Developing and enhancing communicative competence among foreign language learners in Japan

PhD by Published Works

Institute of Education

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Declaration

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

James Bury

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Abstract

This thesis presents and discusses ten peer-reviewed publications that focus on enhancing the development of communicative competence among foreign language learners in Japan. This is an important area of research as, despite emphasis being placed on effective communication by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in policy and educational guidelines, many students are not deemed to have reached satisfactory levels of communicative competence when they graduate (MEXT, 2011).

In view of this, this PhD by Published Works investigates the impact that different teaching approaches and interventions had on three main themes connected to the development of communicative competence: students' productive output and lexical retrieval, students' self-perceptions of ability and levels of confidence, and students' and teachers' perceptions of, and reactions to, the interventions.

The research was conducted in a range of secondary and tertiary educational contexts, and employed quantitative and qualitative methods in a complementary manner. This enabled different research paradigms to be bridged and a wider range of data to be collected.

This body of work contributes to theory by extending a range of concepts, theories, and approaches, including the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995), Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996), information-processing theory, study-phase retrieval, and the spacing effect, by adding empirical evidence from different teaching contexts. It also has major implications in terms of practical application, providing access to research on alternative teaching practices and introducing a variety of activities, courses, and materials, that can be employed by educators both in Japan and internationally. Furthermore, the thesis make a methodological contribution by introducing of the Cycle of practitioner-research, which has the potential to motivate other educators to embark on a similar journey to my own and experience the many benefits that it has brought.

Overall, the research presented in this thesis has contributed to enhanced recognition of the value of core principles, namely maximizing productive output, developing lexical retrieval, and enhancing students' self-perceptions of ability and levels of confidence.

Glossary

To aid the reader, a brief glossary of key terms used in this thesis is provided below.

Communicative competence

Communicative competence is a construct based on functionality and adequacy of communication, and sufficiency of knowledge of linguistic, operational, social, and strategic domains (Light, 1989). In the context of this research, communicative competence is defined as the ability to effectively comprehend and produce language.

Discourse move

Drawing on Springer and Dick's (2006) definition, a discourse move is defined as an action taken with the purpose of encouraging, facilitating, or influencing discourse. Unlike a speech act, a discourse move can be in both written and spoken forms.

IRE/F

A classroom interaction structure which including three moves, Initiation, Response, and Evaluation/Feedback.

IFLL

For the purpose of this thesis, I have combined the terms English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) into the term Instructed Foreign Language Learning (IFLL).

JTE

Japanese teacher of English

L2

Foreign or second language

Lexical item

A lexical item is a word, or sequence of words, that conveys a single meaning.

Lexical retrieval

The process of recalling a lexical item or transitioning from a concept to spoken word(s).

Levels of confidence (LoC)

The extent of trust or belief a person has in their ability to do something well or complete a task successfully.

NTE

Native teacher of English / English L1 teacher of English

Self-perceptions of ability (SPoA)

The impressions a person has relating to their own capabilities in different domains or contexts (Harter 1999).

Task-cycling

The planned employment of different tasks and activities with the aim of developing a range of learning outcomes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis presents and discusses a series of publications that report on teaching interventions and investigations into perspectives undertaken by the author in the instructed foreign language learning (IFLL) environment in high schools and universities in Japan. The research and interventions were conducted with the aim of better enabling and understanding the development of students' communicative competence. While definitions of communicative competence vary depending on context (McGroarty, 1984), it is generally agreed that it is a construct based on functionality and adequacy of communication and knowledge of linguistic, operational, social, and strategic domains (Light, 1989). In the context of this research, communicative competence is defined as the ability to effectively comprehend and produce language.

The research presented in this thesis investigates three main themes: (1) the impact of teaching interventions on students' productive output and lexical retrieval, (2) students' self-perceptions of ability (SPoA) and levels of confidence (LoC) when using English, and (3) students' and teachers' perceptions of teaching interventions, English language courses, and English in relation to students' chosen field of study. These themes are important areas of research as, despite a range of policies enacted by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and considerable resources allocated to improve students' levels of communicative competence, there are still multiple issues that negatively affect development in this context. Following completion of the research, the findings were disseminated to other researchers and teachers in the form of journal articles, book chapters, and presentations. The research also informed the writing and publication of six textbooks.

The development and implementation of the body of work presented in this thesis enabled me to expand my knowledge of IFLL theories, enhance my practical

knowledge and in-class teaching practices, promote a positive image of IFLL to students, teachers, and other stakeholders, and gain valuable insights into perceptions that affect the enhancement of students' communicative competence. As a body of work, the interventions and investigations demonstrate my growth and development as a reflective practitioner and practitioner-researcher, and thus my progression towards becoming a 'holistic TESOL professional' (McKinley, 2019, p. 879), 'all-round' academic (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 60), and 'unbounded professional' (Whitchurch, 2008, p. 383). Thus, this thesis contributes to the field of IFLL on a practical, theoretical, and methodological level by demonstrating how teachers engaging in action research, through a cycle of practitioner-research, can gain valuable insights that can inform both personal and wider teaching practice and knowledge in the field. Consequently, while the research presented was conducted in Japan, the findings have relevance to teachers, students, administrators, and educational policy makers globally.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

A wide range of theories and approaches inform my work as a practitioner-researcher. Ontologically, my work is grounded in blended relativism (Moon & Blackman, 2014) as I believe that while realities exist as multiple constructions within the views of subjects, they can be broadly grouped together within boundaries, such as culture. It is this basis which motivates me to search for 'best-fit' teaching approaches while accepting that there is no simple, one-size-fits-all solution.

Epistemologically, my work is informed by constructivism and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1996) as I understand meaning to be created both from interplay between subject and object and interaction among subjects. This has led me to the conclusion that focusing on contextual understanding and learning through experiencing (i.e., using and producing language), is essential in the development of communicative competence.

From a theoretical standpoint, I employ a pragmatic approach (Dewey, 1938) as I believe that it is necessary for a range of approaches to be used to gain insights into research topics. This also draws on post-positivism (Popper, 1963), in which the incorporation of multiple methods (in both teaching and research) are necessary as all individual methods are imperfect, and mixed grounded theory (Johnson & Walsh, 2019), which advocates for the integration of a range of procedural approaches. I have also been influenced by critical theory (Horkheimer, 1937) as I believe that research and theory should be used to change situations.

In terms of practical application, my work can be classified as action research, particularly technical action research and practical action research. Technical action research seeks to deliver more efficient, effective practice by attempting to solve current problems of delivery and developing pedagogical strategies, skills, and tactics, while practical action research is concerned with both the process and the end product of inquiry, building teachers' capacities to self-evaluate and examine their own practice (Grundy, 1982). However, there are also elements of emancipatory action research, which focuses on the social or educational system, challenging dominant, socially and historically embedded ideologies to overcome alienation, dissatisfaction, and ideological distortion (Kemmis, 2001).

Also central to my view of education and practitioner-research is living educational theory (e.g., Whitehead, 1993; McNiff, 1995), which states that teachers' personal values are often negated or denied in practice. As a result, it is imperative that teachers actively investigate how they can improve their practice in a way which fully incorporates their values. Doing so enables practitioner-researchers to become more aware of the motivations and principles that drive their work, allowing them to construct their own living educational theory, which may then be validated by peers and contribute to the wider knowledge base within the field (Whitehead, 1989).

1.3 Organization of thesis

Following this introductory section, the second section of the thesis describes the educational context in which the presented research was undertaken. This is necessary because of the unique and specific cultural and sociological factors present in the Japanese education system, in particular the IFLL context.

Section 3 discusses the development of the interventions reported on in the publications included in this thesis and introduces the first publication.

The subsequent three sections introduce the main themes of research, presenting and discussing nine publications which demonstrate the author's original contributions to the field. Of the ten publications presented in total, four are sole-authored, five are lead-authored, and one is co-authored by the author of this thesis. My contribution to the lead-authored and co-authored publications ranged from 90% to 50% (see Table 1).

Section 7 draws together the findings and discusses the contributions of the research, and Section 8 outlines the final conclusions gained from this body of work.

Eleven appendices are also included. Appendix 1 presents an overview of the Japanese education system. Appendices 2 through 7 outline some of the concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the development of the interventions. Appendices 8 and 9 list textbooks, teaching ideas, and classroom activities that were developed, informed by, and published following the research, demonstrating the work's pedagogical implications. Appendix 10 lists research articles and publications directly linked to those introduced in Themes I through III. Appendix 11 lists a range of presentations that were made in order to disseminate the findings from the research, further illustrating the theoretical and practical applications of this body of work.

Table 1

Author's contribution to publications

Publication	Role	Contribution	
		%	Nature
1	Lead author	90	Wrote the final article and analysed key concepts following discussions with co-author
2	Co-author	50	Wrote sections of the literature review and discussion, collected and analysed data.
3	Sole author	100	
4	Sole author	100	
5	Sole author	100	
6	Sole author	100	
7	Lead author	60	Developed the research themes, wrote the literature review, sections of the discussion and the conclusion, collected and analysed data.
8	Lead author	60	Developed and led the intervention, wrote the literature review, sections of the discussion and the conclusion, collected and analysed data.
9	Lead author	60	Developed and led the intervention, wrote the literature review, sections of the discussion and the conclusion, collected and analysed data.
10	Lead author	80	Developed the research themes, wrote the literature review, discussion and the conclusion, collected and analysed data.

2. Educational context

2.1 The Japanese education system

Since the turn of the century, important shifts towards globalization have led to new issues and challenges facing Japanese society (Willis & Yamamura, 2002). Among these issues are the educational system, educational concepts, and educational philosophy, making education a venue for an ongoing debate about Japan's place in the world (Gorsuch, 2000).

Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has a significant and imposing role in the Japanese education system, most notably in K-12 schooling (Komatsu, 2002), prescribing the scope and sequence of each subject for each age group for the school year. Following the national curriculum has traditionally been strictly enforced (Willis & Yamamura, 2002). An overview of the Japanese education system is provided in Appendix 1.

Japanese classrooms typically focus on the didactic transmission of information from teacher to student, with the teacher spending the majority of the class lecturing (Gorsuch, 2000). This provides students with few opportunities to express their opinions and they are rarely encouraged, or permitted, to challenge the teacher or their classmates (Hayashi & Cherry, 2004). This, combined with the collectivist cultural norms prevalent in Japan, where the opinion of the group is valued more highly than that of the individual (Harumi, 2011), has led to a perceived lack of confidence or willingness to take risks among Japanese students (Hayashi & Cherry, 2004), which are both crucial factors in enhancing productive output (Littlejohn, 2001). As a result, students often produce answers which match the ideas of their peers in order to maintain group harmony and very little academic autonomy is demonstrated (Lochland, 2012).

2.2 English language education in Japan

The position of English as an international language is widely acknowledged (Morrow, 2004) and throughout the world, learning English as a foreign language has become ubiquitous (Tracey et al., 2014), featuring significantly on the educational agenda (Hu, 2007). English language proficiency has been identified as an important factor leading to success in business, scientific research, and technology contexts (Hyland, 2003; Schultz, 2011), and as Japan has come to play a greater role in the international community (Handford & Matous, 2011), there is a growing need for a workforce with communicative English skills (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008), both in spoken and written forms (Yasuda, 2014).

However, despite the importance given to English, English language education in Japan has attracted significant criticism for its failure to develop students' communicative competence (Aspinall, 2006; Kavanagh, 2012). Furthermore, when comparing performance in international examination contexts, such as TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS, the average overall score for Japanese students is one of the lowest among countries in Asia (Beale, 2002). This has affected students' and teachers' perceptions, with both consequently believing that the English abilities of Japanese people are inferior to those of other Asian nationals (Matsuura et al., 2004). As a result, many government-level policy reforms have specified improving English language education as an explicit priority (see section 2.3).

English language lessons in Japan traditionally focused on reading, grammar explanations, and translation, but more recently communicative language practices have been encouraged in an attempt to break away from the rote learning method favoured by the mainstream system (Matsuura et al., 2001; Shin & Ahn, 2006). However, making this shift is extremely challenging due to factors such as a focus on university entrance exams, large class sizes, and lack of opportunities to engage in face-to-face communication in English outside the classroom affecting motivation to develop communicative English skills (Gorsuch, 2000). Additional issues that have been identified are poor quality materials being introduced in courses and authorized by MEXT, and a lack of teacher training or exposure to varied teaching approaches (O'Donnell, 2005; also see Section 2.4). Furthermore, notions of communication can

differ between cultures, making the adoption of communicative methods problematic (Seargeant, 2008), especially in the Japanese education system where it can be difficult to effect positive change (Hosoki, 2011) as it is particularly centralized (Goodman & Phillips, 2003).

The teacher-centred rote learning methodology prevalent in IFLL in Japan is similar to that used in other subjects there (Kikuchi, 2006, 2009) and while there are benefits in some contexts, the approach negatively impacts on students' ability to interact effectively for authentic communicative purposes (Brown, 2007) as it tends to result in passive, rather than active, knowledge of English (McVeigh, 2002). Furthermore, this approach has been found to decrease motivation and pleasure in studying English (Kimura et al., 2001), leading to students generally having negative impressions of their English classes in high school, reporting a low proficiency in the language, and demonstrating little confidence in using English across the four language skill areas (O'Donnell, 2003). This lack of confidence leads to anxiety regarding situations in which English interaction is necessary (Chiya, 2003).

A large body of literature has highlighted the struggles and reticence of Japanese IFLL learners when asked to perform productive oral tasks in their IFLL classes (e.g., Cutrone, 2009; Greer, 2000). This is also true in English writing classes in high schools, which often do not encourage or enable students to become communicative writers, instead tending to emphasize decontextualized grammatical accuracy at the expense of content in order to pass university entrance exams (Reichelt et al., 2012). Furthermore, many students do not receive much input on academic writing (McKinley, 2010), and a lack of focus on writing skills when compared to reading, listening, and speaking can significantly impair writing development (McKinley, 2006). This is despite MEXT guidelines stating that writing skills are necessary to develop students' communicative competence (MEXT, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015). Consequently, productive oral and written output are commonly viewed as difficult to teach and are given a minor role in IFLL classrooms (Ross, 2003; Sakui, 2004; Taguchi, 2005).

2.3 MEXT policies and issues

Since the 1980s, MEXT has striven to improve the communicative ability of Japanese students, demonstrated by the introduction of policies and initiatives such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program in 1987, the introduction of English as a subject at elementary school, and the creation of the 2003 Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese With English Abilities" (p.1). This action plan attempted to create a favourable attitude towards learning English and stated that teachers in Japan "are expected to give students more communicative activities, which are closer to natural, authentic communication" (Takanashi, 2004, p. 4). More recently, MEXT set the goal that graduates of tertiary education should be able to function effectively in English (MEXT, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015) and also focused on the internationalization of higher education in the Global 30 and Top Global University Project initiatives (Aizawa & McKinley, 2020).

However, in spite of MEXT's efforts, communicative approaches to teaching English remain uncommon (Abe, 2013; Umeda, 2014) and the practical English communication being promoted by MEXT at the macro level is still not being prioritized in high schools or universities at the meso or micro levels (Lee, 2010). One major reason for this is that despite the stress placed on the communicative use of English in government-level initiatives, MEXT has not provided sufficient guidance as to how those pedagogical goals and objectives can be achieved (Tahira, 2012), especially in terms of outlining teaching methods for communicative English instruction (Matsuura et al., 2001). The result is often confusion in schools and universities, with drastic changes to in-class approaches needing to be made (Komatsu, 2002), but administrators and teachers not knowing how to implement those changes (Willis & Yamamura, 2002). Consequently, while many teachers are trying to shift their teaching approaches to meet the new educational objectives, without guidance these shifts remain individualized, isolated, and diverse, with unpredictable and unreliable outcomes (Matsuura et al., 2001), demonstrating the importance of institutional and governmental support (Borg, 2015).

2.4 Linking research to practice

A further issue connected to the successful implementation of MEXT policies is the substantial gap between the TESOL research on which they are based and real-life teaching practice. This is a divide found both in Japan and internationally and it leads to educators having significant feelings of disenfranchisement from major decisions that have shaped their profession, despite TESOL traditionally being a discipline led by teachers (McKinley, 2019).

It has been claimed that many TESOL researchers operate in an isolated academic community which is distanced from the majority of teachers and which places greater emphasis on research-informed teaching than teaching-informed research (Rose, 2019), leading to published studies being sanitized and idealized in nature (Rose & McKinley, 2017a). This results in a lack of engagement from teachers and the relevance of current academic research to real-life teaching practices being questioned, with many educators viewing it as disconnected from the problems and realities of their practice (Kramsch, 2015) and not always reflecting the complex issues that teachers deal with in their daily practices (McKinley, 2019).

Even where teachers are willing and interested in reading current research, Marsden and Kasprowicz (2017) found very limited exposure or engagement, with many teachers not being aware of, or lacking access to, it (Sato & Loewen, 2019). Consequently, TESOL practitioners increasingly rely on developing teaching skills from their own practice rather than using research to inform their teaching practices (Paran, 2017; Rose & McKinley, 2017b).

While this addresses calls for more teaching-informed research and the adoption of practices that encourage greater engagement of teachers and teacher educators in developing the knowledge base of language teaching (Rose, 2019), it does not fully reposition pedagogy as the focal point of TESOL research. Achieving that goal would require more proactivity from the people working at the crossroads of teaching and research, what McKinley (2019) refers to as the teaching-research

nexus. They would need to not only aim to increase teacher engagement with research, highlight and investigate real-world teaching problems that fail to attract research attention in the current climate, and address research questions that are driven by practice-based problems, but also work collaboratively to create a better balance of teaching-informed research and research-informed teaching.

Situations in which government-level policy change has appeared decontextualized, mainly as a result of the gap between research and practice, can lead to teachers being forced to abandon "practices that are part of their own educational culture" (Swan, 2015, p. 65), an issue prevalent in Japan (Pigott, 2015). To avoid this, research and policy development needs to be based on, and informed by, real-life teaching practices and teachers. This would ensure the real-world issues impacted by policy shifts are considered, increasing ecological validity and truly reflecting real-world practices. The research presented in this thesis focuses on investigating the impact of different interventions and teaching approaches in order to better understand how teaching practices could be adapted to further enable the development of communicative competence in the IFLL environment in Japan and internationally, thus contributing to the development and evolution of the teacher-researcher nexus.

3. Background to the interventions

3.1 Development of the interventions: Publication 1 (90% contribution)

The development of the interventions presented in this thesis took place over a number of years and many of them can be traced back to theories, approaches, and concepts including communal learning, situational interest, empowerment, engagement, and active learning. Publication 1 introduces some of those theories, approaches, and concepts, providing insight into how and why the interventions were developed.

This publication also provides an insight into my perspectives on research, learning, knowledge, and teaching. The writing and publication of this paper was an important process for me as it enabled me to critically reflect on the motivations that underpin my work as a practitioner-researcher, supporting my growth and development in that role. I found the development of the article a valuable experience which both consolidated and questioned many of the beliefs that I hold.

Further research that underpins the interventions is introduced and explained in Appendices 2 through 7.

- Bury, J., & Masuzawa, Y. (2018). Non-hierarchical learning: Sharing knowledge, power and outcomes. *Journal of Pedagogic Development, 8*(1), 32-51. https://journals.beds.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/jpd/issue/view/34

I further developed the concepts presented in Publication 1 and presented them at an international conference (see Presentation 7, Appendix 11).

Non-Hierarchical Learning: Sharing Knowledge, Power and Outcomes

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Abstract
Arguing that every student has the capacity to succeed and that every student must be provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential, this article introduces a new pedagogic approach that draws on a wide range of influences. Linking theoretical practices from sociology, pedagogy, social and educational psychology, and cultural studies, the approach posits that teaching and learning should be conducted in non-hierarchical classrooms where all members are equal and working towards shared objectives. A theoretical frame is outlined and the factors that helped shape it are reflected on. A conceptual framework which covers the goals of instruction, instructional materials, classroom management, instructional methods, and assessment is also presented. It is hoped that educators will consider the concepts included in this article and, if possible, incorporate them into their teaching practices.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Educational Theory, Teaching Practice, Non-hierarchical Learning.

Introduction

For educators who teach a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds, there are two central beliefs that should inform their pedagogic approaches: (i) every student has the capacity to succeed, and (ii) every student must be provided with the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. In order to help students reach their full potential, it is imperative that educators create curriculums that are engaging, relevant, demanding, and fulfilling. It is also important that the goals of instruction focus on the development of cognitive ability, talent development, and the expansion and consolidation of students' personal and cultural experiences.

By providing every student with materials that engage them as individuals within a group and not just catering to the majority or the most dominant or powerful students, an inclusive education that produces socially aware and well-rounded students can be offered. However, there are a number of issues that make providing such learning experiences difficult, such as the role of assessment, exclusion, and inflexibility.

The education system in many countries is similar to a mass production system with large groups of students being taught the same subject matter in the same way at the same pace year-on-year, resulting in courses becoming static, and eventually stagnant and outdated (Holmes et al., 2001). This is an outcome that must be avoided, as every year educators encounter different students with different knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and cultures. Consequently, a diverse range of techniques need to be employed in order to maximize the learning opportunities offered to all students (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008). Without a flexible, multi-faceted approach, certain students or groups will not be engaged, leading to exclusion (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010).

There is a large body of research that acknowledges differences in student learning styles and focuses on matching teaching approaches with student learning styles (e.g., De Vita, 2001). Further research indicates that the mismatching of teaching and learning styles helps students stretch their abilities (Smith, 2002). Thus, by using a wide range of teaching techniques and approaches, educators can not only cater to diverse learning styles, but also challenge their students to think and learn in new ways (Keyser, 2000).

In this article, a hypothesized pedagogic approach will be introduced, outlining the influences it has drawn on and presenting a theoretical frame and conceptual framework. It is hoped that educators will reflect on some of the concepts included in this article and, if possible, incorporate them into their teaching practices.

Theoretical Frame of Non-hierarchical Learning

The theoretical frame of the development of the non-hierarchical learning approach is varied, drawing on concepts from pedagogy, social and educational psychology, cultural studies, and sociology. Figure 1 illustrates some of the key concepts that have shaped the approach and will be discussed.

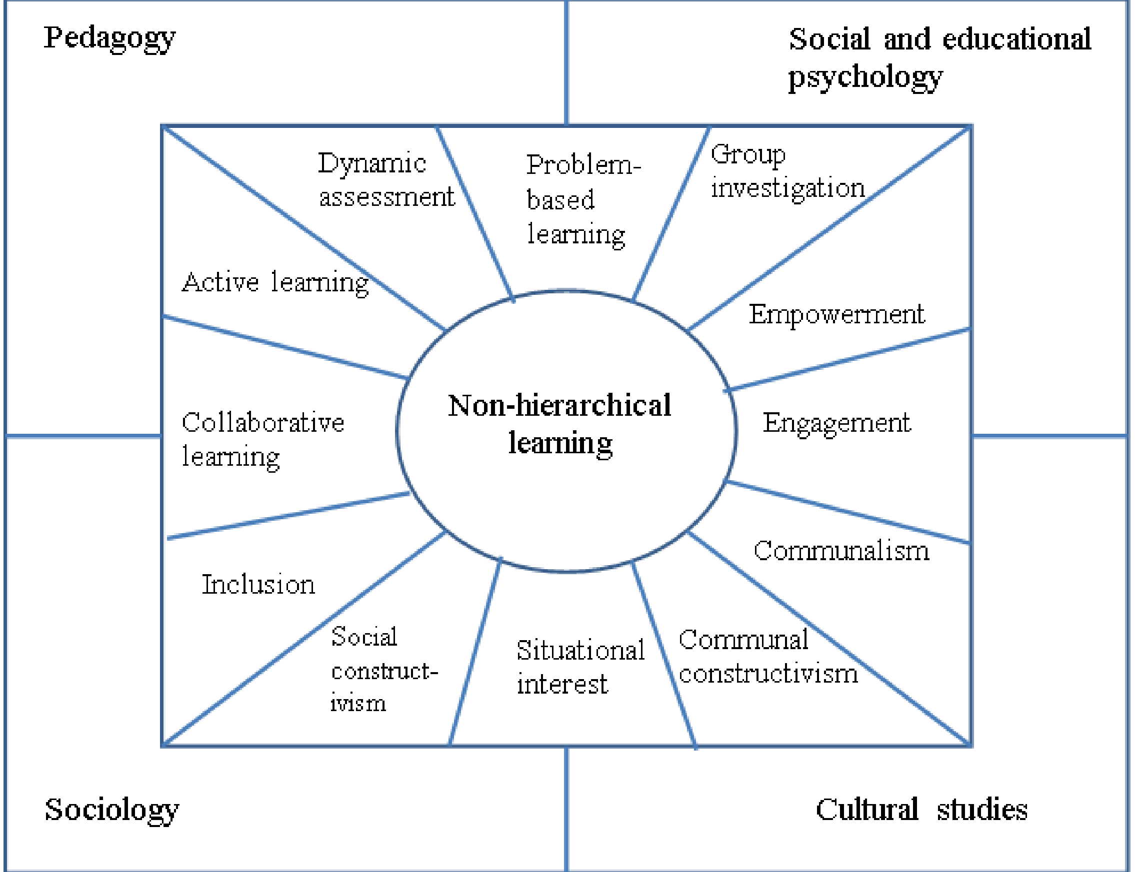


Figure 1. Theoretical frame of Non-hierarchical learning.

Active learning

Defined in its broadest sense as any instructional method that requires students to do meaningful learning activities, engages students in the learning process, and makes them think about what they are doing (Bonwell & Eison, 1991), active learning has received considerable attention over the past several years. Active learning focuses not only on the development of students' understanding of course materials, but also emphasizes the application of practical knowledge and skills by involving students in the learning process (Meyers & Jones, 1993; Auster & Wylie, 2006). Student involvement is a key factor influencing success in higher education (Astin, 1993), leading to significantly improved performance (Hake, 1998). Laws et al. (1999) found that active engagement methods improve conceptual understanding, and Redish et al. (1997) found that improved learning gains are achieved more through active engagement than just spending extra time on a given topic.

On the most basic level, active learning is introducing student activity into the traditional lecture. However, simply introducing activity into the classroom fails to acknowledge the importance that the type of activity being introduced has on influencing how much classroom material is retained, with good activities aiding the development of deeper understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). The instructional practices and classroom activities that are employed must engage students in the learning process, must be designed around important learning outcomes, and promote thoughtful engagement on the part of the student (Litman et al., 2005). The active-learning classroom provides opportunities to activate students' interest and keep them engaged for a longer period of time (Schraw et al., 2001) by employing novel questions, ambiguous statements, and unsolved problems (Litman, 2008).

Due to the perceived extent of change from traditional instruction, the implementation of active learning can polarize faculty. Common concerns include fears that active learning is only possible in smaller classes, that employing active learning is time-consuming so the mandatory content of a

course cannot be fully covered, relinquishing of teacher control leading to class discussions going off-track, and difficulty in planning and preparation (Prince, 2004).

Dynamic assessment

Predominantly based on Vygotsky' sociocultural theory of mind (1986), dynamic assessment offers the opportunity to gain new insights into assessment in the language classroom by revealing invaluable secrets about individual students and their abilities (Ukrainetz et al., 2000). Learning takes place as a result of our experiences, including tests and interactions with others. Thus, dynamic assessment recognizes that abilities and competencies are not static, but are in transactional relationships with the world and sensitive to instruction (Haywood & Lidz, 2007). While traditional non-dynamic assessment shows students' performance and current abilities, by adjusting assessments to the needs of particular learners, dynamic assessment makes it possible to evaluate both the ability of the student to learn from interaction and predict their possible future development (Murphy, 2011).

Describing a wide range of methods, dynamic assessment refers to administration procedures rather than actual assessment instruments, thus, any test can be conducted as dynamic or non-dynamic, depending on the behavior of the assessor (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Dynamic assessment assumes that some individuals can achieve much more cognitively if they are provided with the opportunity to work with a 'significant other' and that assessing an individual's potential is much more revealing and useful than only assessing their present knowledge (Elliott, 2003). In order to assess a learner's hidden potential, mediated assistance is provided along with instruction and feedback during the assessment process (Haywood & Lidz, 2007) and the students' progress in the ability to solve similar problems is then measured (Kirchenbaum, 1998). This focus on assessing learners' cognitive processes is the critical point which distinguishes dynamic assessment from non-dynamic assessment (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

While in formal non-dynamic assessment any change in the person's performance due to interaction during the assessment is considered a threat to test reliability, in dynamic assessment, that interaction allows for a more complete assessment that can determine the extent of the person's performance modifiability. In dynamic assessment, there is a focus on assessment for learning and the role of the assessor as being neutral is 'replaced by an atmosphere of teaching and helping' (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002, p.29) with instruction being embedded in the assessment process itself. Although appropriate interaction and mediation allows assessors the opportunity to identify and remove factors that may be hindering a student's development process as much as possible, it should be meaningful and focused solely on the purpose of learner development (Poehner, 2008).

A further key difference is that dynamic assessment allows for information crucial for effective remediation to be provided and recommendations based on developmental potential to be made (Davin, 2011, cited in Ajideh & Nourdad, 2012). While the scope of non-dynamic assessment is just limited to the past learning experience of individuals, dynamic assessment presents a broader scope of past to present experiences and future capabilities, and is therefore able to provide prescriptive information (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). Obstacles to more effective learning and performance are identified, and ways of overcoming those obstacles on subsequent learning and performance effectiveness are developed (Haywood & Lidz, 2007). By offering individuals an opportunity to benefit from feedback that is closely related to their learning, dynamic assessment helps learners to reconsider and think through problems, thus developing cognitive ability (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1998; Lidz, 1997).

A further central feature of dynamic assessment is the emphasis on individualized learning where a students' present performance is compared to their previous performance and inferences about improvement are made on the basis of the results, rather than comparing the performance or learning of each student with others (Lantolf & Poehner, 2007). The focus on individual instruction and intervention within the assessment procedure is a result of the perception that, within instruction and assessment, individual differences can be identified and appropriate actions taken for each learner. This improves assessment validity as it provides information about individuals' abilities that

non-dynamic measures typically do not (Lidz & Elliot, 2000) and can reveal important differences among students (Anton, 2003).

Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning (PBL) is an instructional method where problems relevant to the students' goals and objectives are introduced and used to provide the context and motivation for learning. Departing from a traditional model of learning in which students are taught identified content through direct instruction and then apply their knowledge to a well-structured situation or problem, PBL models authentic, real-world problems and encourages students to find meaningful solutions (Rhem, 1998; Torp & Sage, 2002). Typically allocating significant amounts of time for autonomous, self-directed learning on the part of the students, PBL is always active and predominantly collaborative or cooperative, giving students the chance to discover knowledge in a meaningful and applicable way. As PBL incorporates a lot of self-directed learning and is based on real-life situations, students gain self confidence in being able to resolve problems that they might face in everyday activities (Utecht, 2003).

PBL provides the opportunity for students to experience a challenging, motivating and enjoyable approach to education (Norman & Schmidt, 2000), with significant improvement in student attitudes and opinions about programs in which PBL had been implemented being found (Vernon & Blake, 1993). Other benefits include improved long-term retention of knowledge compared to traditional instruction (Norman & Schmitt, 2000), better study habits among students, the fostering of a deeper approach to learning, increased library use and class attendance, and studying for meaning rather than simple recall (Major & Palmer, 2001). It has also been indicated that faculty generally prefer the PBL approach (Albanese & Mitchell, 1993).

Group Investigation

Group Investigation (GI) is a pedagogic approach that focuses on the development of four critical components: (i) Investigation, i.e. the organization and collaborative focus of knowledge building and inquiry; (ii) Interaction, i.e. the social dimension of the learning process in which communication is essential to interpreting and constructing meaning; (iii) Interpretation, i.e. group synthesis and elaboration on the findings of each member in order to enhance understanding and clarity of ideas; and (iv) Intrinsic motivation, i.e. the students' emotional involvement which is enhanced by increasing student autonomy in classroom activities (Sharan, 1992; Tan et al., 2006).

Through the development of shared aims, responsibility for collaboration, authentic problems, pooled expertise, and dialogic discussions in GI, students can explore their ideas, clarify them for themselves and to one another, expand and modify them, and finally make them their own. In doing so, it is necessary for students to develop their interpersonal and study skills to achieve their specific learning goals, taking an active part in experiencing and understanding their study topic (Sharan & Sharan, 1992). The teacher's general role is to make the students aware of resources that may be helpful while carrying out the investigation.

Empowerment

Student empowerment is frequently equated with increased participation in the learning process with students commonly disengaging from learning when they are denied formal power in the classroom and wider educational context (Cook-Sather, 2002; Hemmings, 2001; Willis, 2003). The interactions between students and educators are determined by the roles that they assume, with the attitudes and actions of educators strongly impacting on student empowerment (Richards, 1996). If students are to be empowered, educators must redefine their roles and assumptions in relation to the incorporation of the students' experiences and cultures, employing a pedagogy that encourages all students to construct their own knowledge (Cummins, 1986). Students' personal and cultural experiences may differ significantly from educators' expectations, so the adjustment process that is undertaken by educators must be based on an acceptance of students as cultural beings (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Empowered students are confident in their own cultural identity, as well as knowledgeable of social structures and interactional patterns, and so can participate successfully in learning activities

(Cummins, 1994). Significant in achieving empowerment is the need for students to understand the tasks they face and believe that they have the capacity and intellectual tools to undertake them. Key factors in developing this positive approach and attitude are the manner in which teachers receive and extend students' efforts, and encourage them to interact with peers and with course materials, and students' self-perceptions. Self-perceptions are the impressions individuals have in relation to their own abilities and are important determiners of self-esteem (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003) and self-regulation (Harter & Whitesell, 2003). Self-perceptions also affect the way people approach interactions in different contexts (Nezlek et al., 2008) and their willingness to engage in communication (Pearson et al., 2011).

In the classroom, empowering pedagogies typically promote a dialogue between teacher and students, a conversation in which everyone feels safe to speak and all voices are respected (Hemmings, 2000; Singer & Pezone, 2001; Furman, 2002). Educators must strive to build anti-oppressive, interpersonal relationships between students and teachers as well as among students (Lynch & Baker, 2005). Students become empowered when provided with opportunities to engage in learning that is perceived to be moral (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Upadhyay, 2010).

In addition, student participation must be accompanied by critical reflections on their access to and degree of participation (Reid et al., 2008). Academic empowerment requires that students be taught both academic and practical knowledge and skills so they can succeed in today's educational, social and economic structures, while also being taught to think critically about the ways these structures affect their lives (North, 2009).

Engagement

There are many definitions of student engagement covering both social and academic aspects (Dunleavy & Milton, 2008). Social engagement refers to positive interaction with peers and teachers, feeling a sense of belonging, having a positive social self-perception, and being involved in extracurricular and social activities within the school (Archambault et al., 2009). Academic engagement refers to active participation in academic tasks, cognitive investment in those tasks (Willms et al., 2009), and expressions of interest in learning (Park et al., 2012).

The active engagement of students in their learning has been linked to higher educational achievement, positive attitudes to learning, and increased student self-efficacy (Skinner et al., 2009). Furthermore, students who are highly engaged at school are more likely to enter higher education than those that are not (Park et al., 2012). However, engagement levels often decrease as students move through the educational system (Fredricks, et al., 2004). If a learner is interested in a particular topic, they will engage more extensively with it, which could be of educational significance (Hidi, 2006). Thus, making courses relevant to students is imperative.

Communalism

Communalism has been identified as one of nine dimensions in the socialization experiences of low-income African American children (Boykin, 1986), fundamentally focusing on sharing, social bonds, interdependence, an awareness of interconnectedness, and a sense of mutual responsibility. Despite the very specific context to which communalism has been applied to date, the non-hierarchical learning approach posits that the key concepts can be applied to the socialization experiences of all students.

Communalism can be divided into four sub-dimensions: (i) Social orientation, i.e. prioritizing interactions and relationships with people over those with objects or things and holding each social interaction as a valuable experience; (ii) Group duty, i.e. believing that the needs of the group are more important than the needs of the individual; (iii) Identity, i.e. having a sense of belonging and group membership being a key factor in one's self-identity; and (iv) Sharing, i.e. believing exchange and mutual support are essential contributions for the success of a group and that knowledge and expertise should be disseminated rather than kept for individual benefit (Boykin, 1986). Thus, applying the concepts of communalism in an educational context promotes the development of factors essential to the idea of group members working together to create a positive outcome and learning experience that can be rightfully shared and used to the advantage of all.

Communal constructivism
Communal constructivism is an approach in which 'students not only construct their own knowledge as a result of interacting with their environment, but are also actively engaged in the process of constructing knowledge … that will benefit other students and teachers' (Leask & Younie, 2001, p.117). Consequently, students do not simply pass through a course leaving it untouched and unchanged, but they help develop and create a positive effect on the course, and ideally their educational institutes and even the discipline.

The communal constructivist approach was developed following the identification that the majority of student learning that occurs during a course does not become integrated into the materials for the following year. This can result in courses becoming inflexible and outdated (Holmes et al., 2001). It is posited that if the students' learning processes and work could be absorbed into courses, then knowledge would continue to develop and grow, allowing courses to become dynamic and adaptive.

However, for this to be achieved, students must be willing to be knowledge creators, not just passive consumers. Thus, it is necessary for educators to use a range of techniques that encourage students to view themselves as integral parts of the communal process of constructing knowledge. Learners must be empowered and encouraged to engage in meaningful interactions which allow them to contribute to a positive, authentic outcome. It is imperative that learners are listened to, made to feel that they are important, useful, valued, and relevant as this will aid their growth into responsible students and people.

Possible classroom techniques that can be employed include group work and project-based learning, a portfolio assessment process that can be made available to students' peers and learners that follow them, developing a group portfolio that allows current students to reflect on their year-long learning process and also future students to see the progress of knowledge acquisition, making material available to students at least a week in advance of classes to avoid extensive lecturing, allowing students to engage in project work and discussion during lecture time, and encouraging peer tutoring and mentoring.

Situational interest
Research has indicated that students' attention spans during lectures is roughly fifteen minutes (Wankat, 2002), after which the number of students paying attention begins to drop dramatically, resulting in less retention of lecture material (Hartley & Davies, 1978, cited in Prince, 2004). One way of countering this is to develop situational interest, which has been defined as an immediate affective response to certain conditions and/or stimuli in the learning environment that focuses students' attention on the task (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

Classrooms that promote student autonomy and choice increase intrinsic motivation and situational interest (Schraw et al., 2001). Harackiewicz et al. (2000) found that perceived meaningfulness of the task was an important factor in maintaining situational interest. Furthermore, working in small groups also increases students' abilities to maintain situational interest as it can increase the feeling of communal belonging and autonomy (Mitchell, 1993).

Social Constructivism
Constructivism predominantly focuses on lived experience and interpretations of meaning (Schwandt, 1994) with learning being an active process of constructing knowledge to make sense of the world (Adams, 2003). There are many forms of constructivism, which differ on a range of factors including the importance of social interaction as opposed to the individual learner in the construction of knowledge (Phillips, 1995). In social constructivism, communication is compared to processes of building, and active engagement in the processes of meaning-making and understanding the varied nature of knowledge is essential (Spivey, 1997). The learner and educator engage to co-construct meaning with their decisions 'scaffolding' each other (Silcock, 2003).

As such, construction of knowledge is the product of social interaction, interpretation, and understanding (Vygotsky, 1986) and cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is

formed (Woolfolk, 1993). Furthermore, due to the role of language and other forms of communication, knowledge constructs are formed first on an inter-psychological level (between people) before becoming internalized and existing intra-psychologically (Daniels, 2001).

Mainstream constructivism can over simplify group dynamics and assume that similarities among students override social and cultural differences. Although individual differences may be considered in mainstream constructivism, the tendency is to propose general principles that are applicable to all students. However, this approach fails to acknowledge that a given set of learning opportunities may benefit some students while working to the detriment of others. A more diverse constructivist perspective, such as social constructivism, states that general principles must be critically assessed and refined so that their application to specific contexts and groups of students can be understood. Thus, the fluid nature of learning requires teachers to adopt the view that each learner will create knowledge differently and that these differences stem from the various ways that individuals acquire, select, interpret and organize information (Adams, 2006).

Social constructivism addresses the way in which learning can be restructured to allow students to acquire academic knowledge by building on the foundation of personal experience, or conversely how students may gain insights into their own lives through the application of academic knowledge. As social constructivism states that meaning is created through social and collaborative activities, in a classroom the teacher would facilitate rather than explicitly teach or lecture.

Inclusion

In educational contexts, inclusion can be defined as providing all students with the opportunity to access the social and academic life of the classroom (Katz et al., 2012). Social inclusion provides students with the opportunity to interact with peers (Koster et al., 2009) and develop a sense of belonging and acceptance within the learning community (Specht & Young, 2010). Academic inclusion is defined as full and equal participation in academic activities and curriculums (Katz, 2012).

Directly related to resiliency and mental health (Wotherspoon, 2002), inclusion is a major factor in students' academic and social development (Zins & Elias, 2006). Furthermore, it increases academic motivation, aspirations, and achievement (Brock et al., 2008). Consequently, it is widely accepted as one of the key goals in educational systems around the world (Curcic, 2009).

Students come to school to learn and educators must set high standards for all students, support students to achieve them, and create learning opportunities that allow students equal opportunities to succeed. If students are excluded, they will become disengaged (Bru, 2009). The inclusion of students from different backgrounds does not negatively impact the learning of other students (Wagner, 2008), but can actually develop stronger communication, leadership skills (Bunch & Valeo, 2004), and more positive attitudes toward diversity (Cole & Waldron, 2002).

In order to achieve inclusion in the classroom it is essential that compassionate learning communities are built, approaches to instruction are developed so that students have access to differentiated learning opportunities, and student autonomy is emphasized (Katz, 2012). It is also essential that educators create diverse curriculums and employ instructional activities that allow for multiple meanings of representation, expression and engagement (King-Sears, 2009).

Inclusive education questions assumptions about schools, teachers, students, teaching and learning (Moss, 2003), challenges views on the interconnectedness between individuals, education and society (Crebbin, 2004), and strives to achieve a way of life in schools where people are valued and treated with respect for their varied knowledge and experiences (Carrington & Robinson, 2004).

Collaborative and cooperative learning

Collaborative learning can refer to any instructional method in which students work together in small groups toward a common goal (Terenzini et al., 2001) and where emphasis is placed on student interactions rather than on learning as a solitary activity. As such, collaborative learning can be viewed as an umbrella term for all group-based instructional methods, including cooperative learning, which adds the tenet that students are assessed individually while pursuing common goals (Feden &

Vogel, 2003). Further determiners of cooperative learning are individual accountability, mutual interdependence, face-to-face interaction, appropriate practice of interpersonal skills, and regular self-assessment of team functioning (Johnson et al., 1998; Johnson et al., 2000).

Through collaborative and cooperative learning, students can gain confidence in other people and their work and develop their own self-direction and responsibility for learning (Sharan & Sharan, 1994). Social skills tend to increase more within cooperative rather than competitive or individual situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Furthermore, students report increased team skills as a result of cooperative learning (Panitz, 1999).

Conceptual Framework of Non-hierarchical learning

Traditional education systems have strict hierarchies that are stringently adhered to. In many countries, classroom interactions are overwhelmingly controlled by the teacher and the textbook (Dashwood, 2005), placing teachers as primary knowers (Berry, 1981) and students in a submissive role. This situation has been used as a tool by teachers to 'impose order' (Arum & Ford, 2012, p.58) and has created passivity not only in the learners, but within the whole system.

In general terms, the view that a hierarchical organization is the only practical form of organization is based on the assumption that each member of a group is restricted to one specialized function. However, if the one person/one task principle is rejected, the need for a rigid hierarchy disappears, allowing more flexible approaches and relationships to be created.

The study of non-hierarchical organizations in the business context indicates that although members may work independently at times, the work of each individual supports and facilitates the work of the other members within that group, with everyone working towards a mutual goal. The non-hierarchical learning approach posits that this can also be true within an educational context where each student, or small group of students, works on their own task and then reports back to the class, for example in the form of a presentation, which can enhance the learning experiences of others within that group.

This process builds on the theory of network organizations where work conducted by one member is recognized as a positive development by another member, who may then be able to use it and expand on it in their own work. This in turn may help others to make further developments, leading to a cumulative development which produces an outcome much greater than possible if a problem or task was tackled only by isolated individuals (see Figure 2).

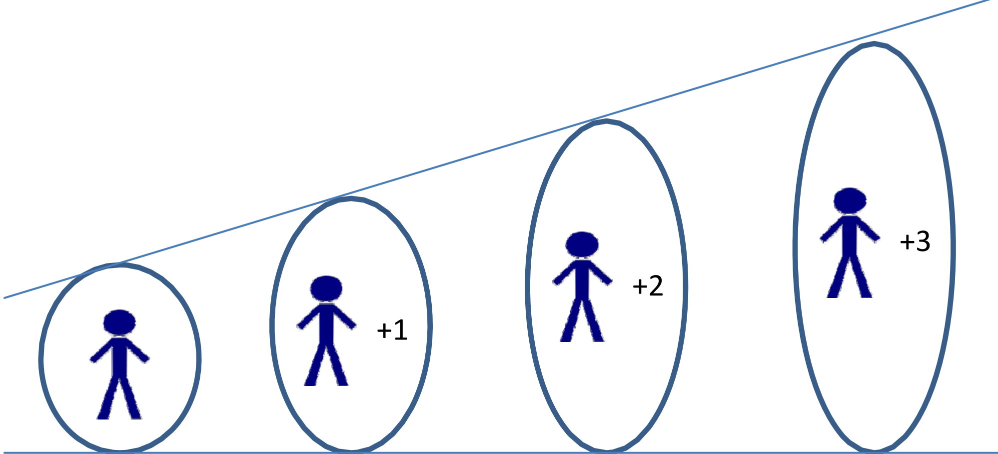


Figure 2. – Development of knowledge in network organizations

Table 1 identifies five elements in the conceptual framework of non-hierarchical learning. They are: Goals of instruction, Instructional materials, Classroom management, Instructional methods, and Assessment. These elements will be discussed below.

Non-hierarchical learning	
Goals of instruction	Develop learning and sharing processes with an emphasis on: (i) empowerment (ii) student ownership (iii) student autonomy and choice
Instructional materials	Emphasis on: (i) using authentic materials that are well-balanced and present a diverse range of cultures (ii) using materials as entry points to paperless discussions and activities (iii) activities that are easily relatable to important learning outcomes (iv) activities that encourage communication, the development of critical skills, reflective learning and an awareness of social responsibility
Classroom management	The role of the educator should be perceived as: (i) co-developer of a productive, safe and compassionate learning environment (ii) contributor to the co-construction of knowledge and progress towards shared goals
Instructional methods	Educators should focus on methods that allow for: (i) minimal explicit instruction (ii) educator to be seen as an equal team member
Assessment	Student assessment is measured: (i) individually (ii) dynamically (iii) as interrelated with learning and teaching

Table 1. Conceptual Framework of Non-hierarchical Learning

Goals of instruction

The main goal of instruction in non-hierarchical learning is to develop students' learning and sharing processes so that they become empowered and learn to use the skills they gain in class in authentic contexts. In order to do this, it is essential for educators to foster effective group and team work skills, and encourage students to critically reflect on their own learning (Cotterall, 2000).

Further to the development of student empowerment, non-hierarchical learning proposes that overall achievement can be improved if student ownership is explicitly stated as one of the overarching goals of instruction. Doing this indicates that a learner's education must be personally meaningful to them, drawing on their goals, interests and experiences.

The third key goal of non-hierarchical learning is to develop students' abilities to work autonomously. Encouraging students to work autonomously aids the development of their mental processes, which in turn improve and consolidate authentic communicative skills (Alan & Stroller, 2005). Supporting students' autonomy is widely acknowledged as one of the key factors in humanistic teaching (Deci et al., 1996) and it promotes students' positive perceptions of their education (Grolnick et al., 1991). The enhancing of student autonomy provides learners with the opportunity to achieve a more complete sense of ownership of their own learning and engage in critical thinking processes (Belgar & Hunt, 2002). This allows students to become less dependent on their educators (Fewell, 2010) and positively influences their cognitive behavior (Zin & Eng, 2014).

Instructional materials

Non-hierarchical learning posits that educators can improve and enhance the education service they provide by using materials that present diverse cultures in an authentic and equal manner. No culture or group of people should be portrayed as better than another. The use of materials that accurately depict diverse groups and the experiences of those groups' members can result in increased motivation and engagement, greater appreciation and understanding of different cultures, and more acknowledgement of the value of students' own life experiences as a topic for knowledge development (Spears-Bunton, 1990).

Despite a traditional focus on textbooks in courses (Dashwood, 2005) and some educators following course textbooks without questioning them (Gorsuch, 2000; Miyahara, 2012), their practical authenticity has been questioned (McGroarty & Taguchi, 2005). Consequently, non-hierarchical learning proposes a departure from focusing on paper-based materials and an over-reliance on textbooks. Instructional materials should be used as entry points to paperless discussions and activities. One possible way of doing this is to increase the amount of problem-based learning and task-based activities that are employed in the classroom (Bury & Sellick, 2015). However, it is imperative that these activities are student-led.

In the non-hierarchical learning approach, educators are encouraged to utilize activities which develop communication skills as well as general cognitive strategies by making the target material relevant to the students and ensuring it has authentic value to them and their learning goals. This allows educational activities to become increasingly rewarding, thus providing students with the situational rationales for staying focused and engaging in learning. By making the links between activities and learning outcomes clear, it is possible to enhance the perceived meaningfulness that students attach to their education.

Tasks that require learners to employ a variety of communicative methods, such as role-play and concept mapping, provide opportunities for learners to consolidate their own understanding through discussions with other group members (Torrance & Pryor, 1998). Thus, open-ended tasks that require students to think critically, solve complex problems, and apply their knowledge in and to their own world are to be encouraged (Shepard, 2000). Authentic learning situations allow learners to use academic knowledge and skills in real-world situations, developing a stronger connection and knowledge transfer between home and school (Bereiter, 2002). Activities classified by Ribé and Vidal (1993) as second and third generation tasks are good examples of possible classroom activities that can be employed as they aim to develop awareness and interpersonal skills in real-world contexts. Furthermore, students' reflective capabilities and awareness of social responsibilities can be developed by educators incorporating more liberal themes into courses (Inui et al., 2006) and moving away from just test teaching.

Classroom management

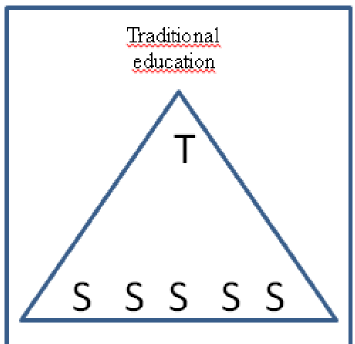
For success in the non-hierarchical learning approach to be attained, the first step is to create a safe and compassionate environment that supports open, honest and lively class discussion. It is essential that all class members feel comfortable sharing their views and experiences and are able to interact and participate fully in classroom activities. It is also critical that individuals are focused on achieving joint goals and not on improving their own status or power within a particular system. Thus, a shared learning process which depends on and develops the complementary skills of its members must be established. This can be achieved in part by educators assuming the role of listener and observer more frequently and emphasizing the need for students to be given time to talk.

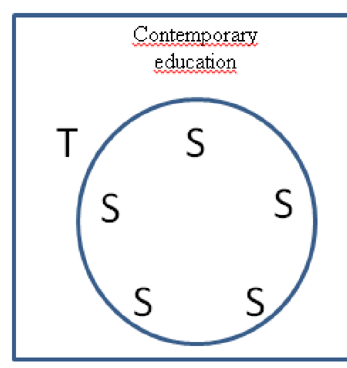
Changes in classroom management can only be achieved if the way educators perceive themselves is challenged (Rice & Wilson, 1999). In non-hierarchical learning both the learner and educator are acknowledged as experts and co-constructors of knowledge instead of teachers being identified as the most knowledgeable and in charge. Thus, there must be an emphasis on the transference of power to the learner (Brooks & Brooks, 1993) and control should be shared by educators and learners (Watkins, 2001) with a focus on interdependence and mutual responsibility. Students must be encouraged to share information and contribute to the development of their shared knowledge and this exchange can lead to improved motivation and social skills (Brown & Duguid, 2001).

Instructional methods

The transmission of information from teacher-students is not the only way of making knowledge accessible. If it is accepted that knowledge is co-constructed through common discourse (van Leeuwen, 2008), then student-student communication is of equal importance, especially where verbal communication is 'the main means of transmitting information' (Edwards & Westgate, 1994, p.16), and books and other resources are viewed as supplementary. Explicit instruction and explanations should be minimal and kept outside of the classroom where possible, allowing the opportunity to discuss ideas and create joint meaning through interaction in the classroom.

In social constructivism, educators position themselves as organizers and potential sources of information (Crowther, 1997), but in non-hierarchical learning, the role of the educator is not to work as a facilitator in order to provide students with opportunities and incentives to construct knowledge and understanding, but to work with students as a member of the team in order to achieve the group goals. The co-construction of knowledge should not be restricted to traditional educator-learner or learner-learner interactions (Weeden & Winter, 1999), but the importance of all participants being part of a team must be acknowledged. The 'flattening' of power relations that is proposed in non-hierarchical learning situates the teacher as an equal team member.





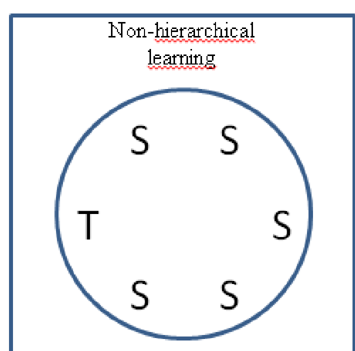


Figure 3 – Visual representations of traditional education, contemporary education, and non-hierarchical learning

Figure 3 illustrates the different approaches between traditional education, contemporary education, and non-hierarchical learning. Instead of the teacher being in control as in traditional education, or being perceived as an interlocutor or facilitator outside of the group, power must be transferred so that each person is an equal contributor to the learning process within the group.

Assessment

In traditional education contexts, teachers are perceived to be the focus for success (Tomlinson, 2001). This reinforces the role of learners as passive recipients, dependent on those around them (Willinsky, 2005). In non-hierarchical learning, it is suggested that students should be given equal responsibility for their learning outcomes. Furthermore, it is posited that increases in achievement should be measured through personal progress, where individual achievement is not judged against other students, but in relation to past performances. This approach could allow students to develop a desire for deeper understanding and gain satisfaction from perseverance and success in difficult tasks (MacGilchrist, 2003).

In non-hierarchical learning, assessment should be conducted dynamically with assessors providing mediation to reduce possible factors that prevent a student from achieving their goals. Aiding a student in this context can greatly enhance their confidence in relation to their own abilities and develop more positive self-perceptions.

Traditionally, assessment, learning, and teaching have been seen as three related but separate aspects of education (Graue, 1993). The non-hierarchical learning approach posits that assessment should be viewed as a further opportunity for learning, both for students and educators. It is essential that effective and targeted feedback is provided so that the students can learn from their assessment

experiences and improve in the future as this will encourage them to view the assessment process as cognitively beneficial.

Potential issues

When introducing and outlining pedagogic approaches, the difference between what is desirable and what is actually possible in a certain context is often not given enough prominence. Analyzing issues and suggesting solutions is quite different from actually applying them in a practical situation (Giroux, 1988), with the greater challenge not being proposing a framework, but in bringing about changes in schools that will benefit all students.

As every pedagogic approach consists of more than one element, it affects more than one learning outcome (Norman & Schmitt, 2000). Thus, when assessing whether a method is successful, a wide range of outcomes must be considered, ranging from the development of factual knowledge and relevant skills to student attitudes and class attendance. However, evidence on how a teaching approach impacts on all of these learning outcomes is often not available or it can include mixed results. For example, when implementing a non-hierarchical approach, factors such as problem-solving and communication may improve while performance on standardized exams may decline. Therefore, deciding whether an approach has been successful is a matter of interpretation and it is not valid to claim that faculty who adopt a specific method will see similar results in their own classrooms.

Autonomy in the classroom develops via interaction with others (Smith & Ushioda, 2009) and learner and educator autonomy should be considered as mutually interdependent (Smith, 2002; Usuki, 2007). For educators that have only experienced hierarchical learning contexts, it can be very difficult to promote the conditions required for the development of student autonomy (Graves & Vye, 2012; Aoki, 1999). Furthermore, educators that do not practice autonomy in their own contexts can have issues in assisting their learners in achieving improved levels of autonomy (Elliott & Dweck, 2005).

As with all new approaches, the introduction of the methods into the classroom should be gradual due to the possibility of students rejecting an approach inconsistent with their beliefs about learning, the classroom, and teacher/student roles (Harris, 2010). At first, teaching needs to be teacher-led, but as courses progress, students should be allowed and encouraged to take more responsibility and have more control over education and learning (Dornyei, 2001). However, teachers will need to provide some guidance (Widdowson, 2003), acting as a resource or guide for learners' own self-directed efforts (Benson, 2001), but this should naturally decrease as students' empowerment, ownership, and autonomy increase.

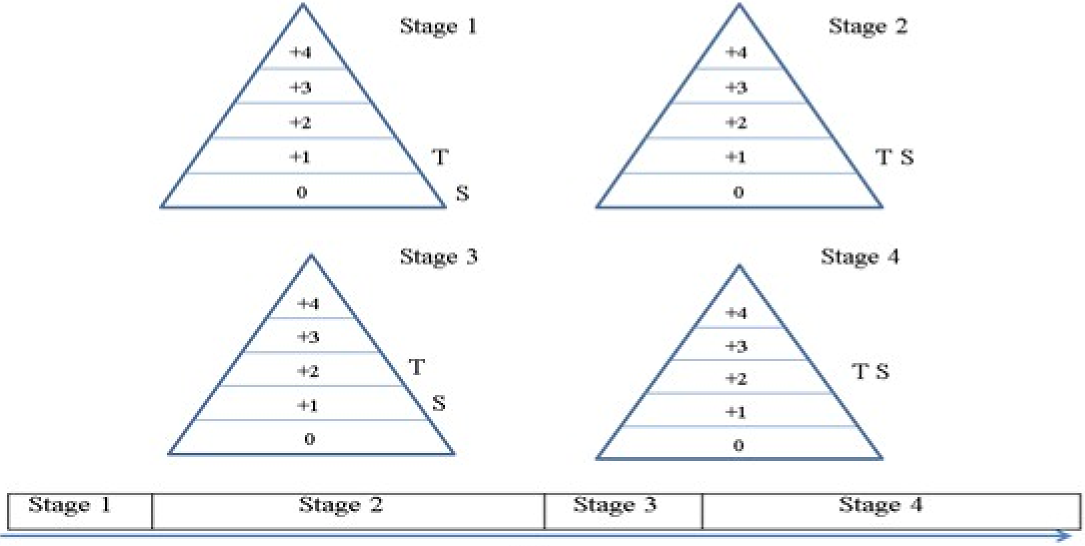


Figure 4 – Example of how non-hierarchical learning could be introduced into the classroom.

Figure 4 illustrates one possible way of introducing non-hierarchical learning into the classroom. In Stages 1 and 3, the teacher either leads the class or acts as a facilitator for student learning. In Stages 2 and 4, the teacher becomes an equal group member and co-contributor to knowledge creation. As courses progress and students become more comfortable with the non-hierarchical learning approach, Stages 2 and 4 can be increased in length.

While it is easy to agree with the theoretical grounding that supports the transference of power suggested in non-hierarchical learning, educators' approaches to classroom management and interaction with students must be adjusted on the basis of differences in students' cultures (Delpit, 1988). Students' opportunities to learn improve when teachers conduct lessons in a culturally responsive manner, consistent with community values and norms for interaction (Au & Kawakami, 1994). Thus, the length of the stages illustrated in Figure 4 must be seen as flexible. Furthermore, it is essential that the learners perceive the educator's role as equal team member as genuine or they could become less willing to share their learning strategies and thought processes, reverting to anticipating and meeting the teacher's need for a correct answer.

From the perspective of critical theory, the non-hierarchical approach can be faulted for focusing more on the roles of educators and students in the classroom than on issues of power in the larger society that constrain the actions of both. As such, it can be claimed that the external contexts within which teachers and students must work and other external pressures and circumstances are not fully addressed.

Conclusion

In an era of intensified competition among colleges and universities, faculty members and educational institutes are recognizing that competitive advantage can be gained through excellence in teaching (Bruce, 2001; Byrne, 2000). Furthermore, student expectations regarding their learning are rising (Page & Mukherjee, 2000) as they seek more engaging class environments (Schneider, 2001) in which they can both obtain knowledge and learn how that knowledge can be applied in their future careers (Merritt, 2001).

In order to address this, educators need to be able to draw on an expansive portfolio of pedagogic strategies and concepts. In this way, the possibility of not only helping students reach their potential, but also of enabling them to be empowered through their educational experiences and to use the skills they learn as practical tools within society is created. If this is achieved, recognized, and acknowledged, definitions of education and learning can be transformed and expanded not only in isolated courses, but possibly over whole institutes.

Although teachers cannot learn on behalf of students or force them to learn, they can do certain things to help and the behaviors that educators exhibit can affect students' feelings towards, and engagement in, learning. Some of the evidence for non-hierarchical learning is compelling and should stimulate faculty to think about teaching and learning in non-traditional ways. Traditional power relationships in education tend to be coercive, consolidating the subordinate, passive status of students. There can also be the assumption that sharing power equally within the classroom would decrease the status of the dominant or individual group. In non-hierarchical relations of power, no group or individual is put above another, and power is neither gained nor diminished in terms of members as isolated units, instead power is generated through interactions among group members.

While there is no one pedagogic approach that can provide the answer to all educational issues and teaching should not be simplified down to formulaic methods, discussions about learning allow educators to analyze their own approaches and concentrate on what should be the main focus of the educational process: helping learners reach their full potential.

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3.2 Goals of the interventions

The overarching goal of the interventions presented in this thesis was to enable students to better develop their communicative competence in line with MEXT guidelines. Their focus can be categorized into two themes: developing productive output and lexical retrieval; and developing SPoA and LoC. The interventions exposed students to teaching methods and learning activities that could allow them to become empowered, develop procedural knowledge, and transition from viewing English as a language of study to viewing it as a language of communication. While the research conducted in this body of work was undertaken on a relatively small scale, it is hoped that the findings gathered will help inform other educators about possible ways their behaviours or approaches could be adapted in order to enhance students' communicative competence. It is also hoped that the importance and utility of conducting practitioner-research has been conveyed and that this will encourage other educators to engage in their own investigations.

4. Theme I – Developing productive output and lexical retrieval

4.1 Publication 2 (50% contribution)

Drawing on a range of concepts, theories, and hypotheses, including the Acquisition-learning hypothesis, Input hypothesis, Output hypothesis, and Information-processing theory (see Appendix 2 for a full list and further explanation), I developed an intervention with three other teachers at a private high school in Japan in which Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) employed, emphasized, and encouraged a corpus of lexis for incidental classroom English during their lessons. Incidental classroom English, such as "Open your books to page 3.", was focused on as it was viewed as meaningful, easy to introduce, and possible to recycle and repeat multiple times without taking a lot of time away from teaching the core materials in the curriculum. It was also hoped that by using English in a highly contextualized way closely linked to routines and everyday classroom activities, students would be encouraged to view English use in the classroom as normal and that it could be established as a legitimate means of communication rather than just a subject to be studied.

In this paper, it was found that, following a conscious effort to increase the amount of English use by JTEs by employing a corpus of incidental classroom English and encouraging students to do the same, there was significantly greater incidence of student-to-teacher communication in English during lessons. Furthermore, not only did the amount of English increase, but the English being used was more conversational and naturalistic. It was also found that the JTEs indicated a perceived increase in students' listening skills, an improvement in students' familiarity with communicative English, and an enhanced ability to deal with a range of spoken English.

- Sellick, A., Bury, J., Yamamoto, K., & Watanabe A. (2015). Encouraging incidental English communication in Japanese English classes, Part 2: Classroom behaviour. *Shumei University Journal*, *12*, 121-145.

The findings from this publication were developed and presented in Presentation 8 (Appendix 11), for which I was co-recipient of the Outstanding Poster Presentation award at the Okinawa JALT Trends in Language Teaching Conference. Furthermore, this publication was selected and reprinted by *Ronsetsu Shiryō Hozon-kai* (論説資料保存会), a national educational organization which collates notable articles from university journals and reprints them as a collection to enable easier access to a wider audience.

Encouraging Incidental English Communication in Japanese English Classes, Part 2: Classroom Behavior

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to address the introduction of a new national curriculum by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MEXT), which requires Japanese teachers of English to increase the amount of English used in their classes relative to the amount of Japanese used (MEXT, 2011). Sellick et al. (2014) found that the implementation of a program to encourage JTEs to increase their use of incidental classroom English resulted in an overall general and persistent small to moderate improvement in the students' perceptions of, and their attitudes towards, learning and using English. Furthermore, the students reported greater satisfaction with their lessons and with their JTEs in the classes that encouraged greater use of incidental classroom English.

This paper will broaden the research on this topic by investigating whether there were real, identifiable, changes in classroom behavior among students or JTEs resulting from the introduction of greater incidental

classroom English, by reporting on actual language use in the classroom before and after the introduction of the new classroom language corpus.

Literature Review

Sellick et al. (2014) reported on an investigation that collected data about students' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, two factors: (i) their Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and (ii) the importance of using English in the classroom. In that study, gathered from two first year junior high school intake groups, it was found that the implementation of a new language corpus increased JTEs use of incidental classroom English and resulted in a general improvement in the students' satisfaction with their lessons, their JTEs, and their attitudes towards learning and using English.

The approach of using the language being taught (L2) as the only means of communication in the classroom and avoiding interference from the students' first language (L1) has traditionally been well supported, especially in Japan (Shimizu, 2006), as it has been thought to hamper L2 acquisition (Swan, 1985). However, other research (Atkinson, 1987; Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001) challenges the monolingual approach, demonstrating the importance of the students' L1 and flexibility of teachers regarding its use. Nation (2003) argues that prohibiting the use of the students' L1 can negatively impact students and have a harmful psychological effect, and that this is especially relevant in culturally homogeneous environments (Cole, 1998). Thus, the combination of mainly L2 with some L1 allowed has been promoted (Willis, 1981; Medgyes, 1994; Turnbull, 2001).

The amount of L2 used in the classroom can be increased through further use of incidental classroom English, which provides students the opportunity to learn through functional input (Meyer, 2008) and

demonstrates that English is not only used in classroom activities, but it can also be an effective tool for communication (Burden, 2001). In view of this, a corpus of classroom English that JTEs could use with first year students was introduced. As the students in the first year progress, the same set of language will continue to be used and expanded upon in each successive academic year.

A large change to teaching practice, such as that introduced by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, can be viewed as a potential threat to the 'key meanings' of teachers' lives, such as their perceptions of their status and their group allegiances (Blacker & Shimmin, 1984). Consequently, teachers can feel that their existing approaches are being implicitly criticized by the introduction of new practices (Craig, 2012). As a result, the implementation of any intervention must involve the affected teachers at all stages and be approached sensitively if it is to be successful. Research conducted on the factors that affect the various responses and attitudes towards change identifies the perceived degree of effort required for success as a key element, where the higher the perceived effort required is, the less likely the change in behavior will be successfully achieved (Sparks, Guthrie & Shepherd, 1997). In view of this, this investigation focused on developing the use of incidental classroom English as it would be viewed as encouraging and providing justification for the expansion of an already existing behavior. This decreased the perceived degree of effort required and meant that the JTEs would not interpret the intervention as being critical of their current approaches.

Research Questions

In assessing this intervention, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. Does encouraging JTEs to use more incidental classroom English result in an increase in usage by JTEs?
2. Is there an increase in English usage by students in the form of teacher-to-student interaction?
3. Is there an increase in English usage by students in the form of inter-student interaction?
4. Are the lengths and complexity of utterances by the JTEs increased?
5. Are the lengths and complexity of utterances by the students increased?
6. Is there any detectable impact on student performance in English examinations as a result of encouraging JTEs to use more incidental classroom English?

Participants

The school: The participating school is a private junior high school located in the Kanto area of Japan. The school is a boarding school and the students come from families that are classified as A or B according to the NRS Social Classification system (Symbols of Success (A) via MOSAIC), i.e. they are primarily from middle and upper middle class families.

As with many schools, the students are grouped into homerooms, but are then subdivided and mixed into classes S, MA, MB, MC, GA, GB, and GC, based on ability as assessed from entry test scores obtained for each subject; class S represents the highest level, and class GC the lowest. After each round of regular testing (midterm and end-of-term tests), the students are reassessed and can be reassigned to a different class. Consequently, there can be considerable movement of students between classes. For first year students the first reassignment takes place after the midterm tests during their first term.

In order to address research questions 1-5, two classes were investigated.

Class 1 consisted of 31 midlevel first year junior high school students (19 male, 12 female, modal age 13) from the April 2010 intake.

Class 2 consisted of 33 midlevel first year junior high school students (19 male, 14 female, modal age 13) from the April 2011 intake. This class was drawn from the intervention group described above.

In order to address research question 6, two groups were investigated. Group 1 consisted of 165 first year junior high school students (103 male, 62 female, modal age 13) from the April 2010 intake.

Group 2 consisted of 157 first year junior high school students (91 male, 66 female, modal age 13) from the April 2011 intake. This group was used as the intervention group.

As no students withdrew from the study, the participant groups represent the entirety of their respective intakes.

Methodology

A mixed methods approach was applied in order to ensure that the data collected was of sufficient breadth and depth. In the Japanese education community, research based on statistical evidence is highly valued and often holds precedence over more qualitative projects. However, quantitative and qualitative methods are not a dichotomy and do not need to be mutually exclusive (Freimuth, 2009), often being employed in a complementary manner (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). Bryman (2006) states that mixed methods research has increasingly been seen as a way to bridge the different paradigms, incorporate quantitative and qualitative methods and offer the best of both worlds.

In order to minimize variation between the participant groups and enable any effects of the intervention to be identified, the two participant groups used the same textbook (Columbus 21, Book 1, published by Mitsumura

Tosho) , followed the same syllabus, and were taught by the same JTEs.

The first stage of the research was to agree a corpus of classroom English that the Year One JTEs would adopt and encourage the use of with the intervention group through the academic year. An incidental classroom English corpus consisting of 56 classroom English items (Appendix A) was jointly developed by the authors and the JTEs. The intervention group students were issued with a worksheet providing this incidental classroom English corpus with Japanese translations. The necessity for the JTEs to use this corpus during lessons and for them to encourage the intervention group students to use this corpus was stressed.

Working with the JTEs in order to develop the classroom English corpus was essential. It ensured that the corpus was relevant to the English classroom, that the project was seen as being developed internally by the English department, rather than imposed from outside, and that all of the teachers were committed to seeing the implementation of the materials they had helped to prepare (e.g. Norton, 2009) . For the intervention to be successfully achieved, the teachers needed to feel valued, that they were supported, that they had an influence on the changes taking place, and that there was shared ownership of the changes. Hutchinson (1991) stated that, "In any social activity, such as education…[it is crucial] to develop sensitive and supportive environments in which people can adjust to changes that affect their working lives". The 'collegial' approach (Bush, 2011) adopted in this investigation aimed to create this environment, which would in turn motivate "others to do more than they intended or thought possible" (Bass & Riggio, cited in Hickman, 2010, p.75) and make a positive contribution to the school's program of "people building" (Greenleaf, cited in Hickman, 2010, p.77) .

The following data was collected:

1. A sample recording was made of a regular English lesson for Class 1 and Class 2. The recording was made during the third term of the academic year for both classes from lessons taught by the same JTE covering the same lesson point from the textbook. Attempts to minimize variation between the two classes were undertaken by matching them for ability level via comparison of the students' test performance profiles, and of student behavior and perceived enthusiasm via JTE reports.

The lesson recordings were analyzed by a count of utterances of incidental classroom English, a calculation of mean utterance length, and an examination of the linguistic register (field, tenor, and mode) of the utterances used was conducted (Halliday, 1985, p.12) .

2. A comparison was made of both groups' performance on an externally administered and scored English test, the STEP Eiken test. All students at the school are required to take this seven level test (with level five being the lowest level, and one the highest) , which has three test sessions during each calendar year. As entry into Oral Communication lessons from Year Three onwards is based on obtaining specific levels of this test, many students take multiple levels and/or make multiple attempts during an academic year.

It should be noted that the students in this school are surveyed each term on many areas of their school life, and that the school has an active policy of encouraging research that might be of benefit to the school and students. Furthermore, it is not unusual for lessons to be recorded or filmed for the purposes of teacher assessment, marketing, and so on. Consequently, the data collection methods should not have seemed out of place to either students or teachers who have been acculturated to the school.

All data collected was anonymous in nature and in order to ensure that

consent to participate in the research was fully informed, the authors explained the purpose of the research to the participating JTEs, the senior management of the school, the parents of the students and to the students in order to obtain their agreement to participate. Once the research had been completed, and the data analyzed, a feedback session was held with the participating JTEs to discuss the results and any implications they may have for teaching policy in the school. Subsequent to this, a feedback session was held with the students to feedback the results of their participation.

It is important to note that the data collected compares the two groups close to the end of the academic year. Ideally, the students would have been randomly allocated to different classes, some having the intervention, and others having no change to their teaching style, thus providing a control group. These groups would have then been sampled early in the academic year, then at a mid-point, and finally at the end, allowing comparisons to have been made between groups over time, and also within groups over time.

However, as students are regularly re-organized across classes in this school, this was deemed impractical. Also, the forthcoming introduction of a new textbook, prevented the study from being conducted over two years with different groups. Consequently, it was decided that data would be collected by sampling a lesson from the 2010-2011 Year One intake（Class 1）, in order to provide a comparison group for the intervention group, the 2011-2012 Year One intake（Class 2）. This investigation can be thus viewed as a comparative instrumental case study（Stake, 1995）with the class as the unit of study（Yin, 1994）, and which, by controlling for as much variation as possible, seeks to evaluate any potential variation（Guba and Lincoln, 1981）between the two cases via theoretical replication（Lee,

2006）.

Results

1. Lesson Recordings: Data recorded for the audio recordings of Class 1 and 2（the intervention group）taught by the same JTE during the final first-year term for each Class（Appendices B and C）included total counts of incidental classroom English occurring during each lesson, incidental classroom English taking place between JTE and students, and incidental classroom English occurring between students. The counts for each Class were then analyzed using the t-test statistic.

Table 1. Classroom English counts and p-values for Class 1 and 2 lessons

	Class 1	Class 2	p-value
Total classroom English	44	116	0
Classroom English between JTE and students	36	103	0
Classroom English between students	9	13	0.197

Significantly more incidental classroom English was recorded during the Class 2 lesson than during the Class 1 lesson, and significantly more communication via incidental classroom English took place between JTE and students during the Class 2 lesson than during the Class 1 lesson. However, while incidence of incidental classroom English between students was higher during the Class 2 lesson than during the Class 1 lesson, this difference did not reach significance.

Mean incidental classroom English utterance lengths were calculated for each Class and then compared using t-tests to ascertain if there was any significant variance between them.

Table 2. Mean Classroom English utterance lengths and p-values for Class 1 and 2 lessons

	Class 1	Class 2	p-value
Average classroom English utterance length overall	2.75	3.06	0.3962
Average classroom English utterance length for JTE	2.75	2.38	0.2250
Average classroom English utterance length for students	2.75	3.29	0.3237

Analysis of utterance length revealed that there was no significant variation between the two Classes.

An analysis of the register of the incidental classroom English used by each Class during the sampled lessons was also conducted, and is presented below, divided into the areas of field, tenor, and mode.

i. Field: Field gives us information about the social activity that is occurring, the topic of the text, the degree of specialization of language, and the angle of representation.

Field	Linguistic Evidence
The social activity taking place Sampled English lessons.	In both samples, the JTE primarily uses language in the imperative and interrogative moods, indicating that the students are expected to obey her commands and answer her questions, e.g. *Be quiet, How do you spell it? Stand up, please.* The students in both Classes primarily use language in the declarative and interrogative moods. Interestingly, they also sometimes use the imperative mood amongst themselves, especially when mimicking the JTE, e.g. *Be quiet, Try again.*
The degree of specialization of lexis Although a language lesson, the lexis used in incidental classroom English is relatively unspecialized. It predominantly uses simple syntax and everyday vocabulary. However, the range and specialization of items of lexis are greater in the classroom English used by the JTE in the Class 2 lesson.	Class 1: JTE: *Listen, please, Do you have the resume I gave you yesterday?, Let's start, You are so noisy, [⋯]number three.* Students: *Yesterday?, I have, I'm happy, I don't speak English, What is it in Japanese?, You are crazy!, Oh, my god!* Class 2: JTE: *Okay, stand up, Whatever you like, Do you have a partner?, What kind of dog do you have?, Number three, And how do you spell it?, Could you spell it?, I think you made a mistake.* Students: *I'm tired, Who are you?, Stand up?, She is Martian!, I am a genius, Are you okay?, We study English.*
The angle of representation The JTE is indirect and impersonal when addressing imperatives to the class, but direct and personal when speaking to a specific student. Direct interaction of this type between JTE and students only occurs in English in the Class 2 lesson however. The students use mainly direct and personal angles of representation as they are either addressing the JTE or another student.	JTE: *Let's start, Number six, How do you spell it?, What kind of dog do you have?* Students: *You are crazy!, Teacher!, I don't understand.*

ii. Tenor: Tenor gives us information about the social roles and relative status of the participants.

Tenor	Linguistic Evidence
Social connectedness/distance Both transcripts convey the social distance expected between student and teacher/examiner.	There are a greater number of personal interrogatives, as well as an apology (see below), used by the JTE in the Class 2 sample, indicating that perhaps the perceived social distance in this Class is slightly lessened. JTE: *Is he cute?* Student: *She! She!* JTE: *Sorry. Is she cute?* Student: *Yes!*

iii. Mode: Mode gives us information about the degrees of interactivity and spontaneity of the text.

Mode	Linguistic Evidence
Spontaneity As the samples are recordings of English lessons, there is necessarily a degree of spontaneity in both. However, each sample shows different degrees of spontaneity.	On the whole, clauses in both samples are relatively short and are imperative, interrogative or declarative in nature. Class 1: The JTE shows little spontaneity in this sample beyond classroom management clauses. The majority of spontaneous language comes from the students, both in student-teacher and student-student interaction. Class 2: The JTE evidences greater spontaneity in this sample, including a relatively long off-topic exchange about names of planets based on a spontaneous student-produced prompt. As with Class 1, student-teacher and student-student interaction show a high degree of spontaneity.
Interactivity The degree of interactivity varies considerably between the two samples, with Class 1 showing considerably less interactivity than Class 2.	Class 1: While there are some instances of turn-taking activity (seven in total), they are generally short, with the longest student-teacher exchange consisting of seven turns, and the longest student-student exchange consisting of two turns. Class 2: There are more instances of turn-taking activity (14 in total), and they are of greater length, with the longest student-teacher exchange consisting of 14 turns, and the longest student-student exchange consisting of six turns.

2. STEP Eiken Scores: STEP Eiken pass rates for Group 1 and Group 2 students were collected. The data for the two Groups were then analyzed using the *z* test statistic. The null hypothesis for these comparisons was that there were no significant differences between the two Groups with regard to their pass rates for each level of the STEP Eiken test.

Table 3. STEP Eiken test pass rates and z test p-values for Group 1 and 2

STEP Eiken Level	Group 1	Group 2	z	p
Level 5	165	157	inf.	-
Level 4	112	128	2.68	0.0037
Level 3	38	48	1.40	0.08
Level Pre-2	6	9	0.63	0.26
Level 2	2	2	inf.	-
Level Pre-1	0	1	0.03	0.49
Level 1	0	0	inf.	-

The analysis showed that the two Groups did not vary significantly in their pass rates of the STEP Eiken test, with the exception of Level 4, where a difference was found significant to the 0.01 level.

Discussion

Having analyzed the data collected, it is now possible to return to the research questions.

1. Does encouraging JTEs to use more incidental classroom English result in an increase in usage by JTEs? The analysis of the sample recordings indicated that encouraging JTEs results in a significant increase in the amount of incidental classroom English used by the JTEs. In the case of the recorded lessons, the JTE demonstrated a more than double increase in classroom English use.

2. Is there an increase in English usage by students in the form of teacher-to-student interaction?

The analysis strongly suggests that teacher-to-student interaction in English is significantly increased by encouraging the use of increased incidental classroom English. In the case of the recorded lessons, the Class 2 sample showed almost three times the number of interactions that the Class 1 sample showed. It was interesting to note that the number of instances of mimicry, students appropriating the classroom English for their own purposes, was also greater in the Class 2 lesson than in the Class 1 lesson (three and five instances, respectively) . Such mimicry aids in the construction of the learning community (Rogoff, 1993) , and serves to provide spontaneous entertainment (Duff, 2000; Cekaite & Aronsson, 2004) . Clearly, without a model, mimicry cannot occur, and use of classroom English by the JTE provides just such a model.

3. Is there an increase in English usage by students in the form of inter-student interaction?

While the amount of student-to-student interaction in English was greater in Class 2 than in Class 1, the difference was not significant, indicating that the encouragement of spontaneous English use by students was not enhanced by the encouragement of classroom English use.

4. Are the lengths and complexity of utterances by the JTEs increased?

and

5. Are the lengths and complexity of utterances by the students increased?

Surprisingly, the data indicated that there were no significant differences between the Classes with regards to utterance length, whether regarding utterances made by JTEs or those made by students. It would seem that the encouragement of the use of incidental classroom English results in the production of a greater number of clauses, but that these clauses are not longer in themselves. Possibly this is due to the prescribed nature of the lexis and the limited range and complexity of lexis the students have acquired.

6. Is there any detectable impact on student performance in English examinations as a result of encouraging JTEs to use more incidental classroom English?

It is tempting to conclude that the improved pass rates at Level 4 of the STEP Eiken test indicate that the increased use of incidental classroom English is not limited to the use of English in the classroom, but is also reflected in students' test performance. However, it would be premature to draw this conclusion. Level 5 is the established benchmark for this age group, and so the pass rates would not be expected to differ greatly. The improvement in level 4 pass rates is consistent with a small positive benefit to the students in Group 2, possibly by helping to improve their listening skills. Furthermore, the increased use of incidental classroom English would not be expected to have any impact in the test performance of the highest ability students, as reflected in the data. However, this is a single set of data, and there are many plausible explanations that can fit these results that do not involve the use of incidental classroom English.

Further research is necessary to fully examine any effect of increased use of incidental classroom English on test performance.

Conclusion

This study collected data from and compared the use of incidental classroom English in two groups. The results indicate that the implementation of a program to encourage JTEs to increase their use of incidental classroom English resulted in a significantly greater incidence of student-teacher communication in English during lessons. This is an additional positive result to the finding that students reported greater satisfaction with their lessons and with their JTEs in the classes that encouraged greater use of incidental classroom English (Sellick et al., 2014).

Perhaps more importantly, the results show that not only is the amount of communication in English greater when JTEs use more incidental classroom English, but that its quality is also different. The analysis of the register of these utterances demonstrates that the communication in English between JTE and students was both more conversational and more naturalistic when the JTE used more incidental classroom English.

During a post-study debriefing session with the JTEs involved in the studies, a general improvement in the Group 2 students' English listening comprehension skill was indicated. The JTEs expressed the opinion that the increased use of incidental classroom English during regular lessons had helped to quickly familiarize the students with English in a communicative manner, and improved their ability to deal with a (limited) range of spoken English. This would be in line with work showing the importance of such ear training in the development of skilled listening in L2 learning (Field, 2008, p.140), but more research will be needed to properly elucidate any real effect.

When asked how the presentation of incidental classroom English to the students could be improved in the following academic year, the consensus response was that, rather than the introduction of a single large corpus of classroom English to reference, a smaller initial corpus should be used, with additional language added during lessons throughout each term of the academic year. It was felt that a single large corpus could be somewhat overwhelming for students new to English, and that it would also be relatively easy to ignore and forget, whereas a regular infusion of new items, perhaps to be recorded in a personal reference for that purpose, would ensure that using incidental classroom English would remain at the forefront of all participants' minds.

The results of this study imply that the project was successful; it achieved its key aims. However, the project can only really be declared a success if the intervention moves from being a one-off project to becoming a standard part of the teaching process in the school, something that will be maintained by current teachers and encultured into new teachers arriving at the school. In this, it was heartening that the JTEs were so keen to consider revisions to the classroom English corpus for the forthcoming intake, indicating that they were willing to follow the model advocated by Richardson (1990), among others, that "empirical premises derived from research be considered as warranted practice, which, in combination with teachers' practical knowledge, become the content of reflective teacher change" (p.10).

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Appendix A: Classroom English Corpus

中学 Classroom English　英語の授業中英語を一生懸命使うのが大切です。授業中先生や友達と話す時下の文は必ず使ってください。			
Good morning/afternoon.	おはようございます。・こんにちは	I'm sorry I'm late.	遅くれてごめんなさい。
Goodbye.	さよなら。	I forgot my [book].	「教科書」を忘れました。
See you [next week].	また「来週」。	I left my [book] in the dormitory.	「教科書」を寮に忘れました。
How are you?	お元気ですか？	Once more, please.	もう一度お願いします。
Let's begin today's lesson.	では、今日の授業を始めましょう。	One more time, please.	
Sit down, please.	座ってください。	Pardon?	
Stand up, please.	立ってください。	I have a question.	質問があります。
Are you all right?	大丈夫ですか？	I don't understand.	分かりません。
Are you ready?	準備はいいですか？・始めます。	I don't know.	知りません。
Open [your books].	「教科書」を開けてください。	May I go to the restroom/toilet?	お手洗いに行っていいですか？
Close [your books].	「教科書」を閉じてください。	Thank you.	ありがとう。
Put your [books] away, please.	「教科書」をしまってください。	How do you say this word?	この単語はどう発音しますか？
Here you are.	はい、どうぞ。	How do you say [犬] in English?	「犬」は英語で何と言いますか？
Look at [page 10/ the board].	「10 ページ・黒板」を見てください。	How do you say [dog] in Japanese?	「dog」は日本語で何と言いますか？
Open your books at page [10].	教科書の「10」ページを開いてください。	What does [dog] mean?	「dog」はどういう意味ですか？
Have you finished?	終わりましたか？	How do you spell [dog]?	「dog」はどう書きますか？
Put your pencils down, please.	筆記用具を置いてください。	Can I open/close the [window]?	「窓」を開けて・閉めていいですか？
Please practice in pairs/groups of 6.	二人ずつ・六人ずつグループで練習してください。	What is the [past] of ["go"]?	「go」の「過去形」は何ですか？
Any questions?	質問がありますか？	Is this right/correct/OK?	これは正しいですか？
Listen to [the CD], please.	「CD」を聞いてください。	[Two books], please.	「窓」を開けて・閉めていいですか？
May I have [two books], please.	「二冊」ください。	What is the [past] of ["go"]?	「go」の「過去形」は何ですか？
Answer the questions.	質問に答えてください。		
Write the answers.	答えを書いてください。	What day is it today?	今日は何曜日ですか？
Ask your partner.	パートナーと一緒に練習してください。	What is today's date?	今日の何月何日ですか？
Listen carefully.	よく聞いてください。	Do you understand?	分かりますか？
Raise your hand.	手を上げてください。	Let's practice.	練習しましょう。
Be quiet/Stop talking, please.	静かにしてください。	Please give it to me.	出してください。
Listen and repeat.	私に続いてくり返してください。		
Raise your hand.	手を上げてください。	Let's practice.	練習しましょう。
Be quiet/Stop talking, please.	静かにしてください。	Please give it to me.	出してください。
Listen and repeat.	私に続いてくり返してください。		

Appendix B: Class 1 lesson transcript

This transcript records only the classroom English used during the lesson - instructional language and use of the L1 by JTE and students has been omitted.

Time	Classroom English	Direction of Utterance	Utterance Length
0:25	Good morning, everyone.	T>S	3
0:26	Good morning, Ms X.	S>T	4
0:28	Sit down, please.	T>S	3
0:43	Okay. Be quiet.	T>S	3
1:56	Listen please.	T>S	2
2:37	What?	T>S	1
4:10	Do you have the resume I gave you yesterday?	T>S	9
4:12	Yesterday?	S>T	1
4:14	Do you have the resume I gave you yesterday?	T>S	9
4:15	I have.	S>T	2
4:15	I'm happy.	S>T	2
4:18	I don't speak English.	S>T	4
5:16	I don't know.	S>S	3
7:48	Be quiet.	T>S	2
7:51	Be quiet.	S>S	2
7:53	Are you ready?	S>S	3
10:18	What is it in Japanese?	S>T	5
10:51	I don't know.	S>S	3
14:28	Teacher!	S>T	1
19:18	Be quiet, please.	T>S	3
19:22	Let's start.	T>S	2
22:53	I don't know.	S>S	3
23:07	You are so noisy!	T>S	4
23:09	You are so noisy!	T>S	4
23:10	You are crazy!	S>S	3
31:40	You are […].	S>S	2
31:12	Better […].	T>S	1
32:24	[…], number three.	T>S	2
32:31	Okay.	T>S	1
32:44	[…], number four.	T>S	2
32:50	Number five.	T>S	2
32:53	[…], number five.	T>S	2
34:04	Okay.	T>S	1
34:52	No, I don't.	S>T	3
35:02	Oh, my god!	S>S	3
36:11	[…], number six.	S>T	2
46:19	Try again.	S>S	2
46:40	Thank you.	T>S	2
46:49	Quiet.	T>S	1
47:03	Thank you.	T>S	2
47:05	[…] Thank you everyone.	T>S	3
47:06	Thank you, Ms Y.	S>T	4
47:15	Bye bye.	T>S	2

Note: […] represents instances of L1 use.

Appendix C: Class 2 lesson transcript

This transcript records only the classroom English used during the lesson - instructional language and use of the L1 by JTE and students has been omitted.

Time	Classroom English	Direction of Utterance	Utterance Length
00:02	OK. Stand up.	T>S	3
00:10	OK. Good afternoon, everyone.	T>S	4
00:13	Good Afternoon, Ms X.	S>T	3
00:16	Who am I?	T>S	3
00:18	Ms Y.	S>T	2
00:20	Alright. My name is…OK?	T>S	5
00:32	Good afternoon, everyone.	T>S	3
00:35	Good Afternoon, Ms Y.	S>T	4
00:36	Sit down, please.	T>S	3
00:45	Maybe…I haven't seen three of you, right? Because you have been to British teachers lessons so far.	T>S	18
01:04	Right?	T>S	1
03:18	Whatever you like. Okay? So, one minute.	T>S	7
03:21	Do you have a partner?	T>S	5
06:34	I'm tired!	S>S	2
06:37	OK. Stop!	T>S	2
06:39	OK. Who will start?	T>S	4
06:45	No!	T>S	1
07:31	OK!	T>S	1
07:41	Okay. Mr. A, stand up.	T>S	5
07:57	Okay. Let's start.	T>S	3
08:10	Okay. And…?	T>S	2
09:21	Thank you very much.	T>S	4
09:28	OK.	T>S	1
09:33	Stand up.	T>S	2
09:42	And…?	T>S	1
09:50	Okay. And…?	T>S	2
09:52	And?	T>S	1
10:15	Okay. Thank you very much.	T>S	5
10:25	Okay. Mr. Y stand up.	T>S	5
10:47	OK.	T>S	1
10:49	Who are you?	S>S	3
10:58	OK.	T>S	1
11:10	Did you make up the story?	T>S	6
11:14	OK. Ms O stand up.	T>S	5
12:09	What kind of dog do you have?	T>S	7
12:10	Toy poodle.	S>T	2
12:12	Is he cute?	T>S	3
12:13	She! She!	S>T	2
12:14	Sorry. Is she cute?	T>S	4
12:15	Yes!	S>T	1
12:22	Okay. Mr. I stand up.	T>S	5

12:39	OK. Stand up.	T>S	3
12:41	Stand up?	S>T	2
12:42	Yes, please.	T>S	2
12:56	She is Martian!	S>S	3
13:00	Crazy, crazy!	S>S	2
13:12	What's「地球」?	T>S	1
13:13	Earth.	S>T	1
13:15	And「彗星」?	T>S	1
13:17	Pluto.	S>T	1
13:18	Pluto?	T>S	1
13:19	Venus!	S>T	1
13:20	Yes, Venus.	T>S	2
13:22	What's「金星」?	T>S	1
13:25	Mercury?	S>T	1
13:27	Yes, Mercury.	T>S	2
13:31	And「木星」?	T>S	1
13:34	Jupiter!	S>T	1
14:42	Number 1 [⋯].	T>S	2
14:45	Number 10 [⋯].	S>T	2
14:55	Number 1 [⋯], number 10 [⋯].	S>S	4
15:03	Quiet please. Quiet.	T>S	3
15:05	Be quiet.	S>S	2
15:08	Genius.	S>S	1
15:10	I am a genius.	S>S	4
15:12	Little and space.	S>S	3
15:43	Are you okay?	S>S	3
16:32	We study English.	S>S	3
27:00	Number one.	T>S	2
27:06	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
27:10	OK.	T>S	1
27:14	Okay. Number two.	T>S	3
27:20	And how do you spell it?	T>S	6
27:30	OK	T>S	1
27:38	[⋯] number three.	T>S	2
27:47	Could you spell it?	T>S	4
27:56	Okay. Number four.	T>S	3
28:03	Very good.	T>S	2
28:07	Number five.	T>S	2
28:11	Okay. Could you spell it?	T>S	5
28:14	Alright. Very good.	T>S	3
28:17	Number six.	T>S	2
28:23	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
28:39	OK	T>S	1
28:42	[⋯] number seven.	T>S	2
28:45	And how do you spell it?	T>S	6
28:48	Very good. Very speedy.	T>S	4
28:53	Number eight.	T>S	2
28:58	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
29:06	Okay. Very good.	T>S	3
29:09	Now⋯number nine.	T>S	3
29:14	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
29:37	Okay. Number ten.	T>S	3
29:44	Alright. Very good.	T>S	3
29:48	Number eleven.	T>S	2
29:51	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
29:54	Very good.	T>S	2
30:00	Okay. Number twelve.	T>S	3
30:12	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
30:31	Thirteen.	T>S	1
30:35	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
30:43	Okay. Number fourteen. Last one.	T>S	5
30:46	How do you spell it?	T>S	5
30:49	OK	T>S	1
41:30	You are crazy!	S>S	3
42:14	I think you made a mistake. It's not present continuous.	T>S	10
42:22	Right.	T>S	1
49:38	[⋯] stand up.	T>S	2
49:41	Everyone, please stand up.	T>S	4
49:49	Stand up, please.	S>S	3
49:57	Right. Quiet!	T>S	2
50:00	Thank you everyone.	T>S	3
50:03	Thank you Ms. Y.	S>T	4
50:04	Bye bye. See you tomorrow.	T>S	5
50:14	Mr. W. Stand up!	S>S	4
50:55	Bye bye.	S>T	2

Note: [⋯] represents instances of L1 use.

（アンソニー　セリック・講師）

4.2 Publication 3 (sole author)

The positive results gained from the intervention in Publication 2 encouraged me to re-examine my own use of English during in-class interactions. While experimenting with different aspects of classroom language, I noted positive impacts on students' language use from varying the discourse moves I used, albeit unsystematically. At the same time, having read around sociolinguistics and socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) I became interested in the development of collaborative environments and the ways in which they can be created to encourage students to produce more output. As a result, I began to investigate how teachers' use of discourse moves could produce learning contexts that enabled more oral output to be produced. Publication 3 reports on an early intervention that investigated the impact of alternatives to questions in traditional IRE/F classroom interactions.

The findings from Publication 3 indicated that the discourse moves employed by teachers improved students' oral output both quantitatively and qualitatively. The publication also investigated teachers' reactions to the intervention, an area of research developed further in Theme III of this thesis. It was found that teachers viewed the intervention to be positive, but felt that they needed more training and practice using the different moves. This has been supported in subsequent research, highlighting the need for more training in communicative teaching styles and the importance of this line of research.

- Bury, J. (2014). Encouraging more student output: Alternatives to questions. *Journal of Second Language Teaching and Research*, *3*(1), 95-106.

Having reflected on the research presented in Publication 3, I decided to revisit and expand my investigation on the impact of teachers using different of discourse moves by focussing on classes taught at a Japanese university and also increasing the number of discourse moves employed by adding and distinguishing between extra question types (see Bury, 2019, in Appendix 10). It was hoped that doing this would

allow for more in-depth analysis, greater flexibility among moves, and would also better represent the discourse moves used in authentic interactions. By including the extra question types and adding to the contexts in which this research has been conducted, the scope of the research was extended and further evidence provided supporting the findings in Publication 3 that teachers employing varied discourse moves can improve oral output, not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. This is important as it highlights a practical way that teachers can adapt their classroom practices in order to promote and enhance students' productive output.

The findings from this research were further disseminated through five teacher-focused publications (Output 2 in Appendix 9 and Presentations 5, 6, 10, and 11 in Appendix 11). Further activities that were developed from related research on enhancing students' productive output can also be found in Outputs 3-7 (Appendix 9) and in Presentations 1-3 (Appendix 11).

ENCOURAGING MORE STUDENT OUTPUT: ALTERNATIVES TO QUESTIONS

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Abstract

Classroom interaction has traditionally been shaped by questions and students can become accustomed to little reflection being given before the next question is posed, hindering discussion and discouraging students from producing more language. Addressing this issue to the Japanese context, in order to avoid reinforcing the student's role as passive, teachers need to encourage effective communication and it has been claimed that using alternatives to questions promotes more student output (Edwards & Westgate, 1994; Wells, 1999; Dashwood, 2005). This article investigates the effect alternatives to questions had on the amount of student output in English oral communication classes in a Japanese high school. The results suggest that alternatives to questions should be employed more, in conjunction with more common questions, and regularly incorporated into classroom interaction to provide students the opportunity to produce more.

Keywords: classroom interaction, student output, classroom language

Introduction

Classroom interaction has traditionally been shaped by questions, described in models such as Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) IRF model, in which the teacher initiates the first move (I), a student responds (R) and the teacher evaluates and asks a question in the follow-up move (F). While this exchange sets cognitive challenges for students, guides the direction of learning and is effective for managing classroom behaviour, it has been claimed that there is potential for teachers to encourage more student output by using alternatives to a follow-up question in the third turn (Young, 1992; Dillon, 1994). Using a range of question types provides the opportunity to start discussion in the classroom, but it may not be the most effective way to encourage students to produce more output.

Previous studies found that although questions engaged students, they reduced 'the length of their answers to conform to [their perceived frame of] the teacher's preferred composition of the answer' (Dashwood, 2005:145), especially when the teacher occupied the role of 'primary knower' (Berry, 1981). As a result, students provided mainly short, accurate answers that

were often without clear development. However, following all of the alternatives to questions, the students were likely to continue and develop their ideas with more language being produced than after questions (Edwards & Westgate, 1994; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Wells, 1999).

Table 1. *Move types and possible effects*

Move type	Process	Observed effects
Question	Asking a follow-up question to the previous response	Minimal responses were likely with hesitant or little follow up and the teacher proceeding to develop a long turn, hindering discussion by students.
Reflective statement	Restatement of the student comment	Clarification engaged the student, allowing them to expand their ideas and appeared to reduce confrontational effects of a question.
Statement of mind	Reflection of teacher's own views on the topic	The student responded to the teacher's state of mind allowing discussion to develop.
Declarative statement	A thought that occurs as a result of what the speaker was saying	The student speaker had the benefit of the teacher's thoughts on the matter.
Statement of interest	Expressing an interest in a person's views	A motivating effect on the student's engagement with discussion.
Speaker referral	Referring to a previous statement of a speaker	The potential for students to discuss a previous proposition was offered.
Back-channeling	Gestures, verbal signals and pauses	Created a feeling of obligation by students to offer more language input to discussions. The signals also indicated to students that they were on track and could keep the turn.

Despite more flexible approaches to the IRF model being identified by Cullen (2002), Dillon (ibid.) states that students can become accustomed to teachers taking back the third turn, often with little reflection on the student's previous response before posing the next question, hindering natural and progressive discussion. In view of this, teachers should consider alternative moves to questions in order to increase their students' language output in a way that promotes communication. Drawing on research by Hatch (1999) and Dashwood (2005:148), Table 1 illustrates types of moves that teachers could employ and their possible effects on classroom language.

Research into the teacher's role in managing classroom interaction has been conducted in different contexts (Morgan & Saxton, 1991; Brown & Wragg, 1993). In response to recent changes implemented by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MEXT) stipulating that teachers are required to increase the amount of English used in the classroom, this article investigates the effects of using alternatives to questions in English oral communication classes in a Japanese High School.

Method

A topic within the current curriculum for the second year high school students (dilemmas and hypothetical situations) was selected and taught by the participating teachers to their normal classes (Class A, B, C, D, E and F). The classes are single sex and have an average of 12 students. The six classes used in this study were deemed representative of the students in the year group as they were 3 boys' and 3 girls' classes, one of each from the higher, mid and lower levels that the students are streamed into. After discussion with the participating teachers it was decided that open questions (those that cannot be answered with just 'yes' or 'no') were to be used in the opening move of the IRF sequence as they were expected to stimulate more student output than closed questions. It was also decided that the teachers should attempt to use the full range of alternatives when responding to students' answers. Although it was important for the teachers to use the full range of moves in their classroom interactions, this was not overemphasized as the analyzable data needed to be produced as naturally as possible.

As audio recordings of ten minute sections of the classes were made, each participant was asked to sign a consent form that outlined the aims of the research. The participant students

were not told when the recording would take place and the recording device was obscured in order to allow them to participate in class as usual during the sample time. Transcriptions were made of the recordings using the Jefferson system (2004), then the moves were identified and the responses made by the teachers were categorized into open questions, closed questions, reflective statements, statements of mind, declarative statements, statements of interest, speaker referral and back-channeling. The question move found in the previous studies identified in Table 1 was divided into open and closed categories in order to investigate the effect the two different question types have on student output during classroom interaction. The number of words uttered by students in response to a teacher's move were then tallied and used to rank the moves. Fillers, such as 'Hmm' and 'Uhh', were not included in the final results.

After analysis of the recordings, interviews with the three participating teachers were conducted to gain insights into their perceptions of the effect the different moves they employed had on student output. The interviews were recorded, but conducted informally and did not follow a set pattern of questions.

Results

From Table 2 (See Appendix) it can be seen that the type of moves made by the teacher had an influence on the length of the students' responses, with a difference of 6.1 words per move being demonstrated between the highest ranking move, reflective statement, and the lowest, back-channeling. Overall, reflective statements encouraged the greatest student output, followed by speaker referrals, statements of interest and open questions, declarative statements, closed questions, statements of mind and back-channeling. Although there is some variation in the ranking of the responses to the different moves, two distinct groups can be identified, with open questions, reflective statements, statements of interest and speaker referrals consistently encouraging students to produce the most language.

Effect of open questions

Sample 1:

T: Where did the <u>boy</u> go?

S: (2.6) The cinema.

T: (1.5) Why do people go (.) why do they go to the cinema?

S: (1.3) Yes. (2.4) They likes the feelings. (1.6) (Japanese) (2.7) Uh. It makes them happy, (1.4) but it is (.) expensive.

Often, following the teacher asking an open question, long answers with more output than was minimally required were produced. In Sample 1, two reasons and a piece of further information were produced where one reason would have sufficed.

Effect of closed questions

Sample 2:

T: How: often do you go: to the cinema?

S: (1.8) Sometimes I go.

T: (2.3) Do you like horror movies?

S: No, I didn't. (.) They are scary.

After closed questions, often short responses with little or no expansion were produced. In Sample 2, a follow up sentence was produced, but it was in the same form as a previously modeled example and no further expansion was given.

Effect of reflective statements

Sample 3:

T: Wha:t did her friends think?

S: (3.7) They were surprised ( ) she wasn't scared.

T: (2.0) So they thought she would be scared.

S: (4.2) Yes, (2.1) she is always scare, (3.2) but this times she wasn't. (2.5) They were shockered.

Rewording a student's statement and reflecting on the previous move engaged the students, giving them the opportunity to expand on their ideas. In Sample 3, the student gave further background information about the subject, reiterated the point previously made using a different, more complex structure, and added an extra confirmation and intensifying adjective.

Effect of statements of mind

Sample 4:

T: Where would you go on holiday, (1.7) Japan or America?

S: (3.2) I think Japan is [best.

T: [Really? I think most people ((cough)) most people would like to go abroad.

S: (5.2) (Oh). Yes.

After a statement of mind the students often produced minimal responses which rarely expanded on their first moves, as in Sample 4.

Effect of speaker referrals

Sample 5:

T: What would you: say [Misato]?

S: (2.6) (Japanese) (1.7) I would say 'no'.

T: (2.8) That's the sa:me a:s [Yukie].

S: (3.4) She doesn't like every insects. (2.2) I hate (Japanese) (2.0) cockroaches just. They are crazy and disgusting.

After speaker referral, students often produced long answers with more information given about their classmates and themselves. In Sample 5, the student comments on a previous remark, giving it background information, then offers information about her personal opinions, and then justified her opinions with a supporting sentence that included two adjectives.

Effect of declarative statements

Sample 6:

T: What do people think is (.) scary?

S: (1.4) (Japanese) (1.9) They think (.) walking at night is scarer.

T: (2.5) Hmm. So:me people find it e:ven scarier when they are walking at night by themselves.

S: (1.7) Yes. (1.6) I don't like when it's (.) (Japanese) (2.6) just me.

Unlike statements of mind, after a declarative statement the students were able to respond to the teacher's move, allowing the classroom interaction to develop. In Sample 6, the student

agrees with the teacher's response and then supports their first comment with personal information.

Effect of statements of interest

Sample 7:

T: Would you: go to watch the horror mo:vie?

S: (1.9) No, (.) I wouldn't.

T: (2.6) Tell me mo:re.

S: (1.8) I don't like (.) horror. (.) They make me scary. (2.4) I like action or romance (love) (2.6) or drama.

After statements of interest the students produced more output than was minimally sufficient and expanded on their previous ideas. In Sample 7, the student supported their initial answer with three sentences, including five pieces of extra information.

Effect of back-channel signals

Sample 8:

T: When (.) would mo:st peo:ple (1.1) watch (.) a horror movie?

S: (1.2) (Japanese) (1.7) In Summer (.) people watch horror.

T: (2.9) Mmm.

S: (3.2) It makes them (.) colds.

After back-channeling, students often produced short answers of only one sentence and did not tend to expand, as in Sample 8.

Table 2 also shows that the number of times the move types were made varied considerably, with open questions being asked a total of 37 times but speaker referrals only being used 15 times. There are also comparisons that can be made between the four most and least used moves and the four moves that encouraged the most and least student output, with six of the eight moves being in the top or bottom groups for both. The exceptions were closed questions being the second most used move but only encouraging the sixth most student output and speaker referrals being employed the least, but encouraging the second highest amount of student output.

Discussion

The alternatives to questions used in this study provided students the opportunity to produce output following prompts that they would not usually encounter as much in the classroom. The results suggest that alternatives to questions should be employed more, in conjunction with more common questions, and regularly incorporated into classroom interaction to provide students the opportunity to produce more. The identification of the groups of four moves that consistently encouraged more student output indicates that students responded better to reflective statements, speaker referrals, statements of interest and open questions in this context.

Reflective statements showed students that their comments were valued and being listened to, and the high level of student output may be attributed to students becoming more confident in offering their own opinions in discussions because of this. Previous studies found that the use of reflective statements reduced the confrontational effects of a question, and the participating teachers in this study reported that the students appeared to feel relaxed and willing to produce more, for example Teacher 1 commenting '[the students] visibly perked up and wanted to open up. They were engaged in the dialogue.' Also, it was noted that a wider variety of comments were produced that deviated from commonly found responses and structures, illustrated by Teacher 2 stating 'some really interesting things came up, not just usual 'test-like' answers.'

Speaker referral offered the potential for students to discuss a previous comment and in many cases this allowed them to produce longer turns than after other moves. The students often commented on and developed classmates' contributions, supporting the findings of Wells (1999: 209) that this type of move helps to develop 'the collective understanding of the topic under discussion.' Teacher 1 commented that 'it brought students' ideas together and they generally linked together well and this helped the flow of the class.'

Unlike previous research conducted in the field of classroom interaction, the results indicate that, along with statements of interest, open questions prompted the third longest responses on average. This could be attributed to younger students taking longer to adapt to new methods and moves being introduced in classroom interactions, especially in a second

language. Therefore, familiarity with open questions being employed in the third move of the IRF model could have led to more output being produced than other unfamiliar moves not commonly encountered. This effect may not be so noticeable in older or more experienced students. Teacher 3 stated 'asking open questions seemed more natural to me and, I guess, the students,' and Teacher 1 commented 'open questions worked better with some students than the alternatives.' These results and comments show that while the implementation of alternative moves to questions are useful in developing student output, questions should not be excluded or replaced completely.

Similar to reflective statements, the teacher employing a statement of interest in the student's previous move showed recognition of their comments and opinions, and allowed the student to expand on their previous comment. Teacher 2 commented that 'statements of interest appeared to engage the students the most. They were happy to be asked for more.'

When the teacher used a declarative statement, some students interpreted the move as an evaluation of their comment and if the declarative statement differed from the opinions the students had put forward in their move, they often corrected their previous statements in order to comply with the teacher. Two of the teachers commented that students contributed less to classroom interaction in general, not just in that one isolated interaction, after the teacher employed a declarative statement. This may be a finding that is emphasized by traditional teacher-student power roles and may also be less pronounced in more experienced, older students who are more confident in their own ideas and opinions.

Closed questions allowed students the opportunity to produce language and offer an opinion or personal information, but often the structure of the response was similar to a previously modeled answer and fitted a pattern that they felt the teacher wanted, similar to the findings of Edwards and Westgate (op. cit.) and Dashwood (op. cit.).

After statements of mind students interpreted the teachers' own views as an evaluation of their previous moves, and this hindered language production. This possibly reflects Japanese students' uncertainty avoidance (Porcaro, 2001) and view that the teacher should not be questioned. All of the participating teachers stated that they noticed a change in student attitude after they employed a statement of mind, for example Teacher 2 commenting 'he just

accepted my comment to be correct and that was the end of it.'

Back-channeling produced the shortest responses of all moves. It was noted by the participating teachers that often the students did not realize what the teacher was attempting to do and did not produce any further output and this may have been caused by the unfamiliarity of the move. Teacher 3 stated 'I was trying to back-channel, but they were just watching me and not speaking!'

The misunderstanding or misinterpretation of certain moves, especially statements of mind and back-channeling, highlights an area of interaction that could be developed and improved. The large difference in the number of times the various moves were employed indicates that the participating teachers felt more comfortable using certain items, particularly open and closed questions, which are the more traditional moves used by teachers in formal contexts. However, by using some of the lesser-used moves in classroom interaction, student output can be promoted, as seen in the high amount of language produced following speaker referral.

Conclusion

Traditionally, in the Japanese education system there is an expectation among students that the teacher and textbook are the sole sources of information (Dashwood, op. cit.), and this view has been used as a way of 'imposing order' (Arum & Ford, 2012: 58) in the classroom. However, rather than reinforcing the student's role as passive, silent listener in Japanese education, teachers in English oral communication classes need to encourage students to speak and communicate effectively. This study has shown that this can be achieved by teachers using alternatives to questions in conjunction with more common question moves.

Overall, the participating teachers reported that using the alternatives to questions together with open and closed questions gave students the opportunity to produce more output and enhanced classroom language production more than using only questions. However, the teachers also claimed that in some cases, such as when using back-channeling, statements of mind and declarative statements, the students misinterpreted or misunderstood the teachers' intentions. This situation could be improved over time as the students become more comfortable with, and able to recognize the intention of, the moves made the teacher. Also,

giving teachers further training in how to effectively incorporate different moves into their classroom language would greatly benefit the fluidity and authenticity of their interactions. After all, natural conversations are not just a series of questions being asked by one person and answered by another.

Biodata

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Appendix

Table 2

Average words per move, output rank and no. of items by class.

Move	Average words per move (by class)																				
	A			B			C			D			E			F			All		
	Words	Rank	No. of items	Words	Rank	No. of items	Words	Rank	No. of items	Words	Rank	No. of items	Words	Rank	No. of items	Words	Rank	No. of items	Words	Rank	No. of items
Open question	8.3	3	5	8.7	4	7	6.3	4	6	7.7	2	8	6.6	3	7	7.3	1	4	7.5	3	37
Closed question	3.2	8	3	4.3	6	4	5.5	5	6	2.7	8	4	4.5	5	5	3.7	6	6	4.0	6	28
Reflective statement	10.7	1	5	9.7	2	3	8.7	1	4	9.3	1	5	8.1	1	2	7.3	1	3	9.0	1	22
Statement of mind	4.1	6	2	4.3	6	1	2.3	7	4	3.3	6	5	4.5	5	3	2.3	7	2	3.5	7	17
Declarative statement	6.7	5	3	8.7	4	2	5.5	5	2	6.7	4	3	3.7	7	6	5.0	5	3	6.1	5	19
Statement of interest	8.3	3	6	9.7	2	4	8.3	3	3	6.7	4	1	5.3	4	3	6.5	3	5	7.5	3	22
Speaker referral	10.5	2	1	11.3	1	2	8.7	1	3	7.3	3	1	6.7	2	6	6.3	4	2	8.5	2	15
Back-channeling	3.7	7	2	3.7	8	3	2.3	7	2	3.3	6	2	2.3	8	4	2.3	7	3	2.9	8	16
Total average words	6.9			7.6			6.0			5.9			5.2			5.1			6.1		

4.3 Publication 4 (sole author)

Having investigated concepts, theories, and hypotheses including the Minimalist Program, the Connectionist approach, study-phase retrieval, and the spacing effect (see Appendix 3 for a full list and further explanation), I began to research ways in which students' lexical retrieval could be enhanced with the aim of positively affecting their communicative competence. This led to the development of the intervention that is presented in Publication 4, which investigates how materials and lexical items taught in courses could be scheduled and recycled in ways that better enable students' lexical retrieval, and consequently, communicative competence.

Comparing test results of 71 university students, the impact of using three different spacing methods on students' retention of vocabulary was investigated. The test consisted of 36 items, split into six sub-sets which were then introduced and re-introduced using six different spacing retrieval schedules. The different schedules were developed in order to allow for the most effective comparison within the confines of a 15-lesson semester. Results indicated that both extended spaced retrieval (ESR) schedules, in which lexical items are spaced at increasingly distant intervals, and uniform spaced retrieval (USR) schedules, in which the intervals are equally spaced, demonstrated greater benefits for students than massed retrieval (MR), or 'cramming', in terms of test results.

- Bury, J., (2016). The effects of three spacing methods on students' mid- to long-term retention of lexis. *The Language Teacher*, *40*(2), 3-8. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT40.2

Further pedagogical research and scholarship that I conducted on the development and enhancement of lexical retrieval can be found in Appendix 9 (Outputs 1 and 8) and Appendix 11 (Presentations 1 and 9).

The Effects of Three Spacing Methods on Students' Mid- to Long-term Retention of Lexis

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This article investigates the effect that six different lexical spacing interval schedules had on Japanese university students' retention of lexis on a translation test completed in the first and last lessons of a 15-lecture course. Two schedules used an expanded spaced retrieval (ESR) technique, two employed a uniform spaced retrieval (USR) technique, and two were based on massed retrieval (MR) methods. It was found that the ESR and USR schedules had greater positive effects on student performance than MR. It is also posited that the challenging learning conditions created by expanding the intervals between the initial encoding of a lexical item and subsequent retrieval attempts can positively affect students' retention rates and overall learning experiences. Consequently, it is suggested that teachers and curriculum developers implement ESR and USR techniques more when planning and adapting materials.

本論は、日本の大学生が全15回の講義の初回と最終回に行う訳の試験での語彙定着力に、6つの異なる語彙分散間隔スケジュールがどのような効果を与えるかを調査したものである。2つで間隔伸張検索（ESR: expanded spaced retrieval）法を使用し、別の2つで均一間隔検索(USR: uniform spaced retrieval) 法、残りの2つは集中検索 (MR: massed retrieval) 法を用いた。結果としてESRとUSRは、MRよりも学生の成績により良い影響を与えた。また、語彙の最初の発信と次の検索の間隔を延ばすという厳しい学習条件が、学生の語彙の定着率と総体的な学習経験に良い影響を与えると仮定される。そのため、教師やカリキュラム作成者は、教材の教授予定を作成する際、より多くのESRやUSR法を取り入れるよう推奨したい。

When teaching reading courses, or reading segments of more integrated courses, instructors regularly use materials that include complex grammatical structures and exigent lexical items (Bury, 2014). Exposing students to vocabulary that is too challenging can be overwhelming and demotivating (Huang & Liou, 2007), negatively affecting retention of vocabulary and the overall learning process (Fulcher, 1997). Therefore, finding a way to introduce new, more advanced vocabulary in a way that engages students and improves their mid- to long-term retention of lexical items is imperative for teachers.

This article examines the effects of three spacing methods on students studying in an English for Tourism course at a Japanese university. The methods investigated were expanded spaced retrieval (ESR), uniform spaced retrieval (USR), and massed retrieval (MR). A recent study by Bury (2014) found that Japanese university students reported increased levels of confidence and perceptions of ability following a course incorporating USR, but that study did not investigate the comparative effect of ESR or MR. As ESR and USR methods have predominantly been tested on college-age adults (Balota, Duchek, & Logan, 2007) and Alzheimer's patients (Camp, Bird, & Cherry, 2000), this paper adds to the current literature, expands the contexts in which the methods have been investigated, and identifies a practical way to improve students' mid- to long-term retention of lexis.

Literature Review

Texts used in traditional English courses are often grammatically complex and introduce academic lexical items that have not been previously encountered by the students. Consequently, students are exposed to more advanced vocabulary and this can aid language acquisition, as in Krashen's (1981) theory of comprehensible input. However, if learners are presented with too many new items, or with items of a level that is perceived as unattainable, they can quickly become demotivated, raising their affective filters (Krashen, 1981). Research has shown that students often become overwhelmed with the complexity of the texts they encounter in class (Murphy, 2007), and this can negatively affect their learning experiences (Fulcher, 1997).

Spaced retrieval is a method of memory improvement in which items are spaced over a lesson, or set of lessons, and not massed together in quick succession, as in MR. Spaced retrieval can be divided into two types: expanded spaced retrieval (ESR) and uniform spaced retrieval (USR). When implementing ESR, items are spaced at increasingly

distant intervals, instead of being standardized, as in USR (Logan & Balota, 2008). In terms of lesson and syllabus planning, the retrieval plan for an item in an ESR schedule could be [1-3-6-10], where the numbers represent the lessons in a course, or possibly activities, if used in a shorter course, in which the item would be reintroduced after the initial presentation. The retrieval schedule used in a USR method could be based around a schedule similar to [1-3-5-7]. MR, which is a technique commonly employed in the periods leading up to exams by students and teachers, attempts to cram information into students' memories through repetition in quick succession.

Camp, Bird, and Cherry (2000) claimed that ESR is particularly beneficial for long-term retention of information, and Landauer and Bjork (1978) demonstrated an average increase in final recall tests in an ESR experiment. Cull, Shaughnessy, and Zechmeister (1996) also found a significant advantage for ESR schedules over USR in final recall tests.

Three explanations of why the ESR method produces generally better results than USR and MR can be identified. Firstly, the increased intervals between items being reintroduced makes it necessary for the information to be retained for longer periods before it is retrieved than in USR and MR methods. This makes it more difficult to access an item, leading to increased retrieval effort (Carpenter & DeLosh, 2005), and thus, a strengthening of retrieval routes (Baddeley, 1997). Therefore, in a retrieval schedule where the first retrieval attempt comes after just one lesson or activity, the retrieval event is relatively easy, whereas when there is a larger interval, an increased amount of re-sampling occurs (Karpicke, 2004, cited in Logan & Balota, 2008).

Secondly, Landauer and Bjork (1978) found an increase in performance during the learning phase of their ESR experiment, and early retrieval success in the initial stages of the learning process encouraged successful retrieval later in the test stage (Camp, Bird, & Cherry, 2000). However, although retrieval success is important during learning for maintaining student motivation, retrieval schedules that have consistently high rates of retrieval success, such as MR, are less effective in developing long-term retention, indicating that mid- to long-term retention benefits from a certain level of difficulty and imperfect performance during the learning process (Bjork, 1999).

Thirdly, spaced retrieval techniques present learners with opportunities to encode items in more than one context (Pashler, Cepeda, Wixted, & Rohrer, 2005), increasing the likelihood that the word will be successfully retrieved later (Cobb, 1999; Schmitt, 2000). Schedules that incorporate multiple retrieval attempts allow students to reprocess items, and increased exposure can help students consolidate meaning (Schmitt & Carter, 2000; Folse, 2004). However, recalling items that are already highly accessible does not require much additional contextual sampling, and therefore does little to consolidate mid- to long-term lexical retention.

Therefore, the most effective retrieval schedules are likely to be those that balance retrieval effort with retrieval success multiple times throughout a course. Consequently, mid- to long-term retention of an item will optimally occur when it requires maximum effort to retrieve in a number of contexts, without being totally inaccessible (Bjork, 1999).

Method

Eighty-eight students in the Tourism and Business Management Department and the English and I.T. Department at a university in the Kanto region of Japan enrolled in three different classes that covered the same materials based around English for Tourism. The classes were made up of 46, 26, and 16 first- to fourth-year mixed-ability students. Students that did not have 100% attendance were not included in the final analysis as their absence may have negatively impacted the effect the different retrieval schedules had. Consequently, this article reports on the test results collected from 71 students (M = 19.6 years old, SD = 1.3).

All participants were given a translation test (Appendix A) in the first lesson of the course. The items were then reintroduced four times each in the class materials throughout the course using six different retrieval schedules: two for ESR, [5-7-10-14] (S1) and [2-5-9-14] (S2); two for USR, [8-10-12-14] (S3) and [5-8-11-14] (S4); and two for MR, [13-13-14-14] (S5) and [14-14-14-14] (S6). All six retrieval methods were used in all of the classes. The test consisted of 36 items, six from each schedule. A second test, using the same items ordered differently, was then administered in the last lesson of the course of 15 lectures. Results for both tests were returned to the students.

The schedules used in this investigation were chosen because they best fitted the Japanese university semester length of 15 lectures. As performance in memory retention and retrieval tests is affected by the intervals between the last engagement with an item and the final recall test (Crowder, 1976), all of the schedules finished in Lesson 14, one week before the last test in Lesson 15.

According to Huang and Liou (2007), in order to improve students' retention of lexical items, it is essential for vocabulary instruction to be targeted

to their needs and goals. Ensuring that the target language in a course is relevant to students' contexts is of particular importance, as relating new vocabulary to their own experiences strengthens their associations and can improve language retention (McAdams, 1993; Sökmen, 1997). In view of this, the items used in this study were selected according to relevance to the course content, as well as level according to the JACET 8000 Level Marker (http://www.tcp-ip.or.jp/~shim/J8LevelMarker/j8lm.cgi) (Appendix B). Each subset (1-6) consists of six items within the same JACET 8000 level, and is made up of only nouns, verbs, or adjectives. The items within the six subsets were assigned to each of the six schedules randomly.

When teaching English for Tourism, the focus on communicative competence and intercultural communication is especially pertinent (Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003). Consequently, unlike traditional English courses, which have been regarded as noncommunicative (Zhang, 2009; Rustipa, 2010), this course was developed and taught in a way that encouraged the students to engage with the lexical items communicatively in extension activities. Low-frequency lexical items were avoided where possible, and the complexity of the texts increased throughout the course. Furthermore, by providing the participating students with positive and encouraging feedback, the teacher aimed to improve students' self-belief, perceptions of ability, and confidence, which would in turn help to improve communicative competence (Bury, 2014).

Results and Discussion

From Table 1, it can be seen that all of the items on the test showed improved recognition rates across all six schedules. The smallest positive effect was 5.4% on Item 4 of Schedule 5, and the greatest was 33.7% on Item 6 in Schedule 4.

Table 1. Test Results and Differences in Percentage by Item

S1 [5-7-10-14]							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Test 1	75.7	67.6	58.1	54.1	43.2	63.5	60.4
Test 2	94.6	89.2	73.6	82.5	68.9	91.9	83.5
Diff.	18.9	21.6	15.5	28.4	25.7	28.4	23.1
S2 [2-5-9-14]							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Test 1	77.8	63.5	56.8	64.9	70.3	56.8	65.0
Test 2	90.2	84.5	75.0	81.1	83.8	86.5	83.5
Diff.	12.4	21.0	18.2	16.2	13.5	29.7	18.5
S3 [8-10-12-14]							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Test 1	87.8	78.4	86.5	71.6	56.8	62.2	73.9
Test 2	97.3	94.6	98.6	90.5	75.7	86.5	90.5
Diff.	9.5	16.2	12.1	18.9	18.9	24.3	16.7
S4 [5-8-11-14]							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Test 1	84.5	79.7	54.1	80.5	52.7	59.5	68.5
Test 2	93.6	87.8	79.7	89.3	83.8	93.2	87.9
Diff.	9.1	8.1	25.6	8.8	31.1	33.7	19.4
S5 [13-13-14-14]							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Test 1	83.8	70.3	90.5	58.1	60.8	54.1	69.6
Test 2	97.3	81.1	98.6	63.5	68.9	67.6	79.5
Diff.	13.5	10.8	8.1	5.4	8.1	13.5	9.9
S6 [14-14-14-14]							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Test 1	87.8	78.4	74.3	59.5	79.7	56.8	72.8
Test 2	95.9	87.8	89.2	73.0	90.5	71.6	84.7
Diff.	8.1	9.4	14.9	13.5	10.8	14.8	11.9

As Table 1 shows, the schedule that had the greatest positive effect on test results was S1 (23.1%), followed by S4 (19.4%), S2 (18.5%), S3 (16.7%), S6 (11.9%), and S5 (9.9%). These data, when looked at in conjunction with that shown in Table 2, indicate that ESR has the greatest positive effect on students' retention of lexical items, with a combined average of 20.8%, followed by USR (18.1%), then MR (10.9%). Thus, it can be stated that the students showed substantial benefits of both ESR and USR when compared to MR. This is consistent with findings from Balota, Duchek, Sergent-Marshall, and Roediger (2006), and Logan and Balota (2008).

Table 2. Test Results and Differences in Percentage by Schedule

	Test 1	Test 2	Difference	Average diff.
S1	60.4	83.5	23.1	20.8
S2	65.0	83.5	18.5	
S3	73.9	90.5	16.7	18.1
S4	68.5	87.9	19.4	
S5	69.6	79.5	9.9	10.9
S6	72.8	84.7	11.9	
Average	68.4	84.9	16.6	

While there was variation in the levels of positive effects between the different schedules, the two schedules that showed the highest average differ-

ence were S1 and S4. Both of these schedules had an average interval of three lessons (S1 [2-5-9-14] and S4 [5-8-11-14]). This suggests that in the EFL and ESP contexts, retrieval schedules with intervals averaging three lessons have the greatest positive effect on students' retention of lexis over a 15-lecture course. S2 had the third greatest effect, with an average interval of four lessons ([2-5-9-14]), followed by S3 with intervals of two lessons ([8-10-12-14]).

A number of limitations in this study can be identified. The course was conducted over 15 lectures, so it was not possible to examine the effects that larger periods of expansion may have had on retention levels. Furthermore, each lesson was at least a week apart, so the students would have come into contact with multiple external inputs outside of this study. The course was not studied in isolation, and other external factors that the students were exposed to, including both formal and informal learning, may have affected the findings outlined above (Erstad, Gilje, Sefton-Green, & Vasbo, 2009; Furlong & Davies, 2012). Additionally, the data do not control for words the students may already have known before the course. Finally, there were non-native Japanese students among the participants in this study, and, although all students at the university must have achieved a standardised level of Japanese proficiency before enrolment, it is possible that a translation test could have negatively affected their test scores.

Conclusion

Although one technique did not produce consistent advantages in the final recall test, it is important to note that all of the schedules for ESR and USR showed a greater positive effect than MR. This is consistent with previous studies that found spaced retrieval in any form is a beneficial memory improvement technique in terms of the learning stage, final recall tests, and students' confidence and perceptions of ability (Camp, Bird, & Cherry, 2000; Balota, Duchek, & Logan, 2006; Bury, 2014). Therefore, it is suggested that more teachers and curriculum developers implement both ESR and USR techniques when planning and adapting their course materials.

It is also posited that the challenging learning conditions created by expanding the intervals between the initial encoding of a lexical item and subsequent retrieval attempts can positively affect students' retention rates and overall learning experiences. In certain circumstances, higher degrees of success during learning could improve motivation and students' confidence, especially for students who are often frustrated by difficulties with their memory. However, finding a schedule that successfully balances the maximum effort required to retrieve items and multiple opportunities for processing those items in different contexts is of paramount importance. If a teacher can teach the same students over a longer period of time, it may be possible to determine the best retrieval schedules according to their specific abilities, goals, and preferences (Pavlik & Anderson, 2004), and this should be one of the main aims of teachers when attempting to develop their students' retention of lexical items.

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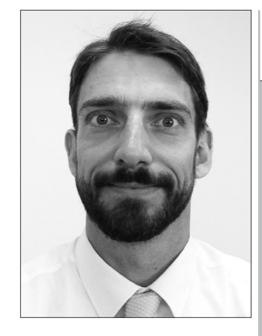

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Appendix A. Lesson 1: Test with Answers

Vocabulary Test

Section A

1.	economy (n.)	_____	a. 経済
2.	distant (adj.)	_____	b. 遠く
3.	society (n.)	_____	c. 社会
4.	independent (adj.)	_____	d. 独立
5.	tradition (n.)	_____	e. 伝統
6.	ancient (adj.)	_____	f. 古代
7.	local (adj.)	_____	g. 現地
8.	development (n.)	_____	h. 開発
9.	cultural (adj.)	_____	i. 文化的
10.	growth (n.)	_____	j. 成長
11.	specific (adj.)	_____	k. 特定
12.	nation (n.)	_____	l. 国家

Section B

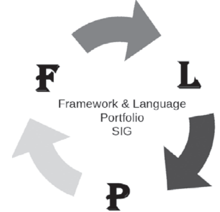
1.	negative (adj.)	_____	a. 陰性
2.	border (v.)	_____	b. 境界
3.	founding (adj.)	_____	c. 創立
4.	surround (v.)	_____	d. 囲む
5.	expensive (adj.)	_____	e. 高価な
6.	promote (v.)	_____	f. 推進する
7.	claim (v.)	_____	g. 主張する
8.	developing (adj.)	_____	h. 発展途上
9.	prevent (v.)	_____	i. 防ぐ
10.	global (adj.)	_____	j. 世界的
11.	maintain (v.)	_____	k. 維持する
12.	positive (adj.)	_____	l. 積極

Section C

1. contemporary (adj.) ______ a. 現代の
2. wildlife (n) ______ b. 野生生物
3. severe (adj.) ______ c. 厳しい
4. territory (n.) ______ d. 領土
5. sacred (adj.) ______ e. 神聖な
6. stability (n.) ______ f. 安定性
7. destination (n.) ______ g. 生き場
8. significant (adj.) ______ h. 重要
9. selection (n.) ______ i. 選択
10. ethnic (adj.) ______ j. 民族的な
11. peak (n.) ______ k. 頂点
12. urban (adj.) ______ l. 都市

Appendix B. Test Items and JACET 8000 Levels

	1. noun		2. adj.		3. adj.		4. verb		5. adj.		6. noun	
S1	economy	1	local	2	negative	2	claim	2	contemporary	3	destination	3
S2	development	1	distant	2	developing	2	border	2	significant	3	wildlife	3
S3	society	1	cultural	2	founding	2	prevent	2	severe	3	selection	3
S4	growth	1	independent	2	global	2	surround	2	ethnic	3	territory	3
S5	tradition	1	specific	2	expensive	2	maintain	2	sacred	3	peak	3
S6	nation	1	ancient	2	positive	2	promote	2	urban	3	stability	3



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5. Theme II - Self-perceptions of ability (SPoA) and levels of confidence (LoC)

5.1 Publication 5 (sole author)

Drawing on concepts, theories, and approaches including anxiety and the Model of L2 willingness to communicate, acknowledging the importance of SPoA and LoC in general in IFLL and more specifically in developing productive output (see Appendix 4 for further explanation), and taking into account specific factors related to SPoA and LoC in Japan (see Appendix 5), Publication 5 examined the impact a course that was developed with the aim of improving both productive output and lexical retrieval had on students' SPoA and LoC. The course was underpinned by concepts, theories, and hypotheses including the Depth of processing hypothesis, task-cycling, and Involvement load (see Appendix 6 for a full list and further explanation).

It was found that having enrolled on and completed the course outlined in Publication 5, students' SPoA and LoC improved in all of the language areas over the period the course was taught. The categories with the two highest improvements were knowledge of vocabulary and communication.

- Bury, J. (2014). Developing texts for an English for Tourism course: The effect of using task-cycling, spaced retrieval and high-frequency words on students' self-perception of ability and levels of confidence. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *2*(2), 181-194.

Presentation 9 (Appendix 11) further disseminated the research conducted in Publication 5.

While the findings from this publication were interesting, the level of analysis was purely descriptive, which detracts from the overall impact and scope of the research. However, it was an important part of my development as a practitioner-researcher as

reflecting on it enabled me to focus on improving my analytical skills, the result of which can be seen in the next two publications in this theme.

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DEVELOPING TEXTS FOR AN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM COURSE: THE EFFECT OF USING TASK-CYCLING, SPACED RETRIEVAL AND HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS ON STUDENTS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF ABILITY AND LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE

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Abstract. *Texts used in traditional reading courses often contain complicated grammatical structures and academic lexical items. Exposing students to high level texts can aid language acquisition, but if the text is too complex, students can become overwhelmed and demotivated. To address this, texts and activities used in an undergraduate English for Tourism course were developed based on frequency lists and applying the principles of the modified natural approach (Byrnes 2006), task-cycling (Skehan 1998; Levy and Kennedy 2004) and spaced retrieval (Karpicke and Roediger 2007). This article reports on enrolled students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence.*

Key words*: course development, English for Tourism, students' perceptions of ability, student confidence*

1. INTRODUCTION

When teaching reading courses, instructors often use texts rich in complex grammatical structures and context-specific lexical items. This is especially true in English for specific purposes courses as teachers regularly use authentic materials. Exposing students to texts that are too complex and challenging can be overwhelming and demotivating (Huang and Liou 2007; Murphy 2007). A common classroom response is for students to translate texts word by word, which is time consuming, can lead to misinterpretation and does not develop other important reading skills, such as reading for general meaning and gist.

To address this, a new English for Tourism course was developed, designed, tested and taught to students enrolled in the Tourism and Business Management Faculty at a university in the Kanto region of Japan. The course had no pre-requisites and was opened as an elective to students from all four year groups. While the course aimed to develop students' overall English abilities, large parts of each lesson were dedicated to reading texts that supplied learners with information on various aspects of the tourism industry.

Applying the theory of the modified natural approach (Byrnes 2006), authentic texts were selected and modified drawing on various high-frequency word lists, including those found at www.wordfrequency.info and www.wordandphrase.info. Activities were then designed implementing the principles of task-cycling (Skehan 1998; Levy and Kennedy 2004) and spaced retrieval (Karpicke and Roediger 2007). This enabled words and structures to be recycled between chapters, while new words and structures were also introduced, drawing on Krashen's (1981) theory of comprehensible input.

In developing the course, there were a number of considerations that needed to be taken into account:

1. How can students be helped to cope with the large amount of new structures and lexical items in a text that is written in another language?
2. How can texts and activities best be used to improve students' short-term and long-term retention of context-specific lexical items?
3. How can texts be used in a course to help develop communicative competence?

This article reports on research undertaken in response to the above considerations. Data gathered from questionnaires conducted before and after the course was delivered is reported on and discussed, addressing the following research questions:

1. Will completion of the course help improve students' perceptions of their reading abilities and levels of confidence in reading English?
2. Will completion of the course help improve students' perceptions of their speaking abilities and levels of confidence in speaking English?
3. Will completion of the course help improve students' perceptions of their knowledge of tourism specific vocabulary and levels of confidence in using these lexical items?
4. Will completion of the course help improve students' perceptions of their communicative competence and levels of confidence in communicating in English?

2. Literature Review

Texts used in traditional reading courses often contain complicated grammatical structures and some uncommon, academic lexical items. As a result, students are exposed to new, more advanced language and this can aid language acquisition, as in Krashen's (1981) theory of comprehensible input. However, a learner with no previous knowledge of the target language can quickly get lost and, therefore, lose motivation, raising their affective filters (ibid.). Research on reading courses (Huang and Liou 2007; Murphy 2007) has shown that students often become overwhelmed with the difficulty of the texts they encounter in class, which can be detrimental to the learning process (Fulcher 1997).

English for specific purposes classes focus on one particular context, and because of this, there is often a lack of accessible material. Consequently, teachers frequently employ authentic materials. However, the complexity of these materials can accentuate and intensify the challenges students face. To address this, materials need to be altered and modified, described as the streamlined natural approach (Byrnes 2006).

When reading complex tests, a large number of students translate passages word by word using their dictionaries (Schuetze 2010) and translation, especially when conducted on mobile phones, which is accessible and engaging for students (Corris et al. 2004). However, Schuetze (2010) states that developing students' reading strategies and their approaches to deciphering a text by introducing and expanding their techniques other than translation can help to consolidate meaning and avoid misinterpretation. Over-reliance on any one reading strategy should be avoided.

For long term success in language learning, a balanced approach that combines the opportunity to engage with both the meanings and the forms of the language needs to be developed (Skehan 1998). Sotillo (2000) suggests this can be achieved in part by employing asynchronous and synchronous discussions, which can be used to focus on

different pedagogical goals. In asynchronous, pre-planned communicative activities students have more time to focus on accuracy and this can significantly affect the language produced (Skehan and Foster 2001). In synchronous activities students focus more on meaning, developing communication strategies (Skehan 1998).

Huang and Liou (2007) state that targeted vocabulary instruction is essential in improving students' retention of lexical items. When reading, students must comprehend and interpret words and sentences with multiple possible meanings. Focusing on lexical items that have been chosen from high-frequency word lists is likely to help students' comprehension as they commonly appear in different contexts, allowing multiple meanings to be conveyed. Ensuring that the target language is context specific and relevant to students' interests and needs is also of particular importance (McAdams 1993), as relating words to students' own contexts and experiences strengthens their associations (Sökmen 1997) and can improve short and long term language retention.

Giving students the chance to review and use newly encountered lexical items in varying contexts is also of great importance as it increases the likelihood of the items being recalled at a later point (Schmitt 2000). Furthermore, if lexical items are successfully employed and then reviewed, the retrieval routes that students employ when encountering them again are reinforced (Baddeley 1997). As a result, the increased exposure to the lexical items gained through reviewing vocabulary allows students to consolidate meaning (Schmitt and Carter 2000). Additionally, using basic grammatical structures as entry points into a text before moving on to more complex structures helping students develop the building blocks needed to deal with longer reading passages.

When teaching English for Tourism, the focus on communicative competence (Canale and Swain 1980) and intercultural communication (Alred et al. 2003) is especially pertinent. Learners face many challenges when dealing with the processes of communication, interpreting differences in cultures and constructing meaningful messages in the target language, and developing students' abilities in these areas must be emphasized (Byram and Buttjes 1991). Students are constantly being challenged in relation to their comprehension of and beliefs about the target language and culture (Risager 2006) as well as their perceptions of their own abilities and levels of confidence, and courses should reflect this.

Self-perceptions are the impressions a person has relating to their own abilities in different domains or contexts (Harter 1999). As such, they are a critical component of self-esteem (Bong and Skaalvik 2003) and play an important role in the development of self-regulation, reading ability (Harter and Whitesell 2003) and the way people approach communication (Nezlek et al. 2008), with self-esteem affecting willingness to engage in communication (Pearson et al. 2011).

3. Course Development

Drawing on the research found in response to the considerations outlined above, the principles of the streamlined natural approach (Byrnes 2006), spaced retrieval (Karpicke and Roediger 2007) and task-cycling (Levy and Kennedy 2004) were applied when developing the English for Tourism course being reported on in this article. This involved utilizing a range of modified authentic texts, implementing planned intervals between the use of target lexical items to improve short-term and long-term retention rates and introducing tasks in a way that allowed balanced development between a focus on form

and a focus on meaning to occur. Tasks that encouraged students to use reading strategies other than translation were also employed.

In order to aid the development of communicative competence, activities described by Ribé and Vidal (1993) as second and third generation tasks were employed. These aimed to develop communication skills in conjunction with general cognitive strategies, use the target language in a context specific to the students that has real value to them and their language learning goals, and to develop awareness and interpersonal skills in the tourism sector.

Unlike traditional reading courses, which have been regarded as non-communicative (Zhang 2009), this course was developed to expose readers to lexical items that could be used communicatively in extension activities, breaking from the more traditional reading teaching techniques that dominate university classes (Rustipa 2010). It was decided that the target lexis should be drawn from high-frequency word lists to give students the opportunity to consolidate their comprehension of sector specific lexical items, in turn developing their communicative competence in the context of the tourism industry. Exigent grammatical structures and low-frequency lexical items were avoided in order to present a balance of recycled words and structures, and newly introduced items that built on the previously covered material. This allowed the complexity of the texts to increase in a planned progression throughout the course. By developing the reading texts in this way and providing the students with positive and encouraging feedback, the course aimed to improve students' self-belief and perceptions of ability, which would in turn help to improve communicative competence.

The texts covered a wide range of popular tourist destinations from around the world (see Appendix A), activities that can be done there and a profile of a worker in the industry at that destination. Learners had the opportunity to read and identify the main points of the texts by applying the strategies that were presented in the activities and tasks. As a result, learners were not forced to use a dictionary as soon as they read the first sentence of a text as they had been given the necessary strategies and building blocks. This design aimed to assist learners immerse themselves in the texts and identify the main points and ideas without extensive translation, thus developing a wide range of reading strategies.

4. METHODOLOGY

To investigate students' perceptions of their reading abilities, speaking abilities, knowledge of tourism specific vocabulary and communicative competence, and their levels of confidence in reading English, speaking English, using tourism specific vocabulary and communicating in English, the participants completed a ten-item pre-course questionnaire at the start of the first lesson and a 19-item post-course questionnaire in the final lesson. As the cohort was fairly small, every student received a questionnaire to ensure that all opinions could be voiced, making the data more representative. Twenty one students enrolled on the course and completed the first questionnaire. One student was absent from the final lesson and one student had dropped out, giving a return of 19 post-course questionnaires.

The items on the questionnaires (see Appendix B and Appendix C) were translated into Japanese and the students were able to write their comments in their first language to avoid dubious results being created due to misunderstandings and the language barrier. This allowed the student voice to be fairly and accurately represented.

All the data collected was anonymous, the purpose of the research was explained to the students and it was clearly stated that their participation was voluntary. Class averages will be presented as analysis of the individual participants' results could not be conducted due to anonymity. Once the research was completed a short, translated report was made available to all of the participants.

5. RESULTS

Table 1 Students' perceptions of their abilities and levels of confidence in various language areas

Language area	Students' perceptions of ability			Students' levels of confidence		
	Pre-course	Post-course	Difference	Pre-course	Post-course	Difference
Reading	4.42	5.42	1.00	5.48	6.26	0.68
Speaking	4.24	5.05	0.84	4.86	5.11	0.21
Vocabulary	3.86	5.32	1.53	3.95	5.47	1.47
Communication	4.24	5.53	1.32	4.33	5.26	0.95
Average	4.19	5.33	1.17	4.65	5.53	0.83

Table 1 shows that all of the language areas in both students' perceptions of their abilities and levels of confidence in the various language areas improved by overall averages of 1.17 and 0.83. It can also be seen that the lowest post-course average score is greater than the highest pre-course score, with the exception of the data relating to students' levels of confidence in Reading, which had a relatively high pre-course average.

The data also indicates that, in both perceptions of ability and levels of confidence, the language area with the biggest improvement was Vocabulary, followed by Communication, Reading and Speaking. Students' levels of confidence were higher than their perceptions of ability in all language areas, except for post-course Communication, which had an average of 5.53 in perceptions of ability and 5.26 in levels of confidence. Overall, students' perceptions of ability improved more than their levels of confidence and this is true in all of the language areas except Vocabulary.

Table 2 Ranking of language areas by students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence

Students' perceptions of ability		Tableheading Students' levels of confidence	
Pre-course	Post-course	Pre-course	Post-course
1. Reading (4.42)	1. Communication (5.53)	1. Reading (5.48)	1. Reading (6.26)
2. Speaking and communication (4.24)	2. Reading (5.42) 3. Vocabulary (5.33)	2. Speaking (4.86) 3. Communication (4.33)	2. Vocabulary (5.47) 3. Communication (5.26)
4. Vocabulary (3.86)	4. Speaking (5.05)	4. Vocabulary (3.95)	4. Speaking (5.11)

Table 2 shows that while all of the language areas improved and the ranking of improvement was consistent in both students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence, there was variance in the ranking of the language areas between the pre-

course and post-course questionnaires. Both pre-course rankings were very similar, but the post-course rankings differed, especially for students' perceptions of ability.

In regards to students' perceptions of ability, the pre-course data shows the ranking to be Reading, Speaking and Communication, and Vocabulary. The post-course data identifies the ranking as Communication, Reading, Vocabulary and Speaking. Therefore, even though Vocabulary showed the greatest improvement in terms of students' perceptions of ability, it still ranked third, behind Communication and Reading.

In terms of students' levels of confidence, the rankings of language areas in the pre-course and post-course questionnaires were Reading, Speaking, Communication and Vocabulary, and Reading, Vocabulary, Communication and Speaking respectively. The rise to second for the vocabulary category and the drop to fourth for the speaking category reflect the differences in improvement highlighted in Table 1.

Table 3 Perceived effect of the course on ability and confidence

Language area	Perceived effect on ability	Perceived effect on confidence	Overall perceived effect
Reading	6.05	6.53	6.29
Speaking	5.89	5.79	5.84
Vocabulary	7.00	6.74	6.89
Communication	6.11	6.16	6.13
Average	6.26	6.30	6.28

Table 3 shows that the students believed the course had a positive effect on all of the language areas, both in terms of their perceived levels of ability and levels of confidence. It can be seen that there was a slightly more positive perceived effect on confidence (6.30) than ability (6.26). In regards to perceived effect on ability, the data shows that the language area with the greatest perceived improvement was Vocabulary, followed by Communication, Reading and Speaking. This is the same ranking as the students' perceptions of improvement in ability and levels of confidence. In relation to perceived effect on confidence, the ranking differs slightly, with the greatest perceived improvement being in Vocabulary, then Reading, Communication and Speaking. In all of the language areas the students' perceived effect of the course on confidence was greater than its effect on ability, with the exception of Vocabulary. This supports the finding that students' perceptions of ability improved more than their levels of confidence.

Table 4 Perceived effect of the course on ability and levels of confidence vs. students' post-course evaluations of ability and levels of confidence

Language area	Perceptions of ability			Levels of confidence		
	Post-course evaluation	Perceived affect	Difference	Post-course evaluation	Perceived affect	Difference
Reading	5.48	6.05	0.57	6.19	6.53	0.34
Speaking	5.10	5.89	0.79	5.14	5.79	0.65
Vocabulary	5.33	7.00	1.67	5.48	6.74	1.26
Communication	5.52	6.11	0.59	5.28	6.16	1.17
Average	5.36	6.26	0.90	5.52	6.30	0.78

Table 4 shows that, in terms of both perceptions of ability and levels of confidence, the effect the students believed the course to have was greater than the results relating to students' perceived ability and levels of confidence gained from the post-course evaluation. In regards to ability, the average difference was 0.90 and in terms of levels of confidence the average difference was 0.78.

Table 5 Ranking of language areas by students' post-course perceptions of ability and levels of confidence vs. perceived effect of the course

Ability			Levels of confidence		
Post-course evaluation	Perceived effect on ability	Difference	Post-course evaluation	Perceived effect on confidence	Difference
1.Communication (5.52)	1.Vocabulary (7.00)	1.Vocabulary (1.67)	1.Reading (6.19)	1.Vocabulary (6.74)	1.Vocabulary (1.26)
2.Reading (5.48)	2.Communication (6.11)	2.Speaking (0.79)	2.Vocabulary (5.48)	2.Reading (6.53)	2.Communication (1.17)
3.Vocabulary (5.33)	3.Reading (6.05)	3.Communication (0.59)	3.Communication (5.28)	3.Communication (6.16)	3.Speaking (0.65)
4.Speaking (5.10)	4.Speaking (5.89)	4.Reading (0.57)	4.Speaking (5.14)	4.Speaking (5.79)	4.Reading (0.34)

Table 5 shows that while students ranked the language areas most positively affected by the course as Vocabulary, Communication, Reading and Speaking for perceptions of ability and Vocabulary, Reading, Communication and Speaking for levels of confidence, the greatest differences between their post-course self-evaluations and their perceived effect of the course were in Vocabulary, Speaking, Communication and Reading for ability and Vocabulary, Communication, Speaking and Reading for confidence.

Responses to Item 2 on the post-course questionnaire ''How much do you agree with the statement - I would recommend joining the course to my friends?'' produced an overall positive response of 6.79, with a mode of 7. In relation to this item, six comments were made. Two said the course was good for helping them attain their future employment goals, one said that it was good to study about tourism, one said the course was interesting, one said that the topics were good and one said that the course was too difficult. That half of the comments made in response to this item were related to tourism and future employment reflects the reasons given for joining the course in Item 1 on the post-course questionnaire as 68.42% of the responses to Item 1 mentioned future employment goals in the tourism industry. Other reasons given in response to Item 1 were, 'English is important in society', 'Passing Eiken grade 2' and 'I wanted to speak English'.

6. CONCLUSION

All of the language areas showed improvement in both students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence over the period in which the English for Tourism course was taught. This suggests that the course was successful and positively contributed to developing students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence in reading, speaking, using tourism specific vocabulary and communicative competence.

The language area that was most improved was the category relating to tourism specific vocabulary. This implies that the implementation of spaced retrieval, task-cycling and the modifying of texts to include target lexis drawn from high-frequency word lists was successful in helping improve students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence in using specialized lexis in this context.

The language area that showed the second highest improvement was Communication. This suggests that the decision to depart from a traditional, non-communicative reading course to one that exposes students to high-frequency lexical items that can be used in extension activities to develop communicative competence had positive results. This is supported by the improvement in students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence in Speaking. This finding also suggests that the planned development in the complexity of the texts helped to improve students' self-perceptions, which had a constructive effect on the way they felt about and approached communicating in English.

The improvement in students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence in Reading implies that modifying authentic texts so that they were more accessible and relevant, and encouraging students to develop different reading strategies through task-cycling and reviewing lexical items through spaced retrieval was a success. The decision to avoid complicated grammatical structures and low-frequency lexical items when designing the course may also have contributed to these results.

The findings of this research show an improvement in students' perceptions of ability and confidence in four language areas, and the English for Tourism course introduced in this article had a direct impact on these results, indicating positive results in relation to the four research questions outlined. However, the course was not studied in isolation and other external factors that the students were exposed to, including both formal and informal learning, may have affected the findings outlined above (Erstad et al. 2009; Furlong and Davies 2012). Consequently, while the materials studied throughout this course impacted on students' perceptions of ability and confidence, the level of its bearing on the outcomes presented is difficult to calculate.

To address this, the effect the students' believed the course to have had on their perceptions of ability and levels of confidence was investigated. The results show that students believe this English for Tourism course had a positive effect on all of the language areas investigated in both terms of ability and confidence. This supports the findings that the course was successful and positively contributed to developing students' abilities and levels of confidence in reading, speaking, using tourism specific vocabulary and communicative competence.

The students' perceived effect of the course was greater than their perceptions of improvements in ability and levels of confidence in the post-course self-evaluations in all language areas, both in perceptions of ability and levels of confidence. This further strengthens the claim that this course helped the students' development in the four language areas investigated. The positive perceived effect of the course is also corroborated by the positive feedback and the constructive comments that students made in relation to item 2 on the post-course questionnaire.

The greatest perceived positive impacts of the course in terms of ability were in Vocabulary, Communication, Reading and Speaking, and this supports the finding that the implementation of spaced retrieval, task-cycling and the streamlined natural approach was successful in helping improve students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence in the four investigated language areas. It also further corroborates the finding

that exposing students to high-frequency lexical items and reviewing them in a communicative way in extension activities had positive results.

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Appendix A: English for Tourism Course Contents

Tourism English I (1)

Lesson themes

Lesson 1： Asia and the Pacific I – Guam, Scuba diving and the diving instructor.

Lesson 2： Europe I – Finland, visiting Santa and the dog-sled driver.

Lesson 3： Africa I – Botswana, safari and the safari guide.

Lesson 4: North and Central America I – San Francisco, visiting Alkatraz and the tour guide.

Lesson 5： South America I – Peru, visiting Machu Piccu and the photographer

Lesson 6： Review I

Lesson 7： Assessment I

Lesson 8： Asia and the Pacific II – India, visiting the Taj Mahal and the Bollywood director.

Lesson 9： Europe II – Italy, visiting Mount Vesuvius and the fashion buyer.

Lesson 10：Africa II – South Africa, The Cradle of Humankind and the hotel manager.

Lesson 11：North and Central America II – Panama, visiting the jungle and the cruise rep.

Lesson 12：South America II – Brazil, capoeira and the river boat navigator.

Lesson 13：Review II

Lesson 14：Assessment II

Lesson 15：Review and feedback

Appendix B: English for Tourism Course - Pre-course Questionnaire (Japanese)

1. なぜあなたは観光英語の授業を履習に参加したのですか？

____

____

2. 今までに観光英語の授業を履習した事はありますか？

はい。 いいえ。

はいの人はどの授業を履習しましたか?

____

- 1 - 10のスケールで (1 = 非常に悪い, 10 = 非常によい), どのように、あなたの英語力を評価しますか？

3. 英語のリーディング
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. 英語のスピーキング
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. 観光語彙についての知識
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. 英語でコミュニケーションすること
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- 1 - 10のスケールで (1 = 非常に悪い, 10 = 非常によい), 次のカテゴリーに、どれくらい自信がありますか？

7. 英語のリーディング
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. 英語のスピーキング
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. 観光語彙を使用して
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. 英語でコミュニケーションすること
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

English for Tourism Course - Pre-course Questionnaire (English)

1. Why did you join this English for Tourism course?

____

____

2. Have you studied an English for Tourism course before?

Yes No

If Yes, which course?

____

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = very low, 10 = very high), how would you rate your abilities in the following categories?

3. English reading.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. English speaking.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Knowledge of tourism specific vocabulary.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Communicating in English.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = very low, 10 = very high), how confident are you in the following categories?

7. Reading English
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. Speaking English.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. Using tourism specific vocabulary.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Communicating in English.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Appendix C: English for Tourism Course - Post-course Questionnaire (Japanese)

1. 今までに観光英語の授業を履習した事はありますか？

はい。 いいえ。

はいの人はどの授業を履習しましたか？

____

2.

「私は友達にこのプログラムに参加することを勧める。」にどのくらい同意しますか？

(1＝ 完全に反対, 10＝ 完全に賛成)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

説明

____

____

- 1 - 10のスケールで (1 = 非常に悪い, 10 = 非常によい), どのように、あなたの英語力を評価しますか？

3. 英語のリーディング
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. 英語のスピーキング
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. 観光語彙についての知識
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. 英語でコミュニケーションすること
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- 1 - 10のスケールで (1 = 非常に悪い, 10 = 非常によい), 次のカテゴリーに、どれくらい自信がありますか？

7. 英語のリーディング
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. 英語のスピーキング
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. 観光語彙を使用して
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. 英語でコミュニケーションすること
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 1 - 10のスケールで(1 ＝完全に反対、10＝完全に賛成), このコースに加わることが次のカテゴリーの能力をどのくらい向上させたと、思いますか？

11. 英語のリーディング
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12. 英語のスピーキング
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. 観光語彙についての知識
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. 英語でコミュニケーションすること
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 1 - 10のスケールで(1 ＝完全に反対、10＝完全に賛成), このコースに加わることで、あなたはどのくらい自信がもてたと思いますか？

15. 英語のリーディング
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
16. 英語のスピーキング
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
17. 観光語彙を使用して
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
18. 英語でコミュニケーションすること
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
19. 観光英語の授業を履習改善／高める方法はありますか？
____
____
____
____

English for Tourism Course - Post-course Questionnaire (English)

1. Have you studied an English for Tourism course before?
Yes No
If Yes, which course?
____

2. How much do you agree with the statement ‘I would recommend joining the course to my friends’ ? (1 = disagree completely, 10 = agree completely.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Please explain.
____

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = very low, 10 = very high), how would you rate your abilities in the following categories?

3. English reading.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. English speaking.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. Knowledge of tourism specific vocabulary.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Communicating in English.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = very low, 10 = very high), how confident are you in the following categories?

7. Reading English
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. Speaking English.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. Using tourism specific vocabulary.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Communicating in English.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = Not at all, 10 = A great deal), how much do you think joining this course has improved your abilities in the following categories?

11. English reading.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12. English speaking.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. Knowledge of tourism specific vocabulary.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. Communicating in English.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = Not at all, 10 = A great deal), how much do you think joining this course has improved your confidence in the following categories?

15. Reading English
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
16. Speaking English.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
17. Using tourism specific vocabulary.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
18. Communicating in English.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
19. Can you think of any ways the English for Tourism course could be improved?

____
____
____
____

5.2 Publication 6 (sole author)

The research conducted in Publication 5 examined the impact of an English for Specific Purposes course, namely English for Tourism. Publication 6 reports on an intervention in a course in the same field, investigating the impact of using storytelling during in-class activities and assessments in English for Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) and Business English classes. I decided to introduce storytelling into these courses for a range of reasons discussed in the publication. The particular importance of storytelling to this thesis and the connection to the other publications can be found in the potential benefits it brings to promoting trust and understanding among classmates, which enables collaborative and supportive learning environments to be developed, the increased opportunities it allows for spoken and written output to be produced, and the extra chances it allows learners to personalize and therefore consolidate the language encountered in the course materials.

Utilizing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, I explored whether storytelling improved students' understanding of the T&H industry and their SPoA and LoC. Students' perceptions of the intervention, the main focus of the research covered in Theme III of this thesis, were also investigated.

In this paper, students indicated very positive responses to the intervention, believing it to be motivating and engaging. Furthermore, improved self-perceptions of knowledge about the T&H industry and their English abilities, and also improved LoC when using English, were indicated. Additionally, it was stated that the course enabled students to better understand their classmates and to both express and hear genuine feelings and opinions.

- Bury, J. (2020). Introducing storytelling into tourism and hospitality courses: students' perceptions. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism, 20*(2), 135-155. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2019.1665486

Although the results from this publication were particularly encouraging, the possibility of bias needs to be addressed. As in Publication 5, I was the teacher of the courses reported on and also the interviewer and questionnaire administrator in the data collection process. This raises questions regarding the validity and reliability of the data gathered. However, I aimed to reduce my potential impact on the responses and influence on biases in a range of ways including using ‘neutral’ interview locations, reviewing findings with peers, making the findings available to the participants to check prior to publication, and asking questions that did not imply a correct or more desirable response.

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Introducing storytelling into tourism and hospitality courses: students' perceptions

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ABSTRACT

Storytelling is a fundamental component of human communication. As a teaching method, its introduction can lead to a wide range of benefits. Despite this, storytelling is not commonly employed by educators in tertiary education in Japan. As a result, students' reactions to it as a pedagogic approach are relatively underreported in that context. Consequently, this study investigated the perceptions of undergraduate students (n = 132) enrolled in the Faculty of Tourism and Business Management at a university in Japan following the introduction of storytelling into the curriculum. It was found that the participants felt it improved their understanding of the tourism and hospitality industry, was a positive aspect of their course, and improved their perceptions of their English abilities and confidence when using English. It is therefore suggested that storytelling be incorporated more into tourism and hospitality courses.

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Storytelling; tourism and hospitality education; student perceptions; student attitudes; English communication

Introduction

As global mobility increases, Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) educators face the challenge of developing courses that help students build transferable skills and match knowledge and competencies to the rapidly changing demands of the T&H industry (Baum, 2006; Kim & Davies, 2014). With cross-cultural interactions becoming more frequent, the ability to deal with a wide range of factors and offer high-quality services to international travellers is becoming more important (Park & Yoon, 2009; Yoo & Kim, 2013). Thus, the need for a diversely trained workforce with good communication skills is imperative for successfully managing key industry issues (Hawkins, Ruddy, & Ardah, 2012; Lee, Huh, & Jones, 2016). Consequently, it is vital that T&H students are enabled to develop pragmatic skills and realistic employment expectations (Christou & Eaton, 2000; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005).

However, despite the growth of higher education T&H degrees being provided, there is still a perceived lack of adequately skilled labour (Baum, 2006; Richardson, 2010; Wan, King, Wong, & Kong, 2014) and a large number of students with inaccurate perceptions of the industry (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). These are major issues as current students are the future employees and leaders of the industry (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000) and having a committed and highly-skilled workforce is critical in this sector (Stansbie & Nash, 2016).

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In order to address these issues and to ensure the quality of programs being offered, constant innovation and the identification and evaluation of educational elements employed in T&H courses is essential (Tews & Hoof, 2012). To do this, a wide range of pedagogic approaches should be trialled and their impact investigated.

Using a mixed-methods approach, this paper investigates students' perceptions of, and reactions to, the introduction of one such approach, storytelling, into in-class activities and as a form of assessment in seven English for Tourism and Hospitality and three Tourism Business English courses at a private university in Japan. By doing so, this research aims to gain greater insights into students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of different teaching methods, which have been underreported when analyzing pedagogic approaches, especially in the T&H context in Japan (Bury & Oka, 2017). It is hoped this may enable educators to provide courses that better meet their students' needs and objectives. Consequently, this study is relevant to educators and administrators who are curious about what can be done to improve the quality of T&H education.

Literature review

The overarching goal of T&H education is ultimately to enhance the theoretical and practical knowledge of students in order to advance their personal development, communication skills, and attitudes so that they become valued professionals in the T&H industry (Chan, Brown, & Ludlow, 2014). As the T&H industry is susceptible to rapid market changes, the courses that are provided need to keep pace, with the implementation and examination of innovative teaching methods being an integral part of ensuring the quality of programs and developing effective curriculums in contemporary T&H education (Baum, 2002; Tews & Hoof, 2012). It is important to regularly update curriculums to encompass a variety of trends and emerging environmental factors (Barron, Baum, & Conway, 2007). Introducing stories and using storytelling in the classroom is one way of doing this, especially in language and communication classes.

There are many definitions of stories and storytelling and in educational settings the terms story, case study, and scenario can be used loosely. For the purpose of this research, a story is defined as a description of a sequence of real or imaginary decisions or actions in the past, present or future, which involves characters in a T&H related context where a challenge or opportunity is addressed. Storytelling is the method and practices employed when communicating a story to an audience. Case studies demonstrate how knowledge is applied in real-world situations, and the results of that application. They are a description of a problem and its context and they include supporting facts, data, and figures. Scenarios are similar, but are fictionalized and are not usually supported with much data or information, but with characters, dialogues, and conversations instead. Stories are different from case studies and scenarios as they contain high emotional content established via plot, theme, dialogues, and characterization. Stories engage both reason and emotion (James & Minnis, 2004) and that gives meaning and context to information and the narrative.

Recognised as a fundamental aspect of human interaction (Smith et al., 2017), storytelling utilizes the social element of language (Sadik, 2008), is a fundamental way of sharing knowledge (Remenyi, 2005), improves self-awareness and cultural knowledge

(Mello, 2001), and is effective in promoting both learning motivations and performance (Hung, Hwang, & Huang, 2012), all of which are important factors of T&H education. Furthermore, storytelling has been identified as an engaging method of developing more credible and reasonable perceptions of authentic work contexts (Sole & Wilson, 2002). Storytelling as a pedagogical strategy is not new (Coulter, Michael, & Poynor, 2007) and the link between storytelling, knowledge management, and knowledge sharing has been acknowledged (Flottemesch, 2013; Smith, 2012; Whyte & Classen, 2012). However, while storytelling has been extensively used in children's education as a valuable and creative tool (Linde, 2001), its use in the higher education process has been less common, particularly in Japan despite Buckler and Zien (1996) finding extensive benefits in the use of stories to reinforce the innovative culture in companies including Sony and Toshiba in Japan. Consequently, there remain multiple variables that need to be investigated, including how students perceive the use of storytelling in the tertiary educational context.

T&H graduates enter workplaces that feature stakeholders from diverse ethnic backgrounds, involve dynamic human interactions, and necessitate the effective delivery of products and services (Alexander, Lynch, & Murray, 2009). This must be reflected in the courses that T&H educators provide (Deale, 2013) as the successful application of the knowledge and skills learned in tertiary level T&H education strongly impacts on future career success (Christou & Eaton, 2000). Thus, it is essential for T&H courses to have close links with industry (Solnet, Robinson, & Cooper, 2007) and to provide students with a comprehensive and realistic view of what working life in the industry entails (Richardson, 2009), especially as one of the main challenges T&H educators face is reducing the expectation gap (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000). In order to manage expectations, educators need to better inform their learners about the opportunities available and employment conditions that can be expected in the T&H industry.

While the benefits of teaching courses that most accurately represent the T&H industry are not often disputed, the methods that best achieve this are (Okumus & Wong, 2004). However, despite many studies identifying different perspectives on the elements of T&H education (Angelo & Vladimir, 2009; Horng, Teng, & Baum, 2009; Kuo, Chang, & Lai, 2011), it is generally agreed that teaching in a practical manner and employing different pedagogical strategies is beneficial (Jennings, 2002). As a result, T&H programs are increasingly offering more practical materials and are emphasizing the importance of interactions (Deale & Hovda, 2006). This approach helps develop creativity and flexibility in a dynamic working environment.

Storytelling can help students deal with unexpected situations and consider the possibilities of what may happen in various contexts (Bruner, 1990). Furthermore, the construction of stories requires students to actively engage in making sense of their experiences, reflect more deeply about the course materials and their own learning (McDonnell, Lloyd, & Valkenburg, 2004), and can help students consolidate meaning (Malita & Martin, 2010). It also facilitates a better understanding of the work environment by capturing tacit knowledge (Swap, Leonard, Shield, & Abrams, 2001), combining cognitive and emotional knowledge (James & Minnis, 2004), and organizing information into learnable chunks (LeBlanc & Hogg, 2006). In order to assess whether students perceive these benefits to be true, the following hypotheses will be tested:

(1) The introduction of storytelling will:
  (a) improve students' perceived understanding of the T&H industry.
  (b) improve students' perceived understanding of different T&H contexts.
  (c) improve students' perceived understanding of T&H stakeholders.

Storytelling is fundamental to our everyday lives (Schank & Abelson, 1995) enabling people to make sense of their experiences (Squire, 2008) and connect with ourselves as human beings (McDrury & Alterio, 2003). As storytelling relies on both the listener and the teller, it utilizes the social element of language and can be used to develop shared meanings (Stacey, 2001) and build community within a classroom by encouraging reflection and identifying commonalities (Craig, Hull, Haggart, & Crowder, 2001; Sadik, 2008). Furthermore, storytelling is a fundamental method for sharing knowledge (Remenyi, 2005), improving self-awareness, visual imagery, and cultural knowledge (Mello, 2001), and promoting the transmission of one's values, emotions, and beliefs (Harris & Barnes, 2005). Consequently, emotional learning from stories is powerful (Nairn, 2004) and the way we engage with them is pivotal to understanding behaviour (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Holt, 2004) and can give rise to learning that is transferable and reflective (Christiansen & Jensen, 2008) and fluid in nature (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

As professionals, T&H employees are expected to display emotions such as concern and empathy, but emotional learning is often not considered in T&H education, with issues such as meeting learning outcomes and coping with modular content taking precedence. By incorporating storytelling into classrooms, students can learn how to interact with others and manage their behaviors to build relationships with other people (Edelheim & Ueda, 2007), with stories helping establish self-confidence (Grisham, 2006), and being utilized to explore the many representations of our worlds, promote learning motivations, improve the learning performance of students (Hung et al., 2012).

In order to assess whether students believed the introduction of storytelling was beneficial to their learning, the following hypotheses will be tested:

(2) The introduction of storytelling into in-class activities will:
  (a) be perceived as positive when first explained.
  (b) be perceived as positive after the course has finished.
(3) The introduction of storytelling as a form of assessment will:
  (a) be perceived as positive when first explained.
  (b) be perceived as positive after the course has finished.

When communicating with people from other countries in the T&H industry, second-language skills are important tools in conveying meaning and avoiding misunderstanding, thus providing an appropriate level of service (Leslie & Russell, 2006; Alfehaid, 2014). The role of English when interacting with international tourists is particularly important (Ghany & Latif, 2012) in a multitude of T&H contexts (Afzali & Fakharzadeh, 2009).

English language courses found in T&H education predominantly focus on communicative competence and intercultural communication (Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003; Bury, 2014). However, there are a wide range of issues that learners face when dealing

with the processes of communication, such as interpreting differences in cultures and constructing meaningful messages in the target language. One way of developing the communicative competencies that enable students to successfully navigate these processes is the introduction of task-based activities which allow students to function autonomously, enhancing confidence and empowerment (Bury, Sellick, & Yamamoto, 2012). In the context of Japanese T&H undergraduate courses, incorporating task-based activities, such as storytelling, provides students with the opportunity to employ the knowledge they have gained in a communicative manner to achieve authentic goals by developing the skills necessary for effective expression and improving communicative competence (Deniston-Trochta, 2003).

Writing and developing stories in a foreign language can seem overwhelming for students, leading to affective filters being raised (Krashen, 1981). However, like other task-based activities, which are regularly advocated in Japan (e.g., Izumi, 2009; Muranoi, 2006; Takashima, 2005, 2011), it also provides the opportunity for students to view their own abilities more positively (Harter, 1999), enhance self-confidence (Nezlek, Kafetsios, & Smith, 2008), and augment their willingness to engage in communication (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth, & Harter, 2011). Encouraging students to develop their own stories autonomously provides learners with the opportunity to gain a sense of ownership over their work and develop critical thinking processes, moving away from total classroom dependency on the teacher (Fewell, 2010) and fostering critical thinking habits that positively influence cognitive behaviour (Zin & Eng, 2014) and confidence. Also, by working together on stories, students were given the opportunity to create what Christensen (2000) calls the collective text, allowing them to realize they are not alone and that their experiences are not isolated events (Coulter et al., 2007). Therefore, storytelling and other task-based activities, can play an important role in T&H education.

Ranked as the third largest global economy (statisticstimes.com), the need for successful international communication in Japan is substantial (Handford & Matous, 2011). As a result, a high level of communicative competence in English is often promoted in T&H education as highly desirable by employers, not only in the T&H industry (Rahim, 2011), but in all business sectors (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). However, despite the implementation of initiatives with the goal of internationalizing all levels of education in Japan (Seargeant, 2009) and the promotion of English as an integral part of T&H education, many graduates do not reach the level of communicative competence that is deemed satisfactory by the Japanese Ministry of Education (Shimizu, 2006). This could be attributed to a discrepancy between students' goals and interests and the content and approaches employed by English language educators (Alfehaid, 2014). At present, this gap is not being bridges as students' perceptions of the teaching methodologies employed by their educators have been relatively underreported, especially in the context of undergraduate T&H courses in Japan (Bury & Oka, 2017). This is an area of research that warrants further investigation as by developing a greater understanding of T&H students' attitudes, educators will have the opportunity to provide courses that better meet their students' needs and goals. Consequently, the following hypotheses will be tested:

(4) The introduction of storytelling will:
  (a) improve students' perceptions of their English skills.
  (b) improve students' confidence when using English.

Course design

Throughout a course taught to seven English for Tourism and Hospitality classes and three Tourism Business English classes over three semesters at a private university in central Japan, stories related to T&H experiences were introduced and discussed using the four responses outlined by McDrury and Alterio (2003): a 'viewpoint' response, a "wonder if" response, a "similar" response, and a "what learnt" response. A "viewpoint" response explores the different perspectives within the story, enabling students to understand various points of view. A "wonder if" response considers different outcomes, enabling different possibilities to be explored which can then be considered the next time a similar situation is encountered. A "similar" response allows students to share similar experiences, creating a bond and empathy with the story's characters and other students. A "what learnt" response encourages students to reflect on what they have learnt from the initial story, or from the responses to it. It was hoped that by actively considering what they have learnt, students could then apply this knowledge in future situations.

Following the introduction of the stories and the related discussions and before the students began writing their own stories, input regarding the components of a story was given. This is imperative as creating and telling a story is not simple, especially in a second or other language. When developing a story, numerous decisions regarding how to make the ideas that are being communicated accessible to others need to be made (Dredge, Jenkins, & Whitford, 2011). However, despite the apparent difficulty, it is a skill that can be learned and taught (Kent, 2015). The input given in this course included highlighting structure, i.e., a beginning, a middle, and an end or continuation point, and other key factors, such as the need for a clear plot, characters, action, a context, and a climax, denouement, or resolution (Kent, 2015). The 20 master plots identified by Tobias (1993) were also briefly introduced to give the students a better understanding of the possible approaches that they could take.

Once the input relating to the ways in which stories can be constructed had been covered, the students formed small groups (2–4) and wrote short stories or conversations related to the aspect of T&H that had been discussed in the class, such as problems at a hotel. Stories can be either fictional or based on fact (Ferneley & Sobreperez, 2009), so due to issues regarding confidentiality and a possible reluctance to share real stories, the students were given the option of telling either real or fictional stories. Once the stories had been written, they were collected, corrected, and written feedback was provided. Groups were also encouraged to perform or tell their stories to their classmates, but this was not compulsory. In this course, uploading a story to a learning management system such as Moodle was not possible.

All of the courses were 15 weeks long and the students were assessed in three ways. Continual assessment and in-class participation composed 20% of the final grade, with a performed/told pair/group story or conversation and an individual interview, each accounting for 40% of the final grade, being conducted in weeks 12 and 14. Lesson 15 was used as a feedback session and as the first stage of data collection for this research. The English for Tourism and Hospitality classes were all semi-compulsory, whereas the Tourism Business English classes were elective. The class sizes ranged from 8 to 18.

Methodology

Jamal and Hollinshead (2001) call for T&H research to employ multiple approaches and to use the methods that best serve the investigation into the research topic and research questions. Quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive, and this paper attempted to employ them in a complementary manner (Somekh & Lewin, 2005) as a way to link different paradigms (Bryman, 2006). For this reason, in order to assess the students' perceptions of, and reactions to, the introduction of storytelling into the curriculum and as a test format, data was collected in two stages.

First, via a 45-item questionnaire (Appendix) which was distributed to all of the students (n = 143) in the ten classes. The respondents completed the questionnaires in the last class of the semester, with a total of 132 questionnaires returned, representing a 92.3% response rate. Single sample t-tests were undertaken on Items 6–45 to assess the differences between the students' attitudes and a hypothesized mean. The hypothesized mean *(μ)* was set at the mid-way point of the 7 point Likert scale (3.5). An alpha level of .01 was used for these tests, where a significance level $p < 0.01$ shows that there is a significant difference at 95% confidence level. For items that were found to produce statistically significant differences, Cohen's d tests were conducted to establish effect size, where 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, and 0.8 = large.

In the second stage, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The participants, six male and six female, were selected using a convenience sampling method. Four of the interviewees were first-year students, six were second-year students, and two were third-year students. While the convenience sampling method does allow for general data and trends to be obtained, it can lead to sampling bias. As the interviews were conducted retrospectively, the temporal and psychological separation allowed the potential common method variance to be reduced (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Illustrative comments from the interviews have been presented to support the findings.

Results

Table 1 indicates that respondents tended to be male (56.1%), in their first and second years of study (87.9%), and from Japan (81.8%). This skew towards freshman and sophomore students is explained by a greater focus being placed on thesis writing and job-seeking in junior and senior years limiting students' opportunities to participate in more communicative courses, a trend which is marked at both secondary and tertiary levels in Japan (Burden, 2001; Murphey & Sasaki, 1998).

Table 2 indicates that the participants believed the inclusion of storytelling into in-class activities and assessments had a positive effect on their understanding of the T&H

Table 1. Respondents' demographics.

	Gender		Year of study				Place of origin		Total
	Male	Female	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Japan	Other	Total
Total	74	58	68	48	13	3	108	24	132

Table 2. Perceived effect of storytelling on understanding the T&H industry.

Item	Mean	SD	p value	t	df	Mean difference	Std error of difference	95% confidence interval of the difference: Lower	95% confidence interval of the difference: Upper	Cohen's d
It helped improve my overall understanding of the T&H industry	4.61	1.02	<0.0001*	12.5029	131	1.11	0.089	0.9344	1.2856	1.0882
It helped improve my overall understanding of different T&H contexts	4.86	0.85	<0.0001*	18.3826	131	1.36	0.074	1.2136	1.5064	1.6000
It helped improve my overall understanding of different T&H stakeholders	5.01	0.66	<0.0001*	26.2857	131	1.51	0.057	1.3964	1.6236	2.2879

* = significant at $p < 0.01$

industry (4.61) and its contexts (4.86) and stakeholders (5.01). This is supported by comments, such as:

> "The stories had a lot of tourism information. That was important." (Participant 3 [P3])
>
> "I didn't know many of the situations before." (P7)
>
> 'It's good to know more about the different people in the tourism industry.' (P10)

All of the results were significant at $p < 0.01$, thus Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c can be accepted. Furthermore, all of the results for Cohen's d were >0.8, indicating large effect sizes.

Table 3 indicates that the students experienced a number of different feelings when first told about the in-class storytelling activities and the storytelling assessments. In relation to first being told about the in-class activities by their teacher, the range of emotions was fairly balanced, with positive emotions (interested, excited, happy) accounting for 42 primary and five secondary responses, negative emotions (worried, nervous) accounting for 44 primary and nine secondary responses, and neutral emotions (surprised, no feeling) accounting for 42 primary and ten secondary responses. The students reacted to first being told about the storytelling assessments with more trepidation, with positive emotions accounting for 24 primary and four secondary responses, negative emotions accounting for 64 primary and 11 secondary responses,

Table 3. Overall responses to multiple-choice items.

Item	How did you feel when first told about in-class storytelling activities?		How did you feel when first told about the storytelling assessments?	
Feeling	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Interested	29	4	21	
Excited	11		3	3
Happy	2	1	0	1
Worried	27	3	40	4
Nervous	17	6	24	7
Surprised	19	10	26	3
No feeling	23		16	
Other	4		2	

and neutral emotions accounting for 42 primary and three secondary responses. This suggests that the respondents were initially not as comfortable with the introduction of storytelling into assessments as they were with their use in in-class activities. This is supported by interview comments such as:

> 'Tests are important and we need to pass to get credits, so I was worried.' (P4)
>
> "I've never done that kind of test, so I didn't feel confident." (P5)
>
> "I didn't want to do the test at first." (P9)

However, combining the storytelling assessments with more traditional assessments helped reduce students' anxiety, demonstrated in comments such as:

> 'If I didn't do well [on the story telling assessment], I could get more points on the other test.' (P4)
>
> "It's good to have a test we knew as well." (P8)

As the introduction of storytelling into in-class activities was viewed neither positively nor negatively by the participants when they were first told about it and its introduction into assessments was initially viewed more negatively than positively, Hypotheses 2a and 3a should be rejected.

Table 4 shows that the participants generally reacted positively to the introduction of storytelling into both in-class activities and assessments with the students finding sharing stories enjoyable (4.49), despite their original concern, and the indication that they felt nervous when sharing stories (4.68). This was demonstrated in comments, such as:

> "At first, I was not happy, but it was fun." (P5)
>
> "When we knew what to do, it was fun." (P7)
>
> "I liked hearing other peoples' stories." (P12)

It was found that the students perceived the in-class storytelling activities as fun (5.14) and relevant (5.31), more so than other in-class activities at 4.83 and 4.72 respectively. This was indicated in comments such as:

> "The stories were more fun than just reading." (P5)
>
> "It was good to know stories that were about tourism." (P7)
>
> 'The stories were about what we will need [to work in the T&H industry].' (P11)

In support of this, the results show that the participants believed the in-class activities to be valuable (4.93), however, the indication that storytelling is more valuable than other in-class activities (3.73) was not statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. It was indicated that the students found storytelling difficult (4.46), even more so than other in-class activities (4.08), and while it was not particularly stressful (3.13), it was more stressful than other in-class activities (4.33). This was further supported in comments such as:

> "We were not used to [storytelling], so it was a bit difficult." (P1)
>
> "It was harder than what we did in other lessons, but not bad." (P2)
>
> "It was not so stressful, but [it was] compared to other [activities]." (P8)

Table 4. Overall perceptions of storytelling and when compared to other methods.

Item	Mean	SD	p value	t	df	Mean difference	Std error of difference	95% confidence interval of the difference		Cohen's d
								Lower	Upper	
Storytelling as an in-class activity										
It is fun	5.14	1.14	<0.0001*	16.4655	130	1.64	0.100	1.4429	1.8371	1.4386
It is valuable	4.93	1.07	<0.0001*	15.3546	131	1.43	0.093	1.2458	1.6142	1.3364
It is difficult	4.46	0.84	<0.0001*	13.0306	129	0.96	0.074	0.8142	1.1058	1.1429
It is stressful	3.13	1.20	0.0006*	3.5290	130	−0.37	0.105	−0.5774	−0.1626	−0.3083
It is relevant	5.31	1.01	<0.0001*	18.8331	130	1.81	0.096	1.6199	2.0001	1.7921
More classes should include it	4.10	1.07	<0.0001*	6.4425	131	0.60	0.093	0.4158	0.7842	0.5607
Storytelling compared to other in-class activities										
It is more fun	4.83	1.56	<0.0001*	9.7580	130	1.33	0.136	1.0604	1.5996	0.8526
It is more valuable	3.73	1.27	0.0402	2.0728	130	0.23	0.111	0.0105	0.4495	
It is more difficult	4.08	1.45	<0.0001*	4.5607	129	0.58	0.127	0.3284	0.8316	0.4000
It is more stressful	4.33	1.36	<0.0001*	6.9584	129	0.83	0.119	0.5940	1.0660	0.6103
It is more relevant	4.72	1.28	<0.0001*	10.8673	129	1.22	0.112	0.9979	1.4421	0.9531
Storytelling as a form of assessment										
It is fun	3.92	1.08	<0.0001*	4.4680	131	0.42	0.094	0.2340	0.6060	0.3889
It is valuable	5.02	1.19	<0.0001*	14.6752	131	1.52	0.104	1.3151	1.7249	1.2773
It is difficult	5.27	0.95	<0.0001*	21.2433	129	1.77	0.083	1.6051	1.9349	1.8632
It is stressful	5.14	0.80	<0.0001*	23.3736	129	1.64	0.070	1.5012	1.7788	2.0500
It is relevant	3.89	1.26	0.0006*	3.5291	129	0.39	0.111	0.1714	0.6086	0.3095
More classes should include it	3.37	1.11	0.1824	1.3405	130	−0.13	0.097	−0.3219	0.0619	
It is good for both in-class activities and assessments	3.57	0.93	0.3906	0.8615	130	0.07	0.081	−0.0908	0.2308	
Storytelling compared to other forms of assessment										
It is more fun	4.14	1.19	<0.0001*	6.1556	130	0.64	0.104	0.4343	0.8457	0.5378
It is more valuable	3.49	1.08	0.9158	0.1060	130	−0.01	0.094	−0.1967	0.1767	
It is more difficult	4.03	1.44	<0.0001*	4.1965	129	0.53	0.126	0.2801	0.7799	0.3681
It is more stressful	3.25	0.89	0.0017*	3.2027	129	−0.25	0.078	−0.4044	−0.0956	−0.2809
It is more relevant	3.95	1.24	<0.0001*	4.1377	129	0.45	0.109	0.2348	0.6652	0.3629
Sharing stories										
I enjoyed it	4.49	1.09	<0.0001*	10.4351	131	0.99	0.095	0.8023	1.777	0.9083
I felt nervous	4.68	1.19	<0.0001*	11.3926	131	1.18	0.104	0.9751	1.3849	0.9916

* = significant at $p < 0.01$

The students indicated that they found storytelling as a form of assessment fun (3.92) and relevant (3.89), more so than other forms of assessment at 4.14 and 3.95 respectively. This was demonstrated in comments such as:

> "It was fun to make our stories." (P3)
> "The stories were ours. They were what we wanted to say." (P6)
> "It made us think more about tourism and work." (P12)

While it was also found that students perceived storytelling in assessments to be valuable (5.02), it was not seen as more or less valuable than other forms of assessment (3.49). The participants indicated that they found this form of assessment difficult (5.27), more difficult than other forms of assessment (4.03), and stressful (5.14), but it was perceived as less stressful than other forms (3.25). This was indicated in comments such as:

> "The test was difficult. It was our first time." (P4)
> "The [storytelling] tests were stressful and difficult." (P9)
> "All tests are difficult, not just in this course." (P10)

Consequently, as the results indicate an overall positive reaction to storytelling in in-class activities and assessments, Hypotheses 2b and 3b should be accepted. It is however, noticeable that there was a difference in attitudes to storytelling being used in-class and as assessments with the results showing students believed it should be used in-class more often (4.10), but not as assessments (3.37). This gap may have affected the responses to Item 18 (Storytelling is good for both in-class activities and as a form of assessment), which had an average response of 3.57.

Overall, Table 5 indicates that the participants believed the inclusion of storytelling into the curriculum had a positive effect on their English skills (5.33), and confidence when using English (5.34). This was supported in comments such as:

> '[Storytelling] helped our English get better because we needed to think how to communicate in English.' (P6)
> "We got confidence when we could tell our story successfully." (P12)

As a result, Hypotheses 4a and 4b can be accepted.

In terms of the effect on the different skills and confidence, the greatest perceived impact was on speaking (5.82 and 5.47), followed by communication (5.48 and 5.21), and listening (5.27 and 4.18). It was found that students believed storytelling helped improve their English writing skills (4.89) more than their English reading skills (4.04), but boosted their English reading confidence (3.90) more than English writing confidence (3.86).

Discussion

Results from both questionnaires (n = 132) and semi-structured interviews (n = 12) indicate that the inclusion of storytelling helped develop students' understanding of a diverse range of issues and stakeholders in the T&H industry. This is in line with findings reported by Bruner (1990) and Swap et al. (2001) and is important as it suggests that, as a result of increased student awareness, including storytelling into T&H courses could help reduce the expectation gap identified by Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) and Richardson (2009).

Table 5. Perceived effect of storytelling on English skills and confidence when using English.

Item	Mean	SD	p value	t	df	Mean difference	Std error of difference	95% confidence interval of the difference		Cohen's d
								Lower	Upper	
Perceived effect of storytelling on English skills										
It helped improve my English speaking skills	5.82	0.90	<0.0001*	29.6164	131	2.32	0.078	2.1650	2.4750	2.5778
It helped improve my English listening skills	5.27	1.01	<0.0001*	20.1344	131	1.77	0.088	1.5961	1.9439	1.7525
It helped improve my English reading skills	4.04	1.16	<0.0001*	5.3484	131	0.54	0.101	0.3403	0.7397	0.4655
It helped improve my English writing skills	4.89	1.01	<0.0001*	15.818	131	1.39	0.088	1.1261	1.5639	1.3762
It helped improve my English communication skills	5.48	1.02	<0.0001*	22.3024	131	1.98	0.089	1.8044	2.1556	1.9412
It helped improve my overall English skills	5.33	1.18	<0.0001*	17.8179	131	1.83	0.103	1.6268	2.0332	1.5508
Perceived effect of storytelling on confidence when using English										
It helped improve my English speaking confidence	5.47	0.98	<0.0001*	23.955	131	1.97	0.085	1.8013	2.1387	2.0102
It helped improve my English listening confidence	4.18	0.91	<0.0001*	8.5853	131	0.68	0.0701	0.5233	0.8367	0.7473
It helped improve my English reading confidence	3.90	0.78	<0.0001*	5.8919	131	0.40	0.068	0.2657	0.5343	0.5128
It helped improve my English writing confidence	3.86	1.05	<0.0001*	3.9391	131	0.36	0.091	0.1792	0.5408	0.3429
It helped improve my English communication confidence	5.21	1.09	<0.0001*	18.0242	131	1.71	0.095	1.5223	1.8977	1.5688
It helped improve my overall English confidence	5.34	0.85	<0.0001*	24.8706	131	1.84	0.074	1.6936	1.9864	2.1467

* = significant at $p < 0.01$

Moreover, the students stated that the stories they were telling were both recent and relevant to them. Consequently, the introduction of storytelling into the course allowed it to keep up-to-date, which is an important factor (Barron et al., 2007), and also maintained close links to the T&H industry, another key component of T&H education (Solnet et al., 2007).

Two of the main objectives of asking the students to read, discuss, and then create stories or dialogues related to T&H were to aid the integration and strengthening of previously learned concepts and knowledge, and to develop teamwork skills. The findings suggest that this was accomplished as the participants indicated that storytelling helped consolidate meaning, supporting previous research by Squire (2008), encouraged students to interact with each other, also supporting previous research (Deale & Hovda, 2006; Edelheim & Ueda, 2007), and engaged the students in communal and emotional learning, similar to findings from Christiansen and Jensen (2008) and (Nairn, 2004), through developing shared meanings and knowledge, further supporting previous research (Remenyi, 2005; Stacey, 2001).

The results also indicate that despite some initial trepidation about the introduction of storytelling into in-class activities and assessments, students found it valuable and more fun and relevant than other activities and test formats. This is important as if students can enjoy an activity and test, it will increase engagement and motivation, which positively impacts on learning outcomes and possible entry into the T&H industry, helping to reduce the risk of T&H students not entering the industry (Blomme, van Rheede, & Tromp, 2009) and T&H employers hiring graduates that did not study T&H (Dale & Robinson, 2001). Also, the relevance of materials helps to reduce the discrepancy found between students' goals and interests and course content (Alfeheid, 2014).

The indication that storytelling was more difficult than other in-class activities and assessments highlights the need to sufficiently support students in the development of their stories as not doing so could make storytelling seem unachievable and cause students to raise affective filters (Krashen, 1981). It was also found that while storytelling in in-class activities was not particularly stressful, it was more stressful than other types of activity. When this is coupled with the negative feelings students felt when first told about the introduction of storytelling, it suggests that teachers need to not only provide support in terms of content and means of communication, but also emotionally, especially in contexts where there is high uncertainty avoidance, such as Japan (Duronto, Nishida, & Nakayama, 2005). Doing this will allow a productive and supportive learning environment to be fostered, further promoting motivation, engagement, and enhanced learning outcomes. As the students indicated that they were more comfortable with the introduction of storytelling into in-class activities than assessments, the support provided during test preparation would appear particularly important.

One of the other main goals was to enhance not only students' actual verbal and written communication skills, but also their self-perceptions of their English abilities and confidence when using English. The findings of this study suggest that the introduction of storytelling achieved this since the students indicated that they felt it had helped improve their English speaking, communication, listening, writing, and reading. This perceived improvement is reflected in the indicated increase in self-confidence, also found in research conducted by Grisham (2006). This is an important finding as higher

levels of self-confidence aid personal development and attitudes towards communication, key factors in T&H education (Chan et al., 2014).

A further finding was that the participants believed storytelling should be introduced into in-class activities more in other courses, but not into other assessments. This was supported by the indication that students valued storytelling a little more than other activities, but almost equally as valuable as other forms of assessment. Consequently, teachers need to consider whether storytelling should be introduced into both in-class activities and assessments, or just the former.

Issues and limitations

The results presented in this article have both practical and theoretical implications for T&H educators, but it is important to acknowledge their limitations. This study investigated the perceptions of a fairly small cohort from only one university, which reduces the overall generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the skew towards freshman and sophomore students, along with other variables, such as the culture of the individual institution and standards of admission, further reduce the generalizability of the findings. As a result, further research should be conducted in a broader range of educational contexts in order to gain more generalizable findings.

Furthermore, while using storytelling may be desirable for many instructors teaching T&H courses, a number of contextual factors which have an impact on the choice of teaching methods must be considered, such as time constraints and individual educators' limited control over course materials. Moreover, choosing appropriate stories, concern about students' ability to develop and then tell a story, and the need for students to understand the purpose of storytelling in education are all factors that may deter teachers from using the method. Also, no single teaching method is sufficient to achieve the objectives of all T&H courses, including storytelling. Therefore, educators need to combine a number of teaching methods in order to achieve the intended course objectives.

In addition, in this particular context, even though the Japanese Ministry of Education emphasises learner-centred activities (Ozeki, 2011), commonly identified issues that deter Japanese teachers of English from using task-based activities, such as storytelling, include large class sizes, lack of appropriate resources, traditional focus on passing examinations limiting flexibility within curriculums, and insufficient teacher knowledge about, or confidence in using, task-based methodologies. This is unfortunate because well-designed task-based activities offer students the chance to employ the target language in a communicative manner in order to achieve authentic outcomes (Alan & Stroller, 2005). A final issue that may deter some teachers from introducing such methods into their curriculums is a lack of confidence regarding the most effective way to provide feedback to students (Lee, 2007). However, despite the various challenges associated with implementing task-based activities, such as storytelling, they can enhance the communicative nature of a course, making it more fulfilling for the students.

Conclusion

The introduction of storytelling into in-class activities and assessments in this course lead to a number of positive outcomes that have important implications for T&H

educators. Firstly, it provided an extra opportunity for interaction and chance to express feelings and opinions in a new and engaging way. It also allowed students to consolidate their understanding of their classmates, the course materials, the T&H industry in general, and the skills that they will need when they enter that industry. Furthermore, storytelling increased students' perceptions of both their English abilities and their confidence when using English. All of these benefits are important factors in enabling T&H students to prepare themselves for entry into the T&H industry and in reducing possibly previously held misconceptions of what working in that industry may entail.

Another key implication that can be taken from this research is that students' stories provide a space for the expression of genuine feelings in a way that the language of academic discourse cannot. This lets educators examine what their students are thinking, which can be an invaluable insight into students' true emotional states, and could help educators provide more suitable courses and, where appropriate, better pastoral care, support, and career advice.

Encouraging more diverse approaches to T&H pedagogy and suggesting potential solutions to current issues can add depth to the courses we provide (Belhassen & Caton, 2011). In view of this, and as a result of the key findings and implications presented in this paper, it is suggested that educators not only add storytelling to their in-class teaching materials and activities, but also, when possible, to incorporate it into their assessment strategies.

Disclosure statement

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Appendix. Questionnaire

Tourism English Storytelling Questionnaire

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Current year of study: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th Other
3. Country of origin: Japan Other: ___________________
4. How did you feel when your teacher first told you about the in-class storytelling activities?

a. Interested	e. Nervous
b. Excited	f. Surprised
c. Happy	g. No feeling
d. Worried	h. Other _________________________

5. How did you feel when your teacher first told you about the storytelling assessment?

a. Interested	e. Nervous
b. Excited	f. Surprised
c. Happy	g. No feeling
d. Worried	h. Other _________________________

How much do you agree with the following statements? (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree).

6. Storytelling is a fun in-class activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Storytelling is a valuable in-class activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Storytelling is a difficult in-class activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Storytelling is a stressful in-class activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Storytelling is a relevant in-class activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. More classes should include in-class storytelling activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Storytelling is a fun form of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Storytelling is a valuable form of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Storytelling is a difficult form of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Storytelling is a stressful form of assessment.							
16. Storytelling is a relevant form of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. More classes should include storytelling as a form of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Storytelling is good for both in-class activities and as a form of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Storytelling is more fun than other in-class activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Storytelling is more valuable than other in-class activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Storytelling is more difficult than other in-class activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Storytelling is more stressful than other in-class activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Storytelling is more relevant than other in-class activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Storytelling is more fun than other forms of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Storytelling is more valuable than other forms of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Storytelling is more difficult than other forms of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Storytelling is more stressful than other forms of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Storytelling is more relevant than other forms of assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I enjoyed sharing my stories with my classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I felt nervous sharing my stories with my classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Storytelling helped improve my English speaking skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Storytelling helped improve my English listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Storytelling helped improve my English reading skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(*Continued*)

(Continued).

34. Storytelling helped improve my English writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. Storytelling helped improve my English communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Storytelling helped improve my overall English skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Storytelling helped improve my English speaking confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. Storytelling helped improve my English listening confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. Storytelling helped improve my English reading confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. Storytelling helped improve my English writing confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. Storytelling helped improve my English communication confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Storytelling helped improve my overall English confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Storytelling helped improve my overall understanding of the T&H industry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Storytelling helped improve my overall understanding of different T&H contexts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. Storytelling helped improve my overall understanding of different T&H stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5.3 Publication 7 (60% contribution)

Wishing to explore the themes of LoC and SPoA in more general terms, I developed and led the research conducted in Publication 7, which added the variable of students' perceptions of difficulty.

In this article, students' overall perceptions of difficulty were investigated. The relationship between the variables of perceptions of difficulty and LoC and SPoA were also examined, along with the way in which attitudes might be related to gender and place of origin. This area was focused on as understanding the thoughts and attitudes of learners can greatly benefit teachers, especially when teaching multinational classes. Thus, it is important to understand how different groups perceive their own strengths and weaknesses, levels of confidence, and perceptions of difficulty.

The main findings from Publication 7 related to this thesis were that, overall, participants' perceptions of difficulty were significantly higher than LoC and SPoA in relation to writing and speaking. For international students (from South, South-East, and East Asia), perceptions of difficulty were greater than LoC and SPoA for listening only. By contrast, for Japanese students, this was true for speaking, writing, and vocabulary. Furthermore, international students indicated significantly more confidence in reading, writing, and knowledge of vocabulary, and greater SPoA in all five of the English language aspects. Japanese students indicated greater perceptions of difficulty for all aspects, except reading when compared to international students.

- Bury, J., & Sellick, A. (2019). Students' levels of confidence in using English, self-perceptions of ability, and perceptions of course difficulty. *OnCUE Journal, 12*(1), 3-24.

Feature Article

Students' Levels of Confidence in Using English, Self-Perceptions of Ability, and Perceptions of Course Difficulty

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Students' perceptions of their own ability to learn or successfully complete tasks at a specific level can have a wide range of impacts on their learning. While students' self-perceptions of English ability and levels of confidence in using English have been investigated, their connection to students' perceptions of difficulty has been relatively under-documented. Furthermore, students' attitudes towards the difficulty of full courses have not received as much attention as their perceptions of the difficulty of isolated tasks. This paper examines the relationship between 261 students' attitudes towards the difficulty of the materials focusing on different English skills in the EFL courses they enrolled in at a private Japanese university and their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability. The impact of gender and place of origin on those perceptions is also analysed.
学生が自身の学習能力や、あるいはある特定レベルの課題を的確にこなす能力についての学生自身のどのように認識は、しているか、ということは学習そのものに大きなく影響を与えるます。英語力や英語使用に対する対する自信の度合いに関する学生の自己認識については、これまでにもについては研究調査されてきた。しかしいますが、これらと学生の困難難易度についてのに対する学生の認識との関連を示す文献は十分であるとは言えないでしょう。さらに、授業全体の難易度コースの全過程を通して困難にについての対する学生の考えという点は姿勢については、個々の課題の難易度につい

てのをこなすことに対する認識ほどには注目されてこなかったいません。本稿この論文では、日本のある私立大学におけるのEFLの授業で使われた、コースにおける様々な英語の技能に焦点を当てた学習材料の難易度についてののための課題に立ち向かう261人の学生の考え姿勢と彼らの自信の度合いと能力についての対する自己認識との関係性をについて考察するしています。また、性差や出身地がこれらの認識に与える影響についても分析するされています。

The constructivist paradigm of education indicates that increasing student involvement in their own learning can lead to improved learning outcomes (Guthrie et al., 2004). Students' levels of confidence and beliefs about their own abilities can be a barrier to engagement, and thus, effective learning. Students that are overconfident can become frustrated at their perceived lack of progress, while students that lack confidence can easily become demotivated and give up (Savaşç, 2014).

Students' perceptions of their own ability to learn or successfully complete tasks at a specific level, known as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), influence academic motivation (Covington, 1992; Konnel & Bjork, 2007), learning (Seifert, 2004), task choice, effort, persistence, resilience, future courses of action, and achievement (Schunk & Pajares, 2002; Tavani & Losh, 2003). Students that have high levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability participate and engage in tasks more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, achieve at a higher level (Schunk & Parajes, 2009), display less apprehension and anxiety (Parajes, 2002), and have greater self-regulatory skills (Zimmerman, 2000).

Factors that influence students' levels of confidence and perceptions of ability include social comparisons, degrees of student autonomy, and learning and teaching styles (Schunk & Parajes, 2009). Self-efficacy has been found to decline as students progress through the education system due to greater competition among students and increased social-comparative processes, such as test ranking (Jacobs et al., 2002). Classrooms that encourage social comparison, via processes such as announcing relative test performance, tend to lower the self-efficacy of students who perform at a lower level than their peers (Pintrich

& Schunk, 1996), a phenomenon accentuated by educational organisations streaming students by ability (Watt, 2004).

Pintrich and Garcia (1991) claim that attempts to teach strategies that promote meaningful cognitive engagement have a stronger impact when students have greater levels of confidence and perceptions of their own ability. If this is correct, then aiding the development of these factors should be a central part of educational courses, as they can positively influence motivation and academic achievement (Greene & Miller, 1996). Educators should encourage the early development of their students' positive self-beliefs and try to ensure they become automatic and self-perpetuating, determining the ways in which, and to what extent, they use the knowledge and skills they have learned (Parajes, 2002).

Assessing students' levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability can provide educators with valuable insights into their learners' academic motivation, behaviour, and future choices. Hackett (1995) reported that unrealistically negative perceptions of self-efficacy can have a greater impact on choices to avoid academic courses and subsequent careers than actual lack of ability. This tendency should be treated seriously, especially as low levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability are internal and therefore difficult to overcome (Graham, 2006).

Confidence and ability are commonly viewed as distinct variables that have a direct positive relationship such that if one increases, so will the other (Butler & Lumpe, 2008; Phillips & Lindsay, 2006). While motivation is also included in research focused on levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability (Wu et al., 2011), their relation to other factors such as perceptions of difficulty are commonly omitted (Li et al., 2007).

As students' levels of proficiency rise, they generally perceive tasks as less difficult (Hu, 2011), and there is some evidence supporting an inverse relationship between perceptions of task difficulty and self-perceptions of ability (Mangos & Steele-Johnson, 2001). However, this is not always reflected in students' performance levels (Lee & Tajino, 2008). Furthermore, perceptions of the difficulty of entire courses are often not investigated, with most focus being placed on successful completion of isolated tasks and consequent attitudes

towards difficulty at the task level.

Research into the relationship between gender and self-efficacy has generally reported that males indicate greater levels of confidence than females in academic areas related to mathematics, science, and technology (Meece, 1991; Wigfield et al., 2006), despite reported gender achievement gaps in these fields diminishing or disappearing in recent years (Eisenberg et al., 1996; UNESCO, 2016). Conversely, in areas related to languages and arts, male and female students exhibit similar levels of confidence despite the tendency for female students to outperform their male counterparts (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). However, there is a gap in the literature for research which adequately covers the relationship between gender and students' perceptions of difficulty and self-efficacy (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007).

Despite findings that culture has a large impact on learning (UNESCO, 2016), compared to the amount of research into gender and self-efficacy, relatively few studies have been published that investigate the impact ethnicity has on levels of confidence, self-perceptions of ability, and perceptions of difficulty, especially in Japan. However, Heine et al. (2001) found that Japanese students demonstrated a stronger self-improvement response to task failure when compared to North American students due in part to the relatively higher weighting placed on effort compared to performance in Japanese culture.

The relative lack of research into the impact ethnicity has on levels of confidence, self-perceptions of ability, and perceptions of difficulty when studying English as a foreign language is significant given the growth in the population of international students at Japanese universities since the mid-1980s (Murphy-Shigematsu, 2002). This is of particular interest at universities where international students and Japanese students have the opportunity to study together. Thus, it is important to investigate how individual differences such as gender and place of origin impact on students' perceptions (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Rifkin, 2000).

Consequently, in this paper, the relationship between students' attitudes towards the difficulty of the materials focusing on different English skills in the EFL courses they enrolled in at a private Japanese university and their levels

of confidence and self-perceptions of ability are investigated, alongside overall perceptions of course difficulty. An analysis into the impact gender and place of origin have on those attitudes is also undertaken, with the following research questions being asked:

1. What are students' overall perceptions of the difficulty of the courses they enrolled in?

2. What are the connections between levels of confidence, self-perceptions of ability, and perceptions of the difficulty of materials focusing on the following: (i) reading; (ii) speaking; (iii) listening; (iv) writing; (v) vocabulary?

3. How do the variables of gender and place of origin impact on students' attitudes?

Methods

The study participants consisted of 261 students (171 male, 90 female; median age 20) from Japan, South Asia (Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh), South-East Asia (Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines), and East Asia excluding Japan (China and Taiwan) attending a private four-year university in Japan. The large majority of participants (91%) were in their freshman or sophomore year (Table 1). All of the international students must have achieved level N2 in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test or have been highly recommended by a teacher at their Japanese language school. All students, Japanese and international, are required to take English language classes during their first two years of study at the university. These classes are not segregated by nationality, and many courses include a mix of nationalities.

In order to measure perceptions and attitudes, students were asked to complete a 26-item questionnaire during the final lesson of their course. The questionnaire consisted of three items of demographic data, eight modified Likert scale items relating to overall perceptions of course difficulty, and 15 modified Likert scale items relating to students' levels of confidence in using English, self-perceptions of English ability, and perceptions of the difficulty of the materials (which focused on English reading, speaking, listening, writing, and vocabulary).

Table 1
Distribution of Participants' Place of Origin and Grade

Place of origin	No. of Participants	Academic Year	No. of Participants
Japan	199	First Year -Freshman	113
South Asia	38	Second Year - Sophomore	125
South-East Asia	12	Third Year - Junior	18
East Asia (excluding Japan)	11	Fourth Year - Senior	5
Not Given	1		
Total	261	Total	261

The data was collected anonymously during the final lesson of the course as it was hoped that this would encourage the students to participate voluntarily, rather than out of a feeling of obligation or belief that it was a necessary part of the course. Furthermore, it was hoped that this timing would allow students the chance to adequately reflect on their experiences throughout the course. The classes were all either elective or semi-elective subjects with a focus on communicative English, and the class sizes ranged from eight to twenty-five with a mix of international and Japanese students. The courses included in this study were taught by L1 native-English-speaking teachers who had at least nine years teaching experience in Japan. Of the 276 questionnaires distributed, 261 were returned, representing a 94.5% response rate.

Independent-samples t-tests were undertaken to assess the statistical significance of the findings. Two levels of significance are reported, those with an alpha (p) of .01 (denoted with a double asterisk), and those at an alpha (p) of .05 (denoted with a single asterisk). For items found to be statistically significant, Hedge's g tests were conducted to establish effect size. Hedge's g-test was used because it provides more accurate results for relatively small sample sizes (Grissom & Kim, 2005; McGrath & Meyer, 2006) than Cohen's d. While they are not recognised as definitive benchmarks (Thompson, 2007), the effect sizes were interpreted as small (g = 0.2), medium (g = 0.5), and large (g = 0.8)

based on Cohen's (1998) suggestions. Furthermore, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to investigate students' perceptions in relation to the five different aspects of English.

Despite some criticism of self-report methodologies (e.g., Spector, 2006), it has been argued that students above secondary level can effectively comprehend, reflect on, and report their own characteristics (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). Further research has indicated that self-perceptions of ability and levels of confidence accurately predict a variety of learning factors, including goal orientation and actual outcomes (Hardré & Sullivan, 2008; Leach et al., 2003). While students' levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability may be poorly correlated with external evaluations of the same factors (Alba & Hutchinson, 2000), it is the students' own perceptions of these variables that has the greatest impact on the level of effort they will invest in their education (Kember, 2004).

Results

Overall perceptions of course difficulty

Items 19 through 26 of the questionnaire investigated the students' opinions of the difficulty of the specific courses they had taken via 5-point Likert scales. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

The large standard deviations observed in the responses indicate that there is a diversity of opinion. However, there appears to be a trend towards mild disagreement with the statement contents of items 19, 20, and 22 through 25, and a trend towards mild agreement with the statement contents of item 26.

Relationship between levels of confidence, self-perceptions of ability, and perceptions of difficulty of courses taken

In items 4 through 18 of the questionnaire students were asked to indicate their self-perceived ability, levels of confidence, and perceived difficulty of course materials relating to English reading, speaking, listening, writing and vocabulary on a 10-point modified Likert scale. The results relating to gender are summarised in Table 3.

Results related to vocabulary presented the greatest statistically significant

Table 2
Overall Perceptions of Course Difficulty with the Variable of Gender

Item	Overall		Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*p*	*g*
19. I was surprised by how difficult this course was.	2.63	1.02	2.68	1.02	2.53	1.03	0.144	–
20. I thought this course would be easier.	2.64	0.99	2.65	0.97	2.61	1.05	0.374	–
21. I thought this course would be more difficult.	2.91	0.99	2.8	0.97	3.1	1.01	0.011*	0.305
22. I wanted this course to be easier.	2.58	1.14	2.68	1.1	2.41	1.21	0.040*	0.237
23. I wanted this course to be more difficult.	2.75	1.01	2.76	0.96	2.72	1.1	0.395	–
24. This course should be easier.	2.47	0.99	2.52	0.98	2.39	1.01	0.157	–
25. This course should be more difficult.	2.87	0.97	2.93	0.94	2.76	1.02	0.087	–
26. The level of this course was just right.	3.48	1.01	3.45	1.02	3.54	1	0.24	–

** = p <.05*

difference, with both male and female students indicating much higher perceptions of difficulty when compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability. Male students indicated significantly greater perceptions of difficulty in relation to English speaking and writing when compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability. Conversely, Female students indicated significantly greater levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability compared to their perceptions of difficulty in relation to Listening with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests indicating self-perceptions of ability and perceptions of difficulty to be different with an alpha of 0.0366.

Table 3

Relationships Between Levels of Confidence, Self-perceptions of Ability, and Perceived Difficulty of Course Materials for Five Aspects of English with the Variable of Gender

		Levels of confidence		Self-perceptions of ability		Perceived difficulty of course materials			
Aspects of English		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*F*	*p*
Reading	Male	5.4	2.16	5.54	1.96	5.55	2.02	0.28	0.753
	Female	5.13	1.94	5.54	1.63	5.28	1.94	1.14	0.321
	Overall	5.31	2.09	5.54	1.85	5.46	2	0.92	0.398
Speaking	Male	5.04	2.13	5.08	1.86	5.58	2.1	3.7	0.025*
	Female	5.09	2.28	5.4	1.93	5.2	1.85	0.54	0.583
	Overall	5.06	2.18	5.19	1.89	5.45	2.02	2.45	0.087
Listening	Male	5.36	2.09	5.35	2.04	5.57	2.08	0.61	0.545
	Female	5.21	2.07	5.7	1.86	4.97	1.99	3.19	0.043*
	Overall	5.31	2.08	5.47	1.98	5.36	2.06	0.44	0.645
Writing	Male	4.82	2.08	4.96	1.97	5.54	2.08	5.9	0.003*
	Female	4.82	2.12	4.93	1.87	5.31	1.72	1.63	0.198
	Overall	4.82	2.09	4.95	1.93	5.46	1.96	7.26	0.001*
Vocabulary	Male	4.72	2.06	4.61	1.83	5.58	1.97	12.47	0.000*
	Female	4.26	1.89	4.42	1.77	5.42	1.98	10.04	0.000*
	Overall	4.56	2.01	4.55	1.81	5.52	1.97	21.7	0.000*

* = $p < .05$

With regard to the impact of place of origin on students' perceptions, the results in Table 4 indicate that international students had significantly greater levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability compared to their perceived levels of difficulty in reading. However, the opposite was indicated in relation to listening.

Table 4

Relationships Between Levels of Confidence, Self-perceptions of Ability, and Perceived Difficulty of Course Materials for Five Aspects of English with the Variable of Place of Origin

		Levels of confidence		Self-perceptions of ability		Perceived difficulty of materials			
Aspects of English		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*F*	*p*
Reading	Japanese	5.36	1.81	5.08	2.06	5.52	1.97	2.6	0.753
	International	6.15	1.87	6.05	2	5.24	2.08	3.85	0.023*
	Overall	5.31	2.09	5.54	1.85	5.46	2	0.92	0.398
Speaking	Japanese	5.1	1.92	4.91	2.26	5.58	2.04	5.49	0.004*
	International	5.48	1.79	5.52	1.84	5.02	1.91	1.38	0.254
	Overall	5.06	2.18	5.19	1.89	5.45	2.02	2.45	0.087
Listening	Japanese	5.4	1.98	5.17	2.1	5.49	2.05	1.3	0.274
	International	5.72	1.99	5.76	1.96	4.94	2.07	3.24	0.042*
	Overall	5.31	2.08	5.47	1.98	5.36	2.06	0.44	0.645
Writing	Japanese	4.73	1.93	4.56	2.07	5.61	2	15.79	0.000*
	International	5.66	1.77	5.66	1.92	4.96	1.75	3.02	0.051
	Overall	4.28	2.09	4.95	1.93	5.46	1.96	7.26	0.001*
Vocabulary	Japanese	4.41	1.82	4.4	2.08	5.65	2	22.81	0.000*
	International	4.97	1.74	5.05	1.68	5.13	1.85	0.13	0.881
	Overall	4.56	2.01	4.55	1.81	5.52	1.97	21.7	0.000*

* = $p < .05$

Japanese students indicated significantly greater perceptions of difficulty compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability in terms of speaking, writing, and vocabulary.

Overall, the participants indicated significantly higher perceptions of

difficulty compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability in relation to writing and vocabulary. However, international students actually indicated an opposite trend with regards to writing, but this narrowly failed to reach significance ($p = 0.051$).

Table 5 indicates that gender significantly impacted only on students' perceptions of the difficulty of the listening materials of their courses, with male students indicating they were more difficult than Female students. Conducting a Hedge's g test on this item produced an effect size of $g = 0.292752$, which is interpreted as a small effect based on Cohen's (1998) suggestions.

The results displayed in Table 6 indicate that place of origin had a much greater impact on perceptions with 12 of the 15 items achieving significance. The results indicate that, compared to their Japanese classmates, international students were significantly more confident in relation to reading, writing, and vocabulary, had significantly higher self-perceptions of ability in all five aspects of English, and perceived the course materials as significantly less difficult in all of the aspects of English but reading. However, it must be noted that effect sizes were small to medium.

Impact of gender and place of origin on students' attitudes

The only items that produced statistically significant differences between male and female students were items 21 and 22, which indicated that female students had expected the courses they had enrolled in would be more difficult and that male students wanted their courses to be easier. However, Hedge's g for both of these items was <0.5, which indicates small effect sizes based on Cohen's (1998) suggestions.

The results displayed in Table 7 illustrate that only two of the items (19 and 20) produced statistically significant differences between Japanese and international students. The results indicated that international students were retrospectively more surprised by how difficult their courses were, whereas the Japanese students had initially anticipated that their courses would be easier than they were. Again, effect sizes for both of these items were small.

To better interpret the overall relationships between items 19 through 26

Table 5
Impact of Gender on Students' Perceptions

		Male		Female			
	Aspects of English	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*p*	*g*
Levels of confidence	Reading	5.4	2.16	5.13	1.94	0.3214	–
	Speaking	5.04	2.13	5.09	2.28	0.8605	–
	Listening	5.36	2.09	5.21	2.07	0.5808	–
	Writing	4.82	2.08	4.82	2.12	1	–
	Vocabulary	4.72	2.06	4.26	1.89	0.079	–
Self-perceptions of ability	Reading	5.54	1.96	5.54	1.63	1	–
	Speaking	5.08	1.86	5.4	1.93	0.1934	–
	Listening	5.35	2.04	5.7	1.86	0.1758	–
	Writing	4.96	1.97	4.93	1.87	0.9054	–
	Vocabulary	4.61	1.83	4.42	1.77	0.4208	–
Perceived difficulty of course materials	Reading	5.55	2.02	5.28	1.94	0.2991	–
	Speaking	5.58	2.1	5.2	1.85	0.1493	–
	Listening	5.57	2.08	4.97	1.99	0.0254*	0.293
	Writing	5.54	2.08	5.31	1.72	0.3693	–
	Vocabulary	5.58	1.97	5.42	1.98	0.5341	–

** = p <.05*

that may be interpreted as contradictory or mutually exclusive, paired items were further analysed via Student's t-Tests with an alpha of 0.01. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 8.

When the students considered their English courses, they reported that they had expected the course to be harder (items 19 and 20, and items 20 and 21), but that the course level was appropriate (items 24 and 26, and items 25 and 26).

Table 6
Impact of Place of Origin on Students' Perceptions

		Japan		International			
	Aspects of English	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*p*	*g*
Levels of confidence	Reading	5.36	1.81	6.15	1.87	0.0022*	0.433
	Speaking	5.1	1.92	5.48	1.79	0.0738	–
	Listening	5.4	1.98	5.72	1.99	0.1352	–
	Writing	4.73	1.93	5.66	1.77	0.0003*	0.491
	Vocabulary	4.41	1.82	4.97	1.74	0.0163*	0.311
Self-perceptions of ability	Reading	5.08	2.06	6.05	2	0.0006*	0.474
	Speaking	4.91	2.26	5.52	1.84	0.0180*	0.281
	Listening	5.17	2.1	5.76	1.96	0.0226*	0.285
	Writing	4.56	2.07	5.66	1.92	0.0001*	0.54
	Vocabulary	4.4	2.08	5.05	1.68	0.0073*	0.326
Perceived difficulty of course materials	Reading	5.52	1.97	5.24	2.08	0.1749	–
	Speaking	5.58	2.04	5.02	1.91	0.0268*	0.279
	Listening	5.49	2.05	4.94	2.07	0.0330*	0.268
	Writing	5.61	2	4.96	1.75	0.0075*	0.334
	Vocabulary	5.65	2	5.13	1.85	0.0309*	0.265

* = $p < .05$

Table 7
Overall Perceptions of Course Difficulty with the Variable of Place of Origin

	Overall		Japanese		International			
Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*p*	*g*
19. I was surprised by how difficult this course was.	2.63	1.02	2.56	1	2.84	1.09	0.037*	0.274
20. I thought this course would be easier.	2.64	0.99	2.7	0.94	2.43	1.14	0.050*	0.273
21. I thought this course would be more difficult.	2.91	0.99	2.9	0.95	2.94	1.13	0.402	–
22. I wanted this course to be easier.	2.58	1.14	2.59	1.09	2.57	1.3	0.468	–
23. I wanted this course to be more difficult.	2.75	1.01	2.75	0.99	2.73	1.09	0.459	–
24. This course should be easier.	2.47	0.99	2.52	0.99	2.34	0.98	0.105	–
25. This course should be more difficult.	2.87	0.97	2.85	0.94	2.92	1.06	0.333	–
26. The level of this course was just right.	3.48	1.01	3.49	1.03	3.45	0.95	0.381	–

* = $p < .05$

Table 8
p-Values for Paired Item t-Tests

Item Pair	*p*	*g*
19 and 20	0.91	–
19 and 21	0.001*	0.279
20 and 21	0.001*	0.272
22 and 23	0.072	–
24 and 26	0.000*	1.01
25 and 26	0.000*	0.616

* = $p < .05$

Discussion

Overall, the participants indicated significantly greater perceptions of course difficulty when compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability in relation to writing and vocabulary. This may be attributed to the use of sentence-level writing (which the writing materials in these courses focused on) and vocabulary exercises often having dichotomous right/wrong answers. Consequently, students may feel that due to the ease at which they can ascertain whether they have been successful, the materials are actually more difficult. However, when attempting materials that focus on the English skills of speaking, listening, and reading, students are able to adopt a variety of strategies, such as the use of short – even single-word – answers, which can facilitate communication and the ability to complete lesson tasks at least minimally.

Male students indicated significantly greater perceptions of course difficulty when compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability in relation to speaking, writing, and vocabulary, but this was only true for female students concerning vocabulary. In relation to productive English skills, these findings suggest that female students perceive less distance among the three variables.

The similar levels of reported confidence and self-perceptions of ability in different areas of English corroborate previous research which indicated that male and female students tend to exhibit similar levels of confidence in areas related to languages (Parajes, 2002). They further support previous findings that male and female students generally hold similar views about language learning in general (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007), despite sometimes viewing their roles as EFL learners differently (Zhang, 2000). Where they vary from prior research is in indicating that there are some gendered differences in perceptions of difficulty.

For overall perceptions of course difficulty, despite the general agreement that the level of the courses were appropriate, female students indicated that they had thought their courses would be more difficult while male students reported a desire for easier courses. This suggests that female students would prefer the courses they enroll in to be more demanding than male students would.

Compared to gender, students' place of origin produced more noticeable

and significant differences in perceptions. International students indicated significantly greater perceptions of course difficulty only when compared to their levels of confidence and self-perceptions of ability for one of the five aspects of English (listening), whereas Japanese students indicated this to be true for three of the aspects (speaking, writing, and vocabulary).

International students were significantly more confident in reading, writing, and vocabulary. In terms of self-perceptions of ability, international students indicated significantly greater self-perceptions of ability than Japanese students on all of the five aspects of English. Likewise, Japanese students indicated significantly greater levels of course difficulty for all of the aspects of English except for reading. This may be a result of international students having a higher average age and experience of living and communicating in a foreign country, which builds confidence. Moreover, having devoted several years to learning Japanese, it is possible that they are more able to accurately assess their language learning ability. In addition, research has shown that Japanese students often under-estimate their abilities (Heine et al, 2001). A further factor contributing to lower levels of reported confidence and perceived ability compared to perceptions of course difficulty among Japanese students may be the greater emphasis placed on reading over other aspects of English in the Japanese senior high school classroom (Burden, 2001; Murphey & Sasaki, 1998).

Despite the findings outlined in relation to ethnicity above, international students actually indicated greater retrospective surprise at how difficult their courses were. However, this finding was seemingly contradicted by the result that many Japanese students indicated they had prospectively thought their courses would be easier. Unfortunately, the lack of qualitative data in this study means that analysis into what the students actually found difficult cannot be conducted.

The results outlined in this investigation do have important implications for English language educators, but it is important to acknowledge their limitations. Despite the diversity of place of origin of the participants, the perceptions of students from only one university were investigated, and as such, this reduces the overall general effect size of the findings. Furthermore, there is a large skew towards students in their freshman and sophomore years, which also reduces

the general effect size of the findings. This is a result of more focus being placed on thesis writing and job seeking for third- and fourth-year Japanese students reducing the opportunities to study English, a common phenomenon in both secondary and tertiary education in Japan (Burden, 2001; Bury & Oka, 2017). Also, variables that could have impacted on students' perceptions, including class size, students' previous language learning experiences, and teacher background, were not taken into consideration.

A further constraint in this study was that, due to the anonymous collection of student data, it was not possible to link students' self-assessed ability and confidence levels with their course test scores or independent assessments of their ability such as TOEIC scores. A possible solution to this would be to conduct interviews with the participants, which would allow more in-depth analysis to be carried out. Consequently, it is suggested that further research that includes the use of interviews and possibly pre- and mid-course questionnaires be undertaken at other colleges and universities to strengthen the scope of the findings and to gain further insights into English as a Foreign Language students in general.

Finally, while this study was able to identify gendered differences in perceptions of course difficulty, it was not able to ascertain why these differences exist. Consequently, further research is necessary in order to develop a better understanding of the source of these gendered differences in perceptions of course difficulty.

Conclusion

Understanding the thoughts and attitudes of learners can greatly benefit teachers, especially with multinational classes in the Japanese context. Thus, it is important to understand how different groups perceive their own strengths and weaknesses, levels of confidence, and perceptions of difficulty.

This study has attempted to add to the current literature by investigating students' perceptions in the context of a Japanese university. It was found that students' place of origin had a much greater impact on perceptions than gender, with international students indicating significantly higher levels of confidence

and self-perceptions of ability, and Japanese students indicating greater perceptions of difficulty.

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6. Theme III – Student and teacher perceptions of the interventions

6.1 Publication 8 (60% contribution)

Publication 8 reports on students' reactions to, and perceptions of, the introduction of a voluntary speech preparation course that was introduced at a private junior and senior high school in Japan. Investigating students' perceptions is important for a range of reasons, including enabling teachers to better understand students' expectations, improving student-teacher interactions, and reducing potential gaps between student-teacher views (see Appendix 7 for further explanation). Responding to a questionnaire with Likert scale questions and open spaces for comments, students indicated high levels of satisfaction with the course, stating that they believed it had helped improve their English skills and that they would recommend joining the course again.

- Bury, J., Sellick, A., & Yamamoto, K. (2012). An after school program to prepare senior high school students for external speech contests: Implementation and feedback. *The Language Teacher*, *36*(2), 17-22. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT36.2

This research reports on a single high school and, consequently, it is difficult to argue for the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the issues and limitations in the data collection procedure discussed in section 5.3 also apply. However, this paper was the first that any of the authors had published and represents the first step in my journey towards becoming a more effective practitioner-researcher. In addition, the work conducted on this project was recognized by the Award for the Encouragement of English Education through Speeches at the 22nd Dokkyo University All Japan High School English Speech Contest in 2010.

An after school program to prepare senior high school students for external speech contests: Implementation and feedback

Keywords
speech preparation, speech contest

A voluntary after school program to prepare students for external speech contests was introduced in a senior high school. The students' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the program were assessed. Analysis of the data shows a high level of satisfaction and the participating students reported their confidence and levels of speaking and writing had improved. Furthermore, the program offered new learning contexts that were beneficial to the students and developed their skills in the language areas that they found most difficult. The students also had the opportunity to voice their opinions and work autonomously, which empowered them to develop their English skills with a definite goal.

外部スピーチコンテスト対策プログラムが高校で開始された。その対策プログラムに参加する生徒のプログラムに対する認識、及び姿勢が調査された。データの分析の結果、プログラムに参加した生徒は高い満足度を示し、自信とスピーキングとライティングのレベルが向上したと報告した。更に、その対策プログラムでは、生徒の役に立ち、なおかつ生徒たちが最も難しいと考えている言語分野のスキルを向上させる新しい学習内容が提供された。生徒たちは、自分の意見を発表し、自主的に学習をすすめる機会もまた持つことが出来た。それによって、明確な目標を持ち、英語のスキルを発展させようとする自立心が養成された。

James Bury
Anthony Sellick
Kyoko Yamamoto

There is a long tradition of participation in English speech contests in Japanese education, and they are often the source of great prestige for both the winners and their schools. Perhaps the majority of secondary schools have internal speech contests, with students competing against each other at events such as school culture festivals. However, there are also many external competitions in Japan that allow students an opportunity to test their writing and speech-giving abilities against those from other educational institutions. These competitions present both students and their schools with the chance to gain more recognition of their English ability on the wider stage, which can in turn produce numerous advantages, such as increased applications to the school.

Entering a speech contest has many benefits for students, and incorporates the four English skills as the students write their own speeches, negotiate the topic and structure of the speech with their tutor, research their speeches independently, and then deliver the speech. It also provides the students with an opportunity to function in an autonomous context, further developing their confidence and empowering them to use English in a fulfilling and rewarding way. Bradley (2006) claims that speech contests also allow students to proffer opinions regarding topics that they may not usually encounter in the classroom. Furthermore, having entered a speech contest can be an extra asset when

applying to university, and achieving a prize or special mention is well received.

Preparation for contests is essential if a student is to be successful, and in many Japanese institutes, ranging from junior high schools to universities, native speakers of English often take some or all of the responsibility of training and coaching the participants.

This paper investigates the implementation of a new after school program that was introduced at a senior high school and the students' perception of, and attitudes towards, the program. The school is a 6-year private secondary boarding school, based in the Kanto region of Japan, which, until 2010, only entered an extremely small number (fewer than three in any given year) of students independently into external speech competitions. A limited number of students are entered into internal speech contests held three times a year. The school places a strong emphasis on English, and employs twelve native speakers of English who serve in both team-teaching and sole teacher capacities. For students in years four to six, classes with native speakers of English are optional, but have an extremely low drop-out rate. Although the native speakers' lessons cover all four skills, their primary focus is in developing speaking and listening skills through communicative methods.

As the students in this school have an unusually large amount of contact time with native speakers of English, and the school is promoted as one in which English is a main priority and focus, it was proposed that the students should have the opportunity to participate in external speech contests. Consequently, the after school program was established.

Murphey and Sasaki (1998) report that in general, English use decreases in the classroom as students progress through junior to senior high school as it is believed that the curriculum can be taught more efficiently in Japanese (Burden, 2001). Therefore, in addition to boosting participation in external speech contests, a key aim and benefit of the program is to maintain, or increase, the amount of contact time students get with native English teachers, and thus the opportunity to use English. Chances for students to develop their long-writing skills through the curriculum are also often limited with a strong emphasis being put on sentence level grammatical structures, so this program would enable students to practicse and further enhance these skills.

Setting up the Program

As this was a new project at the school, a proposal was drawn up and presented to the Head of English teaching. It was agreed with the Head of English teaching to pilot the program in its first year with the 5th-year students only, and subsequently the program and some competitions were introduced to the 5th-year students at a yearly group assembly. Entry into the program was entirely voluntary, and it was made clear to the students that they could drop out at any time if they felt that they did not wish to continue.

It was initially assumed that the students would show a positive interest in the program, and that about ten students would choose to enter. Consequently, the criterion of success that was established was for a total of ten speeches to be submitted to various external speech contests by the end of the academic year.

The actual initial response was considerably higher than had been anticipated, with 25 students of the 117 5th year students that participate in lessons with the native speakers of English joining (21.4%). The participating students consisted of 21 female students and four male students, with a median age of 17. These students were divided between the two participating native speakers of English, who then took on the responsibility of helping the students write and research their speeches, and also coaching them with regards to the various factors important in giving a successful speech, such as intonation and pace.

It was decided that, due to time constraints (in particular, club activities), each student would formally meet with their allocated assigned teacher once a week for a period of 15 to 30 minutes. The students had the choice as to whether they would meet their teacher individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Of the 25 participants, all but six decided to attend individually.

A total of 17 students of the 25 opted to enter speech contests with submission deadlines in early June. Of the remaining eight students, two

opted to leave the course (one male and one female), and six to prepare speeches for contests with submission deadlines in July through October. Of the entries, one student progressed to a semi-final round, while a second student received an exemplary speech award. Six students also participated in the school's internal speech contests, with two taking first place and three second.

As each student submitted their first speeches to a contest, they were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix A) regarding the program and their experiences of it, with an 87% response rate obtained. The results are presented and discussed below.

Results

The responses given in the questionnaires showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the program, and the data are presented below in Tables 1 and 2 below. Several items (Q1-4, Q9-10, and Q12-21) allowed students to make their own, unstructured comments, translations of which are provided in Appendix B.

The main reasons given for joining the program (Q1) were to improve their English ability and their enjoyment of English. Subsidiary reasons were the chance to compare their English ability with students from other schools and that entering speech contests can help with university entry. By far the majority of the students had never entered a speech contest before (Q2), with all of those who had having experience of the

Table 1. Response Rates for Questions 1, 2, and 14-20.

Q1		Q2		Q14		Q15		Q16		Q17		Q18		Q19		Q20	
a	8	Y	4	Y	10	Y	6	Y	6	Y	0	a	3	Y	12	a	4
b	14	N	11	N	5	N	9	N	8	N	14	b	3	N	3	b	1
c	4											c	0			c	9
d	4											d	8			d	1
e	0											e	5				
f	2											f	1				
g	1																
h	1																

Q1. Why did you want to join the speech contest preparation lessons? (a. I enjoy speaking English, b. I wanted to improve my English, c. I wanted to check my English level against students from other schools, d. It is good for my university application, e. I wanted to win a prize, f. It was a new course at the school, g. My teacher told me to, h. Other); Q2. Have you entered a speech contest before?; Q14. Did you write your work in Japanese and then translate it?; Q15. Did you ask a Japanese teacher for help?; Q16. Did you have any problems researching your topic?; Q17. Could the teachers have helped you research your topic more?; Q18. Which was hardest for you in your writing? (a. Structuring the essay, b. Vocabulary, c. Finding a topic, d. Writing the sentences (Grammar), e. Expressing an opinion, f. Length of speech); Q19. Will you enter another speech contest?; Q20. How would you prefer the classes to be? (a. Individually, b. Pairs, c. Small groups, d. Large groups)

Table 2. Mean Scores for Questions 3-13.

Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
4.20	3.73	3.40	3.27	3.73	3.80	4.07	4.33	3.64	4.20	3.93

Q3. How much do you agree with the statement 'In general, entering speech contests helps to improve students' English'?; Q4. How much do you agree with the statement 'External speech contests are more beneficial than internal speech contests'? Q5. How much do you think joining this course has increased your confidence in speaking English?; Q6. How much do you think joining this course has increased your confidence in writing English?; Q7. How much do you think joining this course has improved your English speaking?; Q8. How much do you think joining this course has improved your English writing?; Q9. How much do you agree with the statement 'The speech preparation lessons were useful'?; Q10. How much do you agree with the statement 'I was given enough help when preparing my speech'?; Q11. How much do you agree with the statement 'I had enough lessons with my teacher to prepare'?; Q12. How much do you agree with the statement 'I would recommend joining the course to my friends'?; Q13. How much do you agree with the statement 'More students should join the course'?

school's internal speech contests. The students showed strong agreement that entering speech contests was a good way to improve their English (Q3), and moderate agreement that external speech contests were of greater value than internal speech contests (Q4). The students indicated that taking the program had had a moderately positive effect on their confidence in speaking and writing English (Q5, Q6), and that their spoken and written English had shown a moderate improvement (Q7, Q8).

The students indicated a high satisfaction with the program (Q9), and also that they had received sufficient assistance from the native teachers (Q10). However, there was only moderate agreement that they had had enough contact time with the native teachers (Q11).

The students indicated strongly that they would recommend the program to their friends (Q12), and showed a moderately strong agreement that more students should join the program (Q13).

Two thirds of the students initially wrote their speeches in Japanese before translating them into English (Q14), but only about one third of the students approached a Japanese teacher of English for assistance (Q15).

Over one third of the students reported having some difficulty determining a theme for their speeches (Q16), but none of the students sought help with researching their chosen topics (Q17). Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the most commonly reported difficulty was writing grammatically correct sentences in English (Q18), with pronunciation, selecting vocabulary, the structure of the speech and its length being reported by smaller numbers of students. A large majority of the students stated that they wanted to enter more speech contests (Q19), something which that has certainly been borne out by their subsequent behavior.

Surprisingly, given that the majority of the students opted to practice individually or in pairs, when asked what size group they thought was best almost two thirds expressed a preference for small groups (Q20), with just under one third preferring to continue with individual classes, and only two students expressing preferences for large group lessons.

Discussion

The data indicates that the implementation of an external speech contest program has been successful, insofar as the initial response and students' comments are concerned. Furthermore, the students indicate that they believe entering speech contests is a good way to improve their English and that participating in the program had has had a positive affect on their confidence and level of English speaking and writing, illustrated by comments made by Student C, "We can talk with foreigners without embarrassment," Student L, "To speak English directly is very fun and we can learn more," and Student T, ''Everyone can change their opinion. It helps people improve essay writing and speech giving skills".

The results show a high overall satisfaction with the program, but only moderate agreement that the students had enough contact time with the native teachers, shown by comments made by Student O, "I want to have much more time with the teachers," and Student V, "[I want] more contact time with teachers to 'feel' English." This suggests that the students want more time to prepare and would find extra sessions beneficial. These findings are supported by the indication that the students would recommend the program to their friends, that they want to enter more speech contests, and that they believe more students should join the program. However, some students showed concern that too many people would join the program and that this could dilute the benefits gained, e.g., Student E, "Now it's [good] enough but if more people join, each person will have less time, so it will not be as successful." Therefore, joining the program should be kept as a voluntary option as forcing unmotivated students to participate may disrupt the sessions or have a negative impact on the overall image of the program. This is supported by comments made by Student W, "If someone tells you to do something, it is effective, but if someone volunteers, the teacher can teach them nicely and it is more effective."

Based on the initial feedback, the format of the program sessions may need to be revised. When initially offered tutorials individually, in pairs or in small groups, the large majority opted for individual sessions. However, the data suggests

that their opinions have changed, with the most popular preferred structure reported being small groups. This could be explained by a feeling of group togetherness, students being able to support each other, provide peer feedback and become positive rivals, or a reduction of anxiety, noted in comments from Student C, "We can help each other and try hard together and feel a natural way to learn," Student M, "To speak English in small groups improves our English more. Small groups mean people can have rivals," and Student W, "Around eight people. I can be not too nervous and I can enjoy it."

However, while this class structure may be popular during the speech writing stage, Student A said, "One to one, slowly is best," and Student R said, "Some people are there so I can learn from them, but there's not a lot of opportunity to say my opinion," which suggests that it may not be practical when preparing the speech delivery as the students would not receive the same level of input as on an individual basis. These results imply that using a small group structure during the speech writing and early practice stages and then shifting to a one-to-one pattern when preparing for the final speech delivery would be appropriate.

It was mentioned that by being able to think about a topic in English, various areas of language skills were being enhanced in a number of different ways. Student M said that, "To think in English about a speech and to practice makes people improve," and Student S said that, "To speak English definitely improves English and also thinking about what to say in a speech helps us improve." Also students found that they were learning new vocabulary and grammar, e.g., Student I, "Learning words we don't learn in lessons," Student T, "To learn new grammar and vocabulary," and Student U, "If I hadn't joined the course, I wouldn't have learned lots of new vocabulary." It was also claimed that gaining extra contact time with native speakers helped to improve the students' English levels, illustrated by Student A, "Contact with the native teachers helps get English into our heads," and Student L, "I enjoyed it a lot because we could talk to English people and get their opinions." It can therefore be stated that the implementation of the speech program provided students with the opportunity to develop their English skills in ways that were previously unavailable. Furthermore, it can be asserted that the new learning contexts have been perceived as beneficial by the participating students.

The participants found writing grammatically correct sentences most difficult, shown by Student D, "I didn't know how to make the most effective sentence," and Student R, "I couldn't explain in English something that I can explain in Japanese very well," but also indicated that this was an area they felt that they had improved, e.g., Student F, "I learned new grammar and vocabulary," and Student M, "What I thought was right, what I learned was incorrect, so it was good to learn the correct way to speak English." Another area of difficulty was pronunciation, illustrated by Student S, "Writing was difficult and intonation / stress was difficult," and Student W, "Writing words is OK, but pronouncing words was difficult." However, the students felt that they had also shown improvement in their pronunciation, e.g., Student B, "Pronunciation is a bit better," and Student M, "The teacher helped me to make the essay and with my pronunciation." It can therefore be stated that the program is addressing areas of language that students need help with and that the students perceive the program to be beneficial in developing their skills in these areas.

The comments regarding the reasons for joining the program showed that it provided the opportunity for students to express their opinions, shown by Student A, "I want to express my opinion," Student H, "To speak English and to tell people what I am thinking," and Student R, "It's a wonderful feeling to tell people what I am thinking," and that it was also a chance to prove to other students that they could speak English well, highlighted by Student P, "I want to prove to people who say I can't speak English that I can." The program therefore gives students a sense of achievement and pride, empowering them to develop their English in a context with a definite objective other than exams.

It is possible that, as the target of the program is not an exam, that the students' enjoyment of the program and therefore their perceptions of English in general were increased, seen in comments made by Student A, "I would love to have experience of lots of contests," Student D,

"It's a good experience," Student M, "To do the speech contest is fun and enjoyable," Student R, "To speak English is fun," and Student T, "It was good for me and fun". Studying a language in a positive and enjoyable environment can lead to increased motivation, the reduction of affective filters (Krashen, 1981), illustrated by Student C, "We can talk with foreigners without embarrassment," and can have a positive affect on the way students study in other subjects.

Conclusion

Regardless of the students' actual performance in the speech contests, their entrance into an external speech preparation program has shown itself to be successful in many respects, particularly in giving students the chance to develop their English skills in an autonomous manner that they found enjoyable and rewarding. However, the structure of the program needs to be altered to take the students' stated preference for small group study into account, which would allow for peer feedback and their desire for more contact time with the native-speaker teachers.

As information regarding many speech contests is sent to schools as a matter of course, the primary requirement from teachers in establishing such a program is scheduling enough time to mentor and facilitate the students' work. This investment of time is amply rewarded by the efforts and many hours of autonomous work applied by the students, and we strongly encourage interested teachers to try implementing a similar program for themselves.

Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/issues/2012-03_36.2>.

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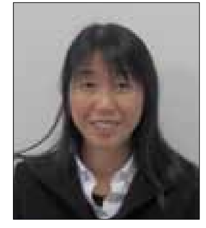

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6.2 Publication 9 (60% contribution)

Publication 9 builds on the research in Publication 8 in two ways. First, the perceptions of teachers rather than students are examined. This is an important area of investigation as changes in education policy often place little emphasis on teachers' emotional processes, and embracing affective domains is vital to effective teacher training and preparation (see Appendix 7 for further explanation). Second, the intervention was in-class, not extra-curricular, and focused on a much less-common type of intervention, a task-based survey and presentation course which included peer marking. It was found that teachers' responses to the intervention were mostly positive, with all participants stating they would want to teach the course again.

- Bury, J., & Sellick, A. (2015). Reactions and perceptions of teachers to the implementation of a task-based survey and presentation course. *Journal of Innovation in Education*, *3*(1), 15-33. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJIIE.2015.074702

The research conducted in Publication 9 was developed and presented in Presentation 4 listed in Appendix 11. Further research I conducted into student and teacher perceptions of interventions can be found in Bury (2016) (see Appendix 10).

Reactions and perceptions of teachers to the implementation of a task-based survey and presentation course

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Abstract: The authors introduced a task-based language teaching survey and a peer-assessed presentation course at a Japanese senior high school. When assessing the success of newly introduced courses, reflection is most commonly limited to the thoughts and perceptions of the students. This paper investigates the reactions of the teachers involved in teaching and assessing the new course. The participating teachers were surveyed, and their responses to (i) the survey activity, (ii) the presentations, and (iii) the peer assessments are reported in this article. The authors found that, while there are some valid concerns regarding the introduction of task-based activities into the classroom, the participating teachers generally found the activity to be rewarding and worthwhile. Furthermore, teachers generally responded positively to the idea of student peer assessment as part of the task-based activity. The authors suggest that other teachers may find value in introducing similar activities to their students.

Keywords: course development; presentations; surveys; task-based activities; task-based language teaching; teachers' perceptions.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Bury, J. and Sellick, A. (2015) 'Reactions and perceptions of teachers to the implementation of a task-based survey and presentation course', *Int. J. Innovation in Education*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp.15–33.

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1 Introduction

In many countries, classroom instructions and interactions are overwhelmingly controlled by the teacher and the textbook (Dashwood, 2005). However, textbooks can often lack authenticity (McGroarty and Taguchi, 2005). Furthermore, poorly levelled textbooks can act as a barrier to learning and demotivate students. In Japan, many high school English language textbooks have been found to be overly challenging (Browne, 1996, 1998), and to functionally exclude teaching methodologies other than grammar translation (Browne and Wada, 1998). This is in stark contrast to the communicative skills being emphasised in the current English language curriculum (MEXT, 2011). However, it is possible to use textbooks as a platform from which communicative activities that effectively present students with opportunities to engage in authentic language learning can be derived.

This 'intrinsic case study' (Stake, 1995) describes teachers' perceptions of, and reactions to, a task-based survey and presentation course introduced at a high school in the Kanto region of Japan. During the course, small groups of students first chose topics based on their own interests, but related to topics covered in the textbook, created surveys on those topics, engaged in the communicative collection of data, then wrote, and finally delivered presentations of their results. While each group presented their work, they were assessed by their peers, both formatively and summatively.

2 Context

The case study was conducted in a Japanese 6-year private secondary boarding school which is part of an organisation that consists of three high schools and an attached university. Roughly one third of secondary schools in Japan are private (MEXT, 2011) and, while both public and private schools follow the national curriculum, private schools have greater flexibility in recruitment and syllabus than public schools. For example, in public schools foreign language teachers can serve only as assistant language teachers in team-teaching lessons, while in private schools they often also conduct solo classes.

In the case of this school, the full-time foreign teachers of English both team-teach with Japanese teachers of English and solo teach English communication classes parallel to the regular syllabus. This parallel structure allows flexibility for new techniques and ideas to be trialled in the foreign teachers' lessons with the successful ones being subsequently imported into the main syllabus via team teaching lessons.

3 Literature review

3.1 Student-produced surveys and presentations

One possible way to increase the amount of authentic language students in the classroom produce is via task-based language teaching (TBLT), the adoption of which is regularly advocated in Japan (e.g. Izumi, 2009; Muranoi, 2006; Takashima, 2005, 2011). Task-based activities, such as writing and delivering a speech or presentation, encourage students to work autonomously, developing their confidence and empowering them to use

English (Bury, Sellick and Yamamoto, 2012) in an authentic context for their language development (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

There are many types of task-based activities and projects suitable for use in language learning classrooms, but Kagnarith, Theara and Klein (2007) identify student-generated surveys as particularly effective. Willis (1996) states that survey activities are primarily student centred and communicative in nature, but are commonly used only in the practice phase of isolated lessons and are not revisited once those lessons are finished. Alan and Stroller (2005) state that by creating, conducting and then presenting findings from their own, autonomously developed surveys, students are engaging in mental processes that promote communicative skills and enable learners to focus on all four macro language skills.

However, in many survey activities, students' personalisation of material is restricted to writing one or two questions of their own, or adapting a set of prompts. Such teacher-centred guidance of language is often necessary, especially in classes with students of a lower language level, but imposing too much control can lead to less creativity. Encouraging students to develop their own surveys autonomously provides learners the opportunity to gain a sense of full ownership and develop critical thinking processes, moving away from total classroom dependency on the teacher (Fewell, 2010) and fostering critical thinking habits that positively influence cognitive behaviour (Zin and Eng, 2014).

Public speaking and making classroom presentations can be daunting for students, leading to effective filters being raised (Krashen, 1981). However, since these kinds of activity can lead students to change the way they view their own abilities in different contexts (Harter, 1999), they can help develop a student's self-esteem (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003). As a result, learners' self-confidence can be enhanced, influencing both their approach to future communication (Nezlek, Kafetsios and Smith, 2008), and their willingness to engage in communication (Pearson et al., 2011).

While the MEXT curriculum emphasises learner-centred activities (Ozeki, 2011), commonly identified issues that deter Japanese teachers of English from using task-based activities include large class sizes, lack of appropriate resources, time constraints in the syllabus, traditional focus on passing examinations, insufficient teacher knowledge about task-based methodologies, and the use of the students' first language (L1) during different stages of the activity (Carless, 2002). However, while L1 use in monolingual classes is often identified as a problematical issue by teachers, enforcing the sole use of the target language (L2) can induce harmful psychological effects and learner resistance (Nation, 2003). Despite the various challenges teachers associate with the implementation of task-based activities, they nonetheless can help increase the communicative nature of a course, making it more fulfilling for the students.

Traditional emphasis on rote vocabulary learning, sentence level grammatical structures, and exam preparation has often resulted in a gradual but inexorable decrease in the use of English in the Japanese classroom as students progress through junior to senior high school (Murphey and Sasaki, 1998). Therefore, students have few opportunities to improve their long-writing skills (Bury, Sellick and Yamamoto, 2012). Additionally, writing activities are commonly viewed as dull and time consuming, by both students and teachers, meaning that writing is often neglected and not covered within the class despite its importance (Al-Gomoul, 2011). Consequently, this course was introduced to offer students an engaging opportunity to practise and further enhance their writing skills, promote writing as a communicative skill, improve students' performance

in university entrance writing tasks, and enhance overall English levels through improved cognitive and linguistic awareness (McDonough, 2003).

3.2 Peer assessment

An additional element of the introduced course was peer assessment, a process in which students grade and/or comment on the performance of their classmates and consider the success of their outcomes in a particular task (Topping et al., 2000). The implementation of peer assessment in EFL classrooms has several important benefits, such as students' learning experiences being enhanced through increased interaction with class content and discussion with classmates to personalise and consolidate meaning (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Peer assessment is therefore grounded in social-constructivist methodology and creates a learning context distinct from the traditional teacher-student transmission of knowledge (Lea, Stephenson and Troy, 2003). Specifically, peer assessment allows students to 'work together to maximise their own and each other's learning' (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1993, p.15). Students are encouraged to share information and contribute to the development of their shared knowledge and this exchange can lead to improved motivation and social skills (Brown, 2001).

Through peer assessment, students can receive more feedback and different perspectives than when they depend solely upon their teachers. Furthermore, the feedback is more immediate and less authoritative than feedback received from teachers (Caulk 1994). As such, it is a valuable addition to supplement the feedback of a teacher (Hu, 2005). Moreover, by assessing others' work, students are given an opportunity to articulate discipline-specific knowledge and develop collaborative dialogue (Wooley, 2007). The establishment of a two-way, collaborative feedback process can help increase students' tolerance and acceptance of peer criticism, increase their self-confidence, and help develop a sense of community within the classroom (Harris, 1992).

Despite the potential benefits of peer assessment, it can be viewed as "unreliable and thus inadequate for evaluative purposes" (Saito and Fujita, 2004, p.34). Additional potential concerns are the danger of miscommunication during the feedback process, individual student differences, classroom dynamics, unequal participation, and cultural issues which act to suppress the direct criticism of peers' work (Min, 2005). However, research conducted in Japanese universities has found that peer assessment scores correlate highly with teacher assessment scores (Shimura, 2006; Okuda and Otsu, 2010), and that Japanese students are often comfortable both giving and receiving peer feedback (Cornelius and Kinghorn, 2014).

3.3 Teacher responses to new course content

New initiatives for teaching and learning, such as the introduction of a TBLT survey and presentation course and peer assessment into EFL classrooms, can be viewed as a potential threat to the 'key meanings' of teachers' lives, such as their perceptions of status and group allegiances (Blacker and Shimmin, 1984). Furthermore, research conducted on the factors that affect the various responses and attitudes towards change identifies the perceived degree of effort required for success as a key element, where the higher the effort perceived, the less likely is the change in behaviour successfully achieved (Sparks, Guthrie and Shepherd, 1997).

Thus, introducing new approaches and ideas into a syllabus must be undertaken with great care. It is not unusual for teachers to feel that new requirements are an implicit criticism of their existing approach (Craig, 2012), and consequently it was essential that the affected teachers were involved at all stages of development of the course in order to ensure its successful implementation. One reason this course targeted student surveys and presentations was because it would not be interpreted as being critical of the teachers' approach to teaching, but rather could be viewed as encouraging the expansion of an already existing behaviour. By working with the teachers, it could be ensured that the course was not seen as being imposed and that the teachers were psychologically committed to seeing the implementation of the materials they had help to prepare (Norton, 2009).

While teachers generally view peer-marking positively, it is rarely used in the language classroom (Wu, 2012). Reported reasons for this include the perceived time necessary to conduct peer assessments well, the difficulty of developing appropriate assessment criteria (which reliably assess the students and which the peer-markers can understand), and concerns with the reliability and validity of peer assessments, specifically, the concern that students cannot produce fair peer assessments due to deficits in their language skills (Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000). Other concerns that have been voiced by teachers include student passivity and/or lack of motivation, the difficulty of adequately monitoring peer marking, particularly in large classes, and the fear that student individual differences-whether of the marker or the student being marked-may bias peer-assigned scores (Topping, 2005; Wu, 2012).

Although many East Asian countries have ongoing programs to ensure that students receive English lessons from Native Teachers of English (hereafter NTEs), either as solo teachers or as team-teachers (MEXT, 2011), research, like that by Wu (2012), has tended to focus on teachers who are nationals of their relevant countries. This article reports on the responses to the introduction of the TBLT course given by NTEs.

4 Course design

The course was trialled in the NTEs' solo classes. The students taking this course were in grade 11 (98 male, 103 female), and the course was implemented at the end of the academic year. The course was intended to encourage the students to review what they had learned through the year, and the presentations represented the year-end speaking test. The course consisted of the following steps:

- the students formed groups
- each group chose a topic and then brainstormed it
- the groups wrote the first draft of their surveys
- survey items were revised following teacher feedback
- survey data was gathered and then analysed
- the first draft of the presentations were written
- the presentations were revised following teacher feedback

- the survey results were presented
- the groups learned their results and received teacher-student and student-student feedback.

Topics selected by the students included fashion, gender differences, hobbies, future dreams, and school life. Throughout the course, teachers were encouraged to let the students work autonomously, playing the role of facilitator and monitor so as not to impose too much control and limit student creativity. The presentations were conducted in front of two combined classes so that students would be able to watch and assess more presentations, and so the presenters would be able to receive more feedback on their performances. The two teachers of the combined classes were asked to grade the students as individual assessors with the final scores based on the average of the two teachers and the student peer assessments.

5 Methodology

To investigate teachers' perceptions of the task-based project described above a questionnaire survey was conducted after the students' presentations had been completed and feedback given. In order to ensure that all opinions could be voiced, all of the participating NTEs (designated teachers A through I) received a questionnaire, and individual unstructured interviews were then conducted with each responding NTE.

Quantitative and qualitative methods are not a dichotomy and do not need to be mutually exclusive, with some researchers preferring a mixed methods approach (Freimuth, 2009), employing them in a complementary manner (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). Bryman (2006) states that mixed methods research has increasingly been seen as a way to bridge the different paradigms, incorporate quantitative and qualitative methods, and offer the best of both worlds. Consequently, the items on the questionnaire (See Appendix) were written to include open, closed, and Likert scale questions, allowing the data to be quantitatively analysed, but also allowing for more interpretive responses to be made (a full list of teachers' comments is available from the authors).

All data was collected anonymously, the purpose of the research was explained to the teachers, and it was clearly stated that their participation was voluntary. Once the research was completed a report was made available to all of the participants.

6 Participants

The school employs a total of eleven NTEs, two of whom were not eligible to take part in the study as they had designed the course and survey instruments. The nine participating NTEs were nationals of the United Kingdom, Ireland, and New Zealand. They ranged in age from 28 through 56 (median 42), and had an average of 7 years teaching experience (two through 25 years), and 5 years teaching experience in Japan (one through 20 years).

7 Results and Discussion

With small populations, it is quite easy for collected data to be unrepresentative of the whole. In order to determine the minimum acceptable data sample size, a formula derived from Keeter et al. (2006) was applied and a minimum response rate of 80% was indicated. Of the nine questionnaires distributed, there was a 100% return rate, ensuring the participants' voices had been successfully captured.

Table 1 Response to Yes/No items

	Yes		*No*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1	9	100	0	0
3	8	88.89	1	11.11
5	4	44.44	5	55.55
13	3	33.33	6	66.67
14	3	33.33	6	66.67
15	7	77.78	2	22.22
16	2	22.22	7	77.78
17	5	55.56	4	44.44
20	9	100	0	0

As shown in Table 1, in response to Item 1 (Have you done this kind of task-based activity before?), all teachers reported prior experience with task-based activities. During the interviews, three NTEs reported having used them with university or adult classes (Teachers A, D, H), two with classes at the school in which this investigation took place (Teachers C, F), two while at other senior high schools (Teachers B, E), one at a different junior high school as an assistant language teacher (Teacher G), and one before at a senior high school as a test where students prepared posters and gave individual presentations (Teacher I). This indicates that while teachers are often bound by a set curriculum, there are a variety of different contexts in which task-based activities can be conducted.

All but one NTE (Item 3-Have you used peer assessment before?) had previous experience with peer assessment. Of the eight teachers that had previously used peer assessment, two had used it during speaking test preparation lessons (Teachers C, F), and two in other schools' speaking tests (Teachers B, E). Other reported contexts were university classes (Teachers A, D), team teaching classes (Teacher G), and while watching video presentations (Teacher H). The high positive response to this item was fairly surprising as peer assessment is rarely mentioned in the shared syllabuses that the teachers work from. However, the responses do highlight a lot of different contexts in which peer assessment can be undertaken.

When asked if they thought peer assessment should be used more in class and tests (Item 5), four NTEs said that peer assessment should be used more. Comments supporting this included, 'It gave students a reason to listen to the other groups' presentations,' (Teacher B), 'It gave students a different perspective of what was expected from them,' (Teacher D), and, 'It was a good way to involve all students.' (Teacher F). Five teachers said that peer assessment is a good tool to use in class time,

but felt that it is unreliable for testing, 'I am not sure that the students understand how to score each other properly,' (Teacher I). One teacher felt peer marking was a useful supplement to teacher grading, 'The students may look at different things to me,' (Teacher E). As many of the comments related to peer assessment (Item 3) were positive, that 55.55% of the respondents felt that peer assessment should not be used more was surprising. However, it seems that the NTEs were responding to Item 3 in two ways: stating why they think peer assessment should be a more prominent feature of the curriculum ('It is a good experience for the students,'-Teacher F), and also stressing that it should not be overused ('It takes a long time to do, so it is hard to fit it into the syllabus,'-Teacher A).

Regarding the use of Japanese by students in the course (Item 13-Did you try to stop students using Japanese when they were writing their surveys? and Item 14-Did you try to stop students using Japanese when they were writing their presentations?), three teachers answered 'Yes' and six answered 'No'. The comments made regarding these two items were very similar, so they have been combined. For those teachers that answered 'Yes', the comments included, 'I tried, but some L1 is inevitable and can be useful,' (Teacher A), 'As much as possible, but the students found it easier to formulate questions in Japanese,' (Teacher E), and 'It was an English language presentation,' (Teacher G). The teachers that answered 'No' commented, 'The students tried very hard to use English in the classes,' (Teacher B), 'I realised they were working together to reach an English end product,' (Teacher C), and 'I have done projects before without allowing the students to use L1 and they did not feel as confident with what they had produced,' (Teacher I).

Concerning extra help (Item 15-Did any of your students ask you for help outside of the class?), 77.78% of the NTEs stated that they had been asked for extra help. Five reported that they noticed a big increase in the students asking for help. Help provided included preparing pictures and graphs, checking grammatical structures, practising presentations, and checking scripts. A common theme raised by the NTEs in the interviews was how little the students normally engaged with them in English outside the lesson time. The extra interaction that the introduction of this course led to helped build bonds and improve the relationships between the NTEs and the students. The visibly higher level of interaction also helped to improve the image of the NTE team and its role within the school.

Only two NTEs reported experiencing difficulty teaching the course (Item 16-Did you have any problems teaching this activity?). Teacher A indicated that timing was an issue and Teacher G stated that some students had problems understanding what they needed to do and so did not start to prepare as quickly as they should have. These issues could be resolved by increasing the number of lessons allocated for the course and by helping teachers explain the course to the students better. Also, as this was the first time the course was implemented, it was completely new to the students. If this kind of task-based activity were to be used more regularly, it is likely that the students would better understand what was expected from them.

Opinions on the ease of assessing the students' presentations (Item 17-Did you have any problems assessing the students' presentations?) were split, with five NTEs answering 'Yes' and four answering 'No'. Problems identified included, 'Inconsistent marking between the two teachers,' (Teacher A), 'Difficulty in distinguishing between the different students' contributions,' (Teacher I), 'Marking the groups of three because the presentations were fast,' (Teacher H), and 'A lot of criteria and other factors to

consider at one time,' (Teacher E). These issues could be addressed in the future by providing more succinct and clearer marking criteria, allowing for more consistent marking and helping teachers deal with the speed at which they needed to assess the presentations.

As shown in Table 2, when asked if they would like to repeat this course (Item 20-Would you like to do this activity again?), a very positive response was received from all of the NTEs. Many of the comments made mirror those from Item 2 (see Table 5), including, 'It was student centred,' (Teacher B), 'The students worked together and produced personalised language that they often do not get the chance to use,' (Teacher F), 'It was motivating and rewarding and gave the students a sense of achievement,' (Teacher G), 'they practised different language skills,' (Teacher C), and 'Students improved their structured writing and their ability to express opinions,' (Teacher D).

Table 2 Response to Likert scale items

	1		*2*		*3*		*4*		*5*		*Average*
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	
8	0	0	0	0	1	11.11	4	44.44	4	44.44	4.33
9	0	0	1	11.11	0	0	5	55.56	3	33.33	4.11
10	0	0	3	33.33	2	22.22	4	44.44	0	0	3.11
11	0	0	2	22.22	2	22.22	5	55.56	0	0	3.33
12	0	0	3	33.33	5	55.56	1	11.11	0	0	3.11

When asked to think about the benefits of survey writing by students (Item 8-How much do you agree with the statement, 'In general, writing surveys helps to improve students' English'?), the NTEs responded very positively (an average rating of 4.33), saying, 'It helps students express themselves in a clear and meaningful way,' (Teacher B), 'It personalises language use,' (Teacher C), 'It improves and reinforces question formulation,' (Teacher D), 'It uses different language skills,' (Teacher F), 'It activates passive memory,' (Teacher G), and 'It encourages students to use new vocabulary and expressions,' (Teacher I). Teacher H suggested that the level of benefit the students get depends on the ability of the teacher to check and correct their work.

When asked about student presentations (Item 9-How much do you agree with the statement, 'In general, doing presentations helps to improve students' English'?), the overall response was positive (an average rating of 4.11), with the NTEs reporting, 'It uses different skills,' (Teacher A), 'It develops confidence,' (Teacher B), 'It develops students' ability to plan and write longer pieces of writing,' (Teacher C), 'It consolidates language,' (Teacher D), 'It develops teamwork skills,' (Teacher E), 'It activates passive memory,' (Teacher F), 'It personalises language use,' (Teacher G), and 'It encourages students to use new vocabulary and expressions,' (Teacher I). Teacher H, however, stated that the process leading up to the presentation was more important than the actual presentation itself, similar to the processes students go through when they are preparing for speech contests. Teacher A added the qualification that doing presentations is useful, but is not necessarily related to learning English.

Focusing on students' progress in writing and speaking (Item 10-How much do you think this activity has improved your Students' English writing? and Item 11-How much do you think this activity has improved your students' English speaking?), the NTEs response was more equivocal (an average rating of 3.11 and 3.33 respectively). The only

comment made regarding these items was, 'In isolation the activity did not help much, but as part of an ongoing process it could help,' (Teacher H).

It is interesting to note that the NTEs reported that writing surveys and making presentations had a positive impact on students' English abilities in general, but were much less confident that this course had improved their own students' English writing and speaking skills. This drop in perceived benefits for their own students as compared to students in general could be explained by increased contact highlighting some of the drawbacks of task-based activities.

As preparation time for task-based activities can be an issue, the NTEs were asked for their impressions (Item 12-How much do you agree with the statement, 'I had enough lessons to prepare my students'?), with most teachers reporting general satisfaction with the amount of time allocated to the course (an average rating of 3.11).

Table 3 Response to multiple-choice item with five options

	Finding a topic		*Vocabulary*		*Question ideas*		*Question forms*		*Other*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
18	1	7.14	2	14.29	4	28.57	6	42.86	1	7.14

As indicated by Table 3, the most commonly identified problem students faced when writing their surveys (Item 18-Which do you think the students found hardest when writing their surveys?), was Question forms (42.86%), followed by Question ideas (28.57%), Vocabulary (14.29%), and Finding a topic and Other (both with 7.14%). Comments made in relation to this item were, 'Producing scaled questions,' (Teacher A), 'Choosing appropriate topics. This took a long time,' (Teacher H), 'Word order,' (Teacher B), and 'Expressing themselves,' (teacher D). Teachers B and F also commented that the students found the activity conceptually challenging and that there was a lot of L1 interference.

Table 4 Response to multiple-choice item with six options

	Structuring the presentation		*Vocabulary*		*Finding a topic*		*Grammar*		*Expressing an opinion*		*Length of presentation*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
19	2	12.50	2	12.50	0	0	6	37.50	5	31.25	1	6.25

As indicated by Table 4, the most commonly identified problem students faced when writing their presentations (Item 19-Which do you think the students found hardest when writing their presentations?), was Grammar (37.50%), followed by Expressing an opinion (31.25%), Structuring the presentation and Vocabulary (12.50%), Length of presentation (6.25%), and Finding a topic (0%). Teachers A, B, G, and H stated that although the students could collect and collate the data well, they found it particularly hard to interpret and comment on their findings. It was also noted that some students also found making a joint conclusion problematic, especially when they had all spoken about different questions. Other areas of difficulty were writing complex sentences and organising the presentation. The responses to Items 18 and 19 highlight areas that teachers could possibly focus on more in their lessons to help students' language acquisition and communicative competence develop.

Table 5 indicates that in response to Item 2 (What were your initial thoughts about the planned activity?) many of the NTEs' initial thoughts were positive, but there were some concerns. While the NTEs' initial concerns were justified, the only issue that actually developed was that of timing as the NTEs reported that the students reacted well to the project, showing high levels of interest and motivation.

Table 5 Teachers' initial thoughts about the planned activity

Positive	*Concerns*
• Students can talk about their own ideas and materials they are interested in. • The activity would make the most of a problematic and short term. • The activity would limit teacher preparation time.	• Student reaction to the project. • Student interest and motivation. • Working to a tight deadline. • Other teachers supporting the idea.

Table 6 shows the responses to Item 4 (How did you feel about using peer assessment in your class?), which were generally positive. The observation that peer assessment focused students on other groups' presentations is especially important as it had been noted that without peer assessment students in the audience often do not pay attention to the presentation content and can even start chatting during presentations. The observations that the students enjoyed the peer assessment aspect of the course and took it seriously were particularly pleasing, as they indicate that the students engaged well with the course.

Table 6 Teachers' thoughts about using peer assessment

Positive	*Student reactions*	*Concerns*
• Focused students on other groups' presentations. • Made students feel part of the evaluation process. • Made students more aware of how speaking tests are graded. • Allowed students to evaluate each other.	• Enjoyed assessing their peers. • Took it seriously.	• The peer assessment becoming a popularity contest. • Students marking everyone the same, ie too high or too low.

While most of the NTEs felt confident assessing their own students (Item 6-How did you feel about testing your own students?), two reported that it was difficult to mark their own students objectively and they may have graded their own students too strictly to avoid being viewed as biased. One NTE said that it was fine in conjunction with another teacher, but they would not want to do it by themselves.

As joint marking is less common than solo marking, teachers were asked how they felt about the experience (Item 7-How did you feel about testing students with another teacher?). All responses were positive, with NTEs commenting, 'It was laid back and light hearted,' (Teacher C), 'It worked well,' (Teacher D), 'I knew an average score would be given, so it was okay,' (Teacher E), 'It may have produced more balanced

marks,' (Teacher F), 'It was good and reassuring to compare marks with another teacher,' (Teacher G), and 'It helped to compare marks after the first presentation to standardise scores,' (Teacher I). The results of this item slightly contradict the comments given for Item 17 about inconsistent marking, but they show that teachers are generally not against marking in conjunction with their colleagues.

Finally, when asked for suggestions to improve the course (Item 21-Can you think of any ways this activity could be improved?), there were many responses ranging from organisational suggestions to ideas for future materials. The most common comment was that more preparation lessons would have helped the students. Other comments included, 'Creating better marking criteria for the peer assessment,' (Teacher A), 'Giving students more focussed topics to choose from,' (Teacher B), 'Making all teachers aware of the time issue,' (Teacher C), 'Giving better access to presentation materials by using students' presentations from this year as examples for next year's students,' (Teacher D), 'Giving more examples of question types,' (Teacher E), 'Extending similar activities to other year groups,' (Teacher G), and 'Discussing the Q and A session with the other teacher before the lesson,' (Teacher I).

8 Conclusion

For successful long-term language acquisition, classroom activities that develop students' communicative competence together with more general cognitive strategies, labelled by Ribé and Vidal (1993) as second and third generation tasks, should be implemented as they have more real value to the students and their language learning goals (Skehan, 1998). In view of this, authentic output should be encouraged in English communication classes as a way of developing students' language acquisition. This case study described one attempt at this.

The NTEs' reactions to, and perceptions of, a TBLT survey and presentation course were generally very positive, with all of the respondents indicating that they would like to teach the course again. This enthusiasm for the course was gratifying and it was subsequently adopted into the regular English syllabus as part of the high school teaching program. There was, however, a noticeable difference between the perceived benefits of TBLT activities on students in general and the perceived benefits of this course on the NTEs' own students.

The comments made by the NTEs identified a wide variety of different contexts in which TBLT activities and peer assessment can be conducted. Both the students and teachers responded well to the peer assessment aspect of the course, but it was indicated that peer assessment does have its limitations.

Potential issues that were identified by the NTEs included timing, students understanding what was expected of them, inconsistent marking and the level of benefit gained by the students depending on the ability of the teacher to check and correct their work. Many of the issues can be addressed by increased teacher training in TBLT activities and administering peer marking, and by creating a clearer and more concise set of marking criteria.

While this case study was situated within a context different from most Japanese high schools, as a result of the positive comments and feedback, and its subsequent adoption into the regular English syllabus, the authors recommend the implementation of similar TBLT activities where possible. Students developing their own surveys and

presentations, and then engaging in peer assessment is an effective and engaging way for students to work towards authentic goals and develop their communicative competence, as well as going further to meet the communicative goals set by the curriculum (Ozeki, 2011).

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Appendix - Survey and presentation feedback questionnaire

1 Have you done this kind of task-based activity before?

Yes No

If Yes, when? ____

2 What were your initial thoughts about the planned activity?

____

____

____

____

____

3 Have you used peer assessment in class before?

Yes No

If Yes, when? ____

4 How did you feel about using peer assessment in your class?

____

____

____

____

5 Do you think peer assessment should be used more in class and tests? Why/Why not?

Yes No

Why?

6 How did you feel about testing your own students?

7 How did you feel about testing students with another teacher?

8 How much do you agree with the statement 'In general, writing surveys helps to improve students' English'. (1 = disagree completely, 5 = agree completely.)

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

9 How much do you agree with the statement 'In general, doing presentations helps to improve students' English'. (1 = disagree completely, 5 = agree completely.)

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

10 How much do you think this activity has improved your Students' English writing? (1 = Not at all, 5 = A great deal.)

1 2 3 4 5

11 How much do you think this activity has improved your students' English speaking? (1 = Not at all, 5 = A great deal.)

1 2 3 4 5

12 How much do you agree with the statement 'I had enough lessons to prepare my students'. (1 = disagree completely, 5 = agree completely.)

1 2 3 4 5

13 Did you try to stop students using Japanese when they were writing their surveys?

Yes No

If yes, why?

____

____

14 Did you try to stop students using Japanese when they were writing their presentations?

Yes No

If yes, why?

____

____

15 Did any of your students ask you for help outside of the class?

Yes No

If yes, what help did they ask for?

____

____

16 Did you have any problems teaching this activity?

Yes No

If yes, what problems did you have?

____

____

17 Did you have any problems assessing the students' presentations?

Yes No

If yes, what problems did you have?

____

____

18 Which do you think the students found hardest when writing their surveys? (Please circle the choices below. You can circle more than one.)

a. Finding a topic
b. Vocabulary
c. Writing the questions (Ideas)
d. Writing the questions (Grammar)
e. Other ______________________

Please explain.

____

____

19 Which do you think the students found hardest when writing their presentations? (Please circle the choices below. You can circle more than one.)

a. Structuring the essay
b. Vocabulary
c. Finding a topic
d. Writing the sentences (Grammar)
e. Expressing an opinion
f. Length of presentation

Please explain.

____

____

20 Would you like to do this activity again?

Yes No

Please explain.

____

____

21 Can you think of any ways this activity could be improved?

____

____

6.3 Publication 10 (80% contribution)

The publications presented so far in this theme have focused on interventions introduced into school environments. In an attempt to better understand students' perceptions of their experiences at the tertiary level and the practical applications that their courses have, and thus a more global understanding of the IFLL context in Japan, I developed and led an investigation into university students' perceptions of the importance of different aspects of English within the tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry. The impact of demographic data on perceptions was also investigated and suggestions how T&H courses could be tailored in response to the findings were made.

It was found that all aspects of English were perceived as important, but communication skills (i.e., strategies) were viewed as significantly more important than reading and writing. The second and third-most important skills were indicated to be speaking and listening. However, perhaps the most interesting finding from this study was that confidence when communicating was identified as being more important than the five aspects of English investigated (speaking, listening, reading, writing, communication). This finding is of particular importance as it demonstrates the necessity of developing SPoA and LoC, as discussed in Theme 2.

It was also indicated that while English skills were regarded as more important for managers and high-level workers, knowledge of English was viewed as an important means of gaining employment in the T&H industry. Consequently, in the article I argue that English-language components of T&H courses should employ activities which aim to develop awareness and interpersonal skills in real-world contexts. Furthermore, it is suggested that the communicative activities outlined by Jing (2010) that include giving oral presentations, performing role plays, and having topical discussions related to T&H should be employed.

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Undergraduate students' perceptions of the importance of English in the tourism and hospitality industry

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ABSTRACT

Educators commonly promote English as beneficial to future employability, but students' perceptions of the importance of English in the tourism and hospitality industry are often not considered. It is important that students' perceptions are examined as gaining better insights could allow more positive attitudes to both English and the industry being fostered. This study investigated the perceptions of students (n = 71) enrolled at a university in Japan and found no statistically significant differences based on gender, country of origin, year of study, work experience, or future work intentions. However, it was indicated that communicative competence, confidence, English listening, and English speaking were the factors perceived to be most important by the students. Consequently, it is suggested that tourism and hospitality courses should incorporate components that focus mainly on these skills, but not to the detriment of English reading and writing, which were also perceived as important.

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Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is the world's largest and fastest growing industry (Baum, 2006). Current students in tourism and hospitality courses are the potential employees and leaders of the sector, so it is important that their perceptions are examined, as gaining a better understanding of them could help educators foster positive attitudes, which will likely lead to greater attraction and retention of graduates in the future (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Richardson, 2010). However, although many studies on the attitudes of employees in the tourism and hospitality industry have been conducted, relatively few studies on the perceptions of students have been published (Brown, Arendt, & Bosselman, 2014; Richardson, 2009; Roney & Öztin, 2007; Walsh & Taylor, 2007).

In tourism and hospitality courses, the importance of English is commonly promoted, with educators' claims that English competence is beneficial to future job prospects (Rahim, 2011) mirroring the perceived need for communicative competence in English for business purposes (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). However, despite the widespread incorporation of English in curriculum design, the level of many graduates' English

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fluency and communicative competence in Japan is identified as unsatisfactory by the Ministry of Education (Shimizu, 2006). The problem of student underachievement and unsatisfactory levels of proficiency in English could be ascribed to a possible mismatch between students' needs, interests, and aims, and the content found in current English-language courses (Alfehaid, 2014).

The majority of English-language education research in Japan investigates the impact of interventions in particular teaching contexts, with relatively few focusing on students' attitudes. Because of this, many issues relating to undergraduate tourism and hospitality students in Japan's perceptions of English remain to be explored. The primary objectives of this article are to investigate students' overall perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English within the tourism and hospitality industry, how these perceptions may vary depending on the respondents' demographic data, and to make suggestions as to how English courses taught to tourism and hospitality undergraduate students can be tailored in response to the attitudes that have been identified.

Literature review

Commonly referred to as the global language, English plays an important role in the tourism and hospitality industry and the quality of the related services offered to the public by employees within the industry (Alfehaid, 2014). Second-language skills are invaluable when communicating with people from other countries, and this is especially pertinent in the context of the tourism and hospitality industry (Leslie & Russell, 2006). This is particularly true of English, which is commonly used as a lingua franca to communicate with international tourists (Ghany & Latif, 2012), is often needed to interact in a wide range of tourism and hospitality contexts (Afzali & Fakhardaz, 2009; Seong, 2005), and should be recognized as the language of hospitality (Blue & Harun, 2003).

As a major player within the global economy, Japan's international communication needs are considerable (Handford & Matous, 2011). Consequently, there is a growing acknowledgment from practitioners, companies, and academics of the importance of English proficiency for future Japanese students and employees (Lesley, 2016). In response to this, English for Specific Purposes courses, including English for Tourism and Hospitality, are becoming increasingly available in a wide range of educational contexts, with the government implementing policies that aim to internationalize all levels of education (Honna & Takeshita, 2005; Seargeant, 2009).

However, despite the apparent importance placed on English proficiency by practitioners, academics, and the Japanese government, students' perceptions of English have been relatively underreported, especially those of students enrolled in undergraduate tourism and hospitality courses. Research has addressed the evaluation of language materials in courses by students and educators (Brunton, 2009; Kirkness & Neill, 2009; Laborda, 2005), evaluations of overall courses (Fuentes, 2004; Luka, 2009), the language needs of students and employees (Choi, 2010), teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of oral communication activities in developing tourism and hospitality students' oral English (Jing, 2010), and students' perceptions of study motivations and preferences (Hjalager, 2003; Lee, Kim, & Lo, 2008; O'Mahony, McWilliams, & Whitelaw, 2001), but students' perceptions of the importance of English in the tourism and hospitality

industry have not been fully investigated. This is an important gap in current research as by gaining greater insights into tourism and hospitality students' attitudes toward the importance of different aspects of English, it is hoped that educators will be able to adapt their courses to meet their students' needs, goals, and objectives more.

Despite being the target of teaching, students often have little or no input into the design of the courses in which they enroll (Sellick, 2016). As a result, tourism and hospitality courses can cover all of the aspects necessary to develop students' competencies in the field, but at the same time, they may not be fully student-centered, and therefore not maximizing their potential to engage the students, as teaching material that is not relevant to their interests and needs can be demotivating (Huang & Liou, 2007). Furthermore, ensuring that course materials are relevant to students' interests and needs allows educators to relate language and theories to students' personal contexts and experiences, which strengthens their associations (McAdams, 1993; Sökmen, 1997) and can improve short- and long-term language retention, particularly in English for Specific Purposes courses (Bury, 2014).

Consequently, designing, developing, and delivering relevant and effective courses in English is imperative when preparing and training future tourism and hospitality professionals. It has been argued that to achieve this goal a needs analysis must be undertaken (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) and that English for Specific Purposes courses that are not based on a needs analysis will not successfully relate the language taught to authentic academic or occupational settings (Garden, 2005). Yet, due to time constraints, needs analyses are often overlooked, especially in tertiary education in Japan where educators are commonly required to upload the content of their courses before they have met the students. By investigating tourism and hospitality students' perceptions in this context, this article is adding to the available research from which educators can inform the choices they make when developing their courses.

Classroom behavior and interactions, including acknowledging students' perspectives (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997) and highlighting the relevance of materials and tasks (McAdams, 1993), can increase positive attitudes toward learning, which will consequently enhance student engagement (Bury & Sellick, 2015). Providing students with the opportunity to voice their opinions is an integral aspect of student-centered education (Diamond, 2004). Not allowing students to express independent opinions and introducing activities in the classroom that are seen by students as irrelevant can negatively impact on student motivation (Assor, 1999). It is therefore essential that students are encouraged to offer their own opinions and are given the opportunity to engage with materials relevant to them.

In Western society, people are increasingly stating what they want to learn and how (Barnett, 2004), but this move is not necessarily reflected in Japan. By investigating and understanding students' values, goals, expectations, and ambitions, and thus gaining greater insights into the perceptions of tourism and hospitality students, educators could be able to provide courses that are more relevant, enjoyable, and motivating. It could also help educators guide students in their employment choices more effectively (Aycan & Fikret-Pasa, 2003).

In general, tourism and hospitality employees rate all four English-language skills as highly important (Prachanant, 2012), and although oral communication is perceived as more important than written communication, both categories are rated highly

(Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011; Kay & Russette, 2000). Despite the finding that the role of English-language proficiency in the tourism and hospitality industry is prominent, the extent of its importance to employees is relative to job function (Ravantharanathe & Syaharom, 2007). In order to assess whether students' perceptions are affected by a similar variable, the following hypothesis will be tested:

(1) H0: There will be no significant difference between students with intentions to work in the industry and those with no intentions to work in the industry's perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.
H1: There will be a significant difference between students with intentions to work experience in the industry and those with no intentions to work in the industry's perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Other factors that can affect perceptions of the tourism and hospitality industry and the skills needed by employees in the industry include gender (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010), previous related work experience, and age (Jenkins, 2001). Furthermore, a wide range of cross-cultural research has attributed large variations in perceptions of, and reactions to, certain service-based phenomena to cultural differences (e.g., Engelen & Brettel, 2011; Matsumoto, 2007; Zhang, Beatty, & Walsh, 2008). Thus, four more hypotheses will be tested:

(2) H0: There will be no significant difference between male and female respondents' perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.
H1: There will be a significant difference between male and female respondents' perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.

(3) H0: There will be no significant difference between students with work experience in the industry and those without work experience's perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.
H1: There will be a significant difference between students with work experience in the industry and those without work experience's perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.

(4) H0: There will be no significant difference between freshman and sophomore students' and junior and senior students' perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.
H1: There will be a significant difference between freshman and sophomore students' and junior and senior students' perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.

(5) H0: There will be no significant difference between domestic and international students' perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.

H1: There will be a significant difference between domestic and international students' perceptions of the importance of various aspects of English in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Methodology

To measure the perceptions and attitudes of students currently studying tourism and hospitality management at tertiary level in Japan, a 14-item questionnaire was distributed (Appendix). The items were developed by the authors and then tested by a panel of three experts. All of the items achieved a relevance rating of I-CVI = 1.0 according to Martuza's (1977) Content Validity Index, which Lynn (1986) classifies as appropriate for a panel of less than or equal to five.

The questionnaires were distributed to all of the students (n = 71) in six classes. The classes were all semi-compulsory subjects with a focus on English for tourism and the class sizes ranged from eight to 15. The respondents completed the questionnaires in the last class of the semester, and thus, a total of 71 questionnaires were returned. Independent samples t tests were undertaken to assess the statistical significance of the differences between the students' attitudes to the various dimensions being investigated. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for these tests, where a significance level $p < 0.05$ shows that there is a significant difference at 95% confidence level. For items that were found to produce statistically significant differences, Hedge's g tests were conducted to establish effect size. Hedge's g test was used as it has been argued to provide more accurate results for smaller sample sizes (Grissom & Kim, 2005; McGrath & Meyer, 2006). Furthermore, descriptive analyses, one-way ANOVA tests, and post hoc Tukey HSD tests were conducted to investigate students' perceptions of the importance of five different English skills in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Results

Demographics, work experience, and future career intentions

Table 1 indicates that respondents tended to be male (63.4%), in their first year of study (59.2%), and domestic students (74.6%). The majority of participants do not have previous work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry (66.2%). Of the 33.8% of respondents that did have previous work experience, the jobs ranged from working in administration, in the kitchen and/or bar, on reception, and doing cleaning. The large majority of respondents (91.2%) do intend to work in the industry after graduation.

Table 1. Demographics, work experience, and future career intentions.

	Gender		Current year of study				Student type		Work experience		Intend to work in the tourism and hospitality industry	
	Male	Female	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Domestic	International	Yes	No	Yes	No
N	45	26	42	19	9	1	53	18	24	47	62	6
%	63.4	36.6	59.2	26.8	12.7	1.4	74.6	25.4	33.8	66.2	91.2	8.8

Overall response to Likert scale items

Table 2 indicates that the participants perceived all of the English skills as important. The highest mean scores were for communication (4.57), speaking (4.40), listening (4.26), and the lowest means were 4.09 and 4.04 for reading and writing, respectively.

There was a significant difference between the perceived importance of English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and communication skills in the tourism industry at the $p < 0.05$ level [$F(4,335) = 3.96$, $p = 0.003731$] (Table 3).

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for reading ($M = 4.09$, SD = 0.94) was significantly different than the score for communication ($M = 4.57$, SD = 0.80). A significant difference was also indicated between writing ($M = 4.04$, SD = 0.95) and communication ($M = 4.57$, SD = 0.80). The differences between the other variables were not found to be significant (Table 4).

Overall, the participants in this study indicated that knowing lots of tourism-specific words (4.24) and being confident when using English (4.41) are both very important in the tourism and hospitality industry. It was also indicated that the students felt having a good level of English would help them get a job in the industry (3.82), but that a good level of English was more important for becoming a manager (3.90) (Table 5).

Students that intend to work in the tourism and hospitality industry indicated that English reading and writing skills are more important than students that do not intend to work in the industry. They also indicated that they felt it would be harder to get a job in the tourism industry and to become a manager if they do not have a good level of English than students that do not intend to work in the industry.

Students that do not intend to work in the industry indicated that English listening and speaking skills are more important than students that do intend to work in the industry. They also indicated that knowing lots of tourism-specific vocabulary and being

Table 2. Perceived importance of English skills.

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Communication
Mean	4.26	4.40	4.09	4.04	4.57
SD	0.99	0.85	0.94	0.95	0.80

Table 3. One-way ANOVA test analysis of perceived importance of English skills.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Between-groups	13.0765	4	3.2691	3.96	0.003731
Within-groups	276.4853	335	0.8253		
Total	289.5618	339			

Table 4. Attitudes to other English factors.

	Item			
	Knowing lots of tourism-specific words is very important in the industry	Being confident when using English is very important in the industry	It will be difficult to get a job in the tourism industry if I don't have a good level of English	It will be difficult to become a manager if I don't have a good level of English
Mean	4.24	4.41	3.82	3.90
SD	0.76	0.76	0.99	0.98

Table 5. Responses by future work intentions, gender, and work experience.

	Intend to work in the tourism and hospitality industry					Gender					Work experience				
	Yes		No			Male		Female			Yes		No		
Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-Value	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-Value	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-Value
6	4.26	0.98	4.29	1.11	0.9589	4.29	0.92	4.23	1.11	0.8331	4.29	1.04	4.25	0.97	0.8724
7	4.39	0.86	4.43	0.79	0.9146	4.48	0.74	4.27	1.00	0.3679	4.38	0.88	4.41	0.84	0.8772
8	4.10	0.93	4.00	1.15	0.8341	4.17	0.85	3.96	1.08	0.4140	3.96	1.08	4.16	0.86	0.4382
9	4.10	0.91	3.57	1.27	0.3236	4.14	0.81	3.88	1.14	0.3207	3.96	1.12	4.09	0.86	0.6171
10	4.57	0.81	4.57	0.79	0.9943	4.67	0.61	4.42	1.03	0.2805	4.46	1.02	4.64	0.65	0.4448
11	4.23	0.76	4.29	0.76	0.8573	4.36	0.62	4.04	0.92	0.1250	4.33	0.92	4.18	0.66	0.4788
12	4.38	0.78	4.71	0.49	0.1390	4.45	0.67	4.35	0.89	0.6038	4.50	0.88	4.36	0.69	0.5161
13	3.90	0.93	3.14	1.35	0.1915	3.81	0.99	3.85	1.01	0.8841	3.50	1.18	4.00	0.84	0.0740
14	4.00	0.89	3.00	1.29	0.0882	3.93	0.97	3.85	1.01	0.7411	3.83	1.17	3.93	0.87	0.7195

confident when using English were more important than students that do intend to work in the industry. In relation to English communication skills, equal importance was indicated by both groups. As none of the differences were found to be significant, Hypothesis (1) H0 is accepted.

For all of the Likert scale items except one (item 13), male students attributed more importance to English in the tourism and hospitality industry than female students. However, none of the differences were found to be significant. Thus, Hypothesis (2) H0 is accepted.

Students that have work experience in the industry indicated that they felt English listening, knowing lots of tourism-specific words, and being confident when using English are more important than students that do not have work experience.

Students that do not have work experience in the industry attributed more importance to English speaking, reading, writing, and communication skills than students that do have work experience. They also indicated that they felt it would be harder to get a job in the tourism industry and to become a manager if they do not have a good level of English than students that do have work experience. However, none of the differences were found to be significant. Thus, Hypothesis (3) H0 is accepted (Table 6).

For all of the Likert scale items, freshman and sophomore students indicated that English had more importance in the tourism and hospitality industry than junior and senior students. However, none of the differences were found to be significant. Thus, Hypothesis (4) H0 is accepted.

For all of the Likert scale items, domestic students attributed more importance to English in the tourism and hospitality industry than international students. In relation to item 8 (Good English reading skills are very important in the tourism industry), there was a significant difference in the scores for domestic students (M = 4.26, SD = 0.90) and international students (M = 3.61, SD = 0.92) conditions; $t(28) = 2.6041$, $p = 0.0148$. Conducting a Hedge's g test on this item produced an effect size of $g = 0.718257$, which is interpreted as a medium effect based on Cohen's (1988) suggestions.

In relation to item 9 (Good English writing skills are very important in the tourism industry), there was a significant difference in the scores for domestic students (M = 4.20, SD = 0.88) and international students (M = 3.61, SD = 1.04) conditions; $t(25) = 2.1587$, $p = 0.0412$. Conducting a Hedge's g test on this item produced an effect size of $g = 0.633912$, which is interpreted as a medium effect based on Cohen's (1988) suggestions.

Table 6. Responses by year group and place of origin.

	Year group					Place of origin				
	Freshman and sophomore		Junior and senior			Domestic		International		
Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-Value	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-Value
6	4.22	1.04	3.98	1.13	0.2135	4.40	0.86	3.89	1.23	0.1177
7	4.38	0.89	4.14	0.99	0.5608	4.52	0.76	4.06	1.00	0.0851
8	4.14	0.96	3.77	0.98	0.2469	4.26	0.90	3.61	0.92	0.0148*
9	4.05	1.00	3.77	1.04	0.8375	4.20	0.88	3.61	1.04	0.0412*
10	4.55	0.84	4.28	1.10	0.4408	4.68	0.65	4.28	1.07	0.1499
11	4.26	0.78	4.00	0.97	0.4549	4.28	0.70	4.11	0.90	0.4776
12	4.40	0.79	4.14	1.00	0.6055	4.46	0.73	4.28	0.83	0.4163
13	3.83	0.96	3.49	1.14	0.9474	3.90	0.93	3.61	1.14	0.3450
14	3.93	1.01	3.56	1.07	0.4419	3.90	0.99	3.89	0.96	0.9671

* Significant at $p<0.05$.

As only two of the items produced statistically significant differences, Hypothesis (5) H0 is accepted, except in relation to the importance attributed to English reading and writing.

Discussion

Despite only 33.8% of respondents having previous work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry, 91.2% state that they do intend to work in the industry. This high level of motivation to work in tourism and hospitality needs to be encouraged so that the trend of tourism employers often recruiting nontourism graduates identified by Dale and Robinson (2001) and tourism graduates not entering the industry (Blomme, van Rheede, & Tromp, 2009) can be avoided.

All of the different aspects of English were indicated to be important, which matches the perceptions of current tourism and hospitality employees (Prachanant, 2012). However, overall, there was a statistically significant difference identified between the indicated perceived importance of English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and communication. It was found that the respondents believed English communication skills to be more important in the tourism and hospitality industry than English reading and writing. These findings support previous studies (Bury, 2014; Canale & Swain, 1980) in which the importance of communication within tourism and hospitality courses is highlighted and reflects the perceptions of workers in the industry (Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011; Kay & Russette, 2000). It is imperative that students are encouraged to develop their communicative competencies as the importance the respondents in this study attribute to communication in the tourism and hospitality industry mirrors the significance placed on interpersonal skills by both employers and academics (Goodman & Sprague, 1991; Tas, 1988).

English speaking was indicated to be the second most important and English listening the third most important of the five English skills surveyed. While these findings did not reach statistical significance, they do suggest that oral and aural communicative skills are perceived as more important than reading and writing skills. Reflecting on these findings, it is suggested that, in order to tailor English courses to tourism and hospitality students' perceived needs and interests, and thus increase motivation (Murphy, 2007), educators should include components that focus on communicative competence, speaking, and listening. Learners are exposed to a wide range of challenges when engaging in communicative activities in the classroom, but as the skills practiced in these activities are the most likely to be used in many different contexts within the tourism and hospitality industry (Afzali & Fakharzadeh, 2009; Seong, 2005), enhancing students' understanding of and ability to implement communicative processes must be emphasized (Byram & Buttjes, 1991).

A further interesting finding was that the mean for item 12 "Being confident when using English is very important in the industry" was greater than the mean for any of the skills in items 6–9. This suggests that developing students' confidence in using English should be recognized as an essential factor that needs to be incorporated in English components of tourism and hospitality courses. Significant in the development of confidence is the need for students to understand the tasks they face and believe that they have the capacity to complete them. Key factors in cultivating this are the manner

in which educators respond to and support students' efforts, encourage them to interact with peers and with course materials, and students' self-perceptions. Self-perceptions are important determiners of self-esteem (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003) and self-regulation (Harter & Whitesell, 2003) and impact on the way people approach interactions in different contexts (Nezlek, Kafetsios, & Smith, 2008) and their willingness to engage in communication (Pearson, Nelson,, Titsworth, & Harter, 2011). In the classroom, confidence building and empowering pedagogies typically promote interactions between teachers and students in which all voices are respected (Furman, 2002; Singer & Pezone, 2001). Thus, educators must strive to build inclusive, interpersonal relationships between students and teachers as well as among students (Lynch & Baker, 2005).

A high level of importance was also indicated in relation to knowing lots of tourism-specific vocabulary. It is therefore suggested that a communicative approach to English teaching, which utilizes a range of strategies for the retention of context-specific lexis, such as spaced retrieval (Bury, 2016), should be employed in English tourism and hospitality courses.

Male students indicated an overall greater perceived importance of the various aspects of English than female students, but the results were not statistically significant. This is also true of the differences found between freshman and sophomore students and junior and senior students.

Domestic students indicated a statistically significant greater importance in relation to English reading and writing skills than international students. This could be attributed to many high school English-language textbooks in Japan excluding communicative teaching methodologies and focusing on reading activities and grammar translation (Browne & Wada, 1998) despite emphasis being placed on communicative skills by the Ministry of Education (MEXT, 2011).

Students with work experience indicated greater perceptions of the importance of English listening, knowing tourism-specific vocabulary, and confidence when using English. Although these results were not found to be statistically significant, they are interesting as they present anecdotal evidence that the participants with real-life experience of working in the industry believed the ability to understand English to be more important than the ability to be understood. The results also suggest that confidence when using English and being able to recall context-specific lexical items are very important in providing good service within the industry. These findings further support the suggestion that tourism and hospitality English courses should aim to develop a high level of communicative competence rather than focusing on grammatical accuracy.

The respondents indicated that having a good level of English would benefit them in gaining employment in the tourism and hospitality industry, but that it is more important for managers than general workers. This matches the perceptions of current employees that the extent of the importance of English depends on job function (Ravantharanathe & Syaharom, 2007) and also suggests that as employees gain promotion the perceived importance of English competence increases. It should be noted that students closer to completing their undergraduate courses and students with work experience placed less importance on the influence of English in helping them gain employment in the industry and becoming a manager in the industry than students in the first two years of their courses and those that do not have work experience. This is

an interesting finding and can possibly be attributed to the fact that as students progress through their undergraduate courses at universities in Japan their choices in English courses become more limited as the focus changes to dissertation writing and other vocational skills.

The results outlined in this investigation do have important implications for tourism and hospitality educators, but their limitations must be acknowledged. The perceptions of students from only one university were investigated, and as such, this reduces the overall general effect size of the findings. Furthermore, as the students progress through their undergraduate courses at this particular university, they focus more on thesis writing and job-seeking and the opportunities to study English diminish, a phenomenon that is common at both secondary and tertiary levels in Japan (Burden, 2001; Murphey & Sasaki, 1998). Consequently, as the questionnaires were distributed at the end of six courses with a focus on English for tourism, the participants in this study were strongly skewed to freshman and sophomore students, which further reduces the general effect size of the findings. As a result, it is suggested that further research be undertaken at other universities and colleges to gain a better understanding of tourism and hospitality students in general.

Conclusion

As a consequence of the findings presented in this article, Hypotheses (1) H0, (2) H0, (4) H0, and (5) H0 are all accepted, with no statistically significant differences being identified between the participant variables. In relation to domestic and international students, despite two items being found to have a significant difference, the other surveyed items did not indicate statistical significance, thus, overall, Hypothesis (3) H0 is accepted.

The findings outlined in this article are relevant to tourism and hospitality educators and have important implications as they suggest students perceive English communication skills, confidence when using English, English listening, and English speaking to be most important in the tourism and hospitality industry. It is therefore suggested that the English courses taught as part of tourism and hospitality undergraduate degrees at universities in Japan should incorporate components that focus mainly on these skills.

The participants in this study indicated that English is important as a means of gaining employment in the tourism and hospitality industry. Despite some concerns being raised relating to the overfocus of tourism and hospitality education on business and vocational preparation (Tribe, 2006, 2008) and a lack of more liberal components in tertiary-level curricula (Ring, Dickinger, & Wöber, 2009), it is the authors' view that English-language components of tourism and hospitality courses can be taught in a way that bridges both liberal and practical aspects. This can be achieved by introducing activities classified by Ribe and Vidal (1993) as second- and third-generation tasks, which aim to develop awareness and interpersonal skills in real-world contexts. Furthermore, the communicative activities outlined by Jing (2010) that include giving oral presentations, performing role plays, and having topical discussions related to tourism should be employed.

The English instruction provided to tourism and hospitality undergraduates in Japan needs to be developed in order to reflect the attitudes of the students, and thus emphasis should be placed on communicative competencies. However, it is important that English reading and writing should be sufficiently covered as they were also perceived as important by the students in this study.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix: Tourism English class questionnaire

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Current year of study: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th Other
3. Country of origin: Japan Other
4. Have you worked (part-time or full-time) in the tourism industry? Yes No

If yes, what job did you do? (You can circle more than one answer)

Administration Cleaning Kitchen/bar Reception Other

5. Do you intend to work in the tourism industry after you graduate? Yes No

If Yes, which job? (You can circle more than one answer)

Administration Cleaning Kitchen/bar Reception Other

6. Good English *listening* skills are very important in the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Good English *speaking* skills are very important in the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Good English *reading* skills are very important in the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Good English *writing* skills are very important in the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Good English *communication* skills are very important in the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Knowing lots of tourism-specific words is very important in the industry.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Being confident when using English is very important in the industry.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It will be difficult to get a job in the tourism industry if I don't have a good level of English.	1	2	3	4	5
14. It will be difficult to become a manager if I don't have a good level of English.	1	2	3	4	5

(For items 6–14, 5 = highest, 1 = lowest)

7. Discussion

7.1 Practical contributions

The findings from the publications presented in this thesis and the research that I have done in connection with them have a range of practical implications that contribute to the IFLL field in Japan and internationally. Overall, while not all aspects of the interventions were fully successful, with the need for further training and more collaboration and better communication between English L1 teachers of English (Native Teachers of English in the publications) and Japanese Teachers of English being noted (see also Lassegard & Tajima, 2020), their employment enhanced students' productive output and lexical retrieval, which promotes the development of communicative competence. Furthermore, high levels of satisfaction were indicated, with students and teachers stating that the interventions were engaging, motivating, and had enabled improvements in students' English abilities, SPoA, and LoC when using English. It was also indicated that students would recommend the courses to their friends and teachers would like to teach the courses again. This suggests that their use should be encouraged and incorporated by teachers and education authorities where possible.

7.1.1 Developing productive output

Through my work, it has been demonstrated that the introduction of various interventions, methodologies, and teaching practices can enhance both the amount and quality of students' spoken and written output, make classroom interactions more authentic, and increase student participation, engagement, and willingness to communicate. Furthermore, different speech patterns can be enabled and more communication strategies can be learned and practised, allowing greater flexibility when interacting to be developed, facilitating a shift away from formulaic question and answer-based interactions, thus enhancing communicative competence. In addition, encouraging students to produce different structures and various forms prevents a language from being viewed solely as a classroom subject, or as a "ritual

language" from which their personal experiences are excluded, enabling longer-term success to be achieved (Rampton, 2002, p.511).

It was also indicated that the increased productive oral output fostered in the interventions helped reduce the degree of silence in the IFLL classroom, which has been acknowledged as a source of conflict in the Japanese second language learning context, often being interpreted as a lack of initiative, refusal to participate, or lack of interest and motivation (Harumi, 2011). This potential reduction in conflict can further enable more collaborative learning to take place and facilitate the joint construction of knowledge through inter-mental activity (see Socio-cultural theory, Appendix 2).

Further findings indicated that the interventions increased students' opportunities to produce both spoken and written output in a range of contexts and genres. This is important as it demonstrates ways in which the amount of active participation and contact students have with English, and English teachers, can be increased, which leads to increased practice opportunities and engagement. This increase in meaningful practice and repetition enables the automization of language, enhancing communicative competence (see Information-processing theory, Appendix 2).

Increasing the contexts and genres in which students can engage with English also enables them to develop communicative skills in different domains (Byrnes et al., 2010). This is relevant as a major shift towards online interaction has highlighted the need for students to be able to communicate and produce output in rapidly evolving forms (Prior, 2009) and develop new types of literacies (Cervetti et al., 2006). Since different genres require the use of different linguistic resources, students need to develop the ability to make appropriate linguistic choices and convey meaning in a contextually appropriate manner (Achugar & Colombi, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2004). This has been identified as being especially significant in writing instruction (Ortega, 2012). Consequently, recognition of a genre-based writing pedagogy, such as that presented in the interventions, which emphasizes context (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001), fulfilling reader expectations (Muncie, 2002), communication (Hyland, 2002),

and interaction (Reid, 1995), is growing in Japan (Matsuzawa et al., 2011) and it can be employed as a way of developing students' communicative competence.

Learners in Japanese high schools rarely produce compositions longer than a paragraph (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2002) and when students enter university, where writing in various genres is often critical (Pecorari, 2006), many encounter problems transitioning to the broader academic literacies expected (Kobayashi, 2002), consequently perceiving themselves as unready to complete longer assignments in their university English courses (Kim, 2001). In addition, the heavy emphasis on decontextualized grammatical structures and sentence-level writing found in high schools leads to a separation of language instruction and communicative writing, which means students are unable to apply their language knowledge in a practical way, despite being able to complete grammar exercises correctly in examinations (Gebhard et al., 2013). The introduction of storytelling, the speech contest preparation and task-based survey and presentation courses, and the writing contest outlined in Bury (2016) (see Appendix 10) addressed this issue, enabling students to practise and gain confidence planning and producing longer compositions. This is crucial as writing instruction that covers both lexico-grammatical forms and free composition requires students to deal with higher-order concerns, such as content, genre, and context, enhancing the development of communicative skills (Williams, 2012). It also allows Swain's (1995) three functions of productive output to be covered. Additionally, the nature of the interventions, which included group work and negotiation, enabled the principles of active learning, group investigation, problem-based learning, empowerment, and engagement (see Publication 1) to be activated.

As students worked towards communicative goals in the interventions, they engaged in interactions that had authentic targets and outcomes, which allowed them to understand their classmates more and both express and hear genuine feelings and opinions. This is a key finding as it highlights a way in which a learning environment that encourages collaborative interaction can be constructed, which can provide more opportunities for scaffolding and can enhance the development of ideas, confidence,

and willingness to communicate (see Appendices 2 and 4). Furthermore, the setting of authentic goals allows students to use the communicative skills they have learned in real-world situations, which consolidates knowledge (Bereiter, 2002), increases motivation and engagement (Alan & Stoller, 2005), highlights the nature of writing as a communication tool and social act (Swales, 1990), and has been shown to be beneficial for overall language development (Robinson, 2011). Authenticity of goals is also connected to perceived meaningfulness, which is an important factor in developing situational interest (Harackiewicz et al., 2000), enhancing autonomy, feelings of communal belonging, and active academic engagement (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; see also Publication 1). The active engagement of students in their learning has been linked to higher educational achievement, positive attitudes to learning, and increased self-efficacy (Skinner et al., 2009).

7.1.2 Developing lexical retrieval

The research also indicated that utilizing spaced retrieval methods when recycling lexical items led to better performance on vocabulary tests than when following massed retrieval schedules, supporting findings that employing spaced retrieval schemes strengthens retrieval routes (Baddeley, 2007). This is important not only in Japan, but also in other educational contexts in which testing plays a major role. However, possibly more significantly, due to the essential role vocabulary knowledge plays in L2 acquisition and the development of communicative competence, the findings suggest that spaced retrieval methods should be considered when teaching lexical items and developing materials in all language contexts.

A further insight gained from the research was that incorporating methods such as Byrnes' (2006) streamlined natural approach, targeted vocabulary instruction (Huang & Liou, 2007), planned progression for the increase in complexity of texts, and employing synchronous and asynchronous tasks (Sotillo, 2000) and second and third generation tasks (Ribé & Vidal, 1993), enabled high-frequency words to be introduced and recycled and task-cycling to be utilized in courses (see Appendix 6). This is a significant finding as it facilitates Stahl and Fairbanks' (1986) three main

principles of effective vocabulary instruction, that both definitional and contextual information be taught, depth of processing be encouraged, and students be provided with multiple encounters with words, preferably in multiple contexts (Pashler et al., 2005). According to encoding variability theory (e.g., Bray et al., 1976), simply incorporating multiple retrieval opportunities into a course is insufficient to guarantee development of lexical retrieval as the nature and effectiveness of the retrieval that occurs is also important (Benjamin & Tullis, 2010). Consequently, the planning of not just when, but also how, vocabulary will be learned needs to follow a principled and informed approach in order to aid the development of lexical retention and retrieval (Webb & Chang, 2012). The incorporation of task-cycling achieved this by effectively varying the environmental and contextual differences between retrieval opportunities. It also helped avoid exposing students to vocabulary that is too challenging, which can be overwhelming and demotivating (Huang & Liou, 2007), negatively affecting the overall learning process (Fulcher, 1997). As a result, the courses in which those methods were used were well-received by students and teachers and regarded as having positively impacted students' SPoA in knowledge of vocabulary and LoC in using English vocabulary.

7.1.3 Developing self-perceptions of ability (SPoA) and levels of confidence (LoC)

The findings from the publications demonstrate that the interventions had an overall positive influence on students' SPoA and LoC. This enhanced students' willingness to communicate, which encouraged participation in interactions and, therefore, the development of communicative competence (see Appendix 4). While this is of particular significance in the Japanese context, where students are often perceived as timid, shy, reticent, and uncommunicative (Cutrone, 2009; Saito & Ebsworth, 2004), it does have similar implications for students and educators internationally.

Findings also indicated that the introduction of the interventions provided students with valuable opportunities to express and engage with genuine feelings and opinions, learn more about their classmates, and also improve self-perceptions of

knowledge and expertise regarding class material. This enabled students to view their own abilities more positively, which can enhance self-confidence (Nezlek et al., 2008) and lead to a reduction in both debilitating and state anxiety (see Appendix 4). Furthermore, it allowed students to create and develop ideas collectively, build bonds, and realize that their individual experiences are not isolated events (see also Coulter et al., 2007), building on Socio-cultural theory, the Interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996), and collaborative learning theories (see Appendix 2). This can lead to the personalization of the language students produce, which can increase a sense of ownership over work and facilitate a transition away from dependency on teachers (Fewell, 2010).

Improved SPoA and LoC were generally indicated for all skills, but particularly in relation to productive skills. This supports the position that the methods used in the interventions should be considered in courses where productive output is a goal.

7.2 Theoretical contributions

The work and research presented in this thesis has also made a theoretical contribution to the field of IFLL. Overall, the influence of the interventions and employment of different teaching practices on students' learning outcomes and experiences provide evidentiary support for theories of classroom discourse in which the teaching methodologies employed by educators impact strongly on how students perform in class and how they approach future interaction (Harmer, 2007; Scrivener, 2011).

Furthermore, the work adds empirical evidence in support of the Output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995; see Appendix 2), in which producing varied output enhances accuracy and fluency, enabling deeper understanding and comprehension to be gained (Nation & Newton, 2009). It also adds validation in this context to the Interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996), which states that when learners are encouraged to interact, deeper levels of comprehension can be attained. Additional

evidence was also added in support of task-cycling, study-phase retrieval, and the spacing effect.

This body of work was undertaken in relatively new and unexplored contexts in terms of investigating and applying theories of collaborative learning. By investigating how interactive, safe learning environments which encourage personalized language production, allow more developed ideas to be produced, enable more effective communication, and improve students' confidence when communicating (Brown et al., 2001; Hedge, 2000) can be constructed, the publications presented in this thesis address a gap in knowledge. This further builds on Socio-cultural theory, the Interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996), and collaborative learning theories (see Appendix 2).

As stated in Section 1.2, one of my central beliefs is the importance of living educational theory (Whitehead, 1993; McNiff, 1995) which asserts that the values and opinions of educators are often negated or denied. This work has shown that the way in which the people who are most affected by interventions view them is key to their success and investigating students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions could lead to courses that are more relevant, enjoyable, and motivating being provided and to enhanced student-teacher relationships (Cowie, 2011; Kimura et al., 2001), which is also a valuable contribution.

An additional theoretical contribution is the support this work adds to the explicit need for a link between academia and practice, which is discussed further in Section 7.3.

7.3 Methodological contributions

The provision of quality language education is increasingly being acknowledged as a human right (Little, 2019). As teachers' behaviours, methodologies, and approaches impact students' language learning, shaping responses to instruction and attitudes

towards communication (Mondada & Doehler, 2005), they are major factors that affect the realization of achieving a high-quality of education.

In order to address this and encourage the development of communicative competence, it is important that educators trial and investigate the impact of new approaches and behaviours. While this is especially pertinent in a context where many graduates do not reach a level of communicative competence deemed satisfactory by MEXT (Shimizu, 2006) despite goals of internationalizing Japanese education (Seargeant, 2009), the importance of regularly updating curricula to incorporate a variety of emerging evidence-based pedagogical approaches has been noted internationally (Barron et al., 2007).

However, factors such as teachers viewing the introduction of new approaches as an implicit criticism of their current approaches and a challenge to their perceptions of status can prevent change from being achieved or even attempted (Craig, 2012). Furthermore, some teachers may lack confidence in, or knowledge of, the best way to introduce new approaches and view the possible benefits of implementing change as not worth the effort needed (Kavanagh, 2012). Consequently, employing highly structured tasks in class that focus on the transmission of grammatical knowledge appears safer and makes fewer demands on teachers' ability to implement communicative teaching methodologies (Takanashi, 2004), an area in which many JTEs have indicated less confidence (Nishino, 2008). Thus, a trend of teachers defaulting to the traditional grammar translation methodologies they themselves were taught perpetuates the status quo (Laurier et al., 2011). Also, in environments where students have been indicated to display high uncertainty avoidance, such as Japan (Duronto et al., 2005; Porcaro, 2001), new approaches implemented in classes can be rejected. It has therefore been claimed that IFLL teachers in Japan require more extensive training in communicative practices for MEXT's revised language policy guidelines to be effectively implemented, but that this is not forthcoming (Kizuka, 2006). This could also be true of other countries in the East Asian region, where similar language policies have been introduced (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

This is where the main methodological contributions of this body of work can be identified. According to Buckler et al. (2009), educators need to understand connections between practice and theory, and draw on a range of sources, evidence, and specialist expertise in order to successfully adopt new teaching practices. However, many educators view a lot of research as sanitized, decontextualized, and detached from the problems and realities of their practice (Kramsch, 2015; Rose & McKinley, 2017). Even where teachers are willing and interested in engaging with the research, Marsden and Kasprowicz (2017) found very limited exposure or engagement, with many teachers not being aware of, or lacking access to, it (Sato & Loewen, 2019). This gap between research and practice has led to educators feeling disconnected from major decisions that shape the profession and the research that informs them, despite TESOL traditionally being a discipline led by teachers (McKinley, 2019).

Although the importance of investigating theory and linking it to practice is widely acknowledged in academia, Cordingley (2015) states that there is still a need for complex notions to be shared in a way that makes them more accessible to, and valued by, practitioners. It is therefore important that teachers engage in their own practitioner-research, investigating research questions that are driven by practice-based problems and focus on enhancing overall knowledge of the issues affecting real-life language teaching (Rose, 2019).

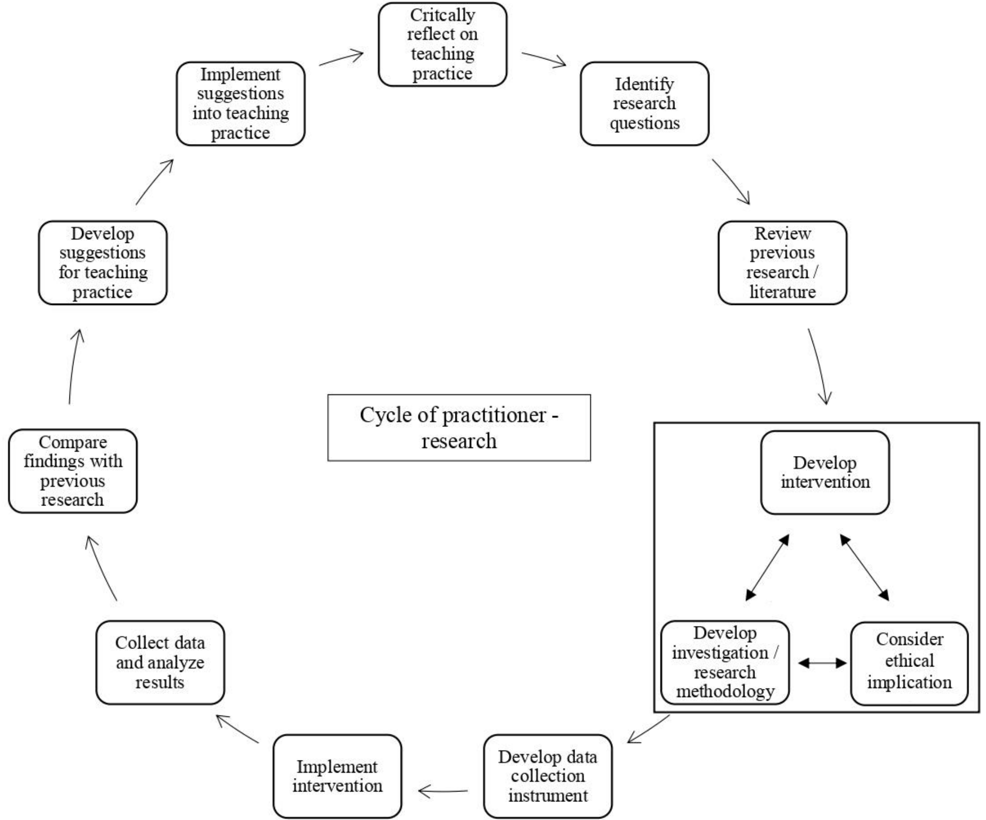
In the research presented in this thesis, I attempted to do that by examining a range of different concepts, theories, and hypotheses to create a way of changing classroom practice that could then be disseminated in order to enable the enhanced development of students' communicative competence. It was hoped that conducting and sharing this research could scaffold the growth of teachers' approaches (see Cordingley et al., 2007, as cited in Cordingley, 2015) and that the collating of this body of work could lead to the extensive benefits of engaging with research identified by Bell et al. (2010). These include improved achievement, attainment, and engagement for learners, and increased differentiation, willingness to experiment, and diversification of learning activities employed by teachers.

The work presented in this thesis aims to inform teacher practice and educational policy by providing both objective information about alternative approaches and practical activities that can be used in and out of the classroom. In this way, I have tried to share good practice with teachers and highlight the positive outcomes that can be gained from conducting practitioner-research. After all, teachers who rarely encounter alternative practices cannot be expected to be effective agents of change (Gallimore & Stigler, 2003) and be encouraged to engage in their own practitioner-research.

Engaging in practitioner-research has a range of benefits, such as enabling the linking of theory and practice, helping educators move towards becoming ‘holistic TESOL professional’ (McKinley, 2019, p. 879), and promoting effective teaching practice that enhances our students’ learning experiences. However, starting this process and conducting research alone and without guidance can be difficult and daunting. In view of this, I have developed the Cycle of practitioner-research presented in Figure 1. It is hoped that this will motivate and help other teachers start and continue on the pathway of practitioner-research that I have found so fulfilling, enlightening, and rewarding.

Figure 1

Cycle of practitioner-research



8. Conclusion

In this thesis, ten main publications and 11 appendices focusing on the development of communicative competence in the instructed foreign language learning environment in Japan have been presented. The overarching themes between and within the body of work which summarize the contributions to knowledge and practical implications have been highlighted and discussed.

The findings discussed in the publications included in this thesis demonstrate that the interventions introduced can positively impact students' development of communicative competence, facilitated through enhanced productive output and lexical retrieval, and also students' SPoA and LoC. In doing so, they highlight practical methods that teachers can employ to develop their students' communicative competence in the absence of training or more explicit guidelines being provided by MEXT. The variety of factors which affect IFLL means that there will never be one best approach. Nevertheless, the research presented in this thesis has contributed to enhanced recognition of the value of core principles, namely maximizing productive output, developing lexical retrieval, and enhancing students' SPoA and LoC.

It has been argued that productive output, lexical retrieval, and students' self-perceptions of ability and levels of confidence can be encouraged and enhanced by adjusting teacher behaviour, employing the methods described in the interventions in the publications, and providing more opportunities for students to engage with different teaching approaches and contexts. As these are key components of developing communicative competence, which is a major goal both of MEXT in Japan and other education authorities globally, it is suggested that the interventions in the publications be seriously considered in both Japanese and wider contexts. It has also been demonstrated that the interventions were positively viewed by both students and teachers and were indicated to be valuable additions to the courses and curriculums being taught. This further supports the view that, despite possible barriers to the employment of such interventions, they are worthwhile and their implementation should be seriously considered.

This body of work has major implications in terms of practical application, providing access to research on alternative teaching practices and introducing a variety of activities, courses, and materials, that can be employed by educators both in Japan and internationally. It also contributes to theory by extending a range of concepts, theories, and approaches, including the Output hypothesis, Interaction hypothesis, Information-processing theory, study-phase retrieval, and the spacing effect, by adding empirical evidence. Furthermore, the introduction of the Cycle of practitioner-research (see Figure 1) makes a major methodological contribution and has the potential to motivate other educators to embark on a similar journey to my own and experience the many benefits that it has brought.

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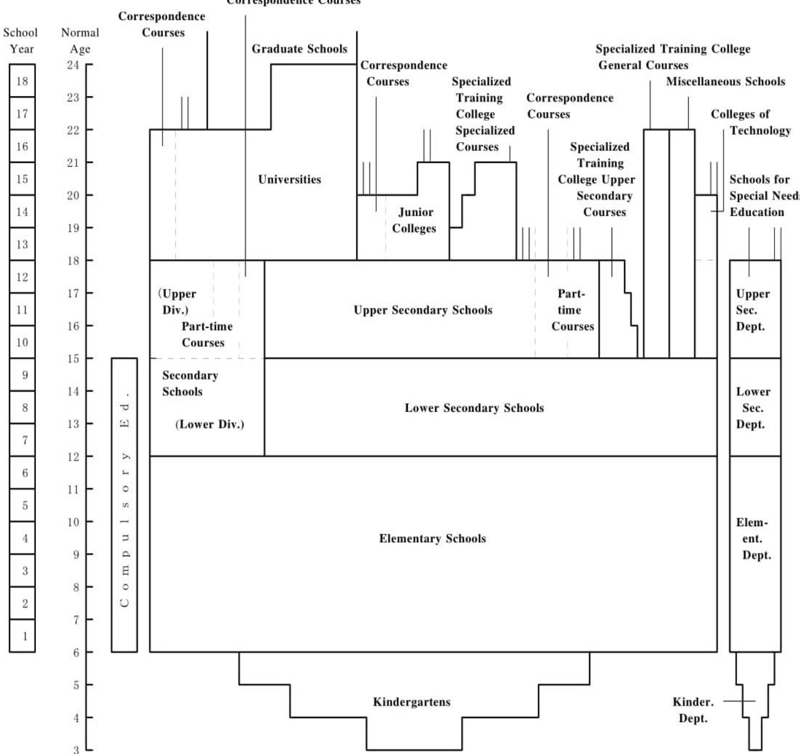
Appendix 1 – Overview of the Japanese education system

Overview of the Japanese education system (MEXT, 2012, p.4)

In Japan, higher education starts upon completion of a total of 12 years of primary education (6 years in elementary school) and secondary education (three years respectively in both lower and upper secondary schools). Japanese higher education institutions include universities awarding bachelor's, master's, doctor's and professional degrees, junior colleges awarding associate's degree, and colleges of technology, where lower secondary school graduates are admitted and receive practical and creative completion education throughout a five-year period, and specialized training colleges (specialized schools) which offer specialized courses for the purpose of developing professional or practical abilities or to foster culture.

Organization of the School System in Japan



○ Academic degrees awarded by higher education institutions and the standard periods required to obtain such degrees

University	Bachelor's degree	Four years
Graduate school	Master's degree	Two years
	Doctor's degree	Five years
	Professional degree	Two years
Junior college	Associate's degree	Two or three years

※Of undergraduate courses, the standard period of those of medicine, dental surgery, pharmacy to nurture pharmacists, and veterinary science is six years, while the standard period of doctoral courses based on such undergraduate courses is four years.

○ Degrees awarded by higher education institutions and standard periods required to obtain such degrees

College of technology	Associate's degree	Five years
Specialized school	Specialist's degree	Two or three years
	High-level specialist's degree	Four years

※Degrees of specialist and high-level specialist shall be given to graduates of specialized schools that can meet certain standards designated by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Appendix 2 - Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Productive output

Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Productive output

Concept / Theory / Hypothesis	Main ideas related to this theme
Acquisition – learning hypothesis Input hypothesis	- Productive output occurs as a result of building competence through engagement with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). - Provided affective filters are not negatively affecting students' engagement levels, exposure to comprehensible input enables successful second language acquisition (Krashen, 1985).
Output hypothesis	- Focusing only on comprehensible input without providing learners with opportunities to produce output is insufficient for accuracy and fluency to be achieved (Swain, 1985, 1995). - Producing output pushes learners to undertake syntactic level processing, thus enhancing accuracy and fluency and enabling a deeper understanding and competence to be gained (Ellis, 2003; Nation & Newton, 2009; Swain, 2005).
Three functions of productive output (Also Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis)	- In Swain's (1995) 3-stage process (the noticing function, hypothesis-testing function, and metalinguistic function), producing output enables learners to become conscious of gaps in their understanding of the language they are studying (Achard & Niemeier, 2004), to experiment with and reformulate target forms following feedback from interlocutors (Panova & Lyster, 2002), and to reflect on, discuss, and analyse language that they, or others, have produced (Swain, 1998).
Information – processing theory (Also ACT* Model (Anderson, 1983))	- Communicative competence consists of both declarative knowledge (knowing that) and procedural knowledge (knowing how) (Mitchell et al., 2013). - Productive output, facilitated through meaningful practice and repetition, is vital in developing procedural knowledge as it enables a shift from controlled to automatic processing to be made (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). It is this transition that leads to the automatization of language that enhances communicative competence and allows higher level lexis and structures to be learned (DeKeyser, 2005, 2007; Lightbown, 2008; Segalowitz, 2003).
Interaction hypothesis	- Investigating the interactions that learners participate in leads to a greater understanding of the nature and impacts of input on IFLL. - When learners are encouraged to interact with interlocutors and negotiate meaning, deeper levels of comprehension can be attained as input can be queried, recycled, and paraphrased (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996). - Encouraging interaction, and thus productive output, can push learners to amend their hypotheses about the language they are studying, which enables them to address gaps in understanding and develop communicative competence (see Swain's (1995) three functions of productive output above).

Socio-cultural theory	- Interaction enables the joint construction of knowledge through inter-mental activity in students' Zones of Proximal Development, which is then individually internalized (Nassaji & Swain, 2000).
Classroom discourse	- The language used by teachers, such as different discourse moves (examined in Publications 3 and 4) and increased incidental classroom English (examined in Publications 2 and 6), during communicative activities and classroom interactions, strongly impacts on how students perform at that time, and how they behave in future interactions (Harmer, 2007; Scrivener, 2011).
Collaborative interaction and enabling behaviours	- As not all learners are comfortable interacting in a foreign language, it is imperative that instructors' behaviours enable students to practise freely and openly without fear (Brown et al., 2001; Hedge, 2000). - Scaffolding, mediated language, and collaborative talk can be employed to enable the successful construction of environments in which collaborative interaction can take place (Ohta, 2000), providing students with a safe opportunity to experiment with ideas before using them in real-world, authentic situations (see Swain's (1995) hypothesis-testing function above). This can lead to more developed ideas being produced, greater confidence, and more effective communication.

Appendix 3 - Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Lexical retrieval [1]

Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Lexical retrieval [1]

Concept / Theory / Hypothesis	Main ideas related to this theme
Knowledge of vocabulary	- Knowledge of vocabulary is a complex construct (Read, 2000) which involves numerous types of word knowledge, such as form, meaning, and use, and comprehension of both receptive and productive functions (Nation, 2001). - It encompasses both breadth of knowledge (vocabulary size) and depth, and provides the basis upon which language can be learned and processed (Graves, 2009), playing an essential role in IFLL (Cameron, 2001). - Vocabulary knowledge is also central to foreign language learning as it critically impacts on whether input is comprehensible, and thus, useful and meaningful to the learner's language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). - Students place significant importance on vocabulary knowledge and show particular interest in receiving vocabulary instruction (Read, 2004).
Minimalist Program	- Languages are different from one another only because their lexicons are different, and, therefore, all that language acquisition requires is the learning of the lexicon (Chomsky, 1995, 2000).
Vocabulary knowledge and comprehension	- A positive correlation between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension has been found both in general contexts (Schmitt et al., 2001) and in examinations (Alavi & Akbarian, 2012; Kameli & Baki, 2013) with vocabulary size regarded as a significant predictor of both overall academic success and successful foreign language learning (Daller & Phelan, 2013; Daller & Wang, 2017). - Certain vocabulary sizes are necessary to achieve comprehension in different contexts (e.g., Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003; Nation, 2011; Schmitt, 2008), ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 word families (the base, inflected, and derived forms of a word) for basic everyday conversation, to 10,000 word families to cover most language contexts.
Vocabulary knowledge and communicative competence	- Vocabulary knowledge is not only important in relation to receptive skills, but is also vital in determining communicative competence (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000). - Adequate vocabulary knowledge is necessary to produce both spoken and written output successfully (e.g., Gu, 2003; Read, 2000; Tellier, 2008). Consequently, learners' vocabulary development is fundamental in aiding the development of their global language proficiency (Zhang & Graham, 2020). - Teaching vocabulary is a crucial aspect of IFLL (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Thornbury, 2002) and should be reflected as such in curriculums (Wilkins, 1972).
Recycling / Repeated	- Vocabulary learning is a process which takes time, practice, and repetition (Nakata, 2006), with lexical items being learned through numerous exposures (Schmitt, 2000).

encounters with lexical items	- A single encounter with an item is insufficient for all aspects of word knowledge to be acquired (Schmitt, 2007), especially when the purpose is productive output as vocabulary items must not only be recognized, they must be readily accessible and retrievable (Baddeley, 1990). - Positive effects of increased exposure to lexical items have been demonstrated in incidental (Hulstijn et al., 1996) and intentional vocabulary learning (Folse, 2004), and multiple exposures can enhance the ability of learners to recognize meaning and recall items (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010; Webb, 2007). - Repeated encounters with words do not just consolidate the form–meaning link, but also enhance depth of knowledge by adding to the quality, quantity, and strength of understanding (Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Nation, 2001). - The implementation of recycling to consolidate previously studied words can be more important than teaching new words, as not recycling can lead to partially-known words being forgotten, which negates the time and effort previously spent learning them (Nation, 1990). This can then lead to feelings of frustration and fossilization. - Incorporating effective recycling throughout a course is often difficult to achieve, especially when attempting to find the optimal balance between effortful retrieval and limiting the likelihood of unsuccessful retrieval or complete forgetting (Kasprowicz et al., 2019).
Connectionist approach	- Learning occurs as a result of associative processes and links between elements being constructed in the brain (Ellis, 2003; Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986). These links become stronger in a gradual and cumulative process as the associations are repeated, and they also become part of larger networks as connections between elements increase (Joanisse & McClelland, 2015). - In the context of IFLL, the reactivation of vocabulary (Sökmen, 1997) enhances procedural knowledge of lexical items as each successful retrieval strengthens its connection, making future retrievals easier (Baddeley, 1990).
Study-phase retrieval (Also reminding)	- Successful retrieval of a previously learnt item strengthens the representation of that item (Benjamin & Tullis, 2010; Toppino & Bloom, 2002).
Retrieval practice effect	- Most forgetting occurs soon after the first encounter with an item, so the first recyclings are particularly important and need to occur as soon as possible (Baddeley, 1990).
Spacing effect	- After the initial meeting with a new lexical item, gradually increasing intervals between recycled encounters, through planned spaced repetition, results in more secure learning that will be remembered for a longer period of time than massed repetition or words being presented at regular intervals (Carpenter, 2017; Li & DeKeyser, 2019; Toppino & Gerbier, 2014). [This has been contested in other research (e.g. Rogers & Cheung, 2018; Suzuki, 2017), especially when there is a focus on short-term vocabulary gains (Serrano & Huang, 2018)]. - Finding optimal spacing schedules is difficult (Toppino & Bloom, 2002) and requires substantial planning, especially in the IFLL context where there are often major time constraints which limit the number of explicit recyclings that can be incorporated into a course (Swanson & Mason, 2018). Furthermore, quantifying the amount and frequency of

repetitions necessary for a lexical item to be acquired is problematic. This is because learner variables, such as age and previous vocabulary knowledge, treatment variables, such as mode of input and engagement, and methodological variables, such as test format and preparation, all play significant roles in vocabulary learning (DeKeyser, 2005; Rogers, 2017; Uchihara et al., 2019).

Appendix 4 - Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Self-perceptions of ability (SPoA) and levels of confidence (LoC)

Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Self-perceptions of ability (SPoA) and levels of confidence (LoC).

Concept / Theory / Hypothesis	Main concepts related to this theme
Self-perceptions of ability	- SPoA play an important role in the development of self-regulation, reading ability (Harter & Whitesell, 2003), and the way people approach communication (Nezlek et al. 2008). - SPoA and LoC, which are closely related to the construct of anxiety, directly impact on the way students act and engage with second language learning activities (Paris et al., 2012), academic achievement, willingness to communicate, and sustained long-term skill-enhancement (Craven & Marsh, 2008; Craven & Yeung, 2008; Marsh & Martin, 2011).
Anxiety and motivation	- Student attitudes, SPoA, and LoC are central in determining levels of motivation, which is a critical factor of successful language acquisition (Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Zhou, 2016). - When forced to produce the language they are learning, students can feel that they are representing themselves badly, increasing debilitating state anxiety, which reduces the benefits gained from practising the language being learned (Nascente, 2001). - Language learning anxiety generally adversely impacts on foreign language performance (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) and negatively influences the communication strategies learners employ with anxious learners less likely to take risks in the language class (Ely, 1986), producing fewer interpretive and more concrete messages than relaxed learners (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986). - Given the significance of motivation in language learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002), it is logical to assume that motivation impacts heavily on vocabulary learning, especially as it is a gradual process that must be studied over an extended period of time.
Model of L2 willingness to communicate	- SPoA, anxiety, attitudes towards the learning situation, and motivation all impact on the Willingness to Communicate construct (L2 WTC) developed by MacIntyre and Charos (1996, as cited in Yashima, 2002). - The more motivated and less anxious a learner is and the greater their SPoA are, the greater their willingness to communicate and participate in interactions in a L2 will be (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2002). This influences how frequently they will produce output and communicate in the language they are studying (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Clément, 1996), a major indicator of reaching a higher proficiency (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001).

Appendix 5 - Self-perceptions of ability (SPoA) and levels of confidence (LoC) in the Japanese context

In Japan, Brown et al. (2001) found that students were anxious in general, but particularly in regards to oral participation in class (see Section 2.2). This is supported by findings that language learning anxiety for Japanese learners is most often associated with output-related tasks, and Horwitz et al.'s (1986) three performance anxieties (communication apprehension, social evaluation, and test anxiety) are all commonly cited sources of anxiety (Burden, 2004; Williams & Andrade, 2008). Further investigations into second language motivation and anxiety in Japan have identified six major influencing factors (see Table below) (Arai, 2004; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Hasegawa, 2004; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2007; McClelland, 2000; Tsuchiya, 2006; Yashima, 2000; Zhang, 2007).

Major factors influencing Japanese L2 learners' motivation and anxiety.

Factor	Aspects
1. Teachers	Teachers' attitude, teaching competence, language proficiency, personality, and teaching style.
2. Class characteristics	Course contents and pace, focus of tasks, variety of tasks.
3. Experiences of failure	Disappointing test scores, lack of acceptance by teachers and others, low SPoA.
4. Class environment	Attitude of friends and classmates, compulsory nature of English study, inactive classes, inadequate use of audio–visual equipment.
5. Class materials	Unsuitable or uninteresting materials (e.g., inappropriate level, too many handouts)
6. Lack of interest	Lack of practical application of English, little desire to interact with English-speaking people.

Studies indicate that second language learning anxiety can be effectively managed (Stroud & Wee, 2006), and it has been reported that when Japanese university students' self-confidence is increased, their second language proficiency and participation in speaking activities improved (Tajima, 2002; Tani Fukuchi & Sakamoto, 2005). It is therefore crucial that IFLL teachers in Japan employ classroom activities and behaviours that address these factors in order to raise students' LoC and, consequently, decrease English language anxiety.

Appendix 6 - Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Lexical retrieval [2]

Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Lexical retrieval [2].

Concept / Theory / Hypothesis	Main concepts related to this theme
Depth of processing hypothesis	- Mental activities requiring more elaborate thought, manipulation, or processing facilitate better learning (Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995). - For productive mastery to be achieved, learners need to avoid relying solely on receptive exposure and engage in productive tasks that encourage deeper semantic processing (Lee, 2003; Lee & Muncie, 2006). Therefore, varied approaches need to be utilized with careful consideration of the quality, frequency, and focus of the activities being employed (Hulstijn, 2001).
Task-cycling and transfer appropriate processing	- Employing tasks which balance focus on pedagogical goals (Skehan, 1998), highlight the importance of pre-task planning (Skehan & Foster, 2001), and utilize both synchronous and asynchronous tasks (Sotillo, 2000) leads to better learning. - Implementation of a wide variety of activities enables learners to develop more in-depth and contextualized representations of learned material (Lightbown, 2008). - Using diverse tasks positively affects active participation, engagement, and motivation (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Webb, 2005). - Once learners have had opportunities to process new items as input, switching to productive activities that involve more elaboration on meaning and production will improve the chances of future recall (Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995).
Involvement load	- Making learners work harder to retrieve information by employing diversified practice contexts increases 'Involvement Load' (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001), i.e. the amount of need, search, and evaluation necessary for successful completion of an activity. This results in better long-term retention (Bjork & Bjork, 2014) and consequently lexical retrieval.
Forced output	- Forced output during the initial stages of learning new words should be limited as learners cannot produce a new word unless they have had enough opportunities to begin to encode word forms, activate word meanings, and make appropriate connections between form and meaning (Barcroft, 2008). - Tasks that involve forced output and semantic elaboration during this initial stage could overload processing capacity, thus diminishing the amount of information that can be encoded (Barcroft, 2008). Consequently, substantial planning of which activities to use and when must be undertaken to encourage effective development of lexical retrieval.

Appendix 7 – Concepts, theories, and hypotheses that informed the interventions – Student and teacher perceptions

Students' perceptions

Research into student beliefs about language learning is important as it helps teachers understand students' "expectations of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with language classes" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 283). Furthermore, it can enhance classroom instruction and learning experiences by improving student-teacher interactions, highlighting differences between student and teacher beliefs, and helping to avoid any tension caused by gaps between student and teacher views (Matsuura et al., 2001; Saito & Ebsworth, 2004). Bridging the gap between students' and teachers' goals, objectives, and perceptions of learning can only be achieved when learners' attitudes and preferences are known (Rao, 2002). Therefore, it is important that educators assess and evaluate students' beliefs and perceptions of English programs, teaching interventions, and overall perceptions of English. This will also allow them to modify their courses if necessary in order to improve participation and engagement (Lochland, 2012).

Teachers' perceptions

Teaching is "irretrievably emotional" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 812) and may be especially so for second language teachers who, as well as experiencing the anxieties and excitement of teaching itself, may also face extra emotional challenges to their self-identity, such as potential criticisms or overt questioning of their cultural beliefs or norms (Cowie, 2011). A major theme in studies on emotion and teaching is the impact of school reform, usually large-scale educational change instituted by national governments (Darby, 2008; Lasky, 2000; Schmidt, 2000). Mainstream, government-level educational changes often focus on the rational and cognitive processes that lead to educational improvements, placing relatively little emphasis on the emotional processes, despite them also being pivotal in enabling teachers and students to improve their performance (Hargreaves, 2000, 2005). Many studies indicate negative

links between enforced teacher development, educational change, and emotions (Bibby, 1999), leading to researchers stressing that embracing affective domains is an essential part of teacher training and preparation (Shoffner, 2009; Zembylas, 2007).

As the most local agents of curriculum change (Freeman, 1998), teachers are particularly sensitive to effects that will “complicate or destabilize their relations with pupils and colleagues” (Reynolds & Saunders, 1987, p.197). Furthermore, regardless of qualifications, teaching context, or level of experience, teachers are viewed as messengers of new policies, and as such, are often held responsible for their outcomes (Laurier et al., 2011). It is therefore imperative not only that new policies be clearly explained and guidelines on how to effectively implement them be given, but also that teacher feedback is collected and acted upon.

Appendix 8 - Pedagogical implications – Textbooks

1. Bury, J., Sellick, A. & Horiuchi, K. (2022). コミュニケーションのための実践演習 Book 1〈初級編〉 *Complete Communication Book 1*. Seibido.

2. Bury, J., Sellick, A. & Horiuchi, K. (2002). コミュニケーションのための実践演習 Book 2〈初級編〉 *Complete Communication Book 2*. Seibido.

3. Sellick, A., Bury, J., & Horiuchi, K. (2021). 新たな時代への扉 *Grand tour – Seeing the world*. Seibido.

4. Bury, J., Sellick, A., & Yoshida, S. (2019). *Expanding Classroom Language: Bilingual Readings for Teachers of English* [Digital], Kindle Press.

5. Sellick, A., Benthien, G., Bury, J., Iwasaki, E., & Yoshida, T. (2019). *Games for the Language Classroom: A Bilingual Guide for Teachers of English*, [Digital], Kindle Press.

6. Sellick, A., Bury, J., & Yoshida, S. (2016). *Classroom English: Bilingual Handbooks for English Teachers.* Shumei University Press.

Appendix 9 - Pedagogical implications – Teaching ideas and classroom activities

1. Bury, J. (2020a). Finding another way. In J. Talandis, J. Ronald, D. Fujimoto & N. Ishihara (Eds.), *Pragmatics undercover: The search for natural talk in EFL textbooks* (pp. 74-78). Pragmatics Special Interest Group of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT).

2. Bury, J. (2020b). The questionless conversation. In J. Talandis, J. Ronald, D. Fujimoto & N. Ishihara (Eds.), *Pragmatics undercover: The search for natural talk in EFL textbooks* (pp. 96-103). Pragmatics Special Interest Group of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT).

3. Bury, J. (2020). Jumbled question dictation. *The Language Teacher, 44*(3), 26-27. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT44.3

4. Bury, J. (2019). Stating reasons to agree and disagree. *The Language Teacher, 43*(4), 17-18. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT43.4

5. Bury, J. (2018). Dice question rotation. *The Language Teacher, 42*(4), 29-30. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT42.4

6. Bury, J. (2017). Discussing, deciding, and reporting: Dilemmas. *The Language Teacher, 41*(6), 26-27. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT41.6

7. Bury, J. (2015). Working with dialogues – A tourism job fair. *Humanising Language Teaching*, *17*(1). http://www.hltmag.co.uk/feb15/index.htm

8. Bury, J., & Sellick, A. (2015). Introducing lesson topics and context specific lexis. *The Language Teacher, 39*(3), 17-18. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT39.3

Appendix 10 - Related publications

Bury, J. (2019). The effects of different discourse moves on students' oral output. *The Language Teacher, 43*(3), 3-7. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT43.3

Bury, J., & Sellick, A. (2016). Introducing and implementing a writing contest at a six year Japanese high school. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *4*(3), 551-559.

Sellick, A., & Bury, J. (2014). Encouraging incidental English communication in Japanese English classes, Part 1: Student attitudes. *Shumei University Journal*, *11*, 167-190.

Appendix 11 – Related presentations

1. Bury, J. (2019, November 2). *Finding Another Way* [Presentation at Pragmatics Undercover Forum], JALT 2019, Nagoya: WINC AICHI.

2. Bury, J. (2019, June 22). *Using dilemmas to stimulate communication and collaboration* [Presentation], Okinawa JALT Summer Symposium, Naha, Okinawa: Okinawa Gender Equality Center (Tiruru).

3. Bury, J. (2018, November 24). *Problem-based learning in collaborative classrooms,* [Presentation at TD/CUE Forum], JALT 2018, Shizuoka: Shizuoka Conference and Arts Center.

4. Bury, J., & Sellick, A. (2018, June 23). *A task-based learning survey and presentation course: Student and teacher perceptions* [Presentation], TBLT in Asia 2018 Conference, Kyoto: Ryukoku University.

5. Bury, J. (2018, May 20). *Using different moves in classroom interactions* [Presentation], JALT PanSIG Conference 2018, Tokyo: Toyo Gakuen University.

6. Bury, J. (2018, March 6). *Managing classroom interactions to increase student output* [Presentation], The 13th Annual Education and Development Conference, Bangkok: AETAS Lumphini.

7. Bury, J. (2018, March 5). *Non-Hierarchical Learning: A Pedagogic Approach* [Presentation], The 13th Annual Education and Development Conference, Bangkok: AETAS Lumphini.

8. Sellick, A., & Bury, J. (2016, December 18). *The impact of classroom English on student attitudes and behavior* [Presentation], Okinawa JALT Trends in Language Teaching Conference 2016, Naha: Okinawa Prefectural University

of Arts.

9. Bury, J. (2016, September 18). *The effects of using high-frequency words, spaced retrieval, and task-cycling on students' perceptions of ability and levels of confidence* [Presentation], The 11th FL Teaching and Research Mini-Conference in Matsuyama: Ehime University.

10. Bury, J. (2016, September 17). *Encouraging student output: Getting more by asking less* [Presentation], The 11th FL Teaching and Research Mini-Conference in Matsuyama, Ehime, Japan: Ehime University.

11. Bury J. (2013, December 14). *Encouraging more student output in the classroom: Alternatives to questions* [Presentation], Shumei University Research Briefing, Chiba: Shumei University.