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【Research Paper】

Intercultural Presentation Activities Fostering Creative Thinking in Elementary School English Classes: Use of "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]"

Yoichi Kiyota, Natsue Nakayama, Fumiko Kurihara, and Chika Kuroki

Abstract

English textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for elementary students cover diverse cultural topics but lack sufficient opportunities for comparing and contrasting different cultures to deepen their understanding of the relationship between language and culture. With these issues in the background, this study examines the planning and practice of presentation activities in two sixth-grade foreign language (English) classes at a public elementary school and the impact these activities had on the students. The practitioner (elementary school teacher) used the "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]," a self-assessment tool for cultural learning was used for one year to design and implement classes and to develop lessons for students to learn about topics related to culture presented in the textbook units. The children gave a group presentation as a final activity. This paper reports on the practice of using the "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]," a video of the children's presentation rehearsals, and an analysis of the comment sheets from the audience who participated on the day of the presentation. It was confirmed that the children were able to use their creative thinking skills to make the study of culture their own by actively engaging in activities with other students and paying attention to the interaction with the audience.

Keywords

elementary school English, cultural learning, creative thinking, autonomous learners

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

English textbooks for elementary school students in Japan authorized by the MEXT cover topics related to diverse cultures in Japan and around the world and present opportunities for students to expand their cultural knowledge. However, not enough opportunities are available to learn about the relationship between language and culture by comparing and contrasting different cultures with their own. An analysis of the major English language textbooks used in elementary schools (Nakayama et al., 2022) revealed

that many of them referred to various cultural subjects, including those from non-English-speaking areas. They visually introduced typical examples through photos and videos, such as “tourist spots,” “food,” “events,” and “customs” in foreign countries. However, “superficial observation [of culture] has the danger of leading to value judgments or prejudice against other cultures from a perspective centering on one’s own culture” (Nakayama et al., p. 79). Efron (2020) also notes that Japanese elementary school English textbooks handle foreign cultures in the form of an introduction through overseas travel, and language learners only observe other cultures from a tourist perspective, which comes with the risk of simplifying or stereotyping the culture.

Byram (2021) notes the importance of cultivating attitudes, skills, and critical cultural awareness in addition to knowledge in the context of cultural learning when studying foreign languages. Critical cultural awareness is defined as “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 2021, p. 66). Such learning, related to personal attitudes and awareness, does not have standardized “correct answers” that need to be acquired. However, living in a modern society with the coexistence of various cultures necessitates some value judgments about culture. The process of foreign language acquisition requires inquiry-based learning, where students find “answers” actively and independently while becoming aware of the relationship between their own culture and other cultures. Paige et al. (2003) also note the importance of “experiential learning” for effectively learning about culture, in which learners reflect, observe, and actively experiment with culture rather than merely acquiring cultural knowledge. In other words, we can interpret the method of deepening cultural learning as the need for students to have the opportunity for self-directed, autonomous learning.

Before this study, a research project on English language leaners’ portfolio was launched in the Special Interest Group on English Language Education at the Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET SIG-ELE). In 2022, *Summative self-assessment descriptors as learning goals for elementary school children learning English: Passport to Junior High School* (hereafter referred to as the “Passport to Junior High School”) was developed (JACET SIG-ELE, 2022). It is a tool to help children become autonomous learners of the English language while reflecting on their learning and undergoing continuous self-assessment. Elementary school textbooks for fifth and sixth grade from three major companies were analyzed to develop self-assessment descriptors (SADs) for achievement goals for elementary school students, defined in the “Skills volume” for learning the five skill areas (listening, reading, speaking [interaction], speaking [production]) and in the “Culture volume” for learning related to culture. The “Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]” presents learning objectives for intercultural skills that students are expected to develop through English language learning, aiming to deepen not just knowledge but skills and attitudes as well, to ensure that students may personalize their cultural learning in English language classes in

elementary school. Using these SADs is expected to provide children with the opportunities to autonomously learn about language (English) and culture and to reflect on their learning, in addition to allowing teachers to effectively incorporate cultural learning into the classroom.

The practitioner used the “Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]” in the design and practice of classes for one year. The practice was carried out in two sixth-grade foreign language classes (English) in a public elementary school in Tokyo. This study covers the planning, implementation, and review of these presentation activities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Creative Thinking and Autonomous Learning

Modern society, where people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds live together, places increased importance on foreign language education, including culture and values. Fukushima (2015) refers to the element of culture in foreign language education as the ability to be aware of, compare, and adjust one’s own as well as other’s cultures as a source of value is an essential ability for “living together with others (p. 35).” However, even though developing knowledge and skills in the English language is possible through materials in textbooks, setting objectives and methods for learning in schools as a group is challenging because culture is the standard of behavior of a society, but it varies according to individual experiences and situations. Therefore, the appropriate method to learn about culture for students is to explore culture autonomously based on the knowledge and thinking skills they have developed so far while remaining cognizant of the relationship between their own culture and other cultures.

Regarding methods of intercultural learning, methods and techniques of intercultural learning need to extend beyond the theoretical, comparative, and analytical level because even if one knows about the differences, they do not necessarily know how to behave when confronted with them, and the importance of cultivating real-life observation skills through an experiential approach is suggested (Carton, 2015). In other words, students need to find their own ways of understanding other cultures. To cultivate such an attitude about exploring culture, this research focuses on the skill of creative thinking in learning.

Creative thinking skills are not relevant only to English education and are in fact attracting attention to overcome various challenges in education today. For example, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2019) reports that developing creative skills can “help young people to adapt to develop capacities to undertake work that cannot easily be replicated by machines and address increasingly complex local and global challenges with out-of-the-box solutions” (p. 6.).

Takamatsu Junior High School, attached to the Faculty of Education of Kagawa University, defines creative thinking as the ability to continue self-reflection and

renewing values toward a better society. The school explains its reason for establishing the new subject area (creative expression activities) as follows: When faced with questions without correct answers or unpredictable and complex situations, we must construct our course of action and our idealized image. In doing so, we must confront ourselves and reexamine our perspective and way of thinking about people, things, and events in a multifaceted and multilateral manner, aiming to create an ideal image of ourselves and our society (Takamatsu Junior High School, attached to the Faculty of Education of Kagawa University, 2020). In other words, the importance of continuously reviewing the current situation and reexamining the relationship between society and oneself to respond to difficult-to-predict social changes of the future can be identified as an element of creative thinking.

Another study systematically reviewed research cases in educational environments that promote creative thinking, and identified common elements (Davies et al., 2013). This study notes that "learners having control of their learning and ownership of the activity" (p. 88) as one of the common elements, suggesting the necessity of learner-led study for an educational environment that fosters creativity. Further, it specifically refers to the teacher-learner and learner-learner relationships. In particular, "opportunities for collaboration with peers" are important in learner-learner relationships, where this joint learning can be used to develop mutual evaluation as well as self-assessment. Collaborative work among learners became a central activity in the implementation of this study. We will take up this point again in the chapter "Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications" as a creativity-oriented learning method for intercultural understanding.

Furthermore, this study examined creative thinking skills due to a major change in the educational environment. This change is due to the introduction of digital tools. The educational environment in Japan is rapidly digitizing: as part of the GIGA School Program, tablets and electronic blackboards have been introduced as learning tools for students in elementary and junior high schools. English education has also been greatly influenced by digitization. For example, the development of machine translation systems is expected to have an even greater impact on foreign language education (Gally, 2020). In addition, Yamanaka (2023) pointed out that English education is no longer oriented towards how close learners can get to the 'correct' speech of native speakers, but how much learners are able to express what they intended using machine translation as a tool, and whether they can communicate in a more meaningful and richer way. Given such changes in the environment surrounding education, learners increasingly need to independently determine their need to learn English and find a way of learning that is suitable for them.

Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) argue that instead of uncritically taking in the information taught to them, students can make their learning valuable and foster creative thinking by reorganizing their learning in light of their own experiences. Some studies also suggest that students are more motivated when they engage in creative tasks

(Beghetto et al., 2015; Rosenberg, 2015). Therefore, in this study, we had children reflect on their study of cultural learning and develop it into a presentation in a form of their own choice, such as a skit or a picture book.

2.2 The Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]: A Tool to Promote Autonomous Learning about Culture

We used the Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume] (JACET SIG-ELE, 2022) in this study to implement the intercultural presentation project in English classroom. Periodic examinations are commonly conducted as milestones to assess students' vocabulary and grammar skills in junior high and high schools, and students are usually expected to learn at the same pace toward the same goal in groups of grades and classes. However, it is better for foreign language learning to be carried out according to the needs and the progress of individual students (JACET SIG-ELE, 2022). In particular, the importance of autonomy increases when learning a culture because personal experience greatly influences comprehension. In other words, students need to reflect on their own experiences and deepen their understanding rather than merely studying facts (see Paige et al., 2003).

Figure 1 presents an excerpt from the "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]." The "Culture volume" comprises "Knowledge/Skills section" and "Attitude section." The "Knowledge/Skills section" includes four items for self-assessment ("There are diverse cultures in the world (languages; food, clothing, and shelter; customs; rules; etc.)," "Cultures of the world have similarities and differences," "Cultures may be influenced by other cultures," etc.), and the "Attitude section" includes two items for self-evaluation, "I am interested in the diverse cultures of the world (languages; food, clothing, and shelter; customs; rules; etc.)" and" "The diverse cultures of the world are important to the people in their respective regions. (Respect and sensitivity)." As depicted in Figure 1, each learning item displays the specific elements dealt with within the textbooks, included SADs as sub-items in the table. Children can read the descriptors in the table, reflect on their learning, and answer on three levels: "Agree, Disagree, and Don't Know. In addition, there is a free description section at the end of the book where children can write about aspects of culture that they are particularly interested in studying, citing specific examples, to ensure they can deepen their learning and awareness of culture.

Figure 1

Excerpt from "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]"

Reflect on the "Culture" that you have studied so far

- Select one of the three options in the column on the left for each given descriptor.
- Under the general topic, please write down what you were particularly interested in.
- After completing the questionnaire, share and discuss it with your friends.

Knowledge/Skills volume

1. There are diverse cultures in the world (languages; food, clothing, and shelter; customs; rules; etc.).

1	Various languages and scripts exist in the world.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
2	People around the world wear different clothing depending on where they live, their ethnicity, their religion, and so on.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
3	In addition to bowing and handshakes, people around the world have several other ways of greeting.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
4	Depending on the climate, customs, religions, etc. various types of cuisines and ways of eating exist in the world.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
5	Depending on their respective histories, traditions, climates, etc., countries and regions around the world have different events and holidays.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
6	Depending on their respective histories, traditions, climates, etc., countries and regions around the world have different buildings.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
7	Children around the world have different school lives, including class subjects, timetables, and events.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know
8	Depending on the local climate and environment, different kinds of flora and fauna exist in the world.	□ Agree □ Disagree □ Don't Know

3. Research Objective

Rather than passively memorizing knowledge about culture, an attitude of autonomous exploration according to one's interests is essential to enriching one's study of culture. This study aims to examine how presentation activities, wherein groups of children develop, create, and perform topics from textbooks, affect their attitudes and skills related to autonomy and intercultural competence. Based on the results, we explore the pedagogical implications for the planning and practice of cultural learning.

4. Practice Procedures

4.1 Background of Practice: Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume] and Designing a One-Year Culture Study

The practice was implemented in two sixth-grade classes (with 32 children in each) at a ward elementary school in Tokyo. The practice was carried out by an English teacher, who was also in charge of one of the classes during the 2022 school year. The members who designed this study and the practitioner shared a common understanding of the study of culture in English language learning. These were: 1. Language is a part of culture, and English is a subject that can be learned not just through English language skills but also by connecting it with countries and cultures around the world; 2. Culture can be effectively learned together with other subjects such as the Japanese language, social studies, and morality; and 3. Learning about the relationship between oneself and others in different positions, which forms the basis of communication, is important throughout elementary school education. Furthermore, the practitioner was concerned that although children had the opportunity to learn about the countries of the world in social studies, they usually felt distant from them, and they rarely compare or associate these cultures with their own unless prompted intentionally by the teacher.

The practitioner first created a worksheet containing the list of all SADs included in the "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]." This worksheet includes SADs that serve as the learning objectives for culture in the English language class for one year, columns for children to evaluate their cultural learning in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and a free-description section for children to fill in their discoveries and impressions about the culture they have learned in each unit. Furthermore, it also presents the schedule of the year's lessons, which progresses gradually from "Learning about similarities and differences between the culture of Japan and other countries," to "Researching cultures that students wish to learn about by comparing them to Japan and other countries, and experiencing the culture," and "Presenting what each student has researched and experienced using the foreign language learned in elementary school," and thus, children can see how they can deepen their study of culture over the year.

This elementary school uses the textbook *NEW HORIZON Elementary English Course 6* (Allen-Tamai et al., 2020). This contains a section titled "Over the Horizon," which further develops the theme of culture. The practitioner positioned this developmental content as the study of "International Understanding and Culture" under the title "Connecting with the World" and devoted one hour of each unit of the textbook (a total of eight hours) to studying "Over the Horizon." The activities of the year were set up as follows:

The first term: Learning about the world (topics based on textbook contents)
The second term: Exploratory learning to study textbook contents more in depth

The third term: Children choose a topic from the textbook, summarize the contents, and make a presentation in English

During classes the practitioner introduced her own intercultural experiences and photographs in the form of “small talk” to create opportunities to learn about various countries, and based on the textbook contents, she intentionally incorporated opportunities for students to notice similarities and differences between the cultures. Additionally, an exhibition area was set up for introducing cultures in front of the library, and teachers who had lived abroad and foreign students visiting the elementary school who were studying Japanese spoke about their intercultural experiences. Thus, children had the opportunity to actively deepen their awareness of intercultural issues throughout the year, not just in English class but also in classes such as integrated studies and social studies.

4.2 Presentation Activity Conducted in the Third Term

4.2.1 Preparation and goals of practice. For this study, we analyzed the presentation activity conducted in the third semester as the culmination of the study of culture. The contents of this activity were determined based on discussions among the four authors. The primary emphasis was on the autonomy and creativity of the children. The decision was to conduct presentations in English at the end of the third semester, and the authors had a shared understanding that topics set by the teachers were unlikely to promote the children’s autonomy and creativity; rather, it would result in students simply researching from books and the Internet for their presentation. Creativity helps learners discover what they can do in the learned second language by actively involving them in the learning process (Rosenberg, 2015); hence, we thought it would be better to involve the children as much as possible in the process of setting the topics and the contents of the presentation. Therefore, we took the perspective of cultivating creative thinking skills toward learning as a pillar of practice and had several discussions with the class practitioner regarding creative initiatives in the presentation activities. Finally, the activity was set up for children to create and present their own scenarios based on what they had learned about culture in creative forms, such as skits (plays), paper theaters (paper dolls), and picture books. Through this activity, children were able to implement what they had learned throughout the year of culture study and present it in a way of their choosing. This allowed them to creatively reconstruct their own learning.

Presentation activities were conducted in groups of 4–5 children. The practitioners distributed worksheets at the beginning of the project, which had explanations and columns for “Objective,” “What I Want to Achieve,” “My Responsibilities,” “Schedule,” and “Presentation Structure.”

Until the day of the presentation, a total of six hours of class time from English and period of integrated studies classes was allotted to prepare the presentation activities over

the course of one month. The "What I Want to Achieve" section in the worksheet included "Use as many expressions from the textbook and what you have learned as you can. Do not make it too difficult." "The presentation should be about three minutes, and all participants should have lines," "Use skits, paper theater, picture books, etc. to perform in English," and "Make sure you include your own message at the end (e.g., We all live on the earth, or Let us enjoy our difference! etc.)." Children selected the topic and format of the presentation themselves, discussed and prepared the content, scenario, and props in groups, thought about their lines in English, rehearsed, and prepared for the performance.

4.2.2 Topics and presentation formats for each group. Students participating in the projects were divided into 16 groups of a total of 64 students from two sixth-grade classes. Table 1 presents the 14 topics and presentation formats captured in the rehearsal videos.

Table 1

Presentation Topics and Formats

Group	Topic	Presentation Format
1	National Flag	Paper doll
2	Food	Picture book
3	Event	Paper doll
4	Greetings	Paper doll
5	Food	Skit
6	Food	Presentation using a tablet
7	National Flag	Presentation using a tablet
8	Endangered Species of Animals	Paper doll
9	Event	Paper doll
10	Food	Picture book, Paper doll
11	World Heritage Site	Paper doll, Paper theater
12	World Heritage Site	Paper doll, Paper theater
13	Clothing	Paper dolls, Picture book
14	National Treasure	Skit

Topics covered in the presentations included Food, World Heritage Sites, National Flags, Endangered Species of Animals, etc., and students referred to the themes covered in "Over the Horizon" and added new information as well. They also chose their own presentation format, such as making picture books or paper theater, preparing skits, illustrations, paper dolls, tablets, etc. Contents of the presentation are analyzed in 6. Results. As an overview, children acted as those from foreign countries (Group 1, 3, 4, 7, 13, and 14) or fairies (Group 2), used magical tools from familiar cartoons such as

"*dokodemo door*" and "*takecopter*" (Group 11), and various other characters and scenes, as well as unique storylines. Children often introduced their own characters in skits and picture books, learning from each other and introducing cultures. For example, the hungry protagonist powered up every time he ate food (sushi, pizza, gyoza, etc.), and at the end, he fought the monster and won (Group 6), demonstrating how children decided on the contents of their presentation by connecting information they were familiar with from their own perspective with the different cultures that they wanted to introduce.

Furthermore, many groups incorporated the contents of developmental learning related to culture, which was the theme of this practice. For example, children researched world clothing, such as kilts from Scotland (Group 13), and then instead of simply organizing and presenting the cultural topics from their textbooks, based on their group discussions and investigations, they tried to create characters in skits, etc. as belonging to those cultures, imagined their thoughts and opinions, thought of lines in English, and reflected them in their presented skits and picture books. We believe such activities led the students to think from the perspective of others by putting cultural diversity into concrete characters and simulating their own experiences of intercultural situations.

4.2.3 Presentation activity on the day. On the day of the presentation, the children gave their presentations to an audience of nine Japanese English-language teaching assistants (referred to as the "Local English Expert" in the elementary school), five student teachers in an English teacher training course, and three out of the four authors of this study. The children were divided into two groups and experienced the positions of both "presenter" and "audience." Group presentations were repeated about four times before different audiences. The audience was divided into small groups to facilitate listening while walking around all groups. Although the children looked nervous at the beginning, they seemed to get more confident as they presented before a new audience every time, became conscious of the reactions, and corrected the parts that did not work initially. Active interactions were carried out between the children and the audience, with questions asked and feedback offered on what the audience liked.

5. Analysis Procedure

We analyzed the rehearsal videos and conducted a text analysis of the written comments by the presentation audience (Japanese English-language teaching assistants, and student teachers; a total of 14 people).

5.1 Analysis of Children's Rehearsal Videos

The analysis was conducted by three researchers using video recordings of the children's presentations made before the final presentations. Out of the total 16 groups, we studied the 14 groups whose videos could be analyzed. As the aim of this study was

to develop the intercultural competence of children and plan a cultural learning project to foster autonomy, we considered the following three perspectives in the analysis:

A: Intercultural communicative competence (Did students try to interpret and explain other cultures and connect them with their own?)
B: Choice of presentation method (Did students select the presentation method of their own judgment, or were they observed changing it?)
C: Way of communicating (Did students have an awareness of communicating with others, rather than just reciting the lines they had memorized?)

To analyze Perspective A, we referred to Byram's (2021) "Interpretation and association skills in the intercultural competence model" from the viewpoint of "children trying to understand and interpret cultures different from Japanese" and "trying to explain them by relating it to their own culture."

Perspectives B and C were set with reference to Tassinari's (2012) perspectives on the components of autonomy in learners. Specifically, for "Selecting or changing the method of presentation based on their own judgment," we set Perspective B by referring to "cognitive and metacognitive components (cognitive and metacognitive knowledge, awareness, and learners' beliefs)," and action-oriented components (skills, learning behaviors, and decisions), and Perspective C by referring to social components (learning and negotiating learning with partners, advisors, and teachers) (Tassinari, 2012, p. 28). For Perspectives A, B, and C, the authors assessed all 14 videos at three levels (3: Strongly recognized, 2: Recognized, and 1: Did not recognize).

5.2 Text Analysis of Impressions of the Audience

The impressions of a total of 14 people, including nine Japanese English-language teaching assistants and five student teachers, who participated in the final presentation, were analyzed. The purpose was to examine whether the awareness that emerged in the analysis from the children could also be observed in participant impressions. For analysis, we used KHCoder3.Beta.0.31 (Higuchi, 2020). We first conducted an analysis of frequently occurring words for each report and then performed a concurrence network analysis to gain an overview of the content of the descriptions. When selecting words based on the frequency of occurrences, the minimum was set to five owing to the limited number of total comments obtained. The concurrence relationship to be drawn was set at 60.

6. Results

6.1 Children Learning Through Activities: Rehearsal Video Analysis

We analyzed "A: Intercultural communicative competence, B: Choice of

Presentation Method, and C: Way of Communicating" as an average of three assessments on a three-point scale: 3: Strongly Recognized, 2: Recognized, 1: Not Recognized.

Results of the evaluation by the three researchers of this study (Kiyota, Nakayama, and Kurihara) indicated that the mean value for each item was A: 2.43, B: 2.60, and C: 2.48. All items were rated above "Recognized." The following are the ways observed in each group:

Table 2

Presentation Topic, Format, and Observed Ways

Group	Topic	Presentation Format	Observed Ways
1	National Flag	Paper doll	Children introduced the colors and designs of national flags (Ghana, China, the United States, and Canada). Children acted as persons from these countries. They asked questions and interacted among themselves.
2	Food	Picture Book	Children created a picture book called Fairy and World Food. A fairy takes Hiroshi, who is very hungry, across the world in search of food. The book features food from Myanmar (mohinga, hinto, and achu) and Canada.
3	Event	Paper doll	Children created a skit about a teacher and a student. The teacher introduces events in China (burning money), Spain (tomato festival), Thailand (New Year), the United States (Independence Day fireworks), and Mexico ("Day of the Dead").
4	Greetings	Paper doll	Children introduced greetings from around the world (Bonjour, Namaste, Nihao, Annyeonghaseyo). They meet people from different countries in the park.
5	Food	Presentation (Tablet)	Children exchanged information about favorite foods (Australian, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese cuisine) using tablets and illustrations. Speaking about the ingredients, colors, etc. of each dish. After listening to each explanation, other members responded with "I want to eat it!" etc. Students displayed a desire to "communicate" the lines they thought of on their own.
6	Food	Skit	The main character, who is hungry, powers up every time he eats food (sushi, pizza, gyoza, etc.), and finally fights and wins against the Marron Monster. Food was introduced through a story they had written. They devised their performance along with the story.
7	National Flag	Presentation (Tablet)	Children become teachers at the National Flag School. They were from Korea, France, Turkey, and Germany. They described the characteristics, such as the colors and designs of the flags from each country. They introduced the food and culture of each country. They devised creative forms of communication, including quiz-style interactions and dialogue.
8	Endangered species of animals	Paper doll	Children explained animals on the Red List (red pandas, chimpanzees, polar bears, etc.) traveling through forests and the Arctic. They introduced details they had searched for, such as specific numbers. Students changed their tones of voice to attract the audience's attention.

9	Event	Paper doll	Children introduced international events such as the Brazilian Carnival, fruit festivals from France, and the Spanish tomato festival. Also explained the relationship between regional characteristics, such as food, and these events. Characters talk with each other and interact.
10	Food	Paper dolls, Picture Book	Introduced foods such as Khao Man Gai (Thailand), Macaron (France), and Tiramisu (Italy) using illustrations. Members asked each other questions such as "What is your name?" and shared their impressions.
11	World Heritage Site	Paper doll, Paper Theater	Children created a story where characters are initially uninterested in other countries but become interested after they hear about the World Heritage Site. They travel using the Anywhere Door (*dokodemo door*). Conclude with the message, "The world is beautiful! We are all unique!"
12	World Heritage Site	Paper doll, Paper Theater	Characters use the dialogue format "Where do you want to go? I want to go to ~" to introduce World Heritage Sites in various countries.
13	Clothing	Paper dolls, Picture Book	Elementary school students fly to a foreign country. They introduce traditional clothes from various countries (including Scottish kilts and Inuit clothing from Canada). There is creative storytelling and character establishment, such as dialogues from the perspective of the characters. The message is, "Let us enjoy our differences!"
14	National Treasure	Skit	The "precious things" in Japan, China, and Australia are introduced as children acted as children from those countries. The message that water is a treasure in Kenya is included at the end. Demonstrates the diversity of various regions.

The following characteristics were identified with regard to "A: Intercultural communicative competence." For example, the presentations on Greetings (4), National Flags (7), and Foods (2, 5, 6, 10) all had original stories based on their respective topics and displayed their ingenuity in creating stories connected to their own schools and the area of Japan where they lived, to the cultures around the world. Other groups were also creative in connecting Japanese events with events in other countries and regions with different languages and cultures according to their topic, referring to "connections with one's own culture" and "comparison with one's own culture."

For "B: Choice of Presentation Method," as the story-based presentation was a common format, it was characterized by the selection of a format (picture book, paper doll, drama performed by the students, etc.) suitable to the cultural content they had studied outside the class. For example, Group 9 introduced events in various countries, such as the Brazilian Carnival. Doing so, they also explained the relationship between regional characteristics, such as food, and these events, and the children themselves became characters in each country, devising a method of presentation suitable for the topic.

For "C: Ways of Communicating," students demonstrated an attitude of effort in trying to effectively communicate what they had learned about the culture in line with the

contents of the presentation, rather than just acting out scenarios of what they had memorized. For example, Group 7 explained the foods of different countries in relation to the color and design of each country's national flag. Furthermore, they were creative in how they communicated information to their viewers, for example, through interactions in the form of a quiz. They did not simply present the information to their classmates in the classroom; rather, they consciously devised ways to communicate with other classmates and external participants (Japanese English-language teaching assistants, student teachers, and university researchers).

6.2 Results of Text Analysis of Impressions of the Audience

The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 3. The numbers in the parentheses in the table indicate the number of pieces of data used in the analysis. Table 3 demonstrates that despite individual differences in the volume of the descriptions, there is no significant difference in the number of words used between the Japanese English-language teaching assistants and the student teachers, either in the total number of words extracted or in the number of words used. Therefore, we combined and analyzed the data obtained from the Japanese English-language teaching assistants and the student teachers.

Table 3

Basic Information About Impressions

Type	Number of Respondents	Number of Extracted Words	Number of Different Words	Number of Sentences
Japanese English-language teaching assistants	9	1,145 (428)	343 (245)	73
student teachers	5	701 (254)	206 (135)	26
Total	14	1,846 (682)	446 (326)	99

Table 4 summarizes frequently occurring words and the number of occurrences of these words in the comments by external participants of the presentations. Owing to the nature of written comments on the English presentation activity, the most commonly used words were "Presentation," "Activity," "English," "Think," and "Good."

Table 4

Frequently Appearing Words (Top 10 Occurrences) and Examples of Their Use

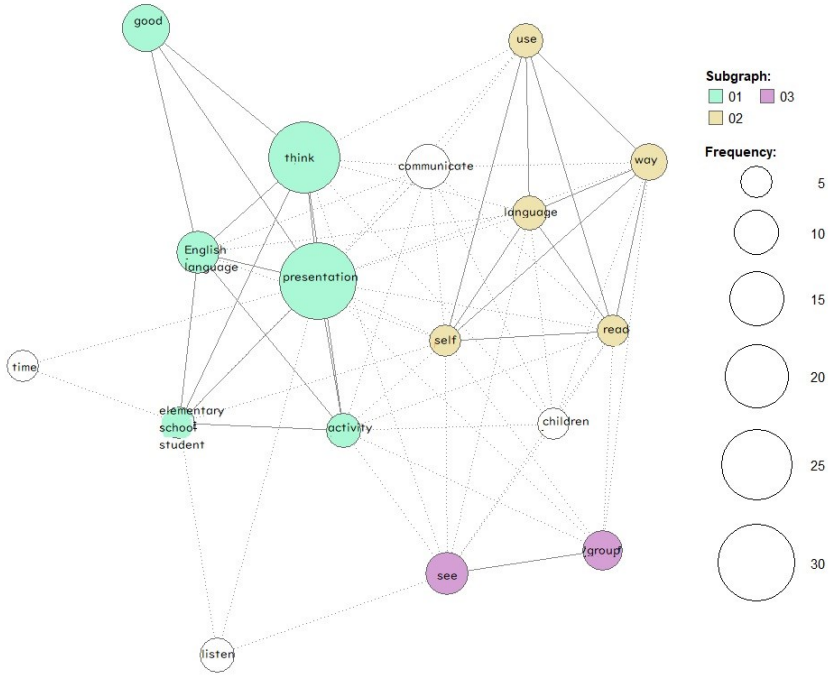
Rank	Extracted Word	Number of Occurrences
1	Presentation	30
2	Think	26
3	Good	11
4	Communicate	10
5	English	9

5	See	9
7	Group	8
8	Way	7
9	Activity	6
9	Word	6
9	Use	6
9	Listen	6

One notable word is the emergence of "Communicate" in the fourth place. Based on "Activities that centered on what the children wanted to communicate were selected" (Collaborator B, Japanese English-language teaching assistant) and "Watching the children trying their best to communicate to the audience in easy-to-understand English using pictures, picture books, and photographs was very impressive." (Collaborator J, student teacher), etc., we can conclude that the project was not carried out as a presentation activity based on simple memorization. This point was mentioned in the notes of nine out of 15 collaborators, indicating that about 60% of them positively perceived the children's willingness to communicate.

Figure 2

Co-occurrence Network Analysis



Subsequently, co-occurrence network analysis was performed to extract the concepts that frequently appeared in the obtained text. As a result of subgraph detection, we recognized three clusters (“Impressions of children’s presentations,” “Study through group learning,” and “Ways of personalizing presentations”) (Figure 2). These clusters were named after confirming the context in which the extracted words were used in each cluster using KWIC concordance.

The second cluster was “Personalization of the contents of the presentation and the method of communication,” which includes the words “Self,” “Read,” “Use,” and “Contents,” located in the upper right corner. There were comments such as, “Most children were not reading from scripts, but rather had memorized them and came up with ways to communicate them.” (Collaborator G, Japanese English-language teaching assistant), and “It was wonderful that students did not just use the English language but also included words, food, etc. from various countries.” (Collaborator I, Japanese English-language teaching assistant). There was a comment on the specific innovations to communicate with others: “Rather than simply presenting their topic, they had combined tomatoes, airplanes, and clothes made of origami and made the presentation enjoyable for the audience.” (Collaborator N, student teacher), indicating that the children were aware of the existence of the audience and proactively devised ways of conveying their presentation.

The cluster at the bottom right is “Study through group learning” and includes the terms “See” and “Group.” The comment, “They saw good elements in other groups and tried to incorporate creative ways the next time they presented.” (Collaborator F, Japanese English-language Teaching Assistant) indicates this. Further, the comment, “It was wonderful how children in groups were speaking slowly, looking directly at their audience, considering their awareness” (Collaborator B, Japanese English-language Teaching Assistant), indicated that the presence of real listeners, such as other groups, the Japanese English-language teaching assistants, and student teachers seemed to affect the presenters’ attitudes. The three clusters commonly co-occurred with the words “children” and “communicating,” indicating that the children’s attitude and awareness toward communication influenced the overall presentation activity.

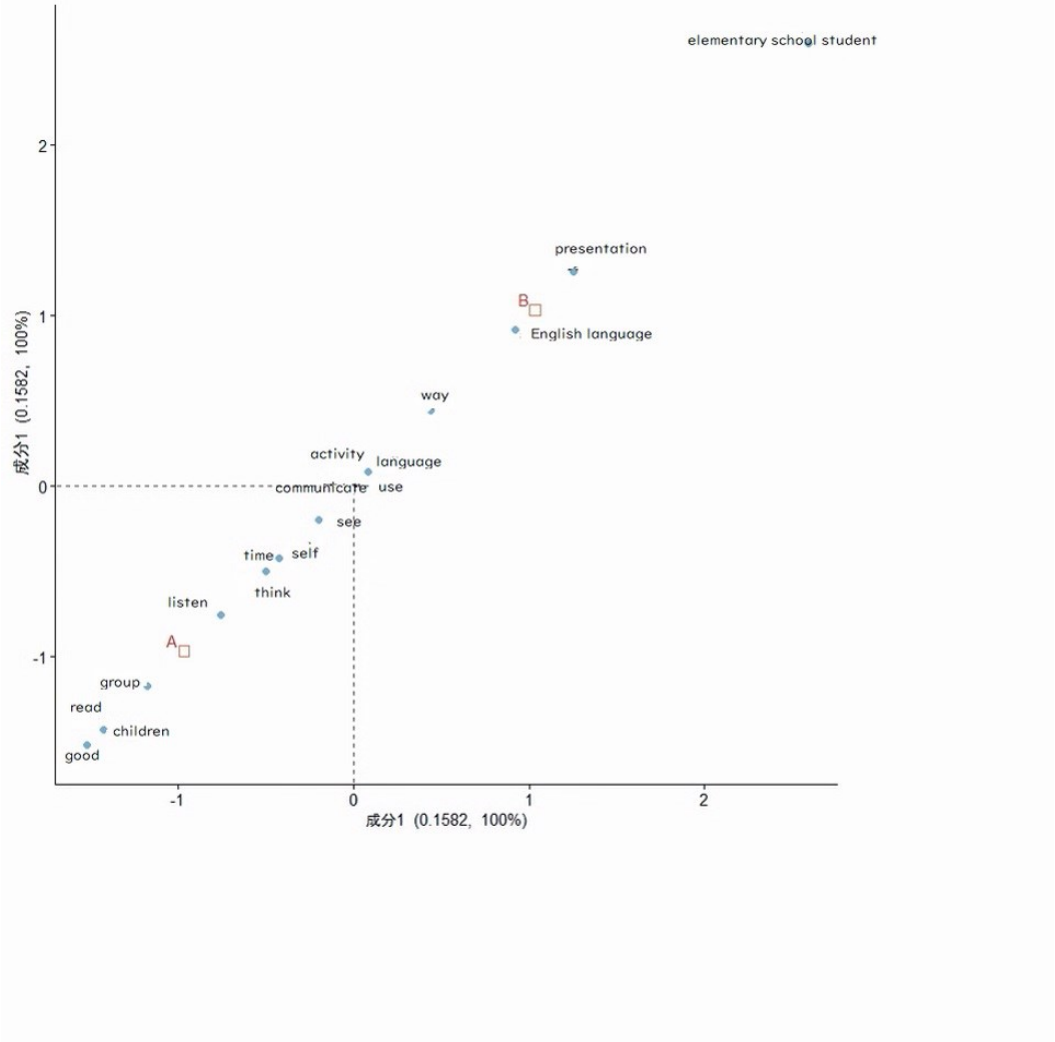
Next, we conducted correspondence analysis to extract characteristic words for each category of respondents (Japanese English-language teaching assistants and student teachers) (Figure 3). The results revealed that “elementary school students” was a characteristic word for student teachers. There were comments such as “When I was an elementary school student, it was a foreign language activity, not a subject like it is now, so I thought that elementary school students of today have improved their English” (Collaborator J, student teacher), comparing and relating their own experiences and learning in class with the observed children. However, the other words were not characteristic of each category of respondents.

To summarize, the words and clusters that appeared frequently demonstrated the

children's proactive attitude toward learning about the culture and their attitude and awareness toward communicating.

Figure 3

Results of Correspondence Analysis



7. Discussion

7.1 Rehearsal Video Analysis

As part of the discussion on this practical research, we first examine two analytical results. First is an analysis of rehearsal videos. For this, we referred to Byram's (2021) "Skills of Interpreting and Relating" as a perspective on "intercultural communicative competence." This skill is described as the ability to interpret a document or events from a different culture, explain them, and relate them to documents or events from one's own culture. Byram (2021) suggests the following three objectives for "Skills of Interpreting and Relating": "Identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins," "identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in interaction and

explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present," and "mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena" (p. 137). Although these achievement goals were judged to be necessary elements for understanding different cultures, they were not directly recognized in the presentation activities for children in this study but were considered from the perspective of leading to the development of these abilities in the future. Specifically, we analyzed the viewpoints of "children trying to understand and interpret cultures different from Japanese" and "trying to explain them by relating them to their own culture" in their presentation activities.

Children talked about the topics such as greetings, national flags, and foods of other countries and regions by comparing and making connections with their own culture. In other words, they created and presented original "stories" relating their current life in their school in Japan to situations in various regions of the world, based on themes such as "food," "language," "events," and "flags" in the textbook they use. For example, the group that opted to do the presentation on greetings introduced several greetings from around the world from the perspective of the people from that country. The group who worked on the topic of World Heritage Sites created a character for the paper theater. The character initially was not interested in overseas topics, but became interested after "visiting" various sites with other characters. Finally, the group chanted the message, "The world is beautiful! We are all unique!" This story of "people who were not initially interested in other countries who later became interested" is a summary of this cultural study, and the group considered that not all would be interested in overseas cultures and thought about how they would address such people.

Furthermore, members of the group who presented on food included food from several countries, presented in the format where all children became members from different countries and interacted with the audience, such as "What is your name?" Such a format necessitates that the presenters listen carefully to the answers to their questions and respond appropriately, rather than mechanically repeating memorized lines. This device simulates the situation of different cultures by assuming the position of "If I were…" playing characters in the story they created. In other words, expressing cultural diversity themselves may have facilitated thinking from the perspective of these characters.

Such experiential learning of culture, as the three objectives suggest by Byram (2021), may lead to the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence to identify and explain the causes of misunderstandings and dysfunctions between different cultures in terms of their respective cultural systems and act as intermediaries to resolve misunderstandings when there are conflicting interpretations of cultural events.

7.2 Analysis of Comments of External Participants

The cluster analysis led to the identification of three clusters: "Impressions of children's presentations," "Study through group learning," and "Ways of personalizing

presentations" (Figure 2). Similar perception was observed in these three clusters.

In the "Impressions of children's presentations" cluster, there was a comment, "They are not reading, they are making a presentation. They are using gesture actions" (Collaborator B, Japanese English-Language teaching assistant), noting the autonomous attitude of children. For the "Study through group learning" cluster, children who were the speakers were identified as being aware of the audience; they incorporated the aspects learned from other groups into their presentations and made presentations consciously attempting to communicate their knowledge to others. In the "Ways of personalizing presentations" cluster, keywords "Self" (five times) and "Way" (seven times) were observed; of the comments that include "Self," four mentioned "personalization" ("They tried to present without reading their script, and they developed the contents themselves" (Collaborator E, Japanese English-Language teaching assistant). For "way," there were comments about the presentation methods, the appearance of devising ways to incorporate learning from the presentations of the other groups, and the preparation of visual materials as a way to communicate with the audience. To summarize, these clusters demonstrate that children made various innovations to communicate the contents of their presentation to the audience.

Tassinari (2012) lists four components of autonomy in learners: cognitive and metacognitive elements, affective and motivational elements, action-oriented elements, and social elements. She says that "the essential characteristic of learner autonomy is the ability to adjust the interrelationship and balance these components in different contexts and situations" (Tassinari, 2012, p. 28). Based on these components, when we look at the results of this analysis, the children performed presentation activities with high interest and motivation (affective and motivational elements). In the presentation activity, they performed with an awareness of their audience. Specifically, the children were found making various presentations with an awareness of the audience. They revised and improved their presentations to better convey their ideas. We can observe action-oriented components as well as cognitive and metacognitive components from this. Further, the fact that they learned from the other groups, "incorporating what they learned from the other groups into their own presentations," demonstrates the use of social components. In other words, this presentation activity demonstrated a scene where all components of learner autonomy were implemented.

The co-occurrence of words such as "children" and "communicate" with all three clusters suggests that the children were autonomously and willingly engaged in this activity. Among the comments received, we had "Activities that centered on what the children wanted to communicate were placed first, and it was very illuminating." (Collaborator E, Japanese English-Language teaching assistant), and "Watching the presentations was enjoyable, as the children were eager to share their thoughts." (Collaborator M, student teacher).

Therefore, we can attribute "creativity" as one of the reasons why students were

able to autonomously pursue learning. Rather than simply reciting facts, children followed their own motivations and used their imagination to create stories in groups. In this process, the practitioner teacher gave full rein to the groups to decide the contents of their presentation, except for minor rules (to set a topic from the Passport and include a final message at the end). Rosenberg (2015) points out that the key to fostering creativity is for teachers to become facilitators and "not think of our learners as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, but as fertile fields which can be cultivated and harvested" (p. 123).

In this manner, the children freely applied their creativity and actively participated in their own learning, with the appropriate support from their teacher. This indicates the successful realization of "learners having control of their learning and ownership of the activity" (Davies et al., 2013, pp.88), which is an essential element for creative learning.

8. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The background of this practical study was an awareness that children may not have sufficient opportunities to learn about the relationship between language and culture as their own problem. According to the practitioner teacher, "learning about culture is being left behind" in English language classes. In a world of unpredictable changes, increasing importance is placed on gaining intercultural understanding in foreign language education, including in English. In other words, each learner needs to be presented with the opportunity to compare and understand their own culture with that of other cultures. In this study, we reported on the practice of using the "Passport to Junior High School [Culture volume]" and analyzed videos of children's rehearsal presentations and the comments of the audience members who participated on the day of the presentation. In this process, we focused on the components of learner creativity and autonomy. Consequently, we found that learning activities where students integrated and summarized the knowledge and skills learned until that point using a creative approach could lead to autonomy in language (English) and cultural learning.

One of the pedagogical implications of this practice analysis is the perspective of "learner attitude" and "learner collaboration." Davies et al. (2013) refer to "learners taking control of their own studies and taking ownership of their activities" and "opportunities for collaboration with peers" as common points that promote creativity. In this practice as well, the results of analyzing the rehearsal videos and the comments of participants revealed that children tended to personalize their learning activities, collaborate with friends to create stories, and watch presentations of other groups and use them to devise their own presentations. In other words, the learners were seeking for their own "answers" autonomously to deepen their understanding on the relationship between language (English) and culture. The prerequisite for such individual exploratory learning is to enhance a learning environment where students collaboratively cooperate and have a mutually positive influence on each other.

Notes

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【Research Note】

Promoting Reflection in English Teaching Methodology Courses: Current Trends and Challenges

Takane Yamaguchi

Abstract

This study examines the general trends and future challenges of promoting reflection in English teaching methodology courses by scrutinizing individual responses to a reflection survey among university instructors of elementary and secondary English teacher education programs. The study focused on three points: the use of Japanese terms for "reflection," teaching styles of English teaching methodology courses, and situations or contexts for reflection. The findings established that *furikaeri* is the most commonly used term in the sense of reflection, while *seisatsu* and *rifurekushon* are also used together with *furikaeri*, without any student confusion. Regarding teaching style, although most classes are teacher-directed, more than half of the English teaching methodology courses incorporate a student-centered seminar style. However, the frequency, content, and methods of this student-centered style was not clarified, hence requiring further investigation. Finally, the situations or contexts for reflection vary but can be divided into three main types: before or after the end of the class, after a mock lesson, and other. For each of these three types, the responses to the other survey questions about reflection tools, methods, learning progress, assessment, and feedback were examined to explore their characteristics. The results revealed the current trends and future research issues for each type. For example, many types of respondents used some form of paper or digital reflection tools, but the format and content of these tools are unknown and require follow-up research.

Keywords

terms for reflection, student-centered, situations or contexts

1. Introduction

To understand the current state of reflection within teacher education programs (TEP), the Japan Association of College English Teachers special interest group on English Language Education (JACET-SIG on English Language Education) conducted a survey of instructors responsible for English language education in these programs at universities and junior colleges across Japan from November to December 2023. The results of this survey were reported by the author in Japanese in *Language Teacher Education 11*(1) (Yamaguchi, 2024). That report only consisted of a compilation of the

survey responses, without any analysis. In contrast, this study examines individual survey responses focusing on the following three points, which may be related to respondents' perceptions of reflection and learner autonomy, with the aim to identify ways to enhance student reflection as well as the general trends and future challenges of promoting reflection in English teaching methodology (ETM) courses.

1. Use of Japanese terms denoting "reflection": The survey allowed respondents to select from Japanese terms such as *furikaeri*, *seisatsu*, *naisei*, and/or *rifurekushon* (see Section 2.1).
2. Teaching styles in ETM courses: The survey asked respondents to choose a maximum of two from a list of options such as lectures, question-and-answer, teacher-directed seminars, and student-centered seminar styles.
3. Situations or contexts in which reflection is encouraged: This was an open-ended question in the survey.

2. Findings

Table 1 presents the number and percentage of responses received, categorized as elementary or secondary TEP (ETEP or STEP, respectively). Although the response rates of the survey were just over 10%, the fact that responses were received from universities ranging from Hokkaido to Kyushu suggests that the survey results reflect current trends in promoting reflection within English TEP in Japan.

Table 1
The number of questionnaires sent and responses received

	ETEP	STEP	Total
Sent	270	315	585
Received (Rates)	33 (12.2%)	38 (12.1%)	71 (12.1%)

2.1 Use of Japanese Terms Denoting "Reflection"

In this section, the following three points have been clarified based on Yamaguchi (2024) statement.

First, when respondents were asked to select the term(s) they commonly used in the classroom from the aforementioned four options, approximately 95% of respondents from ETEP and 80% of those from STEP used *furikaeri*, whose lexical meaning is "looking back" or "retracing."

Second, around half of the respondents who chose only *furikaeri* explained their choice by stating that it is "easy for students to understand," "used in educational settings," and "included in the Course of Study" (CoS). Meanwhile, several respondents indicated that they had "no particular reason" for their choice.

Last, approximately 40% of the respondents reported using both "*furikaeri*" and

other term(s), often without distinguishing between them. The primary reasons provided were "No issues have arisen," and "Students follow the instructions without confusion." Additionally, there were four responses (all from STEP) indicating that students showed no confusion because the differences were explained in advance.

Meanwhile, two responses clearly articulate the reasons for their differentiated usage:

- In the ETM courses, we mainly use the term *furikaeri*, but we deliberately use the term *seisatsu*, which means "reflection or consideration," in the course "*Gakko-kyoiku no Jissen to Seisatsu* (Practice and Reflection in School Education)." (From ETEP).
- We consider *furikaeri* (looking-back) to refer to the second stage of the ALACT model, while *rifurekushon* (reflection) and *seisatsu* refer to the entire ALACT model or specifically to stages 2-4. As students are not familiar with the term *seisatsu,* we do not use it often, but we sometimes use it to clarify when students equate *rifurekushon* with *furikaeri* (From STEP) (see Osaki, 2024).

2.2 Teaching Styles of ETM Courses

The survey included two questions regarding teaching methodology. The first question asked respondents to fill in a table containing the names of the courses they were in charge of, whether the courses were compulsory or elective, the number of students enrolled, and the teaching styles of the classes. The second question asked respondents to name one course in which they primarily used reflection.

Responses to the second question revealed that courses primarily using reflection were the compulsory ETM courses. STEP responses recorded 33 instances (86%) of using reflection terms, while 29 instances (88%) were recorded from ETEP. Therefore, from the responses to the first question, we extracted the enrollment numbers and teaching styles of the ETM courses for each respondent. Regarding teaching styles, respondents could choose from the four aforementioned options, allowing multiple selections. These results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Teaching styles of English Teaching Methodology courses

Styles	ETEP	STEP	Total
Student-centered seminar	2	4	6 (9.7%)
Lecture + Student-centered seminar	6	13	19 (30.6%)
Teacher-directed seminar + Student-centered seminar	4	4	8 (12.9%)
Lecture + Group learning	3	2	5 (8.1%)
Lecture	5	4	9 (14.5%
Lecture + Teacher-directed seminar	5	3	8 (12.9%
Teacher-directed seminar	4	3	7 (11.3%)
Total	29	33	62

Table 2 indicates that although teacher-directed styles are still prevalent, more than half of the courses incorporate student-centered styles. However, the survey did not investigate how often these styles are conducted during the semester or the specific content they cover. Similarly, specifics regarding the use of group learning and group discussion teaching styles are also unknown.

2.3 Situations or Contexts for Reflection

Table 3 presents the number and percentage of respondents who teach ETM courses, excluding incomplete and unclear responses, as well as a summary of the types of situations or contexts in which they encouraged reflection.

Table 3

Types of situations or contexts for reflection

Types	ETEP	STEP	Total
A: Before or after the end of each class	11 (42.3%)	8 (26.7%)	19 (33.9%)
B: After mock lessons	4 (15.4%)	12 (40.0%)	16 (28.6%)
C: Other	11 (42.3%)	10 (33.3%)	21 (37.5%)

Situations or contexts for reflection can be broadly categorized into three types: before or after the end of each class (Type A), after mock lessons (Type B), and other (Type C). In the ETEP responses, Type A accounted for 42.3%, whereas Type B accounted for 40% of the STEP responses. Type C includes a mixture of Types A and B, and is applied after the completion of a task, unit, topic, and so on.

For each of these three types, individual responses to the following six questions were subsequently examined to explore the characteristics of the situations or contexts for reflection (abbreviations for each are shown in parentheses):

- Do you have students use tools (e.g., portfolios, journals, reflection sheets, and digital tools, etc.)? (Tools)
- How is reflection conducted (e.g., up to the individual, in conversation with instructors, in groups, etc.)? (Method)
- How do you assess students' reflections and learning progress (e.g., using reflection tools, etc.)? (Progress)
- Do you incorporate students' reflections as part of their grade assessment? If so, what aspects do you consider when grading? (Assessment)
- Do you provide feedback such as support or advice based on students' reflections and learning processes? (Feedback)
- Do you provide additional instruction to deepen the insights and learning gained through reflection? (Follow-up)

2.3.1 Regarding the number of students enrolled. While creating this question, the author assumed the class size to be for a single course; however, ETEP respondents reported numbers ranging from 2 to 400. Responses such as 120, 160, 220, and 400 were received, which are presumed to represent the total number of students enrolled in the entire TEP, rather than the class size of a single course. In contrast, the responses from STEP ranged from 8 to 50, which are considered to represent the class size for a single course. As such, it was not possible to determine the class size for a single course, and due to significant differences between universities, this study could not clarify the relationship between class size and teaching methods.

2.3.2 Characteristics of Type A. After reviewing the responses, it was found that the Type A group, which encouraged reflection in every class period, was unique. In particular, almost 90% of the respondents indicated that they "leave it up to the individual" in terms of "Method."

Although this trend is significant, about 50% of the respondents mentioned that they "keep track" of "Progress" by means of reflection- and/or comment-sheets, either on paper or in digital tools (e.g., Google Forms, Microsoft Teams, Manaba, etc.).

In the "Assessment" section, 36.8% of the respondents evaluated the submitted sheets based on their descriptions, and 23.5% assessed them based on the number of submissions. The evaluations were based on the following perspectives:

- Whether the goal has been reached.
- The focus and structure of the description.
- The attitude of the students in taking initiative for their learning.
- Whether the students have a good understanding of the content, and showcase their own ideas and questions (through a reflection sheet of about 500 words written at the end of each class period).

Almost 90% of the respondents provided feedback by adding comments to the sheets submitted by the students, or through verbal explanations in class. Follow-up was conducted in 13 cases (76.5%).

The following is a response from a junior college belonging to Type A. The total number of students (N) was approximately 50.

Tools: Quiz style or reflection sheets created by Google Forms.

Method: Up to the individual.

Progress: Monitored by the content of the submitted reflection sheets.

Assessment: In the quiz-style reflections, the score is automatically quantified. In the written form, the score is based on whether the student summarizes the main points of the class to a certain extent. Additionally, points are given to those who research related topics and express their own thoughts and opinions as independent activities.

Feedback: By using Google Classroom.
Follow-up: A course called “Elementary Education Seminar” is required as a subject offered independently by the department, and follow-up guidance is provided before (first-year students) and after (second-year students) teaching practice.

2.3.3 Characteristics of Type B. In Type B, where reflection was conducted after the mock lesson, 75% of respondents promoted some form of group or whole-class reflection. Over 80% of them indicated that they keep track of “Progress” not only through the content of the submitted sheets, but also by students’ attitude during group activities.

Regarding “Assessment,” linked to Progress, 75% of respondents from STEP evaluated the content of the submitted sheets. The following statements are examples of assessment perspectives that are almost exclusively from STEP, except for the last.

- Is it based on objective facts?
- Are the strengths and weaknesses of the mock lesson identified?
- Does reflection show improvement in the second mock class?
- Are the descriptions written properly? Are they submitted on the due date?
- Are the key points of the mock lesson discussed?
- Are reflections based on the perspective of class analysis described?
- Are the comments developmental in nature?
- Are the results and challenges described in detail? (from ETEP)

While just under 90% of the respondents provided Feedback, Follow-up was considerably less common than in Type A, at 25%.

2.3.4 Regarding Type C. This group can be categorized as “Mixed Types A and B” (Type C-1), “Type A and other(s)” (Type C-2), “Type B and other(s)” (Type C-3), and “after the completion of an activity, assignment, unit, topic, etc.” (Type C-4).

(1) Type C-1. This Type A reflection was conducted before the end of each class (Type A) and after mock lessons (Type B). There was one response received from ETEP as follows: “N: 50,” “Tools: A sheet with necessary items such as reflections on the lecture and insights about the mock lesson,” “Method: Left to the individual,” “Progress: Tracked through video recordings of mock lessons,” “Assessment: No,” and “Feedback and follow-up: In conversation with an instructor.”

(2) Type C-2. This is a combination of Type A and pre-switching themes. There was one response received from STEP as follows: “N: 80,” “Tools: Comment sheet,” “Method: Every time in group,” “Progress: Monitored by comment sheet or group discussion,” “Assessment: Submission of sheet and its content,” “Feedback: By comment sheet or verbally to the whole class,” and “Follow-up: Depending on the topic.”

(3) Type C-3. This type is a combination of Type B with the following situations or

contexts: Submission of reflection reports after seminars, during post-analysis of teaching plans, at the beginning and end of the semester, and after in-class discussions.

After the mock lesson & submission of reflection reports (from STEP)	N:7 Tools: Whiteboard & iPad. Method: In group. Progress: Tracked through video and sound recordings and photos of the whiteboard. Assessment: Based on the following three criteria: A. Able to reflect on the mock lesson and discuss appropriate modifications to the unit concept. B. Able to reflect on the mock lesson and describe the issues and results of the class. C. Unable to participate in the discussion of the mock lesson reflection. Feedback & follow-up: Have students submit a reflection report and return the report with comments.
After the mock lesson & seminar (from STEP)	N: 5 Tool: *Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (*J-POSTL*) (JACET-SIG on English Language Education, 2014). Method: Individually & in group. Progress: No response. Assessment: Based on how thoroughly one reflects and the number of reflection items included. Feedback: Given approximately once every five weeks by having students submit their J-POSTL, to which comments will be added. If the submission is careless, students will be encouraged to reflect more thoroughly. Follow-up: Conducted by pointing out areas for improvement and clarifying what has been improved, thereby also helping to build confidence.
After the mock lessons & during post-analysis of teaching plans (from STEP)	N: 40 Tools: Reports. Method: Up to the individual. Progress: No response. Assessment: Based on self-assessment grounded in evidence (data and warrants) and the inclusion of specific improvement plans or future measures. Feedback: Given by commenting on the submitted reports and continuously providing comments during the mock lessons. Follow-up: Conducted as needed, and if there are perspectives that can be expanded into overall instruction, they are addressed in the class.
In the beginning of the semester, after the mock lessons & in the end of the	N: 35 Tools: Worksheet & Google Forms. Method: In group after the mock lessons and then individually. Progress: Tracked through worksheet & Google Forms Assessment: Whether reflection is conducted or not.

semester (from STEP)	Feedback: Reflections done in groups are subsequently shared with the whole class, and individual reflections are returned with additional questions and comments. Follow-up: At the end of the semester, students are asked to reflect on and articulate their overall growth as teachers.
After the mock lessons or presentation & in-class discussion (from ETEP)	N: 4 Tools: *J-POSTL* & reaction papers. Method: Individually (*J-POSTL*) & in group or with the instructor in class. Progress: Tracked through reaction papers. Assessment: Not rated. Feedback: By returning the submitted *J-POSTL* with comments three times in a semester. Follow-up: In conversation with the instructor.

(4) Type C-4. The situations or contexts belonging to this type are "after the completion of an activity, task, unit, topic, etc.," which may be summarized in terms of "the point at which a learning or task comes to a close." The following are some examples of these:

In major activities and the last class of a semester (from ETEP)	N: 30 Tools: Digital portfolio & Google Forms. Method: In group & individually. Progress: I personally don't think I can track progress. I just keep track of student learning. Assessment: Whether reflection is conducted and keywords are included. Feedback: Pick out and comment on submitted responses.
In a situation to verify whether the objectives of the lesson are achieved (from ETEP)	N: 25 Tools: Comment sheets. Method: Up to the individual. Progress: Capture awareness with comment sheets. Assessment: Not rated. Feedback: In the following class, a "review of the previous class" time is set up and the teacher make comments.
In the unit on "Teaching Skills in Subjects" (5 sessions in total) (from ETEP)	N: 55 Tools: *J-POSTL Elementary* (JACET-SIG on English Language Education, 2021) & reflection sheet on LMS. Method: Individually & in group. Assessment: Based on whether all items on the reflection sheet have been filled out completely and submitted by the due date, and points will be deducted if the content of the sheet is significantly lacking.
In situations for lesson planning and tasks (from ETEP)	N: 135 Tools: *J-POSTL Elementary.* Method: In group discussion after the lecture. Progress: Based on reflective writing on PKT after the mock lessons. Assessment: Whether or not the writing is summarized according to the tasks. Basically, if the number of words is above a certain

	level and the Japanese language is not strange, it is acceptable. Follow-up: Encourage students to make use of their mock lessons for the next one.
In situations where understanding of theories and concepts is promoted or hands-on practice experiences are valued. (from STEP)	N: 60 Tools: Writing with some specification of topic (reflection paper). Method: In group and individually. Progress: Tracked through teaching plans, mock lessons, performances, and writings. Assessment: The main point is whether or not students bring their unconscious preconceptions to the surface, face them critically, and reach a new understanding or generate new questions based on the descriptions of their experiences. Feedback: Returning detailed and critical comments to reflection paper. Follow-up: For those who wish to do so, I make it possible for them to participate in study sessions at secondary school sites in which I myself am involved. By having students reflect on their experiences, I try to devise ways for students to make sense of how their university studies can be applied in the field of education.

3. Discussion

3.1 Use of Japanese Terms Denoting "Reflection"

The term *rifurekushon* (reflection) is believed to be introduced to English teacher education in Japan by Genji Hatta, who, in the preface to his book, said "a methodological approach to education that clarifies the principles of teachers' practical thinking is missing from current English pedagogy in Japan" (Hatta, 2000). He proposes the introduction of the professional act of *rifurekushon* or *hansei* (reflection) because English teacher education up to that point had lacked a pedagogical perspective on teaching and learning. In other words, it was at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century that reflection appeared in English language education in Japan, and approximately 20 years later, the term *furikaeri* was used to officially introduce the concept of reflection.

After *furikaeri* first appeared in the 2017 edition of the CoS in Japan, the Foreign Language (English) Core Curriculum for Teaching (MEXT, 2019) was formulated based on this document; in it, an example of a mock lesson procedure is specified as "planning → preparing → practicing → *furikaeri* → improving → re-planning." Owing to this influence, it is not surprising that responses using *furikaeri* as a term equivalent to "reflection" in English stand out. However, "reflection" refers to the entire cycle of procedures described above, as pointed out by the respondent commenting on the ALACT model (see Section 2.1). Thus, *furikaeri* and "reflection" do not necessarily imply the same thing.

The inclusion of this question item stems from the recognition that terminology reflects the user's consciousness and has the effect of promoting understanding of the

term among learners who hear it. Osaki suggests that the Japanese translation of reflection be *seisatsu* (or *furikaeri-seisatsu*), meaning "something that fosters autonomous learners who, after reflecting on their experiences, can redesign their experiences based on their own learning and practice" (Osaki, 2024, p. 64).

As mentioned above, reflection remains a new concept in Japan. Given its mixed Japanese translation, it is necessary to explain the differences in the meanings of the terms beforehand. Although Hatta's use of *hansei* for reflection was commonly used after some kind of activity, its original meaning of self-examination has been lost, and the term is no longer used for reflection. If *furikaeri* becomes only the literal meaning of "looking back," it could be replaced by another term.

3.2 Teaching Styles of ETM Courses

The survey revealed that more than half of the respondents incorporate student-centered teaching. A learner/student-centered style of instruction is considered an effective means of inquiry-based learning, fostering analysis, critical/reflective thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning (Bremner et al., 2022). However, a search of CiNii's Academic Information for articles on student-centered teaching in English teacher education yielded few results. When the search was focused specifically on teacher education in problem/project-based learning (PBL), a learner-centered learning model, the results yielded Kanai (2020), Matsubara and Iwama (2020), and Yoshizawa (2022), among others. However, none of the results are about English education. The only result regarding English education was a study of PBL with cross-curricular themes in mock lessons (Joetsu University of Education, 2017), commissioned by MEXT.

Kanai (2020) points out that teachers who have never experienced PBL may struggle to envision it as a specific teaching format, and hence hesitate to implement it (p. 222). In this context, it seems possible to replace PBL with "learner-centered teaching."

However, research on student-centered teaching does not seem to be progressing in Japan. Kanai (2020) introduced international case studies examining teacher professional development in PBL and its effectiveness. As such, both PBL and student-centered teacher education classes need to be widely implemented within Japan's English education field.

3.3 Situations or Contexts for Reflection

The "Reflection" website of the University of Edinburgh (2022a) presents four different ways of reflecting: "Written reflections," "In conversation with self," "Reflecting with others," and "Creative and other media." This framework was considered easy to understand and appropriate for organizing the survey results, although the "Creative and other media" category was omitted due to a lack of examples.

First, there are four types of "Written reflections": "Reflective reports/essay," "Diary/Journaling," "Blog posts," and "Post-it notes (or scrap paper)." According to the

survey results, nearly all respondents had their students write reflections in some form, except for "Diary/Journaling" and "Blog posts." The tools are often paper, digital reflections, or comment sheets that students are asked to fill out and submit. Most of these sheets may fall into the "Post-it notes" type, although the format, amount, or content to be written have not been specified. If such reflections are to be done for each of the 15 classes in a semester, the format and content of the sheets should be devised so that they do not become stereotyped or cause reflection fatigue among students. The checklist format may create "an association that reflection is merely running through a series of questions and there is no place for creative thinking and full engagement" (University of Edinburgh, 2022b). This is a concern when using self-assessment descriptors for portfolios such as *J-POSTL*.

Second, "In conversation with self" would need to be considered in relation to the "up to the individual" responses. Types include "Thinking by yourself/out loud," "Videos," and "Audio recording/podcast." The first type means talking out loud to oneself (talk out loud). Even if reflections are left to the individual, teacher advice and support are deemed necessary. As the survey results indicate, there have been few attempts to show or play videos and audio recordings of mock lessons.

Last, "Reflecting with others" is divided into three subtypes: "With someone more experienced," "With a peer," and "With a group" or "Reflection in groups." In this survey, the "someone more experienced" would be the instructor in charge of the class. The responses "in conversation with an instructor" are included in this category. Peers and groups refer to classmates, whereas "group reflection," "group discussion," and "group study" would all be considered as reflection in groups after the mock lessons.

"Reflection in groups" has three categories: "Reflecting on a shared experience," "Reflecting on group work," and "Reflecting on theory." Discussions after a mock lesson belonged to the first category. When used in conjunction with reflective reports/essays, "reflective group discussion offers different benefits to student learning compared to individual reflective writing" (Tsang, 2011, p.17). The other two may correspond to PBL and post-lecture group discussions, respectively; however, it is unclear whether they were practiced in this study.

3.4 Limitation of the study

One of the study limitations was the response rate of just over 10% of English TEP. However, given that responses were received from universities across Japan, from Hokkaido to Kyushu, it is safe to assume that the survey results reveal an important trend toward reflection promoted by the ETM courses.

Another limitation was the quasi-structured questionnaire. A significant number of responses were ambiguous and difficult to discern from the descriptions. Therefore, future studies should include follow-up surveys, in the form of questionnaires or interviews, for responses in which specific details are desired.

4. Conclusion

Among the Japanese equivalents of reflection, *furikaeri* was most commonly used. *Rifurekushon* and *seisatsu* were also used without any confusion. Student understanding of the concept of reflection is important; without effective understanding, they will be unable to practice reflection in any genuine sense. As mentioned in a few responses, it is crucial for the concept to be explained adequately in the future, along with ensuring that correct terminology is used depending on the situation or context.

Regarding teaching styles, it seems that teacher-led styles, including lecture-style courses, are still dominant. Although half or more of the courses have student-centered teaching styles, it is unknown how many of the 15 classes in the semester incorporate it. The purpose, content, and methods of incorporating this teaching style are also unknown. It is important for students who will teach in the future to experience this style of teaching; follow-up surveys or interviews can be used to clarify this.

Finally, we consider situations or contexts for reflection. It was found that responses to the other questions varied considerably depending on the situation or context. There were three main types: before and after the end of every class, after a mock class, and other. In the case of every class, more than 90% of the respondents stated that they left reflection to the individual, but they used paper and digital tools for reflection. The format and content of these tools need to be further investigated, as these tools allow teacher educators to monitor learning progress, assess student reflections, and provide feedback.

The challenge for ‘after the mock lesson’ and the other types is group reflection, along with use of paper and digital tools. While group discussions are said to benefit students differently to reflective writing, which form, method, and content should be used is an issue for future research.

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【Research Note】

How a Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher Has Conceptualized Foreign Language Learning and Instruction: A Case Study of a Colombian Assistant English Teacher at K High School

Takashi Yamamoto

Abstract

This paper explores the beliefs of a non-native English teacher working as an assistant language teacher (ALT) at a private K high school in western Japan. The author, who has experience teaching as a team-teacher with this teacher, conducted preliminary surveys and interviewed him. The following are his beliefs about foreign language learning and teaching, which were obtained from analyzing the survey results and the interview: (1) Exposure to a foreign language from infancy is a natural way to learn, (2) Teachers should not create barriers to learning, (3) Learning a foreign language and culture is a pathway to something new and fun, (4) Learning a foreign language requires making mistakes, and teachers should be patient, (5) Students gain confidence by completing small steps, and (6) Learning a foreign language allows us to relativize many things. His words and behaviors based on these beliefs seemed to motivate students to participate in class. This case study suggests that a non-native English speaker with self-awareness and confidence as an ALT in this high school can help connect Japanese English teachers and students, which is one factor leading to success in team teaching.

Keywords

non-native English-speaking teachers, team teaching, ALT, beliefs

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of This Study

Team teaching (TT) using assistant language teachers (ALTs) in secondary English education in Japan began in earnest in 1987 with the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET Program). With the Japan-U.S. alliance as a backdrop, 848 young people, mostly from the U.S., were employed, and many of them were positioned as ALTs, largely in Japanese high school classrooms. More than 35 years later, ALTs are hired not only through the JET Program but also in various other means, and it is not unusual to find at least one full-time ALT in every high school. The same trend is occurring in junior high schools and elementary schools, where English was introduced as a subject in 2020. Currently, the number of ALTs working in elementary, junior high, and senior high

schools stands at 19,251 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, hereafter MEXT, 2022).

As the number of ALTs increases and the practice of teaching through TT builds up, the patterns of TT and the qualities required as an ALT may differ depending on the class's context. Depending on the developmental stage of the learners, there may be a case where non-native English teachers are more beneficial than native English-speaking teachers. Looking outside the classroom, as the demand for English as an international language increases, English and English speakers will become more diverse, and the English teachers and learning styles will also become more diverse.

This paper explores the beliefs of David (pseudonym), a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) working as an ALT at a private K high school in western Japan. He is a NNEST who grew up in Colombia until he graduated from college and learned English in a culture different from most students in Japan.

It is clear that the concept of "native" and "non-native" is not a simple dichotomy but rather a fluid one that depends on a variety of factors (e.g., Baxter, 2016; Faez, 2011; Morgan, 2004), and the uselessness of the idea of a dichotomy has been pointed out (Shibata, 2020). However, recognizing this point, this paper will proceed within the framework that the research collaborator is a "non-native English-speaking" teacher. This is based on the following two points: his "native language," which he has no choice in, is not English, and he is aware that he himself acquired English as an L2.

This paper examines how David's own learning process has led him to develop his ideas about foreign language learning and teaching. First, based on the preliminary survey results about TT, it is confirmed that the students' evaluations of David's TT are positive. Then, the author describes the characteristics of David's words and behaviors obtained from four classroom observations. Next, David's beliefs about foreign language learning and teaching through the interview results will be examined with these findings.

David, a NNEST from Colombia, and the author, one of the Japanese teachers of English (JTE) at K High School, had been teaching together as a team for three years. The students participated enthusiastically class activities and looked forward to having David in class weekly.

Igawa (2008), who surveyed ALTs and JTEs, cited increased motivation on the part of both students and teachers (JTEs and ALTs) as one factor in the success of TT. In this respect, he is an example of a teacher contributing to a "successful" TT. The form of TT that David and the author conducted was mainly the so-called "conventional" form of PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production). As will be discussed below, students felt comfortable, enjoyed, and wanted to use English more in the TT that David joined. From the author's subjective sense as a teaching partner, he felt that NNEST David's behavior in and out of the classroom and his responsiveness to the students were one of the factors that contributed to the success of the TT. What beliefs does David have about foreign language learning and student teaching, and what experiences have shaped these beliefs?

Although this study deals with a very microscopic and limited case study, a careful examination of the pedagogical beliefs of a diverse group of foreign language teachers based on their own learning process could expand the possibilities of foreign language teaching methods and serve as a resource for suggestions regarding teacher education. This paper implies that this case study contributes to the reconceptualization of the role of language teachers, as pointed out by Aoyama (2021) and Balgoa (2019), and to the cultivation of sensitivity to the position of English and English education in Japanese society.

1.2 Research Framework

This study attempts to conduct an exploratory analysis of the content of the ALT's narratives in light of the students' reactions to the lessons given by the non-native English-speaking ALT, the research collaborator, and the classroom observations. The reasons for conducting this study within the framework of an exploratory case study are as follows.

First, exploratory case studies are one of the best methods for educational research settings where various factors are intertwined in such a complex way that generalizations are impossible or difficult to make. Brown (2008) states that case studies are limited in scope, but they "can provide rich and significant insights into events and behaviours" (Brown, 2008, p.9) and "do provide a humanistic, holistic understanding of complex situations and as such are valuable research tools" (p.10). Also, an exploratory case study such as the current study "can contribute uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena" (Yin, 1984, p.14). Furthermore, in recent years, exploratory research such as Hanks (2017) has received much attention in English language education in Japan because there is a need for teachers themselves to be involved in research to clarify issues. In this sense, it is considered appropriate for the author, a classroom practitioner, and a researcher to be involved in the current case study and its analysis.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, the author would like to review previous studies on English language instructors other than JTEs in the context of English language education in Japanese schools.

Hattie (2008), citing Murawski and Swanson (2001) and Willett and Anderson (1983), points out that the effect of TT itself on academic achievement is not significant, and its effectiveness depends mainly on the teachers who implement it. He also claims that the teacher-student relationship is a significant factor affecting student achievement. From this point of view, teacher research on both JTEs and ALTs is highly significant in improving students' academic achievement.

Regarding ALTs in Japanese school education, many studies point out the ambiguity

of their role and call for improvement (Ishino, 2018; Igawa, 2008; Birch, 2008 and so on.). In the current English education in Japan, only a small number of non-JTEs are in charge of classes independently, and most TTs are by JTEs and ALTs, the positioning of ALTs is an issue that cannot be overlooked. Ishino (2018) reveals cases in which JTEs do not feel sufficient significance for ALTs and TT conducted with ALTs, suggesting the need for further research based on ALTs' narratives in this regard as well.

Many studies describe and compare the characteristics of "native" and "non-native" language teachers (e.g., Brain, 1999; Phillipson, 1992; Bailey, 2001; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014; Okuda, 2019). In TT in Japanese school education, ALTs are often viewed as NESTs and JTEs as NNESTs. On this basis, research on better TT has been conducted, as well as research on Japanese teachers' teaching attitudes and identity as NNESTs (e.g., Lawrence, 2020; Kachi & Choon-hwa, 2001; Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Uchida & Sugimoto, 2020). However, the scarcity of studies on NNESTs, who possess different cultural backgrounds and foreign language learning experiences from their students, and collaborate with JTEs to teach English, underscores the need for more research in this area (Shibata, 2010; Lee, 2022).

With the MEXT promoting the use of English in the classroom, the number of ALTs is expected to increase in the future. The native language of ALTs is not necessarily English, and the number of TTs by JTEs and NNESTs is also expected to increase. This is a particularly significant form of English education in today's world, where the importance of English as an international language is being underscored. However, the MEXT does not appear to be actively evaluating the presence of non-native English teachers.

In light of the above, this study focuses on an ALT, a NNEST who is positioned as "ambiguous" in terms of his role but has conducted "successful" TT. The study particularly focuses on his narrative on his foreign language learning process and his beliefs about teaching English based on his experience. The two research questions of this study are as follows:

RQ1: What beliefs did David develop through his foreign language learning and teaching experiences?

RQ2: How do David's beliefs and actions based on them affect the students at K High School?

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Collaborator

・Name: David (pseudonym)

・Age: Late 30s

・Background: He was born and raised in a city in western Colombia. He received his primary and secondary education at an American school in the same city (the language of

instruction was English). After graduating, he attended a public university in southwest Colombia. He majored in graphic design. His parents were both teachers. His mother taught Spanish to international students at a university. Many international students always surrounded her. Among them was a Japanese woman who was a friend of David's sister, and through the family relationship with her, David developed a connection with Japan. Through his interactions with this Japanese woman's family, David's interest in Japan grew, and he decided to study there. After studying the Japanese language in Japan for three years, he returned to Colombia, completed his thesis, and graduated from college. He came back to Japan and married a Japanese woman. He worked for three years as an English conversation school teacher in the Kansai area. He then worked as a web designer for a publishing company. Through the connections of his boss at that time, he got a job in the English department of K High School (his current school), which had been looking for an ALT. 2023 is his 8th year of service at K High School, where he teaches all first-grade classes (10 classes) and one class each for second and third-grade students in the English course.

3.2 Preliminary Surveys

The author used two preliminary surveys (a questionnaire about TT for students and class observations of TT) and an interview with David to address the above research questions. First, prior to the interview with David, a questionnaire was administered to find out students' attitudes toward the classes that David was involved in. Then class observations were conducted to see what David did and how he did it during the classes. This paper is mainly based on the interview with David, but the preliminary surveys leading up to the interview and their results are summarized below.

3.2.1 Student survey on TT and its results. A survey was conducted on 401 sophomores (16-17 years old) who took one year of English classes by TT in their first year at K High School in the 20XX school year (indicated this way to avoid identifying the year of the students who participated in the survey). The questionnaire contained 12 descriptive items in English, as listed in Table 1. Students were asked to respond to each item with a number from 1 ("not at all agree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), depending on their level of agreement. They were also asked about their perception of TT in open-ended questions.

Table 1

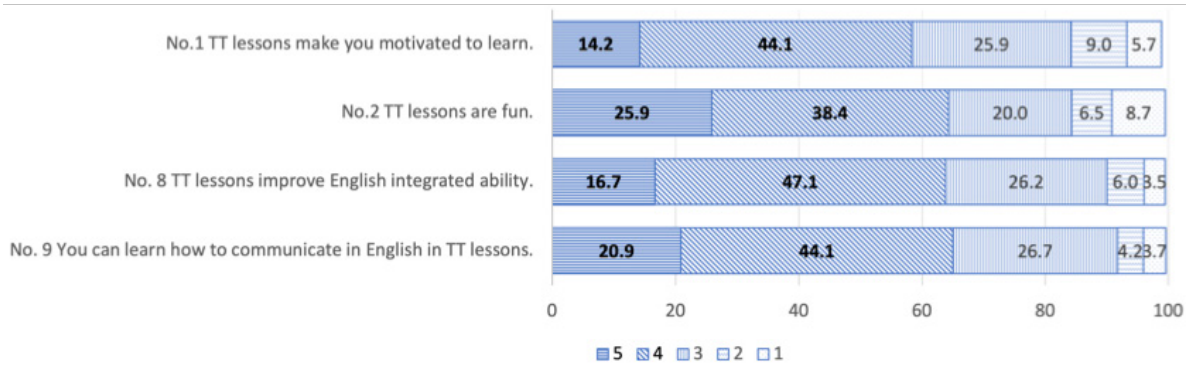
Descriptive Items and Scores

No	Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	TT lessons make you motivated to learn.	397	1.00	5.00	3.5264	1.0335
2	TT lessons are fun.	399	1.00	5.00	3.6667	1.1848
3	You can learn cultural things in TT lessons.	400	1.00	5.00	3.2475	1.0483
4	TT lessons improve your ability to read English.	400	1.00	5.00	3.3650	0.9895
5	TT lessons improve your ability to listen to English.	400	1.00	5.00	3.8700	0.9056
6	TT lessons improve your ability to speak English.	400	1.00	5.00	3.7900	0.9450
7	TT lessons improve your ability to write English.	400	1.00	5.00	3.0425	0.9915
8	TT lessons improve English integrated ability.	399	1.00	5.00	3.6792	0.9417
9	You can learn how to communicate in English in TT lessons.	400	1.00	5.00	3.7450	0.9604
10	You cannot study English systematically in TT lessons.	400	1.00	5.00	2.7375	0.7779
11	TT lessons cannot improve your ability of grammar and vocabulary in English.	400	1.00	5.00	2.6100	0.9055
12	TT lessons are difficult to prepare and review.	400	1.00	5.00	3.1675	0.9985
	Average	399.6	1.00	5.00	3.3706	0.9735

3.2.2 Numerical responses. The questionnaire used to measure students' perceptions rated a value of 0.87 on Cronbach's alpha. The numeric responses to this survey indicate that about 60-65% who responded on scales 4 and 5 to items No.1, 2, 8, and 9 (see Figure 1) have a favorable view of the TT by David and JTEs.

Figure 1

Percentage of Students who Favorably Perceive TT (N=401)



3.2.3 Open-ended statements. The students were also asked to write their opinions or perceptions about the TT in the questionnaire. In addition to increasing the frequency of classes, many students desire smaller class sizes because they want to communicate with the ALT in English. The following comments were originally written by students in English and have been supplemented by the author as needed.

- I want to have more TT. I think that one ALT is too few for 1,200 students in the school. I think there are many students who are interested in English and want to learn to speak it, so I want to see more possibilities. There are many students who can do well in English (tests) but cannot speak English. (Student O)

- We have a TT class only once a week, but I feel this is not enough. (Student T)
- I want the TT class to be divided into some groups according to the level of the students. I want more chances to speak English. (Student S)
- I think it is better to have TT classes in small groups rather than in one class. (Student B)

Even more noteworthy are the following responses from students who seem to have a poor command of English.

- I have always felt that I don't like English, but in TT, I can take English classes with no difficulty, so please make more of it. (Student Y)
- I feel comfortable and can enjoy David's class. (Student K)
- TT classes are motivating. (Student H)

3.3 TT Class Observations

Although the author had three years of TT experience with David, to understand David's behavior more objectively, the author observed the classes that David and other JTEs conducted and his behaviors before and after the classes, and wrote down their characteristics. The list of the four classes the author observed is given in Table 2. Classes A and B are second-year English course students, and Classes C and D are first-year students in the general humanities course, all 50-minute classes. All observations were conducted between September and December of the same school year. In all classes, David actively supported students in participating and was willing to help JTEs during and after class to improve the class. His series of actions, described in detail in the next section, seemed to make the classes he was in charge of more appealing.

Table 2

Classes Observed

Class	Grade	Number of students	Contents	JTE	Role of JTE	Role of David
Class A	2	30	Preparation of Debate/ Practice	Mr. Karakawa	Facilitator	Assistant/Advisor
Class B	2	25	Preparation of Debate/ Practice	Mr. Tsunoda	Facilitator	Assistant/Advisor
Class C	1	36	QA and Group work on Textbook	Mr. Horiuchi	JTE and David take turns facilitating and assisting each other.	
Class D	1	37	Recitation pair work	Ms. Mukai	Assistant/Advisor	Facilitator

* Names are pseudonyms.

3.3.1 David's behavioral characteristics. The four classes observed were basically conducted in an orthodox style with PPP as the main focus, and the teaching methods

were not unique to David: in some classes, JTE took the leadership (Classes A and B), and in others, David took the leadership (Classes C and D). The leadership role taken by the JTE and ALT team depended on what they wanted the students to do in the class. In all classes, communicative activities were well-discussed and well-planned within the team. David used many positive expressions in class and supported student activities appropriately for the class situation. He also created an upbeat atmosphere throughout the class, making students feel at ease.

The following is a summary of David's characteristic behaviors observed in class and before and after the class.

(1) Japanese language use by class. The degree of Japanese use was adjusted according to the situation of students in each class. For the students enrolled in the English course, Japanese was generally not used. In classes where many students were not proficient in English, Japanese was used more for supplementary explanations and encouragement, such as "*Mou sukoshi gambatte* (Hang in there a little longer). The students seemed comfortable with the non-native Japanese-speaking ALT providing support in Japanese. His support in Japanese did not discourage students from trying to use English and did not seem to encourage easy dependence on their native language.

(2) Waiting for students' activities. Although he tried to keep basically to the pre-scheduled class time, he waited relatively long for the students to be satisfied with their activities. As a result, time was sometimes spent on activities for longer than planned.

(3) Use of many positive expressions. In all classes, David always smiled and made eye contact with students. In addition to words such as "Good," "OK," "Excellent," etc., he often used basically positive expressions such as "Close" and "Good try" for wrong answers.

(4) Adequate explanations. He was quite evident with gestures when explaining the procedures of the activities. He showed consideration to avoid confusion among students by showing the model multiple times, adding appropriate anecdotes and examples, and writing sufficiently on the board.

(5) Careful review of lessons. David always tried to improve on the previous class. At the end of each class, he checked with the JTE to see if he had contributed appropriately to the class and if the students had participated fully in the activities. Since he has been working with many JTEs in TT, he often suggests ideas based on relatively successful lesson plans, but he also seems flexible to the JTEs' opinions.

(6) Bright and pleasant atmosphere. In all classes, he incorporated elements that students enjoyed, such as games, quizzes, and time for physical activities. In addition, when the students did not ask questions or voice their opinions, the teachers created a cheerful atmosphere by emphasizing student participation, such as by making big gestures and encouraging students cheerfully.

The author shared the above statements (1) through (6) with the four JTEs shown in Table 2 to check for bias in their views of David's behavior. They agreed that (1)

through (6) were appropriate statements regarding David.

4. Interview with David

After confirming the students' perceptions of TT at K High School, the author interviewed David, focusing on his own foreign language learning process and his thoughts on foreign language learning and teaching. The semi-structured interview, which lasted approximately 90 minutes in English (see Interview Guide in Appendix), was recorded with his consent and transcribed by the author. The author read the transcript repeatedly and summarized the beliefs (1) through (6) that were extracted from David's words. After the interview, David and the author had three meetings (the first at David's school and the second and third in the author's office, each lasting about 30 minutes) while compiling the beliefs to see if they were in line with David's ideas. David asked for corrections on points, not in line with his thoughts, and the author revised his expressions. Finally, beliefs (1) through (6), which are discussed below, were confirmed between the author and David himself.

4.1 Interview Results

David has had a strong interest in learning foreign languages since childhood and is confident in using his native languages, Spanish and English, and can communicate in Japanese. He was exposed to many foreign languages at an early age, as his mother was a Spanish teacher to international students. He learned English relatively early due to his bilingual education at an American school, but he also studied other foreign languages. Through his work experience in other countries and teaching experience in an English conversation school in Japan, he has come to hold the following beliefs about foreign language learning and education.

(1) Exposure to a foreign language from infancy is a natural way to learn.
(2) Teachers should not create barriers to learning.
(3) Learning a foreign language and culture is a pathway to something new and fun.
(4) Learning a foreign language requires making mistakes, and teachers should be patient.
(5) Students gain confidence by completing small steps.
(6) Learning a foreign language allows us to relativize many things.

His beliefs will be discussed in the following sections in light of the preliminary study results.

4.1.1 Belief (1): Exposure to a foreign language from infancy is a natural way to learn. The belief that it is better to acquire a foreign language as naturally as possible

through exposure to it from early childhood was formed through the following experiences. David's mother, who taught Spanish to speakers of other languages, gave him many opportunities to be exposed to various languages. From the time he entered elementary school, he received a bilingual education in an American-affiliated elementary and secondary school in Colombia. Because all subjects other than Spanish were taught in English, he acquired English without being particularly conscious of it as a foreign language. When he spoke with his parents at home, he used his native language, Spanish. However, his parents, both educators, had a family policy of having their children (David and his sister) watch TV on English channels. He was so accustomed to this that he remembers the discomfort he felt when he watched programs broadcast in Spanish.

- Television was only in English. I don't really remember if it was strictly told to, but I was used to that. Every time someone turned on the television in Spanish, it sounded very weird for me. I wanted it to go back to English audio. (Excerpt 58.11-14)
- I think that was one of the main reasons why speaking English was natural. (Excerpt 58.15)
- Both times - when I want to study and when I want to have fun- both are in English. Oh, I think that was one of the main reasons it was very easy to become bilingual. (Excerpt 58.18-19)

David was exposed to many foreigners from an early age and grew up with a respect for English and other languages and cultures. His mother, who was always surrounded by international students, often took him on trips to museums and other off-campus activities. His mother had friends worldwide with whom she had many interactions. One Japanese woman was a former student of his mother's and later became a close friend of his sister. After studying abroad in Colombia, she continued to live there and introduced David's family to Japanese culture. This encounter with the Japanese woman increased David's interest in Japan and the Japanese language and was one of the motivating factors in his decision to come to Japan. David's sister is also remarkably close to this Japanese woman, and thanks to her, she is fluent in Japanese. The experiences of interacting with these people at home and school may have helped him emphasize the importance of exposure to foreign languages at an early age.

Although he studied graphic design in college, he was always interested in acquiring a foreign language. In high school, he had to take the TOEFL for graduation, and his score was so high that he earned a TOEFL Excellency Diploma. Therefore, he did not have to take any English classes at the university. His confidence and belief in his English language skills are expressed in the following words.

- I have no memory of studying (English) really hard and worrying about English.

(Excerpt 105.24)

- It [Learning a language in a situation where they have to use that language] motivates the students very much. (Excerpt 105.27)

After three years of study in Japan, David returned to Colombia. He came back to Japan, married a Japanese woman, and began teaching English at an English conversation school in the Kansai metropolitan area of Japan. He met English teachers from many different countries there and shared the following story, reinforcing his belief in a foreign language learning environment where children must use the language at an early age. The director of his English school was a Canadian-born Scotsman whose daughter, then seven years old, spoke six languages like a native. The director had a wife from the Philippines and was fluent in Chinese; they lived with her parents. The daughter could also speak Tagalog with her grandmother and Spanish with her grandfather. The director's wife could also speak Chinese, so the daughter was comfortable communicating in Chinese and spoke English with her father, the director. His parents were French-speaking Canadians, and the daughter was able to communicate with them in French as well.

- So for her, it was natural to speak all of them because it's one person, one language. (Excerpt 157.12)
- A system to be trilingual depends on the ages and the time-exposures of the language in a day. (Excerpt 158.2)

4.1.2 Belief (2): Teachers should not create barriers to learning. David's career as an English teacher in Japan began at an English conversation school outside the public education system. He had four or five classes each day, each with four or five students. His students ranged in age from zero to 15 or 16, and in the process of teaching them, he learned about the situation of Japanese children and how they acquire a foreign language.

- They really changed my view of learning a lot. (Excerpt 104.9)

At the English conversation school, he gained experience teaching students of various ages, which is different from English education at regular schools. Many students came to the conversation school at the urging of their parents, who wanted them to learn English, regardless of their own intentions. Due to the nature of English education in the private sector, it was necessary to devise and make efforts to encourage more students to continue coming to the English conversation school. Through this experience, he learned to adapt his instruction to the characteristics of the students and to be careful not to make them feel uncomfortable or create barriers to learning.

- It is important to get close to them and become friends. (Excerpt 135.8)

In this regard, he further reflects as follows:

・That's a good experience for me because I didn't know how to handle... for example, a high school kid who is tired from school. After school, he has to come to *eikaiwa*. He's tired. He is in a bad mood. He is a teenager. (Excerpt 135.3-7)

Tatar (2019) points out that English teachers from abroad need adequate training and preparation to teach in an EFL environment. It is important to note that David is currently involved in teaching English in schools after coming to Japan and gaining experience teaching Japanese students of various ages. As a non-native English speaker, David's teaching experience has reinforced this belief.

・When I first came to K High School, I thought the students were very shy. I thought they would be difficult to handle. But I had the same experience. (Excerpt 127.3-5)

4.1.3 Belief (3): Learning a foreign language and culture is a pathway to something new and fun. He grew up feeling the exuberance and joy of something new from the aforementioned off-campus activities his mother took him on and from his teachers at the American School. He describes his childhood experiences as "changing my approach to the world (Excerpt 45.1)." He found his social studies and history classes exciting because they seemed to bring him something new from the outside. He feels that he was greatly influenced by his American teachers at the bilingual school.

・Colombian teachers often had stickers, and they were in Spanish, of course. But American teachers have stickers in English, like "good job" or "cool." It's almost the same as the Spanish ones, but they made a huge difference because they're coming from thousands of miles away. That' s what' s really important. If I had been taught history in Spanish, I might not have been so interested. Because it was taught in English, I was able to get something different, something from outside, something of added value. So it was very interesting. (Excerpt 112.1-7)

He is fascinated by the added value and wants to give his students something new, both in his own classes and the municipal "English Village" project he is currently involved in outside of school. He seeks to offer foreign languages as a pathway or window to the outside world.

・So I think that one of the key things in class and English Village is that they can touch a culture that they think is so far away. (Excerpt 111.7)

4.1.4 Belief (4): Learning a foreign language requires making mistakes, and teachers should be patient. Although he majored in graphic design during college, his interest has always been in languages, as mentioned above about himself and his family environment. His bilingual education from an early age allowed him to learn English relatively naturally. However, he needed help learning Brazilian Portuguese, and especially Japanese, which he learned after college. This has led him to emphasize that learning a foreign language takes time and that mistakes are inevitable. In addition, his experience teaching at an English conversation school made him keenly aware of the importance of waiting.

- If you want to learn a language, you have to make mistakes. So like when I was in school, the reason why you become bilingual is that you use it every day. So every day, you make mistakes. If you make mistakes every day for two years, and in the third year, you will be perfect or improve so much. (Excerpt 149.2-5)
- They don't want to make mistakes. But that's wrong. (Excerpt 149.7-8)
- I would like them to understand that making mistakes is something positive. (Excerpt 149.10)

He said that although Brazilian Portuguese is linguistically close to Spanish and easy to understand, he was initially baffled about speaking it. He also said the following about the Japanese language.

- Learning English was very natural, and Portuguese was very, very easy. But of course, it's very similar to Spanish, though. That's why I wanted to make the challenge of Japanese. When I came to Japan, I thought in my mind, "I'm like a superhero. I have a superpower. I conquered English. I conquered Portuguese and now Japanese." But when I got here, it was not like that. It's completely different. (Excerpt 153.1-9)

In his interview, David talked about his experience teaching a two-year-old girl named Erica (pseudonym). She was two years old, but he had never heard her utter a word of Japanese or English other than the word "mama." Her parents were also concerned about her language development. For the first six months of David's lessons, she was timid and would never repeat what he said, only listen. One day, however, David showed her a picture book and asked her to touch the word "red," and she did. A few months later, when he said "red," she suddenly said "red." The Japanese staff at the English conversation school who were around her at the time were surprised to hear her say the word. The next day, she also said "purple." When she turned three, she could say everything just like any other child within a year or so. Reflecting on this, David said it made him realize how differently each child learns a language and added that he does not think we should be discouraged even if the students cannot say anything at first.

・They always have something inside. You just need to give them time. (Excerpt 127.1-2)

4.1.5 Belief (5): Students gain confidence by completing small steps. There are three courses at K High School, and students have different motivations for enrolling and different levels of proficiency prior to enrollment. David teaches in all courses. He has a good grasp of the characteristics of the students in each course and is able to meet their needs. As mentioned earlier, David is very good at building and maintaining rapport with students in the classroom. He seems to know the level of each student and tries to give them the support they need at the right time.

・I see that most students at K High School are not able to relate what they are learning here in English to their own lives. So, I try to use something that they can relate to their own lives as closely as possible at first when I handle debates in my team teaching classes, for example. (Excerpt 138.8-9)

Depending on the characteristics of the students in each course, he tries to increase their confidence as much as possible through small steps of making them understand, react, and speak up little by little as we see how they are doing.

・Everyone understood what I was saying. But they are not confident. They are worried because they don't have confidence. When the students gain confidence in themselves, they start talking. (Excerpt 143.13-16)
・But every year, I see more and more students who respond to what I say is gradually increasing. I feel that each student's level is changing little by little. (Excerpt143.19-20）
・The students in the college prep course are smart, but they are perfectionists. If they know 90% and don't know 10%, they won't speak. (Excerpt 145.5-6）
・At first, they were scared and said they didn't find my jokes funny, but then they figured out how to do in class and became more confident. My goal is to challenge them and give them confidence. I haven't been able to do both yet, but I'm trying. (Excerpt 147.9-11）

4.1.6 Belief (6): Learning a foreign language allows us to relativize many things. David has experience studying Brazilian Portuguese and Japanese as foreign languages. He believes that by learning multiple languages comparatively, we can develop an intuitive sense of the underlying "equation" of the language, even though the rules of each language are different. He also believes that through the experience of learning multiple languages, the ability to relativize differences and matters between languages will grow.

- I was in a bilingual school, but having another language and a native language helps you compare. That comparison…, it's, I think, it makes a difference. When I learned Portuguese, it was the same. So, it was very easy for me. But it is because once I learned English, I would compare to Spanish. All the systems or all the grammar rules, every language is different. Every language has a different grammar. A small system, just like "nouns go here and verbs here and articles here," is just like something natural. (Excerpt 153.17-24)
- But you have to find like equation like intuition that's there. (Excerpt 154.14)

4.1.7 His own strengths. Finally, it should be added that he views his non-native English speaker status as an advantage or strength as a foreign language teacher.

- I think one important thing is that I am not a native speaker (of English). I know that there is a whole process to get there. (Excerpt 150.1-2)

David believes that the fact that the teacher is not a native English speaker is one of the better conditions for students to learn English. He shared with the author the following advantages of NNEST as an English teacher: The director of the English conversation school told him that native English speakers usually do not spend much time learning grammar and are not good at explaining grammar. However, those who have acquired a foreign language as non-native speakers take the learning process, including grammar, to heart and understand the difficulty of learning a foreign language. The students gradually acquire "equation like intuition that's there" through learning from NNEST.

5. Discussion

Based on the above results, the author of this article can summarize his findings as follows regarding RQ1 and 2: David was forced to use English due to his bilingual education at an American school. Later, he learned Brazilian Portuguese at university, which is linguistically close to his mother tongue. Although he had some initial hesitancy in learning Brazilian Portuguese, he could pick it up relatively quickly, which motivated him to learn another foreign language. He took on the challenge of learning Japanese. It was not easy for him to learn Japanese, which is linguistically distant from his native language, but he persevered and gradually found what he calls "the equation" that leads to his intuition.

His beliefs about foreign language education, formed from his own learning and teaching experiences, can be explained as follows. Foreign languages should be learned from an early age in as natural a way as possible. However, if this is not possible, the learner will develop over a long period of time, experiencing many mistakes in the process

of acquiring a language. In order for students to build confidence in the process of acquiring a language, teachers need to be patient with them, taking them through small steps and not creating barriers to learning. Learning a foreign language and culture is a new and exciting experience. Encounters with his mother, her friends, teachers at the American School, and colleagues with multicultural families at work have inspired him and led him to teach English as an ALT in a Japanese high school. He hopes that his students will develop a curiosity about other cultures and languages through the study of foreign languages, as he has found himself doing. He believes that learners can develop the ability to relativize many things through learning about foreign languages and other cultures from NNEST.

His confidence based on his experiences is reflected in his tolerance for different cultures and people of all ages. The students at K High School who come into contact with him in class seem to be given a window into other cultures through him and their foreign language (English) studies. This may be the reason why David's classes are highly rated as enjoyable.

Many Japanese high school students, including those at this school, may see the importance of English only as a subject required for university entrance examinations and may feel the need to escape from such "learning." David's belief in foreign language education as a "path" or "window" to the outside world may be of great value to these students. He could be the one to give them the joy of "learning a foreign language."

In this case study, David's being NNEST may also be a factor that facilitates the students' learning of English. Maintaining a friendly relationship with him as a trusted advisor and supporter of learning with foreign language learning experience may help students' confidence in classroom activities. This may have contributed to the positive attitude of the students in David's class in the classroom.

In fact, the classes were conducted in a supportive manner appropriate to the students in this school, based on his beliefs. In other words, as a non-native English-speaking ALT, his practice of recognizing and acting on students' difficulties makes their learning enjoyable, helps them tackle tasks without stress, and gives them confidence. David's approachable attitude and teaching style are well suited for K High School students with limited experience communicating in English, and their speaking skills are still developing.

The issues pointed out in previous studies, such as Ishino (2018) regarding the ambiguity of the role of ALTs in the classroom and the positioning of TT in the educational field, should naturally be resolved, and the roles and responsibilities of the teachers in charge should be clarified. Once the class objectives are fully shared between teachers and students, the class activities and the division of roles between ALTs and JTEs should also be clarified. The success or failure of TT in high school English learning in Japan seems to depend on the ALT's awareness and confidence as a trusted advisor and supporter between the JTE and the students, in addition to the clarification of the ALT's

role and the objectives of the class.

6. Conclusion

This paper explored an ALT's beliefs about foreign language learning and teaching through classroom observations and interviews. His beliefs revealed that (1) Exposure to a foreign language from infancy is a natural way to learn, (2) Teachers should not create barriers to learning, (3) Learning a foreign language and culture is a pathway to something new and fun, (4) Learning a foreign language requires making mistakes, and teachers should be patient, (5) Students gain confidence by completing small steps, and (6) Learning a foreign language allows us to relativize many things. Based on these points, David continues to work on building trusting relationships with his students, and the ALT's awareness and confidence as a trusted supporter between the JTE and the students leads to students' active participation in the class. In other words, the key to the success of TT in this school is that ALTs, who have different cultural backgrounds, learning experiences, and teaching experiences than most students and JTEs, can engage students in learning a foreign language and support their development.

A limitation of this study is that it is based on short-period surveys, classroom observations, and an interview. In order to further deepen our understanding of NNEST as a case study, it is necessary to collect and analyze data from multiple perspectives, such as how other JTEs and ALTs perceive the collaborator, in addition to a longer-term involvement with the collaborator.

Notes

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Appendix

Interview Guide to David

1. Please describe the language environment in your home and school during your childhood.
2. What kind of foreign language education did your parents provide you and your siblings?
3. How did you learn English?
4. How do you feel about your foreign language learning?
5. Please tell us about your career as a foreign language teacher.
6. Please give us any episode that impressed you as an English teacher.
7. What is your most important thing as an English teacher?
8. How do you describe your feelings toward your current students?
9. What is your future dream?

【Practice-oriented Research Report】

Encouraging Deep Reflection in Secondary Teacher Education by Using *J-POSTL* and ALACT Model

Satsuki Osaki

Abstract

In the reflection activities of microteaching conducted in the Secondary English Teacher Education course, English Teaching Methodology II, the *Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages for Pre-service English Teacher Education* (*J-POSTL*) has been utilized as a reflection tool. To encourage deeper introspective reflections, a new initiative employing two reflection tools, *J-POSTL* and ALACT model, was implemented. This study analyzed the content of students' reflections and the learning progress of individual reflections through repeated reflection cycles. These findings suggest that superficial reflections have gradually become more detailed and focused on specific issues, leading to new discoveries, progress, and increased confidence. The study also indicated differences in reflection themes among students, with tendencies to repeat reflections on a single theme, suggesting that the depth of reflection varies individually.

Keywords

reflection, microteaching, ALACT model, *J-POSTL*, teacher education

1. Introduction

1.1 Utilization and Challenges of Reflection Tools in Teacher Education Courses

The Core Curriculum for Teacher Education (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology: MEXT, 2017) states that one of the key objectives of English education in teacher training courses at universities is to acquire a perspective on improving lessons through implementation and reflection on microteaching. Thus, efforts to promote such "reflection" often utilize tools such as portfolios and journals and group discussions in teacher education at university (e.g., Tamai et al., 2019; Takeda et al., 2014). For example, Kiyota et al. (2020) reported that various forms of reflective practice using the *Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages for Pre-service English Teacher Education* (*J-POSTL*) (the JACET SIG on English Language Education, hereafter the SIG, 2014a) revealed that the portfolio has promoted deeper reflection among the students. However, critically reflecting on one's own practices is not straightforward, and attempts to do so can end up focusing merely on applying generic skills and methods to teaching without fostering a deeper level of reflection on practice

and theory needed to handle unforeseen situations in the classroom (e.g., Osaki, 2023; the SIG, 2023). Moreover, issues identified from previous research include that (1) it is difficult to allocate sufficient time for discussion for reflection during lessons, (2) it is necessary to identify appropriate intervention by supervisors as facilitators in the reflection process using *J-POSTL*, and (3) although it is suggested that effective use of reflection tools (including *J-POSTL*) can deepen reflection, it is not clear what kind of measures can objectively present reflection and learning progress, and what kind of tools other than *J-POSTL* (journals, practicum diaries, etc.) are available. (e.g., Yoshizumi, 2018; the SIG, 2022). Thus, this paper, as an example to address the above issues, reports on the practice of using *J-POSTL* and the ALACT model (see Section 1.4), a process model of reflection in activities on microteaching and provides an overview of the reflections and learning progress of students taking teaching courses.

1.2 Definitions of Reflection

Before delving into the specifics of this practice, it is essential to clarify the terminology used. The term *furikaeri* in Japanese is considered a translation of reflection and is most commonly used. However, *furikaeri* is considered inappropriate to be used as a substitute for reflection.

Dewey (1933) was the first to introduce reflection into education, and Schön (1983) based his model of reflection on Dewey's ideas. Both share the heart of reflective thought : through oral or written communication, exploring "what happened, why they (practitioners) acted as they did and what they might do as a consequence of their analysis and evaluation (Fenner, 2012, p.34)". Tamai et al. (2019) define reflective practice in the field of teacher education as "a research method of practice aimed at solving problems and promoting growth by drawing new interpretations from reflecting on experiences and deepening the understanding of oneself and one's practices" (p. 54, translated by the author). Comparing this definition with the ideas of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983) reveals that the essence of reflection remains unchanged over time, focusing not only on superficial outcomes but also on drawing new interpretations and seeking solutions or growth through analyzing and evaluating experiences based on practice.

Considering this context about reflection, the Japanese word *furikaeri* cannot cover the semantic domain of reflection. Literally, *furikaeri* means "looking back" and could not be interpreted as meaning "contemplating" or "thinking deeply or carefully." Therefore, in this paper, reflection is translated as *seisatsu*, meaning "deliberation, contemplation," (or *furikaeri-seisatsu*), and is defined as follows:Subsequently, this paper defines reflection as the act of reflecting on one's learning and practices to deepen the understanding of oneself and one's practices, thereby drawing new interpretations and aiming for problem-solving and personal growth.

1.3 *J-POSTL* and Reflection

J-POSTL used in this practice is an adaptation of the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (*EPOSTL*) (Newby et al., 2007), which was compiled using the *CEFR* (the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*) as its source, to the Japanese context. It serves as a reflection tool for students to continuously record what they have learned in their teacher-training courses and teaching practicum, and to use it for their personal growth. By documenting and reflecting on their development, students are encouraged to recognize their strengths and areas of improvement, thereby fostering awareness and learning about the teaching profession. *J-POSTL*, developed under this philosophy, has five objectives:

- To identify teaching competences required of English teachers
- To encourage students to reflect on teaching competences and on the underlying knowledge and skills which feed these competencies
- To promote discussion and collaboration among students and between students and teacher educators
- To facilitate students' self-assessment of teaching and learning
- To provide an instrument which helps chart progress
  (the SIG, 2014a, translated by the author)

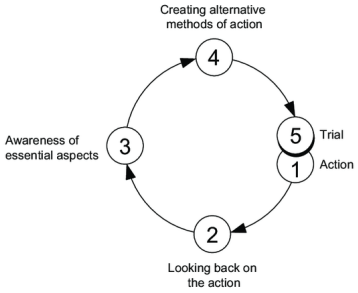
These objectives highlight the importance of reflection in *J-POSTL*, not only focusing on self-assessment but also promoting collaborative reflection based on dialogues among students. *J-POSTL* posits that "personal reflection develops the ability to think independently" and "reflection and collaboration with other students, especially in teaching methodology, help broaden one's perspective" (the SIG, 2014b, p.16, translated by the author). However, ten years after the development of *J-POSTL*, its challenges have become apparent.

1.4 The ALACT Model and Reflection

In combination with *J-POSTL*, the ALACT model proposed by Korthagen (1985) represents an ideal process of learning through experience to develop autonomous teachers by encouraging students to enhance their reflections. The model encompasses five phases, as illustrated in Figure 1: beginning with an action [Phase 1: Action], followed by reflection on the action [Phase 2: Looking back on the action], becoming aware of essential problems and their new interpretations [Phase 3: Awareness of essential aspects], contemplating alternative methods of action based on this awareness [Phase 4: Creating alternative methods of action], and trying out these alternatives [Phase 5: Trial]. ALACT is an acronym for phases 1-5.

Figure 1

The ALACT model of Reflection (Korthagen et al., 2001, 2010)



Korthagen (2010) places particular importance on the second phase, "looking back on the action," meticulously revisiting the experience, and the third phase, "awareness of essential aspects," to promptly realize the core issues. To facilitate these insights, Korthagen advocates the use of "eight questions" (Table 1) designed to help students carefully consider their specific feelings, thoughts, needs, and actions (Korthagen, 2010). There has been an increase in the number of survey reports on using ALACT model for reflection in Japan (e.g. Hoshi, 2021; Takeda, 2015). Among these, Sekihara and Okazaki (2021) points out that the effective application of the ALACT model requires practitioners to carefully explain what each phase means and that reflection can be time-consuming. Therefore, future use of the ALACT model should not only explore how to utilize its reflection process more effectively but also investigate methods of incorporating it into teacher training programs.

Unlike in-service teachers, students without teaching experiences may lack perspectives on English teaching competences and the underlying knowledge and skills, making it challenging to effectively use the reflection process. Thus, the use of other reflection tools, such as *J-POSTL*, and interventions or innovations by teacher educators may be necessary to enhance reflection.

Table 1

Questions Supporting the Transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3

0. What is the context?	
1. What did I want?	5. What did the students want?
2. What did I do?	6. What did the students do?
3. What did I think?	7. What did the students think?
4. What did I feel?	8. What did the students feel?

(Korthagen et al., 2001, 2010)

1.5 Deep Reflection

Applying the defitions of reflection in section 1.2 to each phase of the ALACT model, it could be interpreted as follows: Reflection is the act of contemplating one's

learning and practice [Phase 1: Action] to deepen understanding of oneself and one's practice [Phase 2: Looking back on the action], and by deriving new interpretations [Phase 3: Awareness of essential aspects], aims at problem-solving and self-growth [Phase 4: Creating alternative methods of action]. In essence, moving introspectively from Phase 3 to Phase 4, leading learning progress in one's learning, beliefs, and confidence, and advancing to the next stage of action, constitutes reflection, and it could be argued that this represents the deepest level of reflection. Therefore, this paper defines deep reflection as the act by which students deepen their understanding of their practices and derive new interpretations, thereby aiming at problem-solving and self-growth.

2. Research Questions

This study established research questions to investigate reflection activities using both *J-POSTL* and ALACT model in microteaching as follows:

RQ1. Did the proportion of students who could deepen their understanding of their practice and derive new interpretations, thereby improving problem-solving and self-growth (Phases 2–4), increase compared to the previous year?
RQ2. What kinds of insights and attitudes toward professional growth were observed in the students' reflections?
RQ3. Is there any progress in individual students' reflections through the repetition of the reflection cycle (Phases 1–4)?

3. Method

3.1 Settings

3.1.1 Course description. The study was conducted from September 2022 to January 2023, targeting the English Teaching Methodology II course (autumn semester, two credits), mandatory for students wishing to obtain secondary school English teaching license, composed of 13 students (three juniors and ten sophomores). The course aimed to enhance students' teaching competences and reflection by using *J-POSTL* and the ALACT model across three peer-teaching sessions and one microteaching session. Table 2 lists the course schedules and themes.

During a series of 15 classes, peer-teaching sessions in groups of four were conducted on the 7th, 9th, and 11th classes, followed by a microteaching session executed on either the 13th or 14th class. In the 7th class, an oral introduction to the new grammatical item was administered. The 9th class focused on drill activities for the new grammatical items, while the 11th class dealt with the oral introduction of new teaching materials during the pre-reading stage of the lesson. During the 13th or 14th class, a 15-minute segment of the teaching plan developed by the students was conducted as a

microteaching session with the entire class.

Table 2

The Course Schedule and Themes

Week	Lecture Content
1	・ Objectives of this course ・ The significance of reflection and the use of *J-POSTL* ・ Sharing and discussion about the personal statement section in *J-POSTL*
2	・ Characteristics of the English language ・ Foreign language education in Japan
3	・ Communication skills ・ The process of second language acquisition
4	・ The Course of Study ・ Teaching procedure: junior high school (DVD viewing)
5	Study of teaching materials: New Horizon Course 2, Unit 1
6	Making a lesson plan for oral introduction of a new grammatical item
7	Oral introduction of a new grammatical item (Peer teaching session 1)
8	Making a lesson plan for drill activities of the new grammatical item
9	Drill activities of the new grammatical item (Peer teaching session 2)
10	Making a lesson plan for oral introduction of new teaching material at a pre-reading stage of the lesson
11	Oral introduction of new teaching material at a pre-reading stage of the lesson (Peer teaching session 3)
12	Making a teaching plan for Unit 1
13	Microteaching 1
14	Microteaching 2
15	Review of previous sessions and self-evaluation

For these classes, a teaching assistant and a student assistant (TA/SA) who had completed their teaching practicum and had taken the teacher recruitment examination were assigned. Their primary role was to facilitate discussions immediately following peer teaching and microteaching sessions. Meetings with the supervisor were held before and after each class to ensure the effectiveness and coherence of the teaching and learning processes.

3.1.2 Using *J-POSTL* in teacher education. To facilitate reflection and collaborative learning, *J-POSTL* was employed to enhance students' self-evaluation capabilities, document their growth, and promote deeper reflection through individual reflection and

interactive feedback from other students grounded in a shared understanding of the competencies and skills required of English teachers. *J-POSTL* consists of three main sections: a personal statement, a can-do list comprising 96 self-assessment descriptors, and a dossier. Below, we provide specific details on the use of the personal statement section and self-assessment descriptors of *J-POSTL* in this reflective practice.

(1) Using the personal statement section in *J-POSTL*: This section required students to reflect on their learning experiences and to examine their learning experiences in terms of good English language teaching, followed by sharing and discussing these observations in groups. This sharing process aimed to foster awareness of the ideal teacher's image and beliefs. This discussion aimed to enlighten students about didactic competencies that they had not considered before and needed to develop. Following this discussion, *J-POSTL* was introduced to facilitate understanding of the significance and content of self-assessment descriptors.

(2) Using self-assessment descriptors for microteaching reflection: To maximize learning from microteaching, the supervisor selected 24 out of the 96 self-assessment descriptors from *J-POSTL* that were relevant to the content covered in microteaching (Table 3). For the peer teaching sessions, the supervisor chose the five most relevant self-assessment descriptors, from which students selected one or two they wished to focus on for their lesson planning and preparation. Immediately after the microteaching sessions, the students reflected on the self-assessment descriptors with their peers. Finally, after watching the recordings of their microteaching practices, they completed self-evaluation scores for the 24 selected descriptors. The aim of utilizing the portfolio was for students to become aware of the process and improvement of their own teaching and future issues through reflection. Based on the self-assessment descriptors, a comprehensive review and follow-up instruction on microteaching were conducted in the final class. Students shared their self-evaluations, interpretations, and questions regarding the selected self-assessment descriptors in groups, which were then shared with the whole class.

Table 3

24 Self-Assessment Descriptors

Category	Subcategory	Self-Assessment Descriptors
II Methodology	C. Listening	3. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when listening.
	D. Reading	2. I can evaluate and select various activities to help learners orientate themselves to a text.
		3. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when reading.
	E. Grammar	2. I can recognize that grammar affects learners' oral and written performance and help them to learn it through meaningful contexts by providing a variety of language activities.

	G. Culture	1. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities that awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the target language culture.
IV Lesson Planning	A. Identification of Learning Objectives	1. I can set learning objectives that take into account learners' needs and interests in line with the Course of Study.
		3. I can set objectives that challenge learners to reach their full potential.
		4. I can set objectives that take into account the differing levels of ability and special educational needs of the learners.
	B. Lesson Content	3. I can plan activities that link grammar and vocabulary with communication.
		4. I can accurately estimate the time needed for specific topics and activities and plan work accordingly.
		5. I can design activities to make the learners aware of and build on their existing knowledge.
		6. I can vary and balance activities to enhance and sustain the learners' motivation and interest.
	C. Lesson Organization	1. I can select from and plan a variety of organizational formats (teacher-centered, individual, pair, and group work) as appropriate.
		2. I can plan for learner presentations and learner interaction.
		3. I can plan when and how to use the target language, including the metalanguage I may need in the classroom.
V Conducting a Lesson	A. Using Lesson Plans	1. I can start a lesson in an engaging way.
		2. I can be flexible when working from a lesson plan and respond to learner interests as the lesson progresses.
		3. I can time and change classroom activities to reflect individual learners' attention spans.
		5. I can adjust my time schedule when unforeseen situations occur.
	B. Content	1. I can relate what I teach to learners' knowledge, current events in the local context, and the culture of those who speak it.
	D. Classroom Management	1. I can create opportunities for and manage individual, partner, group, and whole class work.
		2. I can manage and use resources (flashcards, charts, pictures, audio-visual aids, etc.) effectively.
	E. Classroom Language	1. I can conduct a lesson in the target language and, if necessary, use Japanese effectively.

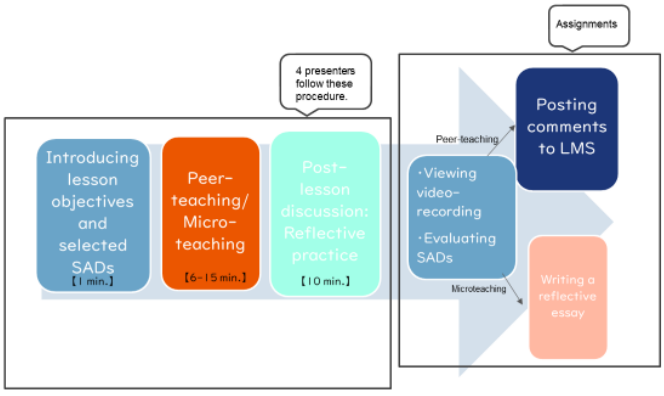
3.1.3 Using the ALACT model in teacher education. The ALACT model's reflection cycle was implemented multiple times through peer teaching and microteaching to

encourage reflection individually and in group(s) during in-class group discussions after microteaching. Employing the "eight questions" from the model in a question format aimed to deepen students' reflections individually and collaboratively. The limited discussion time was focused on carefully selecting challenging or uncomfortable moments from microteaching, thus facilitating focused discussions among peers. In addition, the Learning Management System (hereafter LMS) forum function was used to exchange opinions during the day's microteaching, providing further opportunities for reflection. The ALACT model was also used as an objective measure of change in reflection. Details of the application method are discussed in the Data Analysis section.

3.1.4 Teaching procedure and reflective activities. The main teaching procedure and reflective activities are illustrated below (Figure 2), starting with selecting self-assessment descriptors from *J-POSTL* for planning microteaching, followed by in-group discussions after microteaching using "eight questions." Subsequent tasks included reviewing one's microteaching video, completing the self-assessment for all 24 descriptors, answering "eight questions" on a reflection sheet, and participating in the LMS forum for further reflection. As for the microteaching, students were required to write a reflective essay according to these guidelines.

Figure 2

Teaching Procedure and Reflective Activities (SAD = *J-POSTL* Self-Assessment Descriptors)



The detailed procedure for the in-group discussions after microteaching is illustrated in Table 4. Students engaged in discussions focusing on the success and challenges of microteaching, utilizing "eight questions" to prompt reflection. The discussions aimed to deepen the understanding of teaching competencies related to *J-POSTL* descriptors through objective analysis and evaluation, thereby gaining new insights.

Table 4

Procedure for in-group discussions after microteaching

While referencing the content of the selected *J-POSTL* descriptors,

1. a presenter states whether the activity achieved its intended objective and mentions what went well, providing reasons for the same. (1 minute)
2. a presenter identifies one aspect that might not have gone as well as hoped and explains why he/she thinks this was the case, including their reasoning. (2 minutes)
3. based on the presenter's statements in points 1 and 2 above, peer students state whether they believe the goals of the microteaching were met and how they, from a student's perspective, thought and felt about the aspect identified as potentially unsuccessful. (5 minutes)

3.2 Participants

The study involved 13 students from the "English Teaching Methodology II" taught by the author. All the participants were enrolled in a teacher education program to obtain secondary school English teacher licenses. The data from 11 students who consented to the academic use was analyzed.

3.3 Data and Analysis Methods

The data for this study comprised two main sources: (1) reflective writings posted on a forum after three sessions of peer teaching, and (2) reflective essays of 700-900 characters written in response to the peer teaching sessions and the utilization of *J-POSTL* for self-evaluation, aimed at encouraging reflection on the microteaching sessions.

An analysis was conducted using a case-code matrix. According to Sato (2008), this method "offers a way to build conceptual models to explain phenomena and events. It avoids common pitfalls in qualitative research, such as getting overly fixed on the uniqueness of each case, which can obscure general patterns, or making overly broad generalizations based on a small number of cases" (Sato, 2008, p. 63, translated by the author). Specifically, cases are positioned along the horizontal axis and coded along the vertical axis, with document segments placed accordingly. By stepping back, the overall trends are evident, "while moving closer reveals the specific circumstances unique to each case, making it an effective tool for balancing the consideration of the individuality and specificity of each case with the identification of general patterns and regularities that transcend the peculiarities of individual cases" (Sato, 2008, p.63, translated by the author).

In this study, the case-code matrix was used to position (1) the document segments extracted from students' forum posts and reflective essays after microteaching as cases on the horizontal axis (Figure 3) and (2) the four phases of the ALACT model, from Phase 1 to Phase 4, as codes with document segments from reflective essays placed on the vertical axis (Figure 4). This setup was then used to check for the occurrence of document segments corresponding to Phases 1–4 of the ALACT model (RQ1). Furthermore, by

focusing on the vertical axis codes, as illustrated in Figure 4, document segments related only to Phases 3 and 4 were extracted for a thematic analysis to elucidate the characteristics of reflection themes and insights (RQ2). Additionally, as depicted in Figure 3, a case-centric analysis was conducted by carefully reading each student's reflective writing on each microteaching practice to analyze their changes in reflection (RQ3).

Figure 3

Case-code Matrix: the horizontal axis

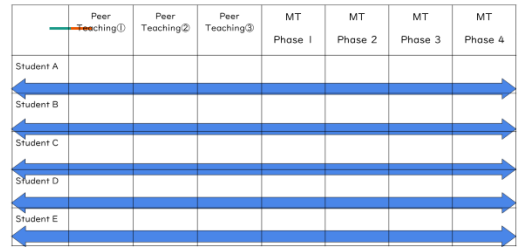
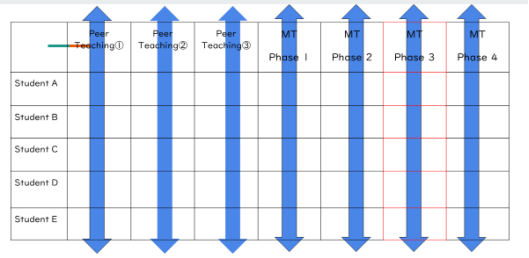


Figure 4

Case-code Matrix: the vertical axis



When positioning the document segments extracted from the reflective essays according to the four phases of the ALACT model as codes along the vertical axis (Figure 4), each student's reflective essay was thoroughly read, and the text was segmented based on coherence. These segments were then coded according to the four phases outlined in Table 6 for textual analysis and categorized into the respective phases of the ALACT model. This initial categorization process was followed by a period of reflection to reassess the suitability of the segmented texts and their allocation to different phases.

Table 6

Text Analysis Codes: Four Phases of the ALACT model

Phases	Codes
Phase 1 (Action)	Implementation of peer teaching or microteaching.
Phase 2 (Looking back on Action)	Students deepening their understanding of their own practice.
Phase 3 (Awareness of Essential Aspects)	Attempting to derive new interpretations.
Phase 4 (Creating Alternative Methods of Action)	Aiming at problem-solving and self-growth.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 RQ1: "Has the proportion of students who could deepen their understanding of their practice and derive new interpretations, thereby aiming at problem-solving and self-

growth (Phases 2–-4), increased compared to the previous year?"

The analysis indicated an increase in students transitioning from Phases 2 to 4 of the reflection process compared to the previous year. In 2021, only 4 out of 20 student reflections reached phase 3, accounting for 20% of the total. In contrast, this study found 10 cases among 11 participants, approximately 91%, demonstrating that most students could engage in deeper reflection.

Table 7

Frequency of Descriptions Extracted for Each Phase of the ALACT model

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Student A	1	5	1	3
Student B	1	3	1	4
Student C	1	5	1	2
Student D	1	2	1	9
Student E	1	3		2
Student F	1	3	1	5
Student G	1	3		6
Student H	1	5	1	3
Student I	1	2	1	2
Student J	1	3	1	6
Student K	1	2	2	3

4.2 RQ2: "What kinds of insights and attitudes toward professional growth were observed in the students' reflections?"

From the code of the case code matrix, descriptions extracted as Phase 3 and those related to Phase 4 were thoroughly read and subjected to thematic analysis, resulting in the identification of five themes: a deeper understanding of the self-assessment descriptors of *J-POSTL* (two instances), awareness of the importance of clarifying the objectives of each activity (three instances), changes in awareness regarding lesson planning and preparation (one instance), improvement of teaching skills and confidence through the reflection cycle (two instances), and changes in the perception of the teaching profession (two instances)

These themes are often related to *J-POSTL* self-assessment descriptors. It was observed that through repetitive practice and reflection, students could gain a deeper understanding based on their experiences regarding the competencies required of English teachers, as described in the self-assessment descriptors. For example, the self-assessment descriptor A-2 under *J-POSTL* V Conducting a Lesson mentions "2. I can be flexible when working on a lesson plan and responding to learners' interests as the lesson

progresses." Student D, through the microteaching experience, demonstrated an understanding of what "flexibility" entails, as evidenced by descriptions below like "I failed to check on students' questions or concerns" and "did not adequately gauge their progress and understanding," indicating a personal interpretation of what such flexibility might mean (D-6).

Deeper Understanding of Self-assessment Descriptors of *J-POSTL*

> "One issue was that I rushed through the lesson with unclear expressions. The essential problem was that I did not allow students enough time to think for themselves, focusing too much on smoothly conducting the lesson. Additionally, I failed to check on students' questions and concerns throughout the lesson and did not adequately gauge their progress and understanding." (D-6)

Furthermore, although having confirmed the objectives of each activity during lesson planning, Student I did not fully understand why these activities were undertaken or were sequenced in a particular order. This lack of comprehension resulted in vague instructions for students, insufficient time allocation, and improper connections between the identified activities (see (I-6) below). There was a newly realized awareness of the importance of designing a lesson not just as a series of activities to be completed in sequence but also considering the instructional effectiveness of how these activities are arranged.

Awareness of the Importance of Clarifying the Objectives of Each Activity

> "It was noted that the instruction for a reading activity was not easily comprehensible to students, initially causing confusion about what was expected of them. This highlighted a need for deeper consideration of the activity's intended effects and purposes. The underlying issue was identified as a personal failure to grasp what expectations the activity was supposed to meet and what concepts were intended to be understood. Merely conducting activities without a clear purpose was deemed meaningless, as it hindered student comprehension." (I-6)

This insight led to a shift in behavior among many students, which boosted their confidence. For instance, Student K, after recognizing that merely planning a lesson did not guarantee its successful execution, practiced the planned lesson with a friend before actual microteaching. This practice, which involved adjusting lesson content and structure, significantly improved teaching efficacy. While initial reflections on peer teaching sessions remained superficial, focusing on aspects such as the unexpected monotony of delivery or the insufficient use of English, reflections on microteaching involved deeper consideration of fundamental problems.

Changes in Awareness Regarding Lesson Planning and Preparation

> "The biggest issue identified was a lack of practice. Even a well-thought-out PowerPoint presentation could fail to align smoothly with the flow of the lesson or lack necessary information when actually used in teaching." (K-6-1) "Engaging in trial and error with a friend who acted as a mock student allowed for necessary preparations and immediate improvements to be made during the practice sessions." (K-7-1)

These experiences illustrate how reflective practice significantly contributes to developing teaching skills and confidence, particularly when it involves the actual trial and execution of lessons with opportunities for immediate feedback and adjustment. Student H reported gaining confidence through repeated practical experiences, which improved self-assurance and led to a newfound ability to conduct lessons calmly and observe and interact with students more effectively (see (H-6) below). Similarly, Student J initially had a passive attitude towards peer practice but shifted to a proactive stance using constructive feedback for subsequent practices, facilitating personal growth as shown in (J-7-6) below.

Improvement of Teaching Skills and Confidence Through the Reflection Cycle

> "The aspect of growth I felt most acutely during the microteaching session was holding confidence in myself and smoothly conducting the lesson. During the first and second attempts at oral introductions and drill activities, I was perplexed by what to do in a mock lesson setting for the first time. I realized I was speaking softly and delivering the lesson hesitantly, a sentiment reinforced upon reviewing my teaching footage. However, by the last microteaching, I managed to conduct the lesson with confidence. Confidence is crucial for effective communication between the teacher and students, making me feel like I have grown." (H-6)
>
> "Compared to other students' microteaching, there were moments I felt inferior, but by embracing the positive aspects of these lessons, I managed to boost my confidence and improve the content of my teaching." (J-7-6)

These reflections highlight the pivotal role of confidence in teaching effectiveness and underscore how iterative practice and constructive feedback contribute significantly to developing teaching skills and self-assurance among students.

Some students contemplated their futures in the teaching profession. Microteaching served as an opportunity for these students to reflect on their teaching aptitudes. Through repeated practice, Student F, as shown in (F-6) below, developed a dedication to meticulous lesson planning, experienced a shift in personal sentiments, and discovered enjoyment in the teaching profession, as described in a reflective essay (F-6). Student K, through continuous practical experience, began to contemplate their preferred teaching style, indicating that these new insights led to actions aimed at problem-solving and

personal growth, as shown in (K-6-2) below.

Changes in the Perception of the Teaching Profession

> "I became more dedicated to creating better lessons during the preparation phase, finding joy in the profession of teaching." (F-6)
>
> "Initially, I thought teaching should be conducted in a lively and energetic manner, akin to a children's show host. However, I've come to realize that there is a teaching style more suited to my personality." (K-6-2)

These reflections demonstrate the transformative impact of practical teaching experiences on students, fostering a deeper understanding of their professional aspirations and preferred instructional methods. Through the cycle of planning, executing, and reflecting on microteaching, these individuals not only enhanced their teaching skills but also cultivated a more profound appreciation for and commitment to the teaching profession.

4.3 RQ3: "Is there any progress in individual student reflections through the repetition of the reflection cycle (Phases 1–4)?"

In this paper, we present a case-centric analysis derived from the case-code matrix, focusing on the reflective observations of Student A throughout her peer teaching sessions and microteaching. During her first two peer teaching experiences, her narratives occasionally referred to *J-POSTL* self-assessment descriptors, with a primary focus on detailing moments of unsuccessful practice and the emotional reactions that accompanied these instances. However, reflection following her third peer-teaching session revealed a significant realization: she identified an unwarranted increase in teacher-centered instruction. She became aware of the critical issue of trying to follow the lesson plan rigidly within the allocated time, which led to a one-sided approach to lesson execution. This reflection led to an awareness of the necessity of considering how to achieve the objectives of activities within limited class time and the importance of deciding where to focus on the development of the lesson. This awareness aligns with the reflection advocated by *J-POSTL* descriptor, "I can adjust my time schedule when unforeseen situations occur" (VA-5).

Furthermore, during her reflection on a microteaching session, she revisited the importance of clearly defining the objectives of each activity and determining focal points, demonstrating a renewed recognition of these aspects. This insight prompted her to engage in trial and error with teaching procedures while planning her lessons, as discussed in her reflective essays.

Table 8

Case-centric Analysis Results for Student A

Peer-Teaching 1: [A-1] During the peer-teaching sessions, I found myself overly committed to following the lesson plan I had devised, to the point where any minor failure left me unable to respond. Additionally, I tried to force students to answer my questions in the manner I had planned. Also, due to insufficient preparation for the class, I stumbled over my words. If I were a student in this class, I would not want to learn from a teacher who appeared unconfident and flustered.
Peer-Teaching 2: [A-2] During the drill activities, I ended up speaking too much myself and was unable to sufficiently encourage the students to speak. If I were a student, attending this class would likely make me feel a sense of inadequacy towards English. In the next microteaching, I aim to be more conscious of constructing the lesson from the students' perspective.
Peer-Teaching 3: [A-3] In this peer-teaching session, despite the main activity being the oral introduction of new material at the pre-reading stage, I ended up focusing too much on the introduction part of the activity. I felt the need to plan and conduct the lesson with a clear focus on the content I wanted to emphasize the most. Reflecting on past lessons, I want to apply what I have learned to improve my next microteaching.
Microteaching Reflection (Phase 2: Looking back on the action): [A-5] Although I often feel nervous and sometimes panic, through multiple practices, I have come to enjoy teaching during the microteaching. Even when I panic and am unable to follow my lesson plan exactly, I have learned how to recover and continue teaching effectively.
Microteaching Reflection (Phase 3: Awareness of essential aspects): [A-6] I think I did not fully understand the intention behind each activity. It is necessary to be more aware of what the students are supposed to achieve and do during each activity and to develop lesson plans accordingly.
Future Perspectives (Phase 4: Creating alternative methods of action): [A-7] Based on reflections from my previous practices, I experimented with different teaching procedures to create my lesson plan. However, I think I was unable to teach effectively because I did not conduct sufficient rehearsals.

In exploring whether repeated reflection cycles (Phases 1 to 4) led to learning progress in students' reflections (RQ3), Student B's case provided insight. Initially, in the first peer-teaching session, Student B reported that being overly focused on completing all activities according to the lesson plan led to rushing through the class quickly, leaving no room to check students' understanding. Student B reports that a lesson plan was developed in the second peer teaching session focusing on *J-POSTL* IV-B-4: "I can accurately estimate the time needed for specific topics and activities and plan work accordingly." Furthermore, the student stated that conducting microteaching during this

peer-teaching session was possible while observing the students' reactions. Although Student B could not participate in the third peer teaching session because of absence, microteaching demonstrated that she had utilized her previous experiences to develop her own teaching style.

Moreover, through the third practical experience, Student B deepened her understanding of her teaching practice by reflecting on what she found challenging and identifying the core issues. Specifically, Student B realized that it was difficult for her to empathize with students who struggled with English and studying because she was proficient in the language. Through this practical experience, she could draw new interpretations and thoughtfully consider the areas for improvement.

Table 9

Case-centric Analysis Results for Student B

Peer Teaching 1: [B-1] I realized that instead of trying to speak quickly to finish the lesson within the allotted time, it is necessary to focus on conveying only the essential information to ensure that all students understand. From now on, I would like to create lesson plans with an awareness of having extra time to comfortably conclude the class. **Peer Teaching 2:** [B-2] Compared to the previous session, I was able to plan the lesson with more time allowance, which allowed me to conduct the class calmly. I provided support to make it easier for students to speak up and advised them on how to be more actively involved in the class while observing their expressions. I was able to teach while paying closer attention to the students' behaviors than in the previous session. **Microteaching Reflection (Phase 2: Looking back on the action):** [B-5-3] During previous peer teaching sessions, I felt anxious and uncertain about how to manage time, incorporate pair work, give instructions, and handle interactions. However, in this microteaching, I was able to somewhat find my own way of constructing a lesson and conducted it with creativity. Particularly, I would like to incorporate the methods I developed for managing classroom interaction and time management into my teaching internship next year. **Microteaching Reflection (Phase 3: Awareness of essential aspects):** [B-6] A recurring issue I've encountered through my teaching practices is the difficulty I face in empathizing with and designing lesson plans for students who struggle with English and academics. Often, I checked questions and gave instructions based on the assumption that "I can do it, or I can understand it." I frequently realized that this could lead to confusing students due to inadequate instructions.

This progression illustrates Student B's journey from focusing on task completion to developing a nuanced understanding of teaching dynamics, including the pivotal roles of empathy and adaptability in instruction. These reflections highlight the transformative power of reflective practice supported by the ALACT model, which fosters growth in

pedagogical skills and sensitivity to students' learning experiences.

Upon carefully reviewing the reflections of the other eight students, a pattern emerged in which initial superficial reflections gradually delved deeper into specific challenges, leading to new discoveries that propelled forward movements and built confidence. The reflections varied in themes, with a tendency among students to revisit a particular theme repeatedly, indicating a diverse range of reflective focuses, including the followings:

- Conducting the class according to the planned time allocation. (Student D)
- Understanding students' interests, concerns, and needs from their perspective. (Student C)
- Making the class enjoyable. (Student F)
- Teachers' confidence, speaking attitudes, and posture are important aspects of teaching quality. (Students H/J)
- Developing lesson plans that are easy for students to understand/acquire the ability to observe their behavior. (Students D/I)
- It is important for teachers to be conscious of their attitudes and posture when speaking English. (Student K)

However, some reflections merely questioned the content of their teaching practices without demonstrating a deeper understanding or posing new interpretations, suggesting variability in the depth of reflection among students. This variability indicates that while some students benefit significantly from reflection by identifying personal growth areas and gaining confidence, others may struggle to achieve the same level of introspection and development.

5. Conclusion

In the reflections of 10 out of 11 students, it was observed that initially superficial reflections gradually delved deeper into specific challenges, leading to new discoveries that facilitated progress and built confidence. Compared with the previous academic year, a higher percentage of students could reflect more profoundly. One notable finding was the deepening of reflections on the content of *J-POSTL* descriptors. Furthermore, it became evident that students focused on varying themes in their reflections, often revisiting a single theme, indicating a tendency towards thematic reflection with in-depth individual variations.

Despite these individual differences, using *J-POSTL* and ALACT model in reflection related to microteaching sessions has been suggested as enhancing students' reflections. In this practice, owing to the inability to allocate sufficient time for discussion-based reflection, efforts were made to use an LMS to share reflections and

employ the eight questions of the ALACT model for both collaborative and individual reflections as a strategy to manage time effectively. Additionally, the ALACT model serves as a reflection tool, offering a measurable means of objectively presenting changes or progress in reflection and learning. Although a simplified version of the eight questions was used to stimulate student reflection, the detailed effects of this intervention need to be explored in future studies. Future challenges include clarifying the role of supervisors and teaching assistants (TAs) as facilitators in promoting reflection and investigating their methods.

Notes

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【Report】

Research Visit to Italy: English Language Education to Develop Intercultural and Global Citizenship Through Picture Books

Natsue Nakayama, Yoichi Kiyota, and Fumiko Kurihara

Abstract

This is a report on a research trip by the authors, who visited primary and lower secondary schools near Turin, Italy, in February 2024. During our five-day visit, we received generous assistance from Silvana Rampone, a former elementary school teacher, an expert of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and a teacher trainer serving at the Board of Education in Turin. We participated in two workshops on English language teaching for intercultural citizenship development using picture books. This method was developed as an Erasmus+ strategic partnership project involving six partners from five European countries: Portugal, Germany, Italy, Norway, and the Netherlands. We observed classes in three primary schools and one lower secondary school. At one school, a joint project with a Japanese elementary school was implemented using a picture book created by one of the authors, and the visit allowed the children who had participated in the project to interact directly with the book's author. It was confirmed that picture books can be an effective tool for improving understanding and empathy and increasing understanding of the importance of cooperation as intercultural and global citizens with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords

Italy, picture books, intercultural citizenship, ICEPELL, CLIL

1. Citizenship Education Through English Language Teaching

1.1 Promoting Citizenship Through Foreign Language Education

Since the publication of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* in 2001, the Council of Europe has advocated for a plurilingual and intercultural approach to language education. Byram, who developed the model of intercultural communicative competence (1997, 2021), emphasized the importance of acquiring intercultural communicative competence through foreign language education and suggested that the goal of a language learner is to become an intercultural speaker rather than a native speaker. Byram et al. (2017) also advocated the inclusion of intercultural citizenship education in foreign language education in response to internationalization and the globalized world.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal call to action to end poverty and achieve a sustainable world. This has had a significant impact on education in Japan, including English language education. For example, English textbooks for primary and secondary schools in Japan commonly include topics related to the SDGs such as climate change, cultural diversity, endangered animals, and environmental pollution, providing learners with opportunities to learn about these issues. However, it is not clear whether students who learn about these topics actually have the chance to critically examine the issues from different perspectives, learn to empathize by making them their own concerns, or act with others to make a difference in their classroom or community.

In 2018, the Council of Europe proposed a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, which presented 20 competences that individuals need to act on as competent democratic citizens, organized into values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding. This suggests that foreign language education in Europe has made continuous efforts to cultivate intercultural, global, and democratic citizenship among learners through the development of materials and teaching tools. The authors are aware that Europe and Japan differ significantly in their linguistic and political environments. However, as the Japanese people also need to strive to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs as global citizens, we decided to investigate how citizenship education was realized through English language education in Europe and to examine the applicability of this approach to English language education in Japan.

1.2 Purpose of the Research Visit

The main purposes of our research visit to Italy were to learn about innovative ways of incorporating citizenship education into early English language learning through picture books and to visit classes conducted by teachers using picture books and materials to develop learners' intercultural citizenship.

To obtain an overview of the ICEPELL project and its implementation in schools, we visited Pinerolo, Piemonte, Italy, where Silvana Rampone, the originator of the project and a leading figure in the development of teaching materials and training, is located. Table 1 summarizes the research trip. We report on our interview with the principal of a school that implements citizenship education and examine some citizenship education practices observed during our visit centering on the ICEPELL project. We then explore the implications for education in Japan.

Table 1

Summary of the research trip

Date	Summary
18th Feb	Late night arrival

19th Feb	Workshop on overview of ICEPELL and on teaching with picture books by Ms. Rampone
20th Feb	Visit Andorno Micca (elementary school) and observe CLIL class
21st Feb	Visit Villanova d'Asti (elementary school)
22nd Feb	Visit Marro Villar Perosa & Pinerolo elementary schools, participate in a webinar: teacher training on picture books and citizenship
23rd Feb	Visit Brignone secondary school and interview Principal Martini (Busca, citizenship education in "Scuola senza zaino")
24th Feb	Return to Japan

2. English Language Learning Using Picture Books

2.1 Introduction

Picture books are useful tools for fostering global and digital citizenship in English classrooms. Picture books offer a wide variety of topics, including those useful for citizenship development. When a teacher reads a book to a learner, the learner's imagination and creativity are stimulated by the words and illustrations. Younger children, who are more likely to enter the world of picture books (fantasy), tend to perceive the story world as if it were the real world in which they exist (Nakayama & Tsuchiya, 2021). Mourão (2022) states that "It is often through the pictures, and careful mediation by the teacher during the read-aloud, that children access other interpretations of what might usually be taken for granted in their own social group(s)." In other words, the use of picture books in the classroom can provide an opportunity for children to experience others' perspectives. Therefore, we believe that introducing English picture books into the classroom can be an opportunity for pseudo-intercultural exchange, whereas actual intercultural exchange is limited by budget, time, etc. We focused on the potential of English picture books and our research team practiced using several picture books in the classroom. In the process, we focused on the Intercultural Citizenship Education through Picturebooks in Early English Language Learning (ICEPELL), an ongoing project in the European Union.

The ICEPELL project was funded by ERASMUS+ for 2019–2022 and was implemented by a consortium of five countries (Portugal, Germany, Italy, Norway, and the Netherlands) and six educational institutions (five universities and one school board) in the EU. It aimed to integrate the development of intercultural citizenship, which is currently not sufficiently incorporated into the classroom, into English classes using picture books. As the phrase "Early Language Learning" in the project title indicates, the target students were primarily elementary and junior high school students between the ages of 5 and 12. The project developed the following substantial products within the limited grant period and is currently actively engaged in teacher training and the

development of teaching materials through this training. The main products were as follows:

- Development of teaching methods using English picture books.
- Compilation of a list of 90 English picture books that can be used for instruction.
- Development of teaching plans and materials (ICE Kit) using 18 of the 90 books.
- Publication of the ICEGuide (ICEPELL Consortium, 2022).

2.2 Methods of Teaching with Picture Books in ICEPELL

On our first day in Pinerolo, Ms. Rampone gave us an overview of ICEPELL and a workshop on teaching picture books. She introduced six structures for teaching lessons using picture books in intercultural citizenship education. Table 2 summarizes these structures.

Table 2

Six structures to be aware of when teaching using picture books (Rampone, 2024)

1. Overview of picture books
2. Setting the story context
3. Before reading aloud
4. While reading aloud
5. After reading aloud
6. Taking action

Of the six structures, Structures 1–3 are things to consider before reading a picture book, including pre-reading activities. Structure 4 concerns reading, whereas Structures 5 and 6 are related to post-reading activities.

In Structure 1, teachers understand the picture book that they are using and plan the outcomes of teaching using it. These include cross-curricular, language and skills, and intercultural citizenship goals. Figure 1 shows the three focal points of intercultural citizenship, as indicated by ICPELL. It also includes sub-items that summarize the areas of intercultural citizenship that can be addressed in foreign language education and that can be used to set goals for intercultural citizenship.

Figure 1

Focal field for intercultural citizenship (based on Ms. Rampone's workshop documents)

In Structure 2, teachers plan activities before displaying a picture book to the students. These activities aim to make the students aware of the theme of the picture book and personalize the context. In Structure 3, teachers show the picture book to the children, but not the story. By using the front cover, back cover, or dust jacket of the book, teachers can help students predict the content of the book. Since it makes use of the picture book's periphery, Ms. Rampone explained the process as "peritextual pondering." In Structure 4, the teacher reads the picture book to the students, while in ICEPELL, the teacher reads the text twice, the second time carefully, asking questions to raise students' awareness of the main points.

Structures 5 and 6 are post-reading activities. However, there are significant differences between the two groups. Structure 5 involves activities directly related to the textual content. For example, the five activities that we observed during this research trip were students singing a song related to the picture book's theme and solving reading comprehension questions. In contrast, Structure 6 activities go beyond textual content. In this stage, activities are conducted to put the message of the story into practice by acting as citizens in local and global communities. At the February 22nd workshop, a project was introduced in which the children thought together about how they could convey the message they wanted to communicate with society, wrote the message they wanted to convey on rocks, and displayed it in a local park so that the public could access it.

2.3 Lessons on Developing Citizenship

During our stay in Italy, we observed five classes that nurtured citizenship. Three were classes that used picture books adopting the ICEPELL structure, and the other two were classes conducted at Andorno Micca Elementary School: one class on CLIL and the other on cooperative project work with a Japanese elementary school. Of the five lessons, three were conducted by Ms. Rampone. In this chapter, we introduce four of the observed lessons: three classes using picture books and one class on CLIL. The remaining class, a cooperative project with a Japanese elementary school, is described in Section 3.

Table 3

Summary of observed classes

Class observed	Date (school)	Picture book used (observed ICEPELL structure)
A CLIL class + cooperative project with Japan	February 20 (Andorno Micca Elementary School)	
Practice using picture books	February 21 (Villanova d'Asti Elementary School)	Hug Me（④⑤）
Practice using picture books	February 22 (Marro Villar Perosa & Pinerolo Elementary School)	Drum Dream Girl（②③④⑤）
Practice using picture books	February 23 (Brignone Secondary School)	Say Something（②③④⑤）

2.4 Practice Adopting the Structure of ICEPELL Using Picture Books

(1) February 21 (Villanova d'Asti Elementary School)

Focal Points: 1. Socially responsible behaviors/interactions with others; and 3. A sense of belonging, knowing, and respecting one's own culture, other cultures, and inherited culture.

The story "Hug me" (Simona Ciraolo, 2024) used in this lesson is about Felipe, a cactus who is trying to discover his identity. Felipe is looking for someone he can hug but being a cactus makes it difficult for him to find a good partner. He feels lonely, but his old and famous family does not understand his feelings. Not wanting to be hurt, he closes his mind but finally finds someone to hug. The class began with a second reading session. Table 4 outlines the class.

Table 4

Class practice of Hug me

Outline of the teaching	ICEPELL Structure
Starting from the second read-aloud. Carefully read the content of the text by paying attention to the main character's (Felipe) emotions.	④
Doing emotion game twice: ① Read the card with emotions with the whole class and ② read with emotion actions	⑤
Complete the picture book by writing the main character's emotions on the page	⑤

As post-reading activities, students did creative activities such as acting out newly introduced "emotion words" using their bodies and writing Felipe's feelings in the Hug me picture book, which they had drawn by themselves.

(2) February 22 (Pinerolo Elementary School)

Focal Point: 3. A sense of belonging, knowing, and respecting one's own culture, other cultures, and inherited culture. Challenging stereotypes.

Ms. Rampone taught the class. In the class, many activities were prepared that could be categorized as Structure 2, in which the students could personalize the context of the story (Table 5). In particular, the activities were designed to facilitate awareness of how we tend to unconsciously judge people based on their appearance, age, gender, etc., and that these judgments are not necessarily reliable. The story featured was "Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music" (Margarita Engle & Rafael López, 2015).

Table 5

Drum Dream Girl classroom practices

Outline of the teaching	ICEPELL structures
Circle time: in and out (Activity where you think about similarities and differences. If the teacher's words (e.g., I like pizza) are true to them, students step forward).	②
Thinking about similarities and differences.	②
Watch the video "48 bad guys" and realize that people tend to judge others based on their appearance.	②
Which belongs to who? (A card game that makes you think about stereotypes.)	②
Guess the occupation game (using actual celebrities).	②

Peritextual pondering	③
Read aloud (1st time: to get the outline; 2nd time: tap the desk rhythmically with the children).	④
What do you want to be when you grow up? (speak out)	⑤

The main character in this story is a girl who loves beating drums. Because of the tradition in her village that girls are not allowed to play drums, she has to practice in secret. However, her passion for the drums and their sounds began to change the tradition. After a careful context-setting activity, Ms. Rampone read aloud for the second time with the children, rhythmically tapping the desk and reading phrases together with the children. This experience helped the children put themselves in the character's shoes. As a post-reading activity, the children presented their own dreams using "what" to wrap up the class.

(3) February 23 (Brignone Secondary School)

Focal Points: 1. Socially responsible behaviour when interacting with others and 3. A sense of belonging for those who are different.

This was the only secondary school that we visited. Ms. Rampone taught the class. The picture book used was "Say Something" (Peter H. Reynolds, 2021). This picture book is slightly different from other picture books in that it does not tell a story but provides an empowering message to students, encouraging them to communicate with society in their own way, a concept that is suitable for the development of citizenship.

Ms. Rampone asked the students to individually write about what they wanted to share with the world and then share it with the class. Through peritextual pondering, she made them aware of various ways to convey a message. Multiple post-reading activities were conducted by reading aloud. In one post-reading activity, she introduced young activists, who prompted the students to realize that there are children of their own age who are actually "saying something" in society. Taking this into consideration, she asked the students to rethink what they wanted to say and how they wanted to do so. Each group had to decide how to deliver the message so that the students were absorbed in

thinking about the songs and performances that would convey their own messages to the society (See Table 6).

Table 6

Say Something classroom practice

Outline of teaching	ICEPELL Structures
Individual writing in response to “The world needs your voice!”	②
Peritextual pondering (What kind of people are there? What are they doing?)	③
Watching a picture book video (decide after listening to students’ wishes)	④
Introduction of young activists	⑤
Sing a song (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGVNZNBUm9s)	⑤
How would you say something? (Each group was asked to convey the message in the format they wished to use)	⑤
Next lesson announcement (word-matching quiz to check their comprehension)	⑤

2.5 CLIL-type Class Practice: Do You Know the SDGs?

February 20 (Andorno Micca Elementary School)

Ms. Rampone taught the class. In the class, multiple activities were conducted to consider the 17 SDGs and their icons in the following steps (ICEPELL Consortium, 2022):

- Matching the icons of the SDGs global goals with explanations.
- Looking at different pictures, guessing which goal the pictures are referring to.
- Discussion and presentation of the top-priority Global Goals for each group.
- Each group performs a drama about the goals on the SDGs card. The other teams watch the drama and guess the goal written on the card held by the group.
- An activity in which the children reexamine the icons of the Global Goals, and if any of the icons are difficult to understand, they create their own icons that they find easy to understand.

These activities were designed to allow students to utilize different lower-to-higher-order cognitive skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) in a step-by-step manner, starting with a matching activity and a whole-class activity to confirm their understanding, such as guessing the target of a photograph (Understanding), acting in a drama (Applying), and then creating an icon (Creating). Furthermore, consideration was also given to the language used, such as “language of learning” and “language for learning” (Coyle et al.,

2001). The introductory activity focused on developing students' receptive skills by introducing words related to the SDGs, whereas the subsequent activity provided an opportunity to use the introduced words. What was impressive was the careful scaffolding of vocabulary and expressions by the teacher herself, in some cases with the help of teaching materials. This kind of scaffolding was observed by Ms. Rampone in practice using picture books.

2.6 Summary and Implications

- The process of developing teaching methods and materials using picture books in the ICPELL project has many implications for Japanese practice. In particular, the focal points provided an easy-to-understand outline of the factors involved in "intercultural citizenship," making a concept that is often thought of as complex easy to incorporate into the classroom. A survey of English language teachers and their attitudes conducted by Kurihara (2024) suggested that the concept of citizenship is still not fully understood in Japan. This focal point could be used to disseminate concepts in Japan.

- Lesson planning based on the six ICEPELL structures begins with setting the "context of the story." Students then collaboratively engage in a variety of pre- and post-reading activities using their cognitive skills. This shows that practice using picture books is a combination of the CLIL and citizenship elements. Ms. Rampone explained that this was also CLIL.

- In the class we observed, the students were asked questions such as "How would you feel if there were no differences in the world?" and "What messages would you want to convey to the world?" In Ms. Rampone's class, she was very careful to scaffold the language so that the message could be conveyed in English.

- One of the most impressive points was that Ms. Rampone's class treated the process of recognizing children as citizens, raising their awareness of the various elements of citizenship and encouraging them to take action to change society in their own ways.

3. Cooperative Learning Project Between Japanese and Italian Primary Schools Using an English Picture Book

One of the most important objectives of the visit to Italy was to meet and interact with Italian teachers and children who collaborated on projects undertaken in Japanese and Italian primary schools. The aim of the project was to integrate English language and intercultural learning using a picture book as a common teaching medium in which Italian

and Japanese children interacted and exchanged their learning outcomes on the Internet. The picture book was created by Kiyota and a student from Meisei University with funding from a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research.

Kiyota had two important tasks on his visit to Italy: one was to deliver letters addressed to Italian children and receive letters from them to Japanese primary school students. The second was to observe the reactions of the Italian children who were carrying out the learning project.

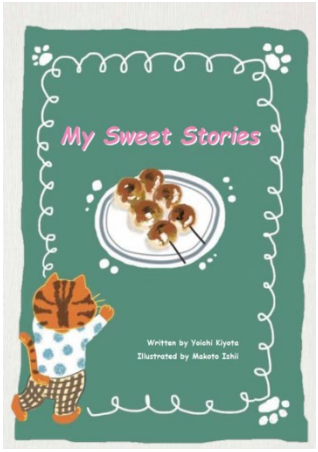
The welcoming attitude of the children was impressive. The children waved handmade Japanese flags. The way they read the letters from Japan and entrusted Kiyota with their letters showed how enthusiastic and satisfied they were with this joint learning project.

3.1 Background of the Project

The purpose of creating this picture book was as follows: The English picture book "My Sweet Stories" (Kiyota, 2023) was used in Japanese and Italian primary schools. Kiyota focused on issues related to the study of culture in English language learning. That is, many foreign subjects are covered in English textbooks for primary schools, and there are opportunities to learn much from them. However, there are too few opportunities for children to learn deeply about the relationship between language and culture as a personal issue.

As the theme of the research, Kiyota has been working on "Research on English Language Learning in Cooperation with Museums." He believes that utilizing the educational resources of various museums is effective for foreign language learning and intercultural understanding, because learners have various integrated learning opportunities through the visual and verbal information on culture contained in museum exhibits. He believes that learning using picture books has similar effects.

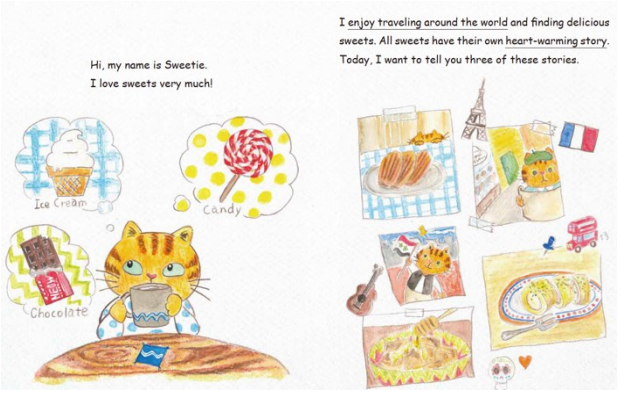
3.2 Creative Learning



This book includes three episodes on France, Mexico, and Syria. If the children are interested in the details, they can conduct their own research. For example, children who have seen the Disney animated film "Coco" may be interested in learning about the Day of the Dead in Mexico. This curiosity can be used in cross-curricular activities, such as using books from libraries or various museum sites on the Internet. These kinds of information can also provide suggestions for children on how to explore culture on their own.

Empathy is a fundamental attitude in intercultural understanding. It is necessary for us to understand people from different cultures and societies. In addition, empathy cannot exist without imagination

toward people with unknown cultural backgrounds. Kiyota expected the book to be used as a creative story to enhance this imagination. This book was created with the aim of being used in English learning classes in elementary schools and as a learning material for teacher training classes at universities.



After being used in a university teacher training course, it was highly evaluated by the students and teachers as educational material for intercultural understanding. Based on these results, Kiyota considered it possible to use the picture book in international cooperative learning. He sent it to a teacher trainer, Ms. Rampone, one of the key people in the ICEPELL project. She immediately introduced this idea to an Italian elementary school teacher who taught citizenship education using picture books.

3.3 Overview of the International Cooperative Learning Project

This project was undertaken by fifth-year students of Andorno Micca Elementary School in Italy under the guidance of teacher Emanuela Boffa Ballaran. In Japan, the project was undertaken by fifth-year students at Yokosuka Gakuin Elementary School under the guidance of teacher Keolanui-Wilson Georgette. The practice consisted of Steps 1–6, as follows:

Step 1: Elicitation of the knowledge necessary for the project: Thinking about “sweets” and “culture” in Japan and Italy, respectively.

Step 2: Reading the three episodes including food culture experiences.

Step 3: Self-introductory information exchange between Japan and Italy (using Padlet to introduce schools, thoughts on sweets, etc.).

Step 4: Exchanging information on each learning activity based on story episodes (e.g., the Syrian episode, “war & peace,” and expressing their thoughts on a mind map).

Step 5: Based on previous studies, each school created its own original story and presented it.

Step 6: Exchange of letters in which children reflected on their previous learning.

Through the medium of picture books, the children of both countries were able to use the familiar subject of food culture to recognize that they have various cultural issues as global citizens. Furthermore, through experiential learning and expanding on the episodes presented in the picture book, the children deepened their respect for and understanding of the culture of the regions to which they and their exchange partners belonged.

3.3.1 Reflections of the teacher from Italy. The following are reflections received by the author from Emanuela Boffa Ballaran, a teacher of Italian children: As the reflections suggest, this international project certainly provided a rich learning experience for both the children and teachers.

> The "My Sweets" project has not only provided valuable learning experiences for my students but has also strengthened their competencies as democratic citizens. Through this project, they developed skills, such as communication, collaboration, cultural awareness, and appreciation, all of which are essential for active participation in a diverse and democratic society. I am immensely proud of their achievements and grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this transformative experience.

The picture on the left below is a poster for the international learning project displayed at the Andorno Micca Elementary School. Through the picture book project, the children enjoyed reading, exploring, sharing, and tasting together with the Japanese children. The picture on the right below shows the letters written by the Italian children to the Japanese children. The author received them and delivered them to the Japanese children after returning to Japan.

4. School Without a Backpack (Senza Zaino)

4.1 School Without a Backpack

On February 22, we visited Marro Villar Perosa Elementary School, which is built as a School Without a Backpack (Senza Zaino in Italian). School Without a Backpack is a teaching method that actively involves children, their families, and teachers. It aims to foster inclusion, a sense of community, and responsibility by providing children with a welcoming learning environment. The School Without a Backpack movement began in Toscana, Italy, and the number of schools in the movement is gradually increasing. Instead of bringing a single backpack, students share materials and stationery, with the aim to

develop a sense of responsibility and create a hospitable environment.

In the class we observed, children learned together in different groups. It was interesting to see a group of students moving from one "station" to another in the classroom where they learned as a group by trying different learning strategies to learn the topic. For example, at one station, the children used a tablet and watched a video together to understand the material, while at another station, they read textbooks together. This allowed the children to adopt different approaches to learning and determine what worked best for them. The teacher helped the children by walking around the stations but could not stay at all of them. Naturally, students worked collaboratively and independently to solve problems.

4.2 Interview with Dr. David Martini, Director of the Institute in Busca

On February 23, we visited the Carducci Comprehensive Institute in Busca, located approximately 60 km from Turin. It was founded in 2010 and includes two nursery schools, three primary schools, and one lower secondary school. Over 1,000 young learners currently attend this institute. In 2016, it adopted the School Without a Backpack model. We interviewed Dr. David Martini, head teacher of the Carducci Comprehensive Institute of Busca, about the model and its impact on learners.

Martini explained the three values emphasized by School Without a Backpack in education: hospitality, responsibility, and community. In terms of hospitality, the institute welcomes students from the community and creates a space suitable for cooperative learning. This encourages the accommodation of various intelligence levels and cognitive styles among learners. In other words, students have the opportunity to learn materials using different methods in a group and find what works for them. Regarding responsibility, the institute introduces music to learners from nursery to lower secondary school because they can learn to work together, respect others, and take responsibility for authentic activities. Primary school children participate in choirs, and lower secondary school students play musical instruments such as pianos, guitars, and violins that they can borrow for free from the school. If students wish, they also have the opportunity to take musical lessons after school. Martini stated that incorporating music activities is important and effective in educating students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (25% of the students are foreign immigrants). Martini emphasized that learning various types of music from around the world helps to raise their awareness of having an inclusive society and becoming citizens of the world. As for the community, the institute holds a large music festival in the region once a year with thousands of students from nearby regions. In addition, in the classroom, there is a place called an *agora*, meaning a place for gathering, where students can do something together every day. For example, they can sing, discuss, or read mystery stories together. Martini stated that this is an ecological approach to building a healthy community. The schools are open to the community and work toward improving the well-being of all people involved, including teachers and

parents. After the interview, Dr. Martini kindly showed us around the school, and we noticed a poster that illustrates the very message that the school wants the children to feel: "When You Enter This Loving School Consider Yourself One of the Special Members of an Extraordinary Family (WELCOME)."

5. Summary and Implications

In the *ICEGuide* (ICEPELL Consortium, 2022, pp.7-8), Byram states his sense of crisis regarding the current state of citizenship education in Europe. He states that children are seen as "the consumers of the curriculum," that teachers are required to "deliver the curriculum," that children are regarded as "citizens-in-waiting" who will not have citizenship until they become adults, and that it is important for learners to become citizens and act in the "here and now."

During our visit to Italy, we observed the process of recognizing children as intercultural, global and democratic citizens, raising their awareness of the elements of citizenship, and helping them take action to improve their community or society in the classrooms. Teaching English through picture books has great potential to foster children's awareness as agents of social change, promote reflection on why they need to learn English, and encourage them to take action to make the world a more sustainable and peaceful place.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Silvana Rampone, a CLIL expert and one of the researchers who developed ICEPELL. Without her generous guidance and support throughout the research visit, it would not have been possible for us to have such a fruitful experience of interviewing teachers and observing classes. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI (Grant Numbers JP19K00805 and JP23K00729).

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【Report】

Achievements and Challenges in Developing and Using the "Passport to Junior High School"

Sakiko Yoneda and Fumiko Kurihara

Abstract

The Special Interest Group on English Language Education in the Japan Association of College English Teachers began research in 2020 to create an English learning portfolio for elementary school children. This paper reports on the development of self-assessment descriptors as a goal for elementary school English learning, called the "Passport to Junior High School" (hereafter "Passport"). The Passport was published in March 2022 and this paper reports on its implementation in English language classes in two public elementary schools in 2023. The Passport was developed with the expectation that children would understand their learning goals by the time they graduate from elementary school and would be able to assess their achievements by reflecting on their learning, thereby promoting autonomous learning. The Passport is a useful tool for bridging elementary and junior high schools, as it helps teachers and children reflect on what each child has achieved in their development of English language skills and culture learning before they graduate from elementary school. However, more research is needed to develop methods to make it easier for teachers to use classroom portfolios and have their children reflect on their learning more effectively.

Keywords

learning goals, support for autonomous learning, reflection, self-assessment, cooperation between elementary and secondary schools

1. Introduction

1.1 The Development of the "Passport to Junior High School" to Promote Learner Autonomy in Elementary School

Since foreign language education became compulsory for 5th and 6th graders in elementary schools in April 2020, the JACET Special Interest Group on English Language Education (JACET SIG-ELE) decided to develop a portfolio for children to help them become autonomous learners. To enhance their autonomy, learners must set clear goals, choose learning methods that suit them best, and take responsibility for their learning. Therefore, in 2020, JACET SIG-ELE launched the Learning Portfolio Development Committee (Development Committee) and began the development of a

Japanese version of a learning portfolio for elementary school children studying English in Japan. The Development Committee referred to the European Language Portfolio (ELP) for learners, developed by the Council of Europe based on the principles of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). The ELP consists of three parts: a "language passport" to prove language proficiency, a "language biography" to set learning goals and monitor and record learning progress through self-assessment, and a "dossier" to store learning outcomes. The "dossier" is a collection of documents where children can store their learning outcomes. The Development Committee started focusing on the elaboration of a Japanese version of the "language passport" to benchmark English language learning when children graduate from elementary schools.

During development, emphasis was placed on contextualizing the learning portfolios for the Japanese educational environment, which differs significantly from the social and educational environment in Europe where the ELPs were developed. The ELPs designed by the Council of Europe are intended for children who may move between different European countries and learn several foreign languages. European children who learn and study different foreign languages can reflect on their language competence based on the descriptors in the CEFR. This has the advantage that any educational institution in Europe can determine the approximate language proficiency of its children. Furthermore, the ELP can serve as a vital resource for teachers to enhance their comprehension of children with varied intercultural and foreign language learning backgrounds, aiding the teachers in choosing appropriate teaching methods. Conversely, Japanese elementary and secondary education lacks a curriculum mandating learning multiple foreign languages. Furthermore, it is not often the case that children move from one country to another. Therefore, the Development Committee aimed to develop a Japanese version of the Learning Portfolio for children to foster their growth as autonomous learners and to facilitate cooperation between primary and secondary educators.

1.2 Purpose of the Passport

In the process of acquiring vocabulary and grammar knowledge in junior high and high schools, it is customary for children to learn at the same pace toward the same goal within grade or class groups, with regular examinations serving as milestones in learning (JACET SIG-ELE, 2022). English education in elementary schools is expected to follow a similar pattern. However, it is preferable for foreign language learning to be tailored to each learner's individual needs, promoting autonomy. The Passport was designed to be used as a tool to support autonomous learning by giving children the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their learning. In addition, it is expected that junior high school English teachers will be able to refer to the Passport and share it with children as they move on to junior high school, leading to appropriate instruction.

2. Development Background

2.1 Textbook Analysis

A total of nine members of the JACET SIG-ELE and seven collaborators with expertise in elementary school English education joined the Development Committee to discuss how to contextualize the ELP in the Japanese educational environment. Following extensive discussion, it was decided to conduct a textbook analysis and define achievement goals for language proficiency in the five skill areas (listening, reading, speaking [interaction], speaking [production]) to be attained through English language education at elementary school. This decision was made because MEXT-authorized English textbooks, aligned with the Courses of Study, are utilized in elementary schools across Japan.

In April 2021, the Development Committee began analyzing government-authorized English textbooks for 5th and 6th graders. A total of six textbooks most frequently used in Japanese elementary schools were analyzed. These textbooks are organized into units by topic, and there were similarities in the topics covered. For example, all the textbooks included “self-introduction” and topics such as “sharing countries or regions you would like to visit and the reasons,” “learning about food, clothing, and housing around the world,” and “introducing countries you want to visit and what you can do there.” Despite minor variations in the wording of unit goals, a common theme emerged regarding “countries and regions around the world you want to visit.” Consequently, these topics were consolidated, and language proficiency objectives were established in the five skill areas for each topic.

The Courses of Study for Elementary School (MEXT, 2017) underscores the significance of “perspectives and ways of thinking” in foreign language communication. It encourages the understanding of phenomena in society and the world, comprehension of the foreign language and its culture, and consideration for others. Additionally, the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and its supplement, the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020), are based on the fundamental concept of fostering “plurilingual” and “pluricultural” competence. It states that language learners should enhance their intercultural adaptability and acquire awareness, skills, and know-how regarding other cultures, thereby gaining richer and more complex linguistic and intercultural competence. This suggests that language learning and intercultural competence complement each other. Since elementary school textbooks in Japan include many learning contents related to culture, the Development Committee decided to include intercultural competence goals in the [Culture volume] of the passport and language skills in the five skill areas. The analysis of textbooks related to cultural learning was conducted using the indicators shown in *A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA) (Candelier, M. et al., 2012), setting the goals for

knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to intercultural understanding (Nakayama, et al., 2022).

3. Contents of the Passport

3.1 Contents

The Passport consists of seven parts, which are listed and described below.

The first part, "1. Introduction," indicates that the Passport targets English language elementary school teachers to use it as a tool to provide children with opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their own learning, as well as to support autonomous learning.

In the second part, "2. Contents," the topic-specific learning achievement goals in five skill areas and the self-assessment descriptors (SADs) on culture are described, which were developed based on the analysis of the textbooks and the preliminary survey conducted in July and August 2021 (Yoneda, et al., 2022). Developing SADs based on the language materials in the 5th and 6th-grade textbooks is expected to facilitate a smooth connection from elementary school to junior high school English education.

In the third part, "3. Methods of Self-Evaluation," two versions of the Passport (a printed Word version and a digital version using Google Forms) are introduced. In both versions, there were three options for SADs for each topic to facilitate children's responses: "I can do it," "With help, I can do it," and "I can't do it," as well as a blank space for free response on the following three points: "What was good that I could do and why," "What was difficult and why," and "What I want to do in the future (using English) based on what I learned." In addition, the method of self-assessment, characteristics of the printed and digital versions, and how to introduce the digital version are described, all of which can be used immediately in class.

The fourth part, "4. List of Self-Assessment Descriptions (SADs)," includes "Skills" and "Culture" volumes. The Skills volume is divided into five skill areas, while the Culture volume is divided into "Knowledge and Skills" and "Attitudes" related to culture. The SADs in the skills section end with the phrases "can listen to __," "can talk about __," "can communicate about __," "can read and understand __," and "can write about __," which follows the objectives of the Courses of Study (MEXT, 2017, p. 169).

The fifth part, "5. Correspondence between SADs and English Sentence Structures, Expressions, and Vocabulary by Topic," in the Skills volume contains three SADs for each of the five skill areas, so that children can understand clearly what vocabulary and expressions they can use for the topic in question.

The sixth part, "6. Examples of Use," is divided into two volumes, "Skills" and "Culture." First, the Skills volume encourages children to reflect on their learning at the end of a topic or after some time has passed, and to evaluate their own English skills on the topic in a summative sense, to include the topics in annual lesson plans. When teachers use the Passport, they are encouraged to check if the SADs are appropriate for the children

for each topic. Conversely, in the Culture volume, it is pointed out that many of the subjects in textbooks use photographs, such as sightseeing spots and food items, but they tend to be stereotypical information. However, by employing SADs, teachers can effectively link textbook topics with cultural learning. For instance, children can compare their school and daily lives with those of children worldwide, identifying similarities and differences, which nurtures an attitude of respect for diversity. Also, through project-based learning, SADs can be used to confirm the goals of experiential learning and in collaborative reflection. The SADs are also useful when teachers want to confirm experiential learning goals or collaborative reflection.

Finally, the seventh part, "7. Complete self-assessment sheets (Word version)," consists of Skills and Culture volumes. The Skills volume contains SADs (five skill areas) on the 13 topics, a three-level evaluation, and a free-response section, which a teacher can modify and distribute to suit their classroom. In the "Culture" section, children are encouraged to reflect on the culture they have learned so far and are asked to self-evaluate their "knowledge and skills" and "attitudes" on three levels: "agree," "not so much agree," and "don't know." At the end of the section, a blank space can be used to encourage children to engage in overall reflection. The children can write their responses to the "What was particularly interesting to you? Give specific examples." In this section, the SADs allow children to reflect on their learning during the lesson, and on what they can do as a member of society with the information they have obtained.

The Passport contains 13 topics, and the vocabulary and expressions needed to learn each topic, which can serve as a compact summary of what can be learned in elementary school English. This suggests that junior high school teachers can also use the portfolio as a record of children's learning progress, making it an effective tool from the perspective of elementary and junior high school cooperation.

3.2 List of SADs [Skills Volume]

The Development Committee categorized the topics into 13 groups: (1) giving directions, (2) self-introduction, (3) daily life, (4) introduction of a town, (5) introduction of Japanese culture, (6) countries and regions of the world to visit, (7) memories of summer vacation, (8) introducing people, (9) nature and environment, (10) diet, (11) memories of elementary school, (12) future dreams, and (13) expectations for junior high school life. Subsequently, the Committee devised appropriate SADs for each skill and compiled a list according to topic. The following is an example of "giving directions" (Table 1, underlined by the author). Table 1 shows the achievement goals for learning English on "giving directions" in elementary school.

Table 1

Self-Assessment Descriptions (SADs)

Topic.		listening	Speaking [Production]	Speaking [Interaction]	reading	writing
1	Giving directions	Ask about the location of things and places, destinations, and directions by looking at maps, place cards, etc.	Organize and talk about the location of things and places, destinations, and directions by looking at maps, place cards, etc.	While looking at maps, place cards, etc., ask and answer questions and communicate with each other about the location of things and places, destinations, and directions.	Children will be able to read and understand sentences describing the location of things and places, destinations, and directions by looking at maps and place cards.	With the help of example sentences from textbooks and other sources, children can look at maps, place cards, etc. and write about the location of things and places, destinations, and directions.

The English sentence structures, expressions, and vocabulary required to learn this topic are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Correspondence between SADs and English sentence structures, expressions, and vocabulary for giving directions

Area	SADs	Sentence Structures & Expressions	Vocabulary
Listening	While looking at a map or location card, be able to understand what the speaker is describing and the location of the place.	It's [by / in / on / under] the .... Is this the symbol for a school?	[Position] at, on, in, under, by [Motion, etc.] SEE, TURN [Directions] straight, right, left Place, facility, etc. block, symbol, hospital police station, post office, bookstore convenience store, department store, fire station, gas station, park, restaurant, school, station, supermarket restaurant, school, station, supermarket [Personal effects, stationery] chair, table, desk, bed,
	Can understand the destination of the person speaking while looking at a map or a location card.	Where is [place]? I want to go to [place].	
	Can understand the directions to the destination of the person speaking while looking at a map or location card.	Go straight for ... block(s). Turn [right / left]. You can see it on your [right / left].	
Speaking [Production]	Can tell the location of objects and places by looking at maps, place cards, etc.	We have ... in our town. It's [by / in / on / under] the	
	Look at a map or place card and say where you are going.	Where is [place]? I want to go to [place].	
	Can tell how to get to the destination by looking at a map, place cards, etc.	Go straight for ... block(s). Turn [right / left]. You can see it on your [right / left].	
Speaking [Interaction]	Ask friends and others about the location of objects and places by looking at maps and place cards.	Where is [place]? It's [by / in / on / under] the .... Is this the symbol for a school?	
	Ask friends about destinations by looking at maps, place cards, etc.	Where is [place]? I want to go to [place].	

	Interact with friends while looking at maps, location cards, etc.	Go straight for ... block(s). Turn [right / left]. You can see it on your [right / left].	box, ball, pencil, cap, book
Reading	While looking at maps and place cards, read and understand sentences that describe the location of objects and places.	We have ... in our town. It's [by / in / on / under] the	
	Can tell by looking at maps, place cards, etc. and read sentences with destinations written on them.	Where is ...? I want to go to	
	Can tell by looking at maps, place cards, etc., and reading sentences with directions to the destination.	Go straight for ... block(s). Turn [right / left]. You can see it on your [right / left].	
Writing	Can write about the location of objects and places by referring to example sentences in textbooks, looking at maps and place cards, etc.	It's [by / in / on / under] the	
	Can write about destinations by looking at maps, place cards, etc., referring to example sentences from textbooks, etc.	Where is [place]?	
	Can write directions to destinations by looking at maps, place cards, etc., referring to textbooks and other example sentences.	Go straight for ... block(s). Turn [right / left]. You can see it on your [right / left].	

When conducting the class, the teacher asks the children to reflect on their learning by selecting one of SADs (Table 3). When they are finished, they can show their results to their friends and discuss what went well and what they thought was still difficult.

Table 3

Complete SAD sheet for giving directions

Area	SADs	I can	With help, I can	I can't
Listening	I can understand what the speaker is describing and the location of places by looking at maps, place cards, etc.			
	I can understand where the speaker is going by looking at maps, location cards, etc.			
	I can understand directions to the speaker's destination by looking at maps, location cards, etc.			
Speaking [Production]	I can say where things and places are located by looking at maps, place cards, etc.			
	I can say where I am going by looking at a map or location card.			
	I can look at a map or place card and say how to get to where I am going.			
Speaking [Interaction]	I can ask friends and others about the location of objects and places by looking at maps and location cards.			
	I can use maps and location cards to ask friends and others about destinations.			

	I can interact with friends and other people while looking at maps and location cards to provide directions.			
Reading	I can read and understand sentences that describe the location of things and places by looking at maps and place cards.			
	I can tell the destination by looking at a map or a place card and reading a sentence written on it.			
	I can see the map and place cards and read and understand the sentences with directions to the destination.			
Writing	I can write about the location of things and places by looking at maps and place cards, referring to textbooks and other example sentences.			
	I can write about destinations by looking at maps, place cards, etc., referring to textbooks and other example sentences.			
	I can write directions to a destination by referring to textbooks and other example sentences, looking at maps and place cards.			
Reflection	What are some of the things above that you have accomplished?			
	What is difficult among the things above? Why?			
	What would you like to do in the future (using English) based on what you have learned in class?			

The list of SADs offers an overview of the comprehensive learning outcomes in elementary school. Additionally, the Correspondence Table of Expression/Vocabulary by Topic presents a more detailed list of SADs and provides a comprehensive overview of language skill acquisition throughout elementary school.

3.3 List of SADs [Culture Volume]

In establishing achievement goals for English language learning at the elementary school level, we recognized the importance of cultural understanding. Thus, we created SADs specifically tailored to cultural learning, given that textbooks frequently address cultural topics. Drawing on the findings of a study conducted by Nakayama et al. (2022), we developed SADs for the Culture volume. Generally, the intercultural competence model encompasses three key areas: knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2011). Therefore, the authors formulated SADs of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Four SADs are in the knowledge and skills section, and two SADs are in the attitude section (Table 4). For each item, more specific SADs were developed in line with the contents of the textbooks (Table 5).

Table 4

SADs in the Culture volume

Knowledge and Skills section	The world has diverse cultures (language, food, clothing, shelter, customs, rules, etc.).
	Cultures around the world have similarities and differences.
	Cultures can be influenced by other cultures.
	When communicating, it is necessary to consider the culture of the other party.
Attitude section	I am interested in the diverse cultures (food, clothing, shelter, customs, rules, etc.) of people around the world.
	The diverse cultures of the world are important to the people of each region.

Table 5

Example of SADs in the Culture volume:
The world contains diverse cultures (languages, food, clothing, shelter, customs, rules, etc.)

1	There are many different languages and scripts in the world.
2	People around the world dress in different ways depending on where they live, their ethnicity, religion, and so on.
3	There are many ways to greet people in the world besides bowing and shaking hands.
4	There are various types of cuisines and ways of eating in the world, depending on climate, customs, religion, etc.
5	Countries and regions around the world have various events and holidays according to their history, traditions, climate, and so on.
6	Countries and regions around the world have a variety of buildings according to their history, traditions, climate, and so on.
7	The school life of children around the world differs in terms of subjects, timetables, and events.
8	The plants and animals of the world differ depending on the local climate and environment.

4. Implementation of the Passport in Two Public Elementary Schools

The symposium titled “The Potential of Learning Portfolios in Elementary School English: Practices and Challenges Using the ‘Passport to Junior High School’” took place online at the Language Education Expo 2023 on March 5, 2023. Two elementary school teachers presented their experiences with utilizing the Passport in the symposium. Below is a summary of their report.

4.1 Practice Using the Passport [Skills Volume] at an Elementary School in Atsugi City, Kanagawa Prefecture

This section presents the practices of using the Passport [Skills] with the 6th grade public elementary school children. The practitioner, Teacher A, who was in her fourth year of elementary school teaching, has been responsible for four 6th-grade classes

comprising 156 children since their 5th grade. She used the Passport in her second year of teaching the 6th grade. The teacher used the Passport when she taught the topics from *NEW HORIZON Elementary 6* (Allen-Tamai, et al., 2020): 1. Units titled "This is me," "Let's go to Italy," "Summer vacation in the world," "We all live on the earth," and "Let's think about our food."

4.1.1 Background of the implementation. The teacher taught English to all 5th and 6th grade classes for two years. When the children were in the 5th grade, the teacher used the children's responses to the question "What did you learn in this unit?" on the back of commercially available test sheets to evaluate the children's attitudes. However, she was concerned that it would be difficult to obtain their honest opinions because they might worry that their responses would be evaluated and included in their grades. Given that the children were accustomed to writing extensively and proficiently on tablets, the digital version of the Passport was expected to enable them to reflect effectively on their learning.

4.1.2 Method. The children used the SADs in the digital version of the Passport and reflected on their learning when the paper and performance tests were administered at the end of each unit. The children were adept at using Google Forms and could effortlessly navigate through the self-assessment and open-ended sections in the digital version. However, due to several school restrictions, the teacher was only able to provide feedback once, following the summer vacation in September.

4.1.3 Findings. The teacher observed the following insights from the children's reflective comments written in the Passport over the course of one year. The more the children used the Passport, the more the teacher found the children's growth and problems from their free writings. Distinctive examples are shown below:

(1) Children enjoyed sharing their experiences in English with their friends, expressing sentiments such as: "I was able to tell the place I went to," "I was very happy talking about my trip during the summer vacation."

(2) The teacher found that pair work could pose challenges, which she did not notice during class. Some students stated, "It is difficult to ask each other in pair work," or "The other person keeps silent."

(3) In general, writing was expected to be burdensome for children who struggle in their native language. However, the teacher discovered that writing was also perceived as a burden by children who did not have issues in Japanese.

(4) The teacher found that the children often commented that "writing was difficult," but they did not necessarily mean the same. Some children had difficulty holding a pencil, while others had difficulty expressing their emotions in English. The teacher realized that she could not simply say that writing is a burden. The teacher should investigate further

what kind of difficulty each child experiences.

4.1.4 Strengths and challenges. First, the strength of the Passport is that it helps children reflect on their learning by referring to specific points addressed in the SADs. In addition, by filling in Google Forms when they took the performance and paper tests, the children could look back at their performance more objectively. On the other hand, several issues were found. The first is the wording of the SADs in the "Writing" section. One of the children asked whether choosing "able to write" was appropriate even though she could only trace the words. Since the children had only been asked to copy down the text in class, they were confused and could not respond properly to the SADs. Also, due to security reasons, the children did not have a chance to see what they had written, and they could not assess their long-term growth. At the same time, despite teachers' intentions to share the children's reflections, they faced constraints due to IT security reasons. Additionally, utilizing the digital version of the Passport via Google Forms necessitated complicated manual procedures, which posed a burden for teachers. Moreover, it would be more convenient for teachers to leverage the digital Passport for providing feedback if the reflection data could be automatically analyzed.

4.2 Practice Using the Passport [Culture Volume] at a Public Elementary School in Tokyo

4.2.1 Background of the implementation. In 2022, Teacher B used the Passport [Culture] in two 6th-grade classes at a public elementary school in Tokyo. However, the teacher recognized that despite children having opportunities to learn about countries worldwide in social studies, they often remained distant from these cultures, seldom comparing or associating them with their own. Feeling it crucial to deliberately integrate the study of culture into foreign language education and other subjects like moral education, social studies, home economics, and Japanese, she utilized the Passport [Culture] throughout the academic year.

4.2.2 Method. The teacher distributed a reflection sheet containing SADs for cultural learning at the beginning of the first term in May, and the sheet was used throughout the year. The title "Over the Horizon: Let's think about Culture" was written on the worksheet. Over the Horizon is the section title in their textbooks. Then, the procedures of reflection were provided: (1) Choose one of the three options and check the box, (2) From all the SADs, put a star next to the number of the item you were particularly interested in (you can put a star as many as you want), and (3) Show and discuss what you have written with your friends when you are done. In addition, a space was provided for children to choose two items each from the "knowledge and skills" and "attitudes" sections that they wanted to learn as of May, and a space for them to think about what they were particularly interested in a few months ahead and write about it with specific examples. The objective

here is not solely to introduce SADs to the children but also to foster their awareness of cultural learning, focusing on topics of personal interest, and encourage ongoing reflection. On the flip side of this reflection sheet, a column was allocated for children to contemplate “What is culture?” and articulate their reflections in a mind map format. In addition, a blank space was provided after the words “Culture is XXX” and “Knowing other cultures is XXX” to visualize the children's understanding about culture. In addition, the schedule for cultural learning throughout the year is shown in three stages. They are: “Learn about the similarities and differences between the cultures of Japan and other countries,” “Investigate the culture you want to know more about by comparing Japan and other countries,” and “Present what you have investigated and experienced in order to share your findings.” From the first term to the third term, the teacher informed the children that they would gradually dig deeper into their cultural learning and that they would culminate their learning with a final presentation.

In addition to the worksheet, the teacher designed a year-long class schedule based on the entire SADs in the Culture volume, consciously incorporating information on diverse cultures of the world into small talk and daily interactions with children and developing a teaching plan to set a final presentation activity in the third term. On the day of the presentation activity, the children were divided into teams of several children, and each team chose their presentation format (skit, storyboard, picture book, etc.) and presented (acted out) a story they had created on the themes of “flags,” “food,” “events,” “greetings,” “endangered species,” “world heritage,” “clothing,” “national treasures,” and so on. The teams presented (performed) the stories they had created (for this study, refer to Kiyota et al., 2024).

4.2.3 Findings. The SADs in the Passport were used not only for the children’s reflection but also for the teacher’s backward design of lessons and activities. The children were able to compare cultures, draw connections to their own culture, and explore other cultures interactively. On the day of the presentation, they showcased their work with a message centered on embracing cultural diversity and differences. Furthermore, by having the children represent cultures from countries other than Japan, they could delve into various cultural experiences and empathize with those who represented diverse cultures.

4.2.4 Strengths and challenges. As highlighted in section 4.2.2, one of the project's strengths lies in providing clear goals for developing intercultural competence among elementary English learners based on the content of the textbooks. This facilitated the children's cultural learning, allowing the teacher to gain insights for concurrently fostering language skills and cultural understanding. Consequently, a presentation activity that seamlessly integrated language and cultural learning was implemented at the end of the academic year. However, unlike the Skills volume, the Culture volume does not

specify the SADs according to the lessons in the textbooks due to the luck of systematic incorporation of culture learning in the textbooks. This could cause confusion among teachers regarding the timing and methods for incorporating the SADs into their lessons. Additionally, designing lesson plans and inquiry-based learning activities to deepen cultural understanding requires teachers to possess critical intercultural awareness and skills. Thus, teachers need to increase their ability to enhance children's intercultural competence, particularly when implementing the SADs outlined in the Culture volume within elementary education settings.

5. Conclusion

This paper reported the development process and contents of the "Passport to Junior High School" and introduced examples of the use of the Skills and Culture volumes by two elementary school teachers. The Passport was developed to clarify the achievement goals of language skills and culture by graduation from elementary school, based on the analysis of the authorized textbooks by the government introduced in the 2020 school year, when English became a compulsory subject. The Passport is a list of language and cultural skills and abilities that can be acquired through English education at elementary school, along with sentence structures, expressions, and vocabulary. The Passport can be used in various ways in each elementary school, and it is hoped that more elementary schools will use it and examine its effects.

Next, we summarize the achievements and challenges of the Passport as seen through the examples of utilization presented in this paper.

First, a list of SADs was devised to determine the language skills and intercultural competence achievable through the elementary school textbook-based classes. These descriptors served as valuable resources for teachers in creating lesson plans and for children in assessing their learning progress. Moreover, teachers can utilize the printed version of these descriptors for lesson planning and facilitating student reflections. Furthermore, teachers could customize the list of SADs based on individual children's needs and lesson content, fostering tailored reflection opportunities for the children.

Another possibility of using the Passport is to promote the cooperation between elementary and secondary schools. For example, Teacher B encouraged the children to bring the reflection sheet they have used to junior high school as a record of their learning. This would be a useful resource for junior high school English teachers to know what each student has learned and achieved in elementary school and make use of the information to teach the students more appropriately depending on their achievement results.

The challenge is that portfolio-based learning has not yet taken root in the Japanese educational environment, and teachers and children may be overwhelmed by the number of SADs included in the Passport, thinking that they must study them exhaustively or may

use them only as a simple checklist immediately after language activities. In order to use the Passport as a tool to develop autonomy, children need to re-evaluate the same SADs after some time to acknowledge their growth and challenges and use them for their continued learning. However, further research is needed on how SADs can be used to help children become aware of their learning and acquire the ability to reflect on themselves properly. Another challenge is the use of the digital version of the Passport. It was developed so that it could promote more effective use of ICT in elementary school English education, where ICT is increasingly being introduced. However, it was discovered that customizing the digital version appropriately and providing feedback to children through the digital version proved challenging. Therefore, there is a pressing need to enhance the digital version, making it more user-friendly and practical for implementation in elementary school settings.

Notes

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【Chronicle】

April 2023— March 2024

Presentations by the SIG members:

Date	Title and Presenter(s) Venue	Event
April 16	"Effects and Challenges of Collaborative Online International Learning in Preservice Teacher Education" Sakiko Yoneda, Hiroyuki Takagi, Chie Ohtani, Kimberly Niezgoda & Suzanne Murray Galella Chicago, IL, USA	2023 AERA ANNUAL MEETING
April 22	Round Table "Enhancing EMI Learning Outcomes: Exploring the Role of Teaching Assistants in Supporting English-medium Instruction (EMI) Classes in EFL Contexts" Akiko Kiyota, Shuhei Kudo, Ryo Moriya & Kana Matsumura Nagoya University	ICLHE East Asia 2023 Symposium
June 5	"Developing an Interactional Competence Rating Scale for a University Speaking Placement Test: Insights from Existing Rating Scales and Performance Data" Kotaro Takizawa, Akiko Kiyota, Shungo Suzuki, Yasuyo Sawaki, Kana Matsumura, Yoko Oi & Yanping Deng The New Yorker Hotel	44th LTRC
July 8	"A Study of Cultural Learning in English Language Study in Elementary Schools - Passport to Junior High School [Culture]" Yoichi Kiyota, Chika Kuroki, Fumiko Kurihara & Natsue Nakayama Video on demand	43th JASTEC Conference
July 19	"A Study on Identification of Children with Learning Difficulties in Listening	20th Anniversary AILA World

	Comprehension and Semantic Comprehension of English Vocabulary” Kagari Tsuchiya & Shien Sakai The Ecole Normale Supérieure Campus in Lyon	Congress Lyon Edition
August 5	“Fostering Learners' Autonomy through Cooperative and Collaborative Learning : Global issues learned through soft CLIL” Kaori Yoshizumi Web conference with Zoom	The 59th National Conference of New English Teachers’ Association
August 15	“Promoting student’s proactive learning : Perspectives and Devices in English Teaching Practices” Kaori Yoshizumi ELEC, Tokyo Japan	ELEC Summer Workshop 2023
August 17	“Modifying EFL Writing Rating Scale Based on Analysis of Raters’ Behavior” Kana Matsumura Bukyo University (Adachi Campus)	The 27th Conference of PAAL
August 18	“A Discussion on the Paradigm Shift in English Language Teaching Brought About by Machine Translation” Shien Sakai, Ohkatsu Hirofumi & Kagari Tsuchiya Daejeon Convention Center, Daejeon, South Korea	The 21st AsiaTEFL International Conference
August 19	“A Study of Motivation through Film in Japanese University English Education” Kagari Tsuchiya Daejeon Convention Center, Daejeon, South Korea	The 21st AsiaTEFL International Conference
August 30	“Utilizing Portfolios to Encourage Deeper Reflection in English Teaching Programs for Primary and Secondary Education” Takane Yamaguchi, Satsuki Osaki, Natsue Nakayama & Shun Morimoto	The 62nd JACET International Convention

	Meiji University (Surugadai Campus)	
September 9	"A Baseline Washback Study of a New Placement Study of a New Placement Test for University Students Using Assessment" Keita Nakamura, Yuya Arai, Yanping Deng, Tatsuro Tahara, Yasuyo Sawaki, Kana Matsumura, ta Nakamura, Yuya Arai, Yanping Deng, Tatsuro Tahara, Yasuyo Sawaki & Kana Matsumura Tohoku University	The 26th Annual Conference of JLTA
September 9	"A Baseline Washback Study of Placement Testing in a University English-speaking Course in Terms of Instructors' Decision-making Behaviours" Kana Matsumura, Xiaofei Liu, Yasuyo Sawaki, Yuya Arai, Yanping Deng, Keita Nakamura & Tatsuro Tahara Tohoku University	The 26th Annual Conference of JLTA
September 17	"The 26th Annual Conference of the Japan Language Testing Association (JLTA)" Kagari Tsuchiya Web conference with Zoom	ATEM the 1st Multilingual and Multicultural Study
October 29	"Formative Assessment of EFL Writing of Argumentative Paragraphs - Investigating the Effectiveness of Schematized Teacher Feedback" Kana Matsumura Web conference with Zoom	JSMMR 2023
November 25	"Teaching Culture Creatively: A Project in Elementary School English Classes" Natsue Nakayama & Kiyota Yoichi Video on demand	Asia TEFL WEBINAR 2023-1
December 2	Poster: "Developing and Using Portfolios to Promote Language Teacher and Learner Growth" Natsue Nakayama & Fumiko Kurihara	The 6th JAAL in JACET

	Ochanomizu University	
December 2	"A Framework for Validation in Mixed Methods Research: A Case Study in Formative Assessment of Performance Testing in the Classroom" Kana Matsumura Ochanomizu University	The 6th JAAL in JACET
February 3	"Building a Student Support System in the EMI Curriculum of the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Education: Comprehensive Profiling to Facilitate Collaborative Initiative among Teachers, TAs, and Students" Tetsuo Harada, Yasuyo Sawaki, Kana Matsumura, Ryo Moriya, Akiko Kiyota & Shuhei Kudo Web conference with Zoom	The 29th Open Research Presentation of Institute for Advanced Studies in Education: Waseda University
March 10	1. Symposium: "Teaching Through Film" Megumi Kobayashi, Kagari Tsuchiya & Hirofumi Ohkatsu 2. Presentation: "World Englishes Global English World: UK, USA & Canada, Japan, Mondolia, and Southeast Asia" Hiromi Imamura, Harumi Oishi, Shinobu Wada & Hiroyuki Umetani 3. Symposium: "Positive Approaches to Solving the English Teacher Shortage" Kaori Yoshizumi, Ai Kuroki & Akira Takahashi 4. Symposium: "The Significance and Possibility of Incorporating Global and Digital Citizenship Education into English Language Education in Japan" Fumiko Kurihara, Yoichi Kiyota & Natsue Nakayama 5. Symposium: "A Discussion of the Paradigm	Language Education EXPO2024

	Shift in English Language Teaching in the Age of AI Development --- with a Focus on Remedial Education" Shien Sakai, Toshiko Od, Kenichi Kamiya & Jin Koizumi 6. Presentation: "Making a List of Language Activities Using the "Passport to Junior High School as the Achievement Goal for Learning English in Elementary School" Sakiko Yoneda, Yoichi Nishimura & Yuta Matsumoto 7. Symposium: "Current Status of Promoting Reflection in English Teaching Courses Obtained from a National Survey" Takane Yamaguchi, Satsuki Osaki & Eri Osada Chuo University & Web conference with Zoom	

Abbreviations

JACET: The Japan Association of College English Teachers
JAAL: The Japan Association of Applied Linguistics
JASTEC: The Japan Association for the Study of Teaching English to Children
AREA: The American Educational Research Association
AILA: International Association of Applied Linguistics
ATEM: The Association for Teaching English through Multimedia
ELEC: The English Language Education Council
ICLHE: Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education
JLTA: The Japan Language Testing Association
JSMMR: Japan Society for Mixed Methods Research
LTRC: Language Testing Research Colloguium
PAAL: Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics

Language Teacher Education
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Contributors and co-authors should be SIG or JACET members. However, contributions from the users of J-POSTL or researchers/practitioners of language teacher education as well as primary/secondary foreign language education are welcome.

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Research Paper	Full-length academic articles on the transportability or the use of *J-POSTL* or on language teacher education and related fields.	Within 8,000
Research Note	Discussion notes on *J-POSTL* or on language teacher education and related fields.	Within 6,000
Practical Report	Reports on classroom application of J-POSTL or on language teacher education and related fields.	Within 6,000
Other	Reports of conferences, PD activities, materials, research programs, etc. related to *J-POSTL* or language teacher education and related fields.	Within 4,000
Book Review	Book reviews on language education.	Within 2,000

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