referring to an L-shaped labor force participation curve for women.

Second, students examined what values underlay the phenomena. For instance, they examined a TV commercial to delve into why it became controversial and what biases and assumptions underlay it. Another attempt was having students examine the UNESCO report

(West et al., 2019), which revealed that gender bias and stereotypes had been engineered into AI voice assistants, leading them to recognize that the engineering field is not immune to bias.

Table 1
Lesson Plan and Activity for the Project on Gender Issues

	Lesson Plan	Activity
Week 1	Analysis	Discussion
Week 2	Analysis	Discussion
Week 3	Crafting: video-making	Group work, brainstorming
Week 4	Crafting: video-making	Group work, writing a script
Week 5	Crafting: video-making	Group work, shooting a video
Week 6	Performance (watching videos)	Feedback

The practitioner ensured that no one was free from bias. However, recognizing it is necessary. It was helpful to cite the concept of the cultural iceberg (Hall, 1976, as cited in The Core Collaborative, 2024), which explains that gender issues have two aspects: one is visible as gender gaps in society, and the other is invisible as gender bias. Students gradually understood the concept by analyzing several examples, suggesting that the visible gap and the invisible bias might be linked.

This process gave students an opportunity to identify a social phenomenon in a scientific way, as they were dealing with engineering data from experiments. This analytical component led them to a deeper understanding of gender issues, going beyond their impressions and experiences by analyzing statistical data and social phenomena.

Crafting Part

The second part of the project was for personalization, where students applied their knowledge and skills from the first part to analyze their own experiences and find ways to break gender bias. Students were required to create a short video in groups of four or five as

their final product. They started with brainstorming, looking back on their own lives, and discussing how these experiences or events demonstrated the gender gap and what gender biases might be hidden. Afterwards, they wrote a script in English to express their ideas through a drama, which consisted of three parts: fact, bias, and solution. They edited a video after filming the drama scenes.

For instance, one of the groups examined how children's toy sections in retail stores were organized differently based on gender. Another group explored the relationships between the usage of word expressions and characters by gender in Japanese manga stories. It should be noted that there was a group that addressed the notion of masculinity and the difficulties experienced by men resulting from gender norms.

When students worked on crafting, the scripts needed to be checked to see if the group followed the instructions properly and expressed their ideas in comprehensible English. Students were allowed to use a translation tool if needed. However, they were required to modify the expressions into ones they could fully understand and convey them in their own words.

Conversely, they exhibited such a high level of creativity that they required no support from the practitioner during the video production process. Although the time allocated for shooting and editing the videos was during class hours, they endeavored to produce the best possible outcomes by fully utilizing their expertise, taking additional time outside the classroom.

Data Collection

There were three data sets: 10 video clips as the final product, scripts for videos, and a questionnaire, which consisted of three open-ended questions. They were as follows.

1. What was the most impressive part of the project, and what did you learn from it?
2. What are your thoughts and impressions on the video production?

3. Please describe how your reflections and insights gained from working on the project may influence your future life.

There were 40 responses that were analyzed to understand how students evaluated the project and to identify changes in their perceptions through the project.

Results

How Students Experienced the Project

The first and second questions aimed to understand how students experienced and evaluated the project. According to their responses, 25 students mentioned that they recognized their own gender (unconscious) bias, which they had not noticed before the project. Thirteen students said they gained an understanding of facts related to gender issues. Additionally, there were comments on what they learned through the project: nine students noted they learned the importance of seeing things from different perspectives, and five hoped that they would use the views and skills they acquired in the future.

Regarding video creation, 17 students mentioned that they developed good teamwork and shared roles. A total of 12 of them said they focused on improving how they communicated their messages by using better English expressions in a video. Nine students faced technical and practical challenges when editing a video. Eight students appreciated what they learned from the video-making activity.

Cognitive Development

The third question aimed to identify how students' perception of society developed and changed after the project. A common reflection was the realization that "we often carry biases without noticing them," which encouraged a reassessment of personal thoughts and behaviors. Students expressed increased interest in current affairs and emphasized the importance of staying informed through news and social developments. They also acknowledged that gender issues are sensitive and require consideration from diverse perspectives. In fact, 32 students

noted that they should consider social issues from various points of view and be aware of their own biases.

Eleven of them mentioned they would consider unconscious bias when engaging with society as future engineers. Students emphasized the importance of designing products and systems that do not reinforce gender inequality. Some pointed out the need to incorporate universal design principles and ensure that products are accessible and fair for everyone. The idea of eliminating bias was supported, along with the recognition that including multiple perspectives leads to better development outcomes.

Discussion

The study examined how collaborative inquiry and video production activities in English class can enhance learners' awareness of gender bias and develop cognitive skills to understand social issues.

The findings indicate that this project provided a significant opportunity to enhance awareness of gender-related issues, uncover gender bias, and develop a deeper understanding of the structural complexity underlying social inequalities. The process of video-making allowed for creative self-expression and became a memorable learning experience, fostering a collaborative atmosphere among group members.

Therefore, the approach of leveraging students' advantages, analyzing data and creating a video in groups, was successful. Through structured discussions, case analyses, and exposure to diverse perspectives, learners recognized the pervasive nature of gender bias and the complexity of social structures that sustain gender inequality. This shift in perception underscores the importance of educational interventions in fostering critical reflection on normative assumptions. In this way, the project provided students with the opportunity to reflect deeply on various biases embedded in society, with a particular focus on gender issues.

Additionally, students' comments indicate that they became aware of other unconscious biases and stereotypes that influence daily life and recognized the need for greater awareness and efforts to reduce these biases. The project became more important because many students recognized the presence of unconscious bias in everyday life and acknowledged the need to critically examine their own thoughts and behaviors. This self-awareness marks a crucial step toward fostering critical thinking and ethical decision-making, particularly in engineering contexts.

In fact, some participants noted the need to carefully examine gender equality or inequality. This perspective reflects critical thinking that they have developed through the project, recognizing the necessity for balanced and nuanced approaches to social issues. This clearly shows that they personalized the gender issues in their context and developed their cognitive engagement to understand the world more critically.

The key to developing a deep understanding and personalization is the video-making process. They worked on the topic in groups, which gave them insights into the complex issue. They realized that solutions to gender disparities are neither simple nor straightforward; instead, they demand nuanced approaches that consider cultural norms, institutional frameworks, and individual behaviors. The acknowledgment that proposed solutions can unintentionally reinforce existing biases further highlights the importance of reflexivity in policy design and advocacy efforts.

Although most students gave positive feedback on the project, a few showed signs of discomfort and hesitation when, in the middle of the project, they explored their own unconsciously developed assumptions that they had never considered before. Educators should accept their candid reactions without denying them and further discuss what materials to use and how to address them.

In summary, the project successfully cultivated critical thinking, social awareness, and a commitment to inclusive practice among participants. These outcomes indicate the potential of such educational interventions to influence students' future contributions to a more equitable society.

Conclusion

The limitation of the study was that insights were primarily based on participants' reflections and self-reported experiences, which can be subject to social desirability bias and may not fully capture unconscious attitudes. Most of them realized that no one can be free from bias, and self-awareness is crucial to address social issues. In this regard, the project fulfilled its purpose.

It should also be noted that the study did not measure the extent to which students enhanced their English proficiency through the project. It has been revealed that collaborative dialogue in language learning can develop an understanding of the target language (Kim, 2025; Suzuki & Storch, 2020; Swain & Watanabe, 2014). The practitioner also found that collaborative dialogue in the process of analysis and video production promotes appropriate language use, enhances language comprehension, and conveys messages according to the context (Ichikawa, 2024). Still, an empirical study with a pre- and post-design could be employed to address their English proficiency.

The outcomes of this project suggest several implications for educational practice and research. First, integrating gender studies into interdisciplinary curricula can foster holistic understanding and equip learners with the analytical tools and critical views needed to challenge their own biases. The findings reveal that such educational interventions hold promise for reshaping learners' mindsets, contributing to critical thinking. Second, personalization is applicable to the problem-solving process, which students found the most practical and rewarding, as they collaboratively pursued their own solutions.

While the project on gender issues was fruitful, providing participants with a lot of food for thought to reflect on their own values and perspectives, further research should examine the impact of such interventions on their attitudes and behaviors when addressing other issues.

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Academic Writing Workshop for Students Aiming to Study Abroad

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Abstract

This paper outlines an English workshop for junior and senior high school students, aimed at preparing them for studying abroad. The workshop mainly focused on developing basic academic writing skills, especially essay structure and logical reasoning. The workshop followed a structured schedule: Day 1 involved topic selection and paragraph organization; Day 2 focused on peer feedback; and Day 3 was dedicated to revisions. Conducted by two instructors in a team-teaching format, the workshop accommodated an average of nine students with varying English proficiencies. To simulate an overseas learning environment, strict English-only rules were enforced, and activities aimed to encourage communication confidence and cross-cultural readiness. These included pair work, discussions on studying abroad, and presentations, promoting autonomy and engagement. Despite its benefits, the short format posed challenges—students had limited time to understand and apply key concepts such as paragraph structure and peer review. Future sessions should allow more time for practice and reflection, and expand instructional support to better meet learners' needs.

Keywords: academic writing skills, study abroad, pre-departure preparation, high school students

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

(MEXT), approximately 35,000 Japanese high school students opted for study abroad programs in 2023. However, only around 3,000 of these students participated in long-term programs lasting three months or more, indicating that such opportunities remain relatively limited in scale. In other words, this small number of students could offer valuable insights regarding their overseas experiences.

This practitioner report outlines a workshop designed as part of the pre-departure preparation for Japanese high school students who chose to engage in long-term study abroad programs. Pre-departure preparation plays a crucial role in ensuring a smooth transition to life overseas, and its scope is necessarily broad. The workshop discussed here focused primarily on the development of academic skills—especially writing—while also addressing topics such as intercultural adjustment and opportunities to experience active participation in a simulated class environment students might encounter at the host institutions.

This report further explores the challenges and areas for improvement that emerged during the implementation of the workshop. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the broader discussion on effective pre-departure preparation for high school students studying abroad.

Literature Review

Studying abroad contributes to the growth of an individual in numerous ways. Benefits of studying abroad have been reported, commonly including increased language proficiency, intercultural competence, and personal growth such as enhanced autonomy (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2009). As Jackson (2020) stated, “Education abroad has the potential to enhance the language proficiency, intercultural sensitivity, and ‘whole person’ development of participants” (p. 452). However, studying abroad also poses various challenges; not only inadequate language proficiency but also a lack of academic skills, intercultural and interpersonal competence, and affective and mental issues have been reported (e.g., Botev & Sybing, 2022; Durbidge, 2017; Furukawa &

Shibayama, 1994; Livingston, 2025).

To assist international students, it is common that host institutions provide pre-sessional programs, whose length can vary from a few weeks to several months. According to Hansen and Khare (2021), pre-sessional programs generally aim at promoting language abilities and cultural awareness of international students seeking academic degrees in the target language environment. Many studies report the usefulness of such programs. For instance, Copland and Garton (2011) conducted a study on international students who participated in a 15-week pre-sessional program in a British university. They found through the online diary and interview data that the students faced social, cultural, and academic challenges in using English, and suggested that they could be mitigated by gaining stronger language skills in a pre-sessional program. Another study by Dewaele et al. (2015) examined the affective impact of a 2–4 week pre-sessional program at a French university and found that international students in a pre-sessional program showed a reduction in their foreign language anxiety regardless of the length of stay. Thus, pre-sessional programs offered by host institutions cannot only help participants deal with practical and real problems they encounter in the host country but also tackle affective aspects of using a foreign language.

Less researched is the pre-departure preparation offered by home institutions before they leave their home country. Unlike pre-sessional programs that have relatively clear goals of facilitating a smooth transition to a particular educational institution in a particular country, it is vague as to what pre-departure preparation should provide, partly due to the paucity of research, and partly due to the fact that participants of such programs might study in different countries for different periods of time. Several researchers advise that the focus of pre-departure preparation should be on awareness-raising for the students' "expectations, attitudes, and needs" (Heinzmann et al., 2015, p. 204) and "beliefs and values" (Engberg & Jourian, 2015, p. 16) before embarking on overseas studies. For example, Schnickel's study

(2011) evaluated the effects of peer-coaching for Japanese university students as preparation for study abroad, and found that they include increased confidence, fewer worries, more preparedness, as well as language skills development. This study offers evidence that students benefit from increasing awareness of how they should behave as students in study abroad settings.

It should be noted, however, that existing studies are mainly conducted in the university setting, and studies targeting high school students remain scarce. Since university students and high school students are in different developmental stages, it is questionable whether the studies on adult learners, like college students, can be directly applicable to adolescent high school learners. In fact, Kinginger's (2013) research shows that age significantly influences study abroad participants' experiences, distinguishing university and high school students. For example, high school students often have "different expectations of independence, privacy, and adult supervision" from university students (Tan & Kinginger, 2013). Therefore, further research on pre-departure preparation targeting high school students is required to better understand their unique needs, experiences, and challenges.

Overview of the Workshop

The workshop was conducted for three days in the summer of 2024, with 1.5 hours spent each day. It was team-taught by the authors of this report, which meant that they took turns leading main class activities every day, and both of them were equally responsible for running the entire workshop. An average of nine students of Grades 9 and 10 participated in the workshop (See Appendix for a detailed student profile). While the main target of the workshop was clearly those who were going to study abroad soon or were hoping to do so in the future, the school also encouraged the participation of the students who had just come back from studying abroad. Because full attendance was not mandatory, the number of participants varied day by day, and the instructors did not know how many or which

participants would attend until the actual lesson day. Some participants only came for one or two days, not in a row. Under these conditions, the authors were given discretion over the design of the workshop. However, the school requested that the primary focus should be academic writing skills. This decision was based on the school’s judgment that writing skills would be essential for those participants with little academic writing experience when they study abroad.

The overview of the workshop is summarized in Table 1. The academic writing instruction was designed so that each explanation included examples, and writing tasks gradually increased both in difficulty and volume.

Table 1

Workshop Overview with Instructional Flow and Main Activities

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice-breaker: Self-introduction • Topic introduction: Qualities of a successful student • Explanation: Paragraph organization • Paragraph writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirming workshop rules • Topic introduction: Study abroad • Explanation: Importance of writing • Study abroad discussion • Paragraph writing • Explanation: Peer feedback • Homework: Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirming workshop rules • Research homework presentation • Practice: Analysis of information • Paragraph revision

Day 1

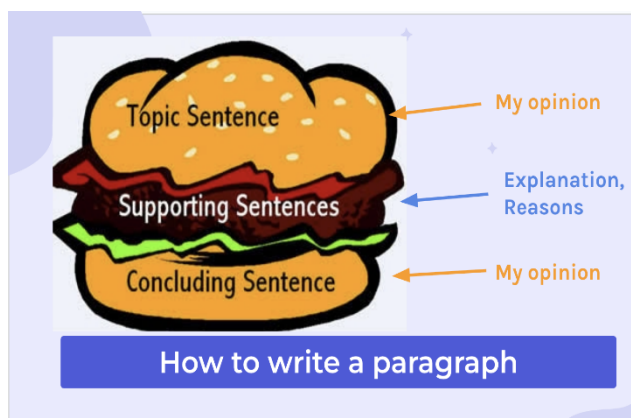
The topic selection and paragraph organization were the main focus of Day 1. Following the general introduction of the purposes and rules of the workshop, the instructors started out with an icebreaker to help participants become acquainted with one another, then introduced a topic about qualities of a successful student. After the participants brainstormed freely in pairs, they discussed in groups which qualities were important and why, using 17 qualities on the given list. Each group was then asked to share their ideas and reasons about

how they ranked three important qualities they chose.

After the students' ranking group presentation, the instructors explained the concept of a paragraph using the building-block model and illustrated the organization of a paragraph through the hamburger diagram, a commonly used metaphor in ESL classrooms (Figure 1). Subsequently, they demonstrated the process of writing a paragraph by adopting the participants' ideas about qualities of a successful student using a hamburger structure. Finally, the students were told to write a paragraph about the most important quality of a successful student on their own, following the instructors' writing sample.

Figure 1

Hamburger Diagram of a Paragraph



Day 2

The initial aim of Day 2 was to teach peer feedback. The instructors began by confirming the workshop rules, such as using only English and helping each other. They also emphasized the importance of writing by telling the students that writing is proof of a good study process where they demonstrate their depth of thinking, turning input into output. After that, they introduced a new topic, study abroad, with a warm-up pair activity about what the participants were most excited about and worried about for studying abroad, and had them

map out ideas regarding the advantages and challenges of studying abroad in groups.

To help the students write a paragraph based on these ideas, the instructors gave sample topic sentences for different subtopics of studying abroad, including good points, challenges, and homestay (Table 2). Since the original Day 2 plan was to cover peer feedback, they additionally explained what feedback is and why it is important in writing, giving examples of good feedback comments. Although the students could not experience giving peer feedback to each other due to time constraints, the instructors were able to convey the importance of analyzing one’s writing through peer feedback.

At the end of Day 2, the students were given research homework to find more information about their study abroad topic and write this down in English with its sources, such as newspaper articles, study abroad agency websites, or government reports.

Table 2

Sample Topic Sentences

Topic	Sample sentence
Good points	More Japanese high school students should experience studying abroad because....
Main goal	Foreign language learning should not be the main goal of study abroad because....
Skills	The most important skill for studying abroad is....
Problems	There are some problems with studying abroad. First,
Decisions	Before deciding whether to study abroad or not, students should think about....
Homestay	To make their homestay experience successful, students should....

Day 3

Day 3 was primarily focused on paragraph revisions based on the researched information. At the beginning, the participants were reminded of the workshop rules again, and presented their researched information from the Day 2 homework to the whole group. The students shared various information, which included culture shock, homesickness,

specific cultural events and customs, common goals, and benefits of studying abroad. The instructors took notes and shared these pieces of information on the whiteboard to make them available to all participants. They then introduced the importance of analyzing and interpreting information to use it as supporting evidence for their ideas in the students' writing. After giving the students small exercises to practice analyzing information, the instructors asked them to choose some of the researched information shared earlier, produce their analysis individually, and check in pairs whether their analysis was appropriate or not.

Lastly, they showed a sample paragraph that incorporated researched information and one's analysis in the supporting sentences, introducing specific expressions like "According to ..." and "Based on this information, ..." and told the participants to revise their paragraph by adding these pieces of evidence. The final writing was collected at the end of the workshop, and returned to the participants on a later day with the instructors' feedback through the school.

Core Areas of the Workshop

This section outlines three core areas of the workshop: (a) academic writing skill development; (b) preparation for intercultural experiences; and (c) practical English communication. These areas reflect the workshop's overarching aim of equipping students with the academic, linguistic, and cultural competencies necessary for successful study abroad experiences.

Academic Writing Skill Development

The primary focus of the workshop was the development of academic writing skills, and therefore was allocated the largest portion of the three-day schedule. Regardless of whether students are required to submit a formal report, a reflective essay, or write short answers in written exams, the ability to clearly express a claim and support it with appropriate information is essential. Given the limited time, the workshop focused on foundational

paragraph writing skills.

Key academic writing terms—such as *paragraph*, *topic sentence*, and *supporting sentences*—were clearly defined and consistently reinforced throughout the workshop. Familiarity with these foundational concepts is expected to facilitate the participants' further development of academic writing skills when they engage in writing tasks during their study abroad programs.

For many Japanese students with little prior experience in academic writing, composing clear and concise topic sentences to express their main point is a particular challenge. Given the time constraints of the workshop, model topic sentences and partially completed examples were provided instead of asking students to write topic sentences from scratch. These scaffolds were meant for the participants to focus on their ideas while making room for their creative freedom and to produce structurally sound topic sentences more efficiently.

While the main focus was on paragraph writing, the instructors also believed that writing needs to be presented not as an isolated skill, but as part of a broader academic process. This process involves gathering information, analyzing and interpreting it, and then expressing one's ideas in the written language. The instructors made an effort to raise students' awareness of how each task they performed fit into this larger process. For example, following the research homework on Day 2, pre-writing discussions in pairs or groups were intended to help the participants experience the progression from idea generation to written expression.

By the third day, the participants were independently producing paragraphs, using the hamburger diagram as a visual scaffold for paragraph structure. In particular, the four students who completed the entire workshop and submitted the writing assignments demonstrated notable progress; their Day 3 writing contained more developed ideas and clearer supporting details. Furthermore, two students successfully included their own analysis and interpretation

of the researched information.

Preparation for Intercultural Experiences

Support for cross-cultural adaptation, which constitutes another important objective of this workshop, was evident in the variety of tasks on the topic of studying abroad. The sequence began on the second day with a speaking activity in which the participants shared their expectations and concerns regarding studying abroad. This was followed by a paragraph writing task on a topic of personal interest related to overseas study. Suggested topic sentences included examples such as “*Foreign language learning should not be the main goal of study abroad because...*” and, in alignment with the workshop’s earlier content on qualities of successful students, “*The most important skill for studying abroad is...*”. These prompts were designed to help the participants articulate their own perspectives as prospective study abroad students.

Further, the participants researched a topic they wished to explore further regarding studying abroad, thereby incorporating viewpoints beyond their own. On the third day, they analyzed this information and integrated it into their writing. This process was designed to enable them to externalize and analyze their own expectations, anxieties, and personal motivations. For example, when one participant shared the idea that “*everyone experiences culture shock*” through their research, it potentially helped other students mentally prepare for such challenges in their own future study abroad experiences.

One important aspect of cross-cultural adaptation involves understanding the expected learner behavior and participation styles in the host country’s study environment. The participants in this workshop were accustomed to a lecture-style format in which they passively listened to teachers, and had limited experience in learner-centered classroom settings that require active participation. In light of this, the workshop aimed to support participants’ transition to a different learning culture. Specifically, “*Help each other in pair*

and group work” was established as a key rule for the workshop. Furthermore, the participants developed their own understanding of expected learner behaviors and attitudes by discussing qualities of a successful student on Day 1. Through a daily reminder of the workshop rule in addition to pair and group activities in various formats, participants were provided with opportunities to engage actively and exchange opinions with their peers. The instructors intentionally gave positive feedback when they spoke up in front of the whole group or had a lively discussion. These experiences were intended to serve as simulations of study-abroad classroom settings. Even if students are unable to participate actively from the outset in a foreign classroom, experiencing the culture of participation—something often left implicit—may facilitate their cultural transition as learners.

Practical English Communication

In order to support the development of practical English skills necessary for studying abroad, an English-only environment was implemented and consistently enforced. Rather than providing traditional English lessons focusing on the language, the workshop simply created a learning environment in which the use of English was demanded. For example, the icebreaker activity on Day 1 involved self-introductions through small talk. This activity was designed to help students initiate conversations by presenting appropriate topics in casual interactions when they interact with people in their host countries. While the English-only policy presented occasional challenges for some participants, it played a key role in encouraging sustained English use during all workshop activities.

Furthermore, the workshop provided useful language resources that participants could draw upon. For example, common topic sentence structures such as “*There are some problems with XX,*” as well as frequently used written expressions like “*According to (source)*” and “*Based on this information,*” were introduced, and students were encouraged to use them in their paragraphs. These models aimed to equip participants with functional

language that they could apply in their future academic writing assignments.

Discussion and Insights

The implementation of the workshop that centered on academic writing skills as a core component of pre-departure preparation for study abroad students yielded several important insights.

The Value and Limitations of Academic Writing Instruction for High School Students

It became clear that introducing academic writing to high school students for credit-bearing, long-term study abroad programs is both appropriate and beneficial. In the workshop, the participants gradually became able to produce and revise paragraphs through scaffolded tasks over three days. Even at a foundational level, the ability to express ideas logically and support claims with evidence is essential for academic success in overseas institutions; for writing in a second language means participating in a discourse community through learning how information is appropriately communicated (Hyland, 2003). However, academic writing is a complex skill that requires time and a step-by-step developmental approach. Given the three-day structure of the workshop, time constraints limited how deeply the participants could engage with the material; accordingly, a longer-term workshop would better support their skill development. Moreover, full attendance at the workshop proved crucial, as the activities were scaffolded and cumulative in nature.

The Importance of Providing Simulated Learning Environments

The workshop highlighted the importance of creating a simulated academic environment that mirrors the type of participation and interaction students will encounter abroad. Hansen and Khare (2021) report that their online pre-session course “served as an introduction to a student-centered classroom approach which participants would be expected to engage in” (pp. 194–195). Similarly, the three-day workshop provided learning activities done in pair and group work. Although the workshop emphasized discussion, peer

collaboration, and personal expression in addition to the English-only policy, a more learner-centered approach could have helped the participants better prepare for active learning environments in foreign institutions. To further strengthen this aspect, collecting information about participants (e.g., their expectations and anxieties concerning studying abroad) would allow for more tailored support. Participants' "reported experiences" (Maune, 2016) of engaging in the workshop can also be valuable resources for improving pre-departure preparation. In addition, involving students with prior study abroad experiences as role models could enrich the workshop. As shown in the previous research, prospective study abroad students find it useful to talk with students who have experienced studying abroad (e.g., Durbridge, 2017; Hansen & Khare, 2021). Their learning experiences as valuable resources could contribute to the success of the workshop.

Addressing Broader Aspects of Transition: Academic, Cultural, and Social

While academic readiness was the critical component of the workshop, it also underscored the importance of supporting students' broader transition needs. Cultural and social adjustment are integral to a successful study abroad experience. Addressing intercultural adjustment in addition to academic preparation aligns with research that intercultural competence is multidimensional and includes "an individual's personal attitudes, such as curiosity, general openness, and respect for other cultures" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 248). Also, according to research (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2015; Lemmons, 2023; Martin, 2020), even short pre-departure preparation could help reduce foreign language anxiety and enhance willingness to communicate, and enhance intercultural competence. Therefore, as Botev and Sybing (2022) suggest, pre-departure programs should address these aspects alongside academic skills. These studies offer implications for improving the workshop design. Although the workshop aimed to assist participants in terms of cultural transitions by simulating target classroom settings and active learning styles, further activities that promote

intercultural awareness, encourage reflection on personal goals, and develop problem-solving skills can be integrated into academic writing tasks. The workshop can attempt to serve dual objectives: strengthening academic skills while supporting psychological and cultural readiness.

In sum, designing a pre-departure workshop that addresses academic, cultural, and social dimensions in an integrated learner-centered manner can more fully meet the needs of prospective study abroad students. Although time and participation constraints remain challenges, adjustments in workshop design can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the workshop.

Conclusion

For Japanese high school students who plan to study abroad, pre-departure support plays a crucial role in facilitating their academic, social, and cultural adjustment to life in the host country. The three-day workshop reported in this paper offered instruction in basic academic writing skills as part of the academic preparation. A distinctive feature of the workshop was the creation of a learning environment that allowed the participants to simulate the attitudes and modes of classroom participation expected in academic settings.

To further enhance the quality of such workshops, participants' reflections and experiences should serve as valuable feedback. Additionally, insights from students who completed study abroad programs can provide practical and relevant input. Identifying the specific needs of prospective study abroad students will be essential in designing the content and design of future workshops.

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Appendix

Day-by-day Participant Profile by Grade

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Total number
Day 1	4	6	10
Day 2	3	5	8
Day 3	4	5	9

Note. These participants had various destinations for their study abroad programs, such as America, Canada, Germany, the Philippines, and Denmark. Among them, only five students (two Grade 10 and three Grade 9) participated fully in the workshop for all three days.

Implementing CLIL in a University English Curriculum: Practices, Perspectives, and Future Directions

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Abstract

In 2024, Rikkyo University implemented a large-scale curriculum reform by integrating Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) into its elective English courses. Currently, 34 diverse CLIL courses are offered annually, serving over 4,000 students. The reform aims to transition toward English-medium instruction (EMI) and enhance students' critical and collaborative thinking in English. This report outlines the background and process of the curriculum reform, including preliminary CLIL trials and faculty development initiatives such as workshops and guidelines. It also presents a case study of the course *Introduction to Global Studies C: Natural Science*, focusing on course design, topic selection, and strategies employed by a non-science instructor to support student learning. The report discusses the potential and challenges of adopting an interdisciplinary approach in CLIL, highlighting implications for future curriculum development.

Keywords: CLIL, higher education, curriculum reform, EMI, classroom practice

This practitioner report examines the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses introduced as a part of university English curriculum reform, focusing on their educational significance and challenges. CLIL, defined by Coyle *et al.* (2010) as “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1), consists of four interrelated dimensions—the 4Cs: Content, Cognition, Communication, and Culture. Emerging from broader movements in plurilingual and pluricultural education in Europe, CLIL effectively integrates subject learning with the development of language competence. Studies indicate

that this approach allows learners to acquire content knowledge and language skills simultaneously, thereby repositioning language education from isolated skill training to a medium for deeper disciplinary learning (Coyle et al., 2010; Pérez-Cañado, 2012).

In Japanese higher education, growing demands for globalization and the cultivation of twenty-first-century skills (OECD, 2018) have intensified the need to move beyond traditional skills-based English classes. Students are expected to enhance not only linguistic proficiency but also higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking, collaborative learning, and intercultural communication. These competencies are emphasized in global policy frameworks and national curriculum guidelines (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; MEXT, 2022). The rapid expansion of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) at the undergraduate level has further underscored the necessity for English curricula that prepare students for academic learning in English across disciplines. In response, CLIL has been increasingly introduced into the Japanese education system. According to Tsuchiya (2019), the introduction of the CLIL approach dates back to the late 2000s (p. 45). CLIL has gained attention as a promising approach to bilingual/plurilingual education, with research suggesting benefits for learners' language development and broader educational outcomes such as motivation and learner involvement (Ikeda, 2019; Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010).

In 2024, Rikkyo University implemented a significant curriculum reform, restructuring all English elective subjects into CLIL courses. The main objective is to provide elective courses that support students' transition to EMI in undergraduate studies. The program aims to enhance learners' ability to engage in deeper learning in English through project-based tasks, interactive discussions, and collaborative presentations. It promotes continuous language learning over four years, encouraging students to view English not just as a subject but as an essential communication tool for academic and professional contexts. Although

first-year students are required to take at least three English courses per semester, many enroll in only a few English electives and often discontinue their studies. This reform offers opportunities to acquire disciplinary knowledge in English while developing broader communicative and cognitive competencies.

To prepare for this transition, extensive preparatory work has been undertaken since 2021. Faculty development initiatives—including the creation of guidelines and syllabi for each course, as well as workshops and seminars—were introduced to enhance instructors' understanding of CLIL pedagogy and build capacity for course design and delivery. This foundational work ensured that the shift to CLIL was both structural and pedagogically grounded.

This practitioner report has two main purposes: first, to outline the background and process of the recent CLIL curriculum reform at Rikkyo University, including faculty development initiatives; and second, to present a case study of a Natural Science CLIL course taught by the author outside her disciplinary expertise. By examining its design and delivery, the report highlights practical strategies, challenges encountered, and implications for sustainable interdisciplinary CLIL courses in higher education.

Curriculum Reform

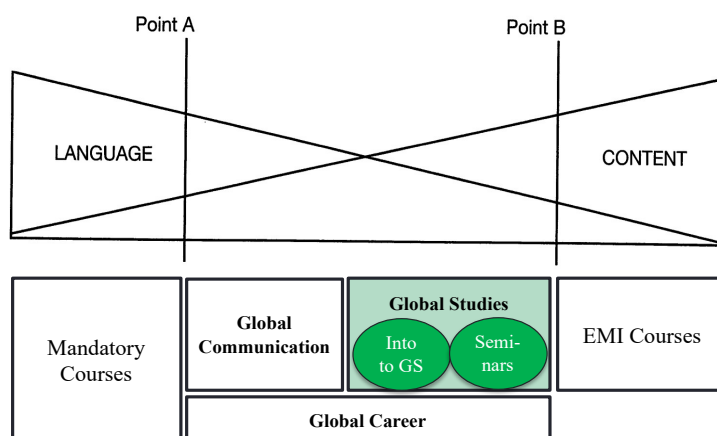
Our university has a tradition of liberal arts education that emphasizes interdisciplinary learning, fostering a broad range of knowledge and critical thinking. The recent internal policy document for 2021–2024 underscores the importance of expanding diverse learning opportunities while maintaining a coherent educational vision. Greater integration across the curriculum is essential, particularly in strengthening links between general education and specialized courses, as well as between comprehensive subjects and language-focused courses. Language education is expected to foster intercultural understanding and expand

students’ perspectives while developing their ability to engage with complex, diverse contexts in contemporary society.

This institutional orientation strongly supports the wide adoption of CLIL. Liberal arts education traditionally connects different fields of study and encourages students to approach problems from multiple perspectives. CLIL offers a concrete methodology for integrating language development with disciplinary knowledge. Building on Brinton and Snow’s (2017, p. 8) pedagogical framework, Yamamoto and Nitta (2021) proposed the “*Blueprint of the Rikkyo Curriculum based on Van Lier’s Scale of Language and Content*,” illustrating a curriculum design that integrates content, language, and cognitive development (Figure 1). This framework reinforces the mission of liberal arts education and highlights the evolving role of language learning as a medium for deeper intellectual engagement, enabling faculty members to collaborate closely and participate meaningfully in the curriculum reform as a unified body.

Figure 1

Blueprint of the Rikkyo English Curriculum (adapted from Yamamoto & Nitta, 2021, p. 129; used with permission).



(Van Lier’s Scale of Language and Content: Adapted from Brinton & Snow, 2017, p. 8)

As part of the reform preparation, the elective curriculum was subdivided into three courses—Global Communication, Global Studies, and Global Career—each addressing different learner needs while providing a coherent pathway for English learning in higher education. The Global Communication course serves as an entry-level cluster, developing academic communication skills through teamwork on global issues and including study-abroad preparation classes focused on standardized tests like TOEFL and IELTS. The Global Studies course aims to build students’ capacity to acquire specialized content knowledge in English through introductory and intermediate subjects, including *Introduction to Global Studies* and *CLIL Seminars*. Ultimately, the Global Career course emphasizes the development of essential English communication skills for effective professional engagement in international contexts. To facilitate the preparation of each course, three dedicated committees, composed of full-time faculty members, specially appointed lecturers, and adjunct lecturers, were established. These committees were responsible for course design, syllabus development, and the piloting of CLIL classes, creating a collaborative framework in which faculty members shared a vision for the program and deepened their understanding of CLIL. As Yamamoto and Nitta (2021) note, the action-oriented approach—planning backward from real-world language use—was foundational in developing the CLIL curriculum at our university.

Pilot CLIL courses were introduced gradually from 2021 as part of a phased approach to full-scale reform. In 2021, four courses were piloted: *Multimodal Communication in English*, *Introduction to Global Studies A: Humanities*, *Introduction to Global Studies B: Social Science*, and *CLIL Seminars: Literature*. In 2022, twelve pilot courses were offered across three thematic areas, designed to align with students’ academic progression and future needs. These initiatives provided insights into curriculum design, student learning outcomes, and faculty professional development needs. Teacher support at the program launch was

crucial. Faculty Development workshops were conducted under the guidance of the committee, including hands-on demonstrations and Q&A sessions with pilot instructors. Shared syllabuses and teaching materials were provided via online platforms, helping instructors gain confidence in CLIL pedagogy.

The reform was implemented in a large institutional setting. The university has approximately 21,000 students studying majors in 12 distinct colleges, and it provides language courses to students from 35 different departments. In April 2024, the full CLIL curriculum was launched, featuring 34 elective CLIL courses comprising 61 classes and enrolling around 1,500 students in the first year. Each class targeted 25 students at CEFR A2 to B2 levels and was delivered in 100-minute sessions over a 14-week semester. This reform demonstrates how CLIL can be systematically integrated into a liberal arts framework, providing students with sustained opportunities for English-medium learning across diverse fields.

Classroom Practice

To illustrate the enactment of the curriculum reform, this section reports on *Introduction to Global Studies C: Natural Science*, a CLIL elective taught in Fall 2025. This course was significant, as the author, a language teacher, taught it without a background in natural sciences. By documenting how a non-specialist designed and implemented a science-oriented CLIL course, this report aims to contribute to the practical knowledge base of CLIL research and teacher development.

The course was positioned slightly below the level of other CLIL electives in terms of target student proficiency to accommodate a wider range of learners. It was designed as a lower-intermediate CLIL course, corresponding to approximately CEFR B1 level, in response to institutional requests for a course to attract science students. Although few science majors enrolled, the course focused on natural science rather than humanities topics. For a language

teacher without expertise in the field, syllabus design, material development, and lesson planning required significant time and effort.

Table 1

Course Schedule for CLIL: Natural Science

Week	Content
1	Introduction to the course
2	Topic 1: Bioscience: Biomimicry
3	TED video 1: “Biomimicry’s Surprising Lessons from Nature’s Engineers”
4	TED video 1: “Biomimicry’s Surprising Lessons from Nature’s Engineers”
5	Prepare for the first project
6	First Project (Poster Presentation)
7	Topic 2: Geoscience: Natural Disasters
8	Lecture: The Impact of Volcanoes on Climate Change and Ecosystems
9	Second Project (In-class Writing) and Discussion
10	Topic 3: Brain Science: Brain and Our Behavior
11	TED video 2: “Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are”
12	Prepare for the final project
13	Final Project (Individual Presentation)
14	Wrap-up (Collect final project report)

Before outlining the themes, it is important to note that topic selection was the decisive factor in shaping the overall course design. In planning a fourteen-week syllabus, the first step was to determine which topics could be included under the broad category of natural science. From a long list, the instructor narrowed it down to three personally engaging

themes. Choosing topics of genuine interest was believed to sustain motivation in designing lessons from scratch. While secondary school science textbooks from English-speaking countries were consulted, the CLIL principle required reliance on authentic materials. Accordingly, original slides and handouts were created for each session. The workload was particularly heavy for the author and all instructors involved in the first year of CLIL implementation. Nevertheless, this intensive preparation served as a valuable process, prompting the teacher to reflect on fundamental questions about teaching and learning.

Theme 1: Bioscience: Biomimicry

The first theme introduced biomimicry as a scientific approach that adapts natural designs for human application. Authentic images were used to stimulate student curiosity. Building on this engagement, students selected subtopics of personal interest and conducted group poster presentations, deepening their autonomous learning. Focusing on biomimicry proved effective in the author's course, highlighting the importance of topic selection in CLIL practice, particularly for language teachers outside their disciplinary expertise. Frequent use of visual materials, such as slides and videos, also enhanced learning. Students reported numerous discoveries and felt they tangibly experienced "learning through English."

As the first project, group poster presentations were conducted at the end of this section. Clear instructions guided preparation, and sessions were organized in a rotating format. Groups were arranged in a large classroom, and presenters rotated roles after each session to convey their work to new audiences. This format provided repeated experience in both presenting and listening. Audience members completed structured feedback sheets, which were compiled and shared in the following class to promote reflection.

Theme 2: Geoscience: Volcanoes and Natural Disasters

In the geoscience module, scaffolding was systematically incorporated. A vocabulary handout supported comprehension. One core task required groups to explain a diagram of

volcanic eruptions (see Appendix A). Students first discussed the image in either Japanese or English to ensure conceptual understanding, then collaboratively shared knowledge, and finally produced a short English presentation by a group representative. This was followed by a video on volcanic activity.

Although demanding as a warm-up, the activity was effective: students solidified their understanding in their first language, then shifted to the target language for expression. By legitimizing L1 as a bridge, students focused on content, confirmed ideas at a deeper level, and transferred this knowledge into English. This approach moved beyond superficial language use, allowing learners to develop disciplinary understanding while engaging in authentic English communication.

Theme 3: Brain Science: Final Project

The final theme focused on brain science. For the capstone project, students chose topics within this field and delivered individual presentations. Peer evaluations indicated extensive learning from one another's work, and course evaluations highlighted the value of diverse perspectives through final projects. These observations were based on students' written reflections and course evaluation comments, which consistently emphasized increased confidence in explaining content and learning from peers' presentations.

Teacher Reflection

Initially, the instructor felt anxious about whether a language teacher without a scientific background could effectively teach natural science in English. That uncertainty persists, and full confidence remains elusive. Nonetheless, the teaching process has proven enjoyable and meaningful, with each class offering new insights and discoveries. CLIL practice highlights its unique value: it enables teachers and students to explore disciplinary content together while sharing the enjoyment of teaching and learning.

Discussion and Implications

This section discusses the educational significance and challenges arising from the described classroom practices and considers their broader implications for CLIL curriculum development in higher education. The case study of *Introduction to Global Studies C: Natural Science* highlighted key aspects of CLIL implementation, including the importance of topic selection for learner motivation, strategies used by a non-specialist instructor, the role of scaffolding and L1 use, and the value of collaborative projects. While these findings are grounded in a specific institutional context, they resonate with broader discussions on adapting CLIL in EFL environments. By reflecting on both the potential and limitations observed, this section connects micro-level classroom experiences with macro-level curriculum reform issues, ultimately offering insights into the sustainable development of interdisciplinary CLIL courses.

Topic Selection and Classroom Facilitation

One critical factor influencing the success of the Natural Science CLIL course was the selection of topics. Starting with biomimicry effectively captured student interest by connecting scientific principles with familiar objects and real-world applications. Students reported that the novelty and accessibility of the theme stimulated curiosity and encouraged active engagement in English, despite challenges with unfamiliar terminology. This outcome aligns with Coyle et al.'s (2010) argument that meaningful content is essential for sustaining motivation in CLIL, and with discussions in Lasagabaster and Ruiz de Zarobe (2010) suggesting that learner involvement and motivation are supported when topics are relevant and stimulating. For non-specialist instructors, choosing personally meaningful themes provides intrinsic motivation for lesson preparation while compensating for limited disciplinary expertise.

For non-specialist instructors, facilitation is as crucial as topic selection. From a practitioner's perspective, it is clear that, in the absence of deep disciplinary expertise, creating a favorable classroom climate and fostering interactive participation are essential for course success. Notably, establishing a supportive and collaborative learning environment reduces students' anxiety, encourages communicative risks, and enables deeper engagement with complex content. This stimulates intrinsic motivation to explore the topic independently. The success of the biomimicry section suggests that topic selection and classroom facilitation serve as pedagogical levers in CLIL, allowing teachers and students to approach disciplinary knowledge with greater enthusiasm. This has broader implications for curriculum design. Elective CLIL courses should align with academic progression and incorporate content and learning environments that spark curiosity, making learning through English a rewarding experience.

Teacher Expertise and the Potential of CLIL

Another significant issue revealed in this case study is the role of teacher expertise in CLIL implementation. The Natural Science course was taught by a language teacher without formal science training, generating considerable anxiety and uncertainty. While the instructor's lack of disciplinary expertise posed challenges in content knowledge and confidence, it also showcased a distinctive strength of CLIL: the opportunity for teachers and students to engage in disciplinary exploration together. This transformed the class into a collaborative learning space guided by curiosity and inquiry. In this sense, the teacher's role shifts toward facilitation: guiding students' inquiry, supporting meaning-making, and co-constructing disciplinary understanding with learners. This orientation is consistent with discussions of language-led CLIL in Japan, where CLIL is often implemented by ELT teachers rather than content specialists (Ikeda, 2019). From a practical standpoint, this case therefore underscores the importance of faculty development programs and institutional

support systems that enable instructors to teach outside their disciplinary comfort zones. It suggests that non-specialist instructors, when provided with adequate pedagogical tools and collaborative support, can make meaningful contributions to interdisciplinary CLIL curricula. Thus, the course exemplifies how CLIL can expand the professional role of language teachers and enhance their involvement in broader educational objectives.

Scaffolding and the Role of L1

The geoscience module of the course illustrated the value of scaffolding and strategic use of the first language (L1) in CLIL contexts. A central activity required students to interpret and explain a diagram of volcanic eruptions. To support this task, vocabulary handouts were provided in advance, and students discussed the content in either Japanese or English. This sequence—first building conceptual understanding in the L1, then transferring knowledge into the target language—helped learners consolidate their disciplinary knowledge while reducing cognitive load. This approach aligns with Gibbons' (2015) view that scaffolding enables learners to engage with complex content in accessible yet challenging ways. Additionally, legitimizing L1 use corresponds to recent studies on translanguaging, which emphasize the pedagogical benefits of flexible language practices in multilingual classrooms (García & Wei, 2014). In this case, L1 discussion enhanced comprehension and fostered a collaborative atmosphere where students could verify their understanding and co-construct meaning before producing output in English. The activity suggests that the thoughtful use of L1 can serve as a powerful bridge between disciplinary content and language development, particularly in EFL environments such as Japan.

Collaborative Learning and Project-Based Tasks

Another noteworthy aspect of the course was its emphasis on collaborative learning through project-based tasks. The group poster presentation in the biomimicry module and the final individual project in the brain science module encouraged students to take responsibility

for their learning while contributing to a shared learning community. These tasks fostered peer interaction, provided feedback opportunities, and allowed students to learn from diverse perspectives. Such activities align with task-based learning and project work, which enhance learner autonomy and involvement (Ellis, 2003; Beckett & Slater, 2005). In the context of CLIL, project-based tasks facilitate the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge in English while developing essential academic skills such as presentation, collaboration, and critical thinking. Feedback mechanisms, including peer evaluations and structured reflection sheets, further reinforced learning by prompting students to articulate their understanding and respond to constructive comments. The success of these projects demonstrates that CLIL courses effectively prepare students for English-medium instruction, providing students with practical opportunities to integrate content learning with authentic communication and collaborative problem-solving.

Curriculum-Level Implications

This case study offers implications for curriculum reform that extend beyond individual classroom practices. The Natural Science course was part of a large-scale institutional reform that restructured the entire elective English curriculum into a CLIL framework. In response to requests from the science faculties and its position within the elective curriculum, this course was established. However, assigning a language teacher without disciplinary expertise to lead it was initially challenging. To teach the course effectively as part of the Global Studies track, enhanced support from the committee was essential. While ensuring coherence across courses was important, allowing instructors room for flexible innovation was equally necessary. As noted by Yamamoto and Nitta (2021), an action-oriented approach—designing courses by working backward from real-world language use—served as a guiding principle. This report suggests that even challenging courses for language teachers can be successfully delivered with systematic support. Furthermore, the sustainability of interdisciplinary CLIL courses

depends not only on individual teacher initiatives but also on organizational mechanisms that promote faculty development, sharing of teaching materials, and continuous dialogue among instructors. For institutions considering similar reforms, the experience at Rikkyo University demonstrates that embedding CLIL within a liberal arts framework requires both bottom-up experimentation and top-down coordination.

Limitations and Future Challenges

While this report highlights the potential of CLIL implementation, it is essential to recognize its limitations and consider directions for improvement. First, the Natural Science course attracted few science majors, indicating a need to align content with disciplinary needs and increase participation through targeted measures. Second, the heavy preparation load for non-specialist instructors, including material development, lesson planning, and assessment design, raises concerns about sustainability, emphasizing the need for continuous institutional support to ensure smooth integration and adequate resources for new instructors. Finally, as this study reflects a curriculum reform within our institutional context, its findings should be viewed as a reference rather than universally generalizable results. Future research should pursue longitudinal tracking of student outcomes and comparative analyses across multiple CLIL contexts to provide broader perspectives. Despite these limitations, this case highlights the importance of continuous reflection and collaborative support in sustaining interdisciplinary CLIL practices, offering valuable insights for institutions considering similar reforms.

Conclusion

This practitioner report examines the implementation of CLIL in a large-scale curriculum reform at Rikkyo University, focusing on institutional processes and classroom practices. A case study of a Natural Science course, taught by a non-specialist instructor, illustrated the opportunities and challenges of implementing interdisciplinary CLIL in a

Japanese higher education context. Key findings highlighted three areas: (1) the importance of topic selection for sustaining learner motivation, (2) the value of CLIL in helping non-specialist instructors recognize the role of facilitation, and (3) the effectiveness of scaffolding, L1 use, and project-based learning in enhancing students' active engagement.

At the curriculum level, the report emphasizes the need for institutional mechanisms such as committees, faculty development, and resource sharing to ensure sustainability. Limitations remain in relation to workload, student participation, and the need for more comprehensive empirical evidence. These insights suggest that CLIL can serve as a bridge between English-medium instruction and liberal arts education, enriching both through interdisciplinary learning. Ultimately, the success of CLIL depends on striking a balance between teacher creativity and systematic institutional support and fostering a culture of collaboration and reflection that sustains innovation in language and content learning.

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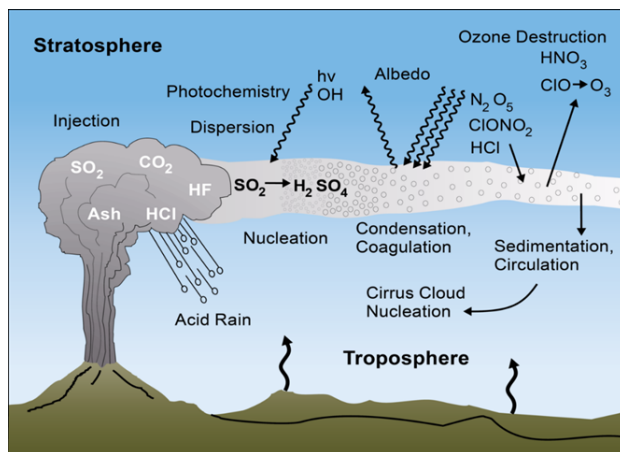
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Appendix A: Picture Description



Cited from U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *Volcanoes can affect climate*. U.S. Geological Survey. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/VHP/volcanoes-can-affect-climate>

【Keywords】

ozone destruction: オゾン破壊 SO₂: 二酸化硫黄 H₂SO₄: 硫酸 HNO₃: 硝酸塩

dispersion: 分散 photochemistry: 光化学 nucleation: 核生成 condensation: 凝結

coagulation: 凝固 cirrus cloud: すじ雲 sedimentation: 沈降 (粒子の重力落下)

albedo: アルベド (反射能 : 反射光の比) injection: 噴射 stratosphere: 成層圏

troposphere: 対流圏

Group members' names (_____)

Explanation

Submission Guidelines

JACET International Convention Selected Papers, Vol. 12

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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 - 3.2 Use 12-point Times New Roman font.
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 - 3.4 Do not justify right margins.
 - 3.5 Do not use running heads.
 - 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).
 - 3.8 Acknowledgements should not be included at the time of submission.
 - 3.9 For pagination, use Arabic numerals placed in the upper right-hand corner of each page.
 - 3.10 In order to guarantee anonymity in the review process, both the author name(s) and their publication information should be substituted with “ ***** ” throughout the entire manuscript including references

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