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Table of Contents

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【Invited Paper】

The Implications of Machine Translation
for English Education in Japan

Tom Gally

Abstract

The performance of machine translation (MT) provided online for free by Google and others improved significantly in 2016. MT is now increasingly used in business, research, and government as well as in private life. Although still imperfect, MT that is applicable for practical purposes challenges the primary reason given for universal English education in Japan: that acquisition of fluency in the language is essential for international communication. Language educators considering how to respond to the challenge from MT face significant uncertainties, including what effect MT use might have on learners' language acquisition and motivation, and whether and how MT should be incorporated in classroom curricula. After examining two simple but illustrative examples of MT use in the real world—a sign in a convenience store and an MT-mediated conversation overheard on a train—this paper discusses what is known and unknown about MT and language education as of 2019. It closes with a proposal to evaluate MT not by the sentence-by-sentence accuracy of its translations but rather by means of "can-do" rubrics similar to those of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Keywords

1. Introduction

Since the dawn of civilization, a fundamental assumption of human interaction has been that if two people who speak different languages want to communicate or cooperate with each other, then they must use a common language, one of them must learn the language of the other, or they must rely on a human interpreter. This assumption—that all but the most rudimentary interaction across linguistic divides requires that people know more than one language—has driven the goals and methods of second-language education as well.

However, it is now possible for people without a common language to communicate directly by means of machine translation (MT), that is, computer software that takes textual or spoken input in one language and outputs a translation in another

language. While the accuracy of the translations produced by MT is still a significant issue, recent significant improvements in MT quality, enabled by advances in artificial intelligence technology, have made MT usable, and used, in many real-life contexts. This development has the potential to overturn the very foundation of second-language education, forcing educators, students, policymakers, and others to start thinking about the implications for language education and learning. Those implications, and the many unknowns that affect them, are the focus of this essay.

Before describing the capabilities and limitations of MT in general, I will first present two simple but illustrative examples of MT in actual use.

2. Two Cases of Real-World Use

2.1 A Convenience Store Sign

Figure 1 shows a sign that was displayed in an eating area on the second floor of a convenience store near my home in Yokohama, Japan, in 2019. As is increasingly common with multilingual signs in Japan, the English seems to have been prepared with MT.

Figure 1. A sign in a convenience store in Yokohama.

These three lines of English typify the lower range of quality for today's MT. The first line, "Works of Eat," is supposed to be a translation of the two Japanese lines above it, which actually mean "Guide to using the eating area." The second, "Available time," corresponds to a phrase in Japanese that means "The times when you can use [this area]." Below that line appears the time range "am6:00～pm8:00"; while not punctuated in the standard way for English, it should be understandable to both Japanese and English speakers. The third line in English is "Drinking , smoking , can not be ."; this corresponds to the two Japanese lines above it, which mean "You may not drink alcohol or smoke." At the bottom of the sign are two prohibition symbols, one the standard

no-smoking sign, with a red slash through a lit cigarette, and the other a no-drinking sign, with a similar slash through a mug of beer.

The three lines of English seem to have been composed using MT because, first of all, the third line follows the verb-final grammatical order of the Japanese sentence; a Japanese speaker with even an elementary ability in English would be unlikely to create a sentence like this. (The MT user probably input the two lines separately; if they had been input together, the MT output would have been more natural.) Second, the first line, "Works of Eat," makes no sense; it seems to be the result of the translation engine's inability to handle the first line, a Japanese-English neologism based on the words "eat" and "in," meaning the area within a store for eating the store's ready-to-eat food.

This sign typifies the degree to which even low-quality MT can be used for practical communication. If a foreign resident or tourist able to read English but not Japanese happened into the store and saw the sign, he or she would probably understand the meaning of the phrase "Available time." Although this English might seem opaque in isolation, there is sufficient context for the foreigner to guess the intended meaning: a time range appears immediately below it, the sign is posted in an unstaffed area that has tables and chairs, and a customer who happens into the convenience store might naturally be wondering whether it is acceptable to sit at those tables and eat. The third line, about drinking and smoking, is unnatural as English, but the symbols immediately below it provide more than enough context to make it understandable as well. Only the first line, "Works of Eat," is likely to be incomprehensible even in context to a person who cannot read Japanese. Nevertheless, the sign's overall intended message—that customers can sit and eat there from six in the morning until eight at night as long as they do not smoke or drink alcohol—should be clear.

This ratio—about one-third of MT output being more or less natural, one-third unnatural but understandable in context, and one-third incomprehensible—is typical for MT today. If the translations appear in isolation, without textual or situational context, they are often useless; with sufficient surrounding clues, however, they can, like this sign, serve their intended purpose in real-life situations. Furthermore, if the person who prepared this sign had had moderate knowledge of English or of how to use MT effectively, he could have fixed some of the errors and made the sign even more understandable.

I have been shopping at this convenience store for nearly 20 years, and I know the owner slightly. The store is in a residential neighborhood that has few foreign residents or tourists. The owner, who probably prepared the sign himself, appears to be in his sixties. I have not asked him about his knowledge of English, but it would not be surprising if he has not used or studied the language since high school. He has always looked busy and tired when I have seen him in the store, which is open 24 hours a day, and it is unlikely that he would have had any time in recent years to review English, so he has probably forgotten nearly everything he learned in school. It is even less

conceivable that he would have had any opportunity to learn techniques for improving the output of MT; in 2019, the development and promulgation of those techniques, such as making sentence subjects explicit and back-translating the output into the source language to check its meaning, are still in their infancy. His inexperience with both English and MT would explain why two of the three lines in English are so unnatural: he just accepted whatever output he got from a free online translation service and copied it onto the sign. But despite all these problems, the sign serves its intended purpose.

2.2 A Tourist on a Train

A couple of months after I noticed that convenience store sign, I was sitting on a crowded commuter train from Tokyo to Yokohama one Saturday evening when I realized that two women standing near me were having a conversation in both Japanese and English. We were so close that I could not help hearing every word that they said, and I learned a little bit about them. Speaker A was a tourist visiting Japan, apparently, judging by her accent, from another Asian country; she mentioned that, before coming to Tokyo, she had stayed at a hotel in a popular resort in central Japan. She had a suitcase beside her, so she was probably in transit between hotels. Speaker B was a Japanese college student. I did not hear the beginning of the conversation, but I guess that it had begun a few minutes before, perhaps when Speaker A struck up a conversation with Speaker B to find out if she was on the right train.

Speaker A spoke only English. Speaker B spoke mostly Japanese, though sometimes, with effort, she tried to express herself in English as well. They were able to have this bilingual conversation because they were using an app on Speaker A's smartphone that could translate spoken English into Japanese and vice versa.

Their success using the app was mixed. Some of what they said seemed to be correctly translated and understood; some of their utterances were apparently misinterpreted by the app's voice recognition function and had to be repeated or rephrased; and some of their utterances seem to have been recognized but the translations could not be understood. (No spoken translation was audible. Instead, the two women confirmed the accuracy of the voice recognition and read the translations from the other's language by looking at the smartphone screen.)

The following, from memory, is a re-creation of part of their conversation. They had just finished confirming that Speaker A would need to get off the train after two more stops.

Speaker A said in English, "I plan to go to Place M in Yokohama tomorrow."

Speaker B read the translation on the smartphone screen and replied in Japanese, "I pass through Place M almost every day." She looked closely at the screen as she said this to confirm that it had recognized her words correctly.

Speaker A seemed to understand the English translation, and she said into the phone

"How come?" After a pause, she said "How come?" again. And again. The phone apparently did not recognize those words, so she rephrased herself: "Why do you go there?"

Speaker B answered in Japanese, "My college is near there."

Speaker A replied, "Are you a college student?"

This time, Speaker B seemed to understand Speaker A's words directly. Without looking at the translation on the phone's screen, she said in very hesitant English, "Yes, I am, uh, year two, uh, college."

The rest of the conversation, which lasted until Speaker A got off the train a few minutes later, was conducted in English. While Speaker A was fluent, Speaker B was clearly not used to speaking English and had to make an effort to express what she wanted to say. I could see Speaker B's face as she spoke: she looked both excited to be using her limited English to communicate with the tourist and embarrassed at not being able to speak better. During the part of the conversation unmediated by the translation app, Speaker A adapted her spoken English and used gestures to help Speaker B understand.

While by no means smooth, the conversation—at least the part I heard—seemed successful overall. In addition to the practical discussion about where Speaker A should get off the train, Speaker A was also able to tell Speaker B about the hotel where she had stayed at the resort. While some information exchange would have been possible even without the translation app, the level of the conversation was somewhat richer than it would have been if Speaker B had had to rely entirely on her limited English speaking ability. (I assume that Speaker A knew no Japanese.)

2.3 Some Implications

The example of the convenience-store sign shows why many people have started to use MT. If my assumptions about the store owner are correct, then, when he was in school five decades ago, he was required to study English as a foreign language. There were several reasons for that requirement. First, it was, and still is, believed that learning a foreign language—any foreign language—benefits learners by exposing them to other cultures, to other people, and to a way of communication that is different from their first language. Second, English ability acquired through study is regarded as an indicator of one's intelligence and diligence, and ability in the language is tested on entrance examinations for universities and colleges. And the third is that, in the globalizing world of a half century ago and even more so in that of today, it is believed that many people will need the ability to use English, the international lingua franca, at some point in their lives.

For a convenience store owner in his sixties in that part of Yokohama, preparing a sign in Japanese and English for his store is probably one of the few times he ever has a

need for English. Having long forgotten nearly everything of the language he learned when he was young, he faced three options: devote many hours of his very limited time to trying to relearn enough of the language so that he could compose the English for the sign himself; pay a translator (if he knew how to find one) to prepare the sign for him; or spend a few minutes on his smartphone or computer to get translations using free online translation tools. It is no surprise that he chose the last option. It would be even less surprising, if he decided to prepare similar signs in Chinese, Korean, Thai, or the other Asian languages that foreign customers in that part of Yokohama are more likely to know, that he would use MT for those languages as well rather than trying to learn their writing systems, vocabulary, and grammar from scratch. MT thus offered a quick, easy, and very cheap solution to a practical problem.

The train conversation shows how MT can also encourage and enable interpersonal communication. While Google and others offer free smartphone apps for interpreting spoken conversation, and specialized devices for the same purpose are widely advertised and sold in Japan, when I have observed them in actual use, both in a handful of real-life situations such as on the train and in some formal experiments (Kōchiyama, Liang, Wrobel, Kawakita, & Gally, 2018), conversations using them have been only barely satisfactory. The frequent misrecognition of the participants' speech and the occasional mistranslation of correctly recognized speech make the interpreted conversations a frustrating experience even for users who are able to adapt their speech to make what they say easier for the software to recognize and translate. Until effective techniques for using the software are better understood and more people are trained and experienced in those techniques, the apps' and devices' main application will be simple tasks, such as asking and giving directions. Holding a conversation even through a professional human interpreter can be exhausting; few people would have the patience to conduct an extended conversation or discussion if it had to be interpreted by today's software.

But despite their limitations, the software and devices for conversational interpretation are seductive in a way that the more reliable written translation is not. By enabling face-to-face conversation between people without a common language, communication that is embedded in a rich context of gestures, facial expressions, speech intonation, and even physical contact, they enable the establishment of person-to-person connections that might not otherwise be formed. Those connections might, in some cases, motivate people to try to acquire each other's language so that they can communicate more directly. The Japanese college student I observed on the train, for example, was clearly enjoying the opportunity to talk with the foreign tourist, something she might have avoided had she been forced to try to speak only in English from the beginning. While that particular interaction ended when the tourist got off the train, one can easily imagine someone who has made a friend using an interpretation app feeling inspired to try to learn the friend's language.

One of the main reasons that has long been given in Japan for teaching all children English—that it might be useful at some point in the future—is made less convincing by the ready availability of reasonably accurate MT (Gally, 2018). When that convenience store owner needed to write in English, the software could do the job adequately for his purpose; a little training in how to use MT would have made the results much better—even if he still had no actual English ability. When a Japanese person is asked directions by a foreign visitor—a situation often presented to children as a reason to learn English—the necessary translations can now often be obtained through an app. And those translations can be made not only to and from English—which is the only foreign language that nearly all Japanese schoolchildren study—but to and from many other languages as well, including the Asian languages spoken by the majority of foreign visitors to Japan.

Before discussing the implications of MT's improved capabilities for English-language educators in Japan, I would first like to zoom out and give a brief overview of MT as it exists today.

3. The Quality of Today's MT

Although computer scientists have been developing MT systems since the 1950s, MT became usable for practical purposes, especially between languages as different as Japanese and English, only in late 2016, when Google shifted its free online translation service to a new, neural-network-based system (Lewis-Kraus, 2016; Wu et al., 2016). At that point, the naturalness and grammaticality of the output improved significantly.

Unlike human language users, however, translation software still does not seem to take knowledge about the real world—meaning, in other words—into account. Words with multiple senses—such as "scale" in English or suji (筋) in Japanese—are often mistranslated, and syntactic ambiguities—such as "The teacher pointed at the student with a pen"—are often misinterpreted. The free software currently available online does not advise users when such ambiguities are present, so people who do not know both the source and target languages cannot easily determine whether or not MT output is accurate.

The neural networks that provide the translations have reportedly been trained using bilingual corpora of human-translated texts. Perhaps because such corpora, especially those available for free online, tend toward relatively formal types of writing—news articles, patents, government and corporate websites, etc.—MT performs much better with such texts than, for example, with informal dialogue from novels or television dramas. The sentences in formal texts also tend to be less context-dependent, making MT more applicable for academic and technical writing, which tends to be more semantically explicit at the sentence level, than for colloquial language, which often depends on an understanding of the situation in order to be comprehended and

translated.

The above example of the convenience store sign illustrates several aspects of how MT succeeds or fails in practice. It functions best when the translation is used within a rich situational and linguistic context. The context in that case was the sign's location in a convenience store where ready-to-eat food is sold; the nearby tables and chairs, suggestive of an informal café; the numbers and letters on the sign indicating a time range; and the symbols prohibiting smoking and drinking. Such a context enables the reader to figure out the sign's intended message; in isolation, perhaps two-thirds of the sign's English would have been incomprehensible.

Similarly, translated conversations like the one I overheard on the train are made more comprehensible by the rich context that typically occurs when people talk face to face: gestures, body language, facial expressions, vocal intonation, and the physical surroundings all help the participants interpret each other's intended meaning even when the translation app's performance is inadequate.

Linguistic context—that is, the other words in the text or utterance—is also important. MT from Japanese to English becomes significantly more comprehensible and correct when the Japanese is pre-edited to make the subjects and objects of each verb explicit. Subjects and objects of sentences are often omitted in Japanese when they will be understood from the context; if no subject is present in the Japanese input, MT tends to default to "I," "you," or "it" as the subject of the output sentence—regardless of the intended meaning. While sentences with all subjects and objects explicit can make for unnatural Japanese, the resulting English translations will usually be more correct. Of course, texts can be pre-edited to be more machine-translatable only by someone who is both fluent in the source language and adept at using it. A person unable to read Japanese, for example, would not be able to make such adjustments before using MT to translate a Japanese text into English; even a native speaker of Japanese, if he or she lacked sufficient explicit awareness of the language's grammar, might have difficulty making the adjustments as well.

An ironic weakness of current online MT systems is that they are very easy to use. They are available for free on both computers and smartphones, and they accept whatever is input by the user—even if it is poorly formed or ambiguous. The Google search engine will sometimes offer a translation of a search term even when the user did not explicitly ask for one. Because anyone using a computer or smartphone can get translations into dozens of languages with little effort, MT is now being used widely by people who do not understand how to use it effectively or how it can fail. In fact, even those of us who have been experimenting with the latest MT software intensively for the last few years do not yet really know the optimal methods for using it. A few techniques, such as making sentence subjects explicit, seem clear, but many other issues, such as how best to confirm the correctness of translations from or into languages one doesn't understand, are still unresolved.

Another issue is that the main providers of current MT systems are private companies that are very careful about revealing their business strategies and protecting their intellectual property. Google, for example, made its neural-network-based MT system available with almost no fanfare in late 2016. While that system performed much better than the previous systems, Google has provided little information about how the system works, what sorts of texts are used for analysis by the machine learning, how frequently and to what extent the neural network that produces the translations is updated, and what plans the company might have for improving or changing the translation process or interface in the future.

The business models for MT are also unclear. Presumably Google, Microsoft, and others hope to recapture their considerable investments either through advertising, including the increased exposure made possible by translating advertisements automatically, or by charging users for their service. There is no guarantee that the services will be as easy and convenient to use, or even available for free at all, five or ten years in the future. This makes it difficult for users, including educators, to know whether and how to incorporate MT into long-term plans.

4. The Unknowns for Educators

Just as MT technology's present and future are full of uncertainties, the implications for language education are obscured by many unknowns as well.

4.1 Real-world Use

One reason I opened this essay with informal observations of the use of MT in Japan is that I have been unable to find any systematic survey data of how it is actually used. In 2018, Satoshi Kurokawa conducted a small online survey of researchers in Japan about their use of MT; the results indicated that about two-thirds of the 141 respondents said they used it in some form, though their ways of using it varied widely (Kurokawa, 2018). My informal questioning of businesspeople, shopkeepers, taxi drivers, and others suggests that many people use the tools when they feel the need, but no clear picture has yet emerged about how widespread that use actually is or about to what extent its use might affect perceptions of the need for actual ability in English or other languages. Since universal English education in Japan is predicated largely on the belief that many adults must use English for their jobs, much more needs to be learned about how the ready availability of MT might be affecting the use of English, and perceptions about the need for English, in real life.

4.2 Effect on Language Acquisition

When I saw the improved output of Google Translate in late 2016, one of my first reactions was to wonder about the effect on foreign-language learning. If university

students studying how to write academic papers in English, for example, were to come to rely on MT when writing in English, would their autonomous ability to use English decline?

Some relevant analogies seemed to be to electronic calculators, Japanese word processors, and car navigation systems. When portable calculators became widely available in the 1970s, many people noticed that they became less able to do arithmetic with a pencil and paper. Similarly, using Japanese word processors, which convert phonetic input into kanji characters, seemed to worsen people's ability to remember how to write individual kanji by hand as they had learned in school. And reliance on car navigation systems has been said to weaken drivers' ability to find their way around on their own.

Research conducted by Mikie Nishiyama and others, however, suggests that these analogies might not always apply to MT (Nishiyama, 2017, 2018). In one experiment that she conducted, for example, she observed Japanese college students writing compositions in English using Google Translate. Some students composed their original drafts entirely in Japanese and then just ran the Japanese through Google Translate to produce the requested English text; it seems likely that long-term use of MT in this way would not benefit, and might even harm, those students' acquisition of English. In contrast, other students engaged with the English output more interactively, reading it to check its meaning, looking up the meanings of words they didn't know, and adjusting the English themselves before finishing their composition; such strategies, by making the students engage actively with the MT-produced English, might actually aid language acquisition.

But this is only speculation. Not only has no long-term, large-scale research been conducted yet to try to determine definitively how the use of MT might affect language acquisition, there is very little subjective evidence either. Ten or twenty years from now, there will be many people who will be able to describe how using MT seemed to affect their foreign language acquisition when they were younger. At present, however, we can only guess

4.3 Effect on Motivation

Also unknown is how the availability of MT might affect Japanese students' motivation to study English. To the extent that students are motivated by a perceived need to use English, the growing everyday use of this convenient new technology seems likely to weaken that motivation. But students have other reasons to study foreign languages as well, including attraction to the people and cultures associated with the language, interest in the grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic aspects of the language itself, and the visceral enjoyment of using a second language. Motivations such as these seem less likely to be harmed by MT.

The strongest immediate motivation for Japanese schoolchildren to study English,

of course, is admission tests to higher-level schools and universities. The popular prestige of high scores on exams such as TOEIC drives many adults as well to continue or renew their study of the language. It is unlikely that test-takers will be allowed to use MT during exams in the foreseeable future, so some learners will continue to be motivated to acquire at least the English required for tests without depending on MT. In the longer term, however, the ready availability of MT may call into question the wisdom of placing so much emphasis on test-taking ability, which may come to be perceived as an increasingly esoteric skill.

4.4 Applicability to Education

These unknowns—about real-world use and about the effects on language acquisition and motivation—make it difficult to know whether and how language teachers should respond to the improvements in MT. Should they incorporate MT in their lessons? If so, how? Should they try to discourage or forbid its use? Or should they just ignore it? Each response is probably suitable in certain educational contexts, but no general insights have yet emerged about which strategy is best for specific types of situations and students.

In writing classes, for example, the issue of whether using MT when composing assignments is "cheating" remains unresolved. So too is the problem of how to identify and deal with plagiarism when MT is used. When a typical Japanese university student cuts and pastes text from, say, the English version of Wikipedia for a class assignment, the teacher can usually detect that copying easily, both from the suspiciously correct English and by finding the original text through a web search. However, if the same student copies text from the Japanese Wikipedia and runs that through Google Translate, the plagiarism can be much more difficult to detect, especially if the student adjusts the input and output to remove obvious strangeness.

Students' attitudes about the use of MT are also unknown. Some might embrace the incorporation of MT in the language classroom, others might resist it, and others might be indifferent. The current generation of teachers did not use MT themselves when studying foreign languages, so we need to discuss it with our students and find out what they think about its use in language study.

4.5 Language Learning for Personal Enrichment

While the need for English ability for practical uses (jitsuyō in Japanese) is the primary justification for universal English education in Japan, it has also been justified in terms of kyōyō, or personal enrichment through broad learning (Yamamura, Gakutani, Karpinska, Tanojiri, & Gally, 2019). In that context, the supposed benefits of learning English include knowledge and insights about other cultures and people; the mental discipline of studying explicitly a foreign grammar and vocabulary; and greater awareness of one's mother tongue acquired in contrast with, and through translation to

and from, another language.

It is unclear whether such goals would be furthered or hindered by incorporating MT in the classroom. On the one hand, the ability to translate online texts from other languages into one's first language enables one to read texts from around the world that would not otherwise be accessible; students using translation apps would also be able to have conversations with, and thus learn about, people from many other countries. On the other hand, MT obviates the need to focus on another language's vocabulary and grammar, which can, in conventional language learning, yield insights into the language's speakers and associated cultures that are not easily obtained through translation. As with the possible effects of MT use on long-term language acquisition, we may have to wait years, even decades, until a consensus emerges about whether or not MT can play a constructive role in a liberal education.

5. What Is to Be Done?

In light of the many uncertainties about MT, it is tempting for language educators to ignore it as long as they can and to continue teaching as they have in the past. That may be a reasonable choice for some teachers, such as those primarily concerned with test preparation or foreign-language literature. For most English teachers in Japan, however, the conflict between the practical, communicative focus of their curricula and the increasing use of MT for real-life communication means that ignoring the issue will make those curricula increasingly untenable. I would therefore like to make a few suggestions on how we might move ahead.

Instead of evaluating the potential impact of MT based on the quality of the translations themselves, educators should focus instead on how effectively MT can be used in real-life tasks. When comparing MT input with MT output, it is easy to find translations that are horribly, even laughably wrong. But the challenge of MT for language education comes not from translation accuracy; rather, it comes from the fact that this amazingly convenient tool is being used, often effectively, by people who need to get things done in the real world. As shown by the examples of the convenience store sign and the train conversation discussed earlier, in rich situational or interactive contexts, MT can fail completely at the sentence level while still enabling the users to accomplish what they want to do.

A promising framework for evaluating MT is one familiar to many language educators: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, n.d. [2001]). The CEFR "can-do" rubrics for evaluating whether people can perform certain tasks in a second language could easily be adapted to evaluate the performance of such tasks using MT. A B2 descriptor for reading, for example, might be "Using MT, I can understand the main content and key points of articles and reports about contemporary issues," while an A1 descriptor for writing

might read "Using MT, I can produce short, simple sentences that convey my intended meaning."

My guess is that most people who have experience using MT would assess themselves as scoring at the A2, B1, or B2 level in most categories regardless of the target language—levels that, for conventional language use, can usually be obtained only after years of study. As the CEFR scales are increasingly being used in language education in Japan, including for university admissions, confirmation or refutation of this guess through systematic studies would clarify the implications of MT for curriculum development and education policy. Perhaps some ambitious educational entrepreneurs could even create a "CEFR-MT" qualification test to formalize the assessment of people's ability to use MT.

The unanswered questions about the effect of MT use on acquisition and motivation can be tackled in three ways. First, when possible ethically and practically, language teachers should experiment with MT in the classroom and try to gauge the impact on student learning and attitudes. That impact is likely to be complex and to vary with the curriculum and with the levels, motivations, and individual learning styles of the students, so teachers should share what they learn widely with colleagues until a broad understanding of the impacts of MT begins to emerge. Second, language educators and other experienced language learners should try using MT themselves in their own private study of other languages; their subjective experiences, if shared widely, will yield insights into how younger students might or might not be able to use it in their learning processes. And third, researchers in the field of second-language acquisition and learner motivation should conduct quantitative and qualitative studies of the effects of MT use and develop new theoretical frameworks to understand now this pseudohuman technology might affect real human language use.

The arrival of usable MT has overturned some basic assumptions of language education. No longer do communication and cooperation between people who do not share a common language have to be mediated by a person who knows more than one language. No longer can it be convincingly argued that acquiring a second language is necessarily worth the immense time and effort required. The widespread availability of MT will lead to growing dissatisfaction with current language education policies and methods and to increased pressure for fundamental reforms. Language educators need to think deeply, both individually and collectively, about how best to respond.

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【Research Note】

A Comprehensive Review of
European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) and
Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Language (J-POSTL):
Implications for Future Practice and Research in Japan

Akiko Takagi

Abstract

This paper conducts a comprehensive review of published articles about the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)* and the *Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Language (J-POSTL).* The purpose of this review is to promote further implementation of the portfolios and to determine implications for future research in Japan. This paper begins with the overview of the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL, followed by a discussion of tendencies and characteristics of research purposes (research questions) and a summary of previous research on the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL. Finally, implications from the review for future research are discussed.

Keywords

1. Introduction

In 2007 the Council of Europe developed the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)* (Newby et al., 2007) based on *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, European Language Portfolio, and European Profile for Language Teacher Education*.

Since August 2008, the Japan Association of College English Teachers Special Interest Group (JACET SIG) on English Education has adapted the EPOSTL into the Japanese context and completed the *Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (J-POSTL)* in March 2014 (JACET SIG on English Education, 2014). Considering implementation of the portfolio both in pre-service and in-service teacher education, the J-POSTL consists of three versions: the J-POSTL (Full Version: For English Teacher Education), the J-POSTL (For Pre-service English Teacher Education), and the J-POSTL (For In-service English Teacher Education).

Since the development of the portfolios, the EPOSTL has been used in Europe for about ten years, and the J-POSTL has been used for about five years. Moreover, theoretical articles, practical reports, practitioner and empirical research articles on the benefits and implementation of the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL have been published.

However, the research findings on the portfolio have yet to be accumulated in a great number because there are not many publications of practitioner and empirical research. Since the J-POSTL was developed only a decade ago, its use in practice and research should be encouraged more.

This paper conducts a comprehensive review of practitioner and empirical research articles on the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL. The purpose of this review is to reveal the characteristics of previous research to promote further implementation of the portfolios and determine implications for future research in Japan. This study does not refer to the details of each research study because of its limited space, but it will introduce some concrete examples from papers, and also present the table summary of reviewed articles in the appendixes for reference.

2. Overview of the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL

2.1 Overview of the EPOSTL

The EPOSTL is a document for pre-service teachers of languages undergoing initial teacher education in a European context (Newby, 2007). It encourages student teachers to reflect on their didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach a language, as well as help them to assess their didactic competences. In addition, it enables them to record their experiences during their teacher education and monitor their progress.

The five main aims of the EPOSTL are to (1) encourage student teachers to reflect on the competences a teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge that feeds these competences; (2) help prepare student teachers for their future profession in a variety of teaching contexts; (3) promote discussion between student teachers and their peers and between them and their teacher educators and mentors; (4) facilitate self-assessment of student teachers' developing competences; and (5) provide an instrument that helps chart progress.

The EPOSTL consists of three main sections, a personal statement (PS), a self-assessment section (SA), and a dossier (D). The EPOSTL also includes a glossary of terms, an index, and a user's guide. The core of the EPOSTL is SA, consisting of 195 self-assessment descriptors (SAD), which are grouped into seven categories: Context, Methodology, Resources, Lesson Planning, Conducting a Lesson, Independent Learning, and Assessment of Learning. Each descriptor is accompanied by a bar, which can be colored according to student teachers' assessment at different stages of their teacher education. The descriptors act as a stimulus for students when they discuss important aspects of teacher education with their peers, teacher educators, and mentors.

2.2 Overview of the J-POSTL

The J-POSTL is a didactic portfolio, which adapted the EPOSTL to the Japanese

educational context. The adaption took into consideration the rational and principles behind the EPOSTL, such as action-oriented learning and life-long learning. The J-POSTL consists of three versions: the J-POSTL Full Version for English Teacher Education, the J-POSTL for Pre-service English Teacher Education, and the J-POSTL for In-service English Teacher Education. These three versions enable pre-service and in-service teachers for pre-service teacher education, initial teacher education, school-based teacher training, and individual professional development in a variety of contexts.

The five main aims of the J-POSTL are to (1) clarify didactic competencies required for English teachers; (2) encourage student teachers to reflect on the competencies a teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge that feeds these competences; (3) promote discussion and collaboration between student teachers and their peers, teacher educators, and mentors; (4) facilitate self-assessment ability of student teachers' didactic competence; (5) provide an instrument that helps chart progress.

The J-POSTL consists of three parts: a personal statement (PS), a self-assessment section (SA), and a dossier (D). It also includes a glossary of terms and a user's guide as the EPOSTL does, but does not have an index.

What is different in the J-POSTL from ESPOTL is SA. JACET SIG on English Education has conducted a series of surveys since 2010 (See Hisamura, 2014 for details regarding the survey and the process of developing the J-POSTL) and grouped SAD into five criteria: novice, apprentice, practitioner, and senior practitioner, and open for those which do not fit into any of the other categories. For all three versions of the J-POSTL, the total number of SAD is 180. The J-POSTL (For Pre-service English Teacher Education) consists of 65 SAD for pre-service teachers and 31 SAD for novice teachers. The J-POSTL (For In-service English Teacher Education) consists of 30 SAD for apprentice teachers (2–3 years), 20 SAD for practitioner (6–10 years), 9 SAD for senior practitioners (more than 10 years), and 25 SAD (open) regarding learning autonomy and intercultural competence, which do not fit into the other categories.

Like the EPOSTL, each descriptor is accompanied by a bar, which can be colored according to student teachers' assessment. However, the bar is not blank. Instead, student teachers were asked to assess their own achievement of each item on a one to five scale to compare their achievement and progress.

3.   Procedure for Choosing and Categorizing Articles on the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL

3.1 Collecting and Selecting Research Articles
To collect articles on the EPOSTL, a keyword search was conducted using

databases EBSCOhost, ERIC, Oxford Journals, Cambridge Journals, JSTOR, SAGE Premier, ScienceDirect, and Wiley Online Library. In addition, three articles were selected from official publications written by the EPOSTL authors (Newby, 2012; Newby, Fenner, & Jones, 2011). To collect articles on the J-POSTL, a keyword search was conducted using databases J-STAGE and CiNii Articles.

After I assessed all the articles, I extracted empirical and practitioner research articles in which research purposes or research questions are clearly mentioned. Empirical research means "the research in which practitioners focus on their own practice" and practitioner research means "the research in which researchers collect and analyze quantitative and/or qualitative data." The articles omitted were theoretical papers, papers in which research purposes or research questions were unclear and practical reports that explained how the author used the EPOSTL or the J-POSTL. As a result, the total number of the articles selected was 33 (19 articles on the EPOSTL and 14 articles on the J-POSTL). The participants in Jones 2011 and Jones 2012 were the same, so the number of study became 32.

3.2 Procedure of Categorizing Articles

For each article, I examined "research purposes (research questions)," "participants (pre- or in-service, school type, grade, and number)," "country (for the EPOSTL)," "length of research," "research methodology (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed)," and "the use of the EPOSTL (J-POSTL)." The use of the EPOSTL (J-POSTL) was categorized into "use in practice" and "use in data collection." When the study examined the EPOSTL (J-POSTL) use in practice, the sections (PS, SA, D) used were examined.

When the EPOSTL (J-POSTL) was used in practice, the use was divided into three kinds of occasions: "class (lecture, workshop, and tutorial)," "mock lesson," and "practicum." When the EPOSTL (J-POSTL) was used in data collection, the section(s) (PS, SA, and D) used were examined, and other methods used for the data collection such as interview and questionnaire were categorized into "others." When SA is used, categories and subcategories of SA, and the number of descriptors were examined. Research purposes (research questions) were summarized after extracting them from the articles. When both research purposes and research questions were contained in an article, only the research purposes were used for the summary.

4.   Research on the EPOSTL

4.1 Summary of Research Purposes (Research Questions)

Table 1 shows the summary of research purposes (research questions) in 18 articles regarding the EPOSTL. Research purposes of half of the articles (nine) were to grasp the participants' perceptions after using the EPOSTL for a certain period of time

(Bagarić, 2011; Cakir & Balcikanli, 2012; Cindrić, Andraka & Bilić-Štefan, 2015; Hoxha & Tafani, 2015; Mehlmauer-Larcher, 2012; Okumuş & Akalin, 2015; Seitova, 2017; Straková, 2016). Two of the nine articles aimed not only to grasp the participants' perceptions but also to show the effectiveness of the EPOSTL (Bagarić, 2011) or to investigate the potential of use of the EPOSTL as a reflection tool (Mehlmauer-Larcher, 2012). Hoxha and Tafani (2015) intended to obtain specific information about whether or not the EPOSTL was helpful during the teaching practicum. They also sought insights and suggestions about its usage in addition to understanding the participants' perceptions.

The only studies that focused on how the EPOSTL was used were Hoxha and Tafani (2015) and Kupetz and Ruhm (2012). Schauber (2015), which used the EPOSTL systematically in various stages in pre-service in EFL teacher education programs, aimed to examine where and how the EPOSTL mediates and supports dialogic reflection. On the other hand, Ivanova and Skara-Mincāne (2016) examined emerging professional identity and how reflective self-evaluation during teachers' practice conducted with the help of the EPOSTL facilitates the professional development of student teachers.

In the other six studies (Bergil & Sariçoban, 2017; Haggag, 2018; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Önal & Alagözlü, 2018; Straková, 2015; Yüksel, 2015), the EPOSTL was used not for practice but for data collection. For example, Bergil and Sariçoban (2017) investigated whether the EPOSTL reflects the self-efficacy level of EFL perspectives teachers and place as an awareness raising position in teacher education, while Haggag (2018) assessed the key teaching competencies of pre-service English language teachers during the teaching practice.

Table 1. Summary of research purposes (research questions) in articles about the EPOSTL

Author	Summary of research purposes (research questions)
Bagarić (2011)	To find out how the EPOSTL could be used as a springboard for the evaluation and development of a teacher education program
Bergil & Sariçoban (2017)	To investigate whether the EPOSTL reflects the self-efficacy level of EFL perspectives teachers and place as an awareness raising position in teacher education
Cakir & Balcikanli (2012)	To understand student teachers' and teacher trainers' perception of their experience with the EPOSTL
Cindrić, Andraka, & Bilić-Štefan (2015)	To obtain students' feedback on the use of the EPOSTL as a self-assessment and reflection tool
Haggag (2018)	To assess the key teaching competencies of pre-service English language teachers during the teaching practice

Hoxha & Tafani (2015)	1. To obtain the student teachers' general perceptions about the EPOSTL 2. To obtain specific information about whether or not the EPOSTL was helpful during the teaching practice and to obtain some insights and suggestions about its usage
Ivanova & Skara-Mincãne (2016)	To examine emerging professional identity and how reflective self-evaluation during teachers' practice done with the help of the EPOSTL facilitates professional development of student teachers
Jones (2011, 2012)	To understand perceptions of pre-service teachers towards the use of the EPOSTL in the bi-lateral teacher training program
Kupetz & Ruhm (2012)	To examine how pre-service teachers used the EPOSTL as a tool to reflect on their progress and to record and assess their achievements
Mehlmauer-Larcher (2012)	To investigate the potential of use of the EPOSTL as a reflection tool
Mirici & Hergüner (2015)	To investigate the contribution of EPOSTL-based self-assessment practices to student teachers' self-awareness and academic achievements in the English Language Teaching and the German Language Teaching departments
Okumuş & Akalin (2015)	To investigate the student teachers' views on using the EPOSTL in a methodology course
Önal & Alagözlü (2018)	To understand in-service language teachers' perceptions of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors
Schauber (2015)	To examine where and how the EPOSTL mediates and supports dialogic reflection in EFL teacher education program
Seitova (2017)	To find out how the EPOSTL promotes professional development of in-service teachers of English
Straková (2015)	To investigate the student teachers' perceptions of themselves as English language teachers based on the criteria of the EPOSTL at the end of their training
Straková (2016)	1. To investigate the beneficial effects of student teachers' reflection 2. To examine student teachers' perceptions of the EPOSTL as a reflection tool
Yüksel (2015)	Taking the EPOSTL as a framework, to investigate influences of pre-service teachers' language learning experiences, what they consider to be appealing aspects of teaching, and expectations from their education program

4.2 Characteristics of Studies

This section describes characteristics of articles on the EPOSTL in terms of participants and the country where the research was conducted, length of research, research methodology, and use of the EPOSTL in practice and data collection (see Appendix 1).

4.2.1 Participants and Country. Participants of sixteen studies were pre-service

teachers and those of two studies were in-service teachers. When we consider that the main target of the EPOSTL is pre-service teachers, this result is not surprising. With regard to school type, one study was of teachers in elementary school, and one was of teachers in elementary and junior high school in pre-service teacher education. In in-service education, one study was of elementary, junior high, and high school teachers. Other studies did not refer to school type. Three studies had less than ten participants; 14 studies had between 11 and 99 participants; and one study had 124 participants. Many of the participants were a cohort of a particular year in a pre-service teacher education program in university. The year of the participants in pre-service teacher education included first and second year (one study), third year (three studies), fourth year (four studies), third, fourth, and fifth year (one study), and unknown (seven studies). Cakir and Balcikanli (2012) included both pre-service teachers and four teacher educators.

Research was conducted in 11 countries: six in Turkey, two in Slovakia, two in Croatia, one in Albania, one in England, one in Egypt, one in Austria, one in Kazakhstan, one in Switzerland, one in Germany, and one in Latvia. Except for Turkey, the number of studies in each country was low.

4.2.2 Research Methodology. Research methodology consisted of seven qualitative, four quantitative, and seven mixed methods research.

4.2.3 Use of the EPOSTL. Fourteen studies used the EPOSTL in practice. Four studies used all three main sections (PS, SA, and D), seven used only SA, and two used SA and did not make it clear whether they used the other sections. This shows that more than 60 percent of the studies focused on the use of SA and few referred to the use of D. When I examined more closely the use of SA (see Appendix 3), I found that three studies used 195 SAD (all the descriptors); one study used 160 SAD in the categories "Methodology," "Lesson Planning," "Conducting a Lesson," "Classroom Management," and "Assessment of Learning"; one study used 144 SAD in the categories of "Methodology," "Resources," "Lesson Planning," "Conducting a Lesson," and "Assessment of Learning"; one study used 93 SAD; three used selected SAD; and in three studies it was unknown whether SAD were used. In short, most studies used a wide range of SAD without selecting numbers of SAD.

When the EPOSTL was used in pre-service teacher education, two studies were only in class, two were only in practicum, two were in class and mock lessons, three were in class and practicum, and one was in class, mock lesson, and practicum. The length of time of using the EPOSTL in one study was nine hours; one was three weeks; one was four weeks; two were one term; four were one year; two were one and a half years; two were for various lengths of time; and one was unknown. In summary, more than seventy percent of the studies used the EPOSTL for a relatively long time, i.e.,

more than one semester. The four studies that used the EPOSTL only for data collection used it just once.

Six studies used the EPOSTL as a tool for data collection. Five used SA, one used PS, and none used D. Moreover, four out of six studies used the EPOSTL for only data collection. Three out of the four studies used only SA in the EPOSTL and did not use other methods for data collection. These three studies converted SA into a Likert-scale questionnaire using 195 SA, and conducted quantitative data analysis. On the other hand, the studies, which used the EPOSTL for practice and whose research purposes were to investigate participants' perceptions and effectiveness of the EPOSTL, employed various data collection methods. More concretely, seven studies employed interviews, six used closed-ended questionnaires, and four used open-ended questionnaires. Other studies included the core didactic competencies scales, portfolio assessment rubrics, reflective essays, class observation reports, and group discussions. Eleven studies used more than two kinds of data collection methods and attempted to capture cases from different perspectives.

5. Research on the J-POSTL

5.1 Summary of Research Purposes (Research Questions)

Table 2 shows a summary of research purposes (research questions) in 14 articles regarding the J-POSTL. Nine out of the 14 articles used the J-POSTL for practice. The research purposes of four of the nine studies was to capture change and improvement of participants' didactic competencies and contents of reflection. Concretely, Kiyota (2015) aimed to grasp pre-service teachers' perceptions about improving their teaching skills, and Yoshizumi (2018) investigated how the student teachers' reflection changed by using the J-POSTL descriptors. In addition, Negishi (2018) aimed to capture pre-service teachers' change of teaching skills and the reasons behind the change, while Miura (2018) grasped change of pre-service teachers' learning. Relating to this, Kiyota (2016) investigated the effectiveness of a project to develop teachers' awareness of their didactic competencies through autonomous reflection using the J-POSTL. Kiyota pursued the process of in-service teachers' change in their practice and awareness qualitatively. Takagi (2015) and Yoshizumi (2018) investigated the types of reflection student teachers have engaged in using can-do descriptors in the J-POSTL. Yoneda (2015) and Yoneda (2016) put emphasis on the role of the J-POSTL as a data collection method and aimed to investigate effectiveness of teaching practicum in elementary school as well as to discover ways to improve the practicum.

The other five studies (Sugita, 2014; Sugita, 2017; Warabi, 2018; Yoneda & Ota, 2017; Yukawa, Shinto, Yamaoka, & Ota, 2014) used the J-POSTL as a tool for data collection. Sugita (2014, 2017) examined the effects of not the J-POSTL but training portfolios adopted to an English on the improvement of basic teaching ability. Yoneda

and Ota (2017) aimed to capture pre-service teachers' learning and awareness-raising as well as the reasons behind the awareness in teaching practicum in elementary school. Yukawa, Shinto, Yamaoka, and Ota (2014) aimed to understand the current didactic competences of apprentice teachers based on their self-assessment. Moreover, Warabi (2018) aimed to investigate how the teacher's instruction and students' evaluation transformed through the teaching of presentation and interaction, and to capture how students' output transformed through instruction and evaluation.

Table 2. Summary of research purposes (research question) in articles about the J-POSTL

Author	Summary of research purposes (research question)
Kiyota (2015)	1. To develop an efficient usage of the J-POSTL as a tool for enhancing pre-service teachers' reflective and language teaching skills 2. To grasp pre-service teachers' perceptions about improving their teaching skills
Kiyota (2016)	To investigate the effectiveness of a project to develop teachers' awareness of their didactic competences through autonomous reflection using the J-POSTL
Negishi (2017)	1. To investigate the relationship between reflection and growth of pre-service teachers 2. To capture pre-service teachers' change of teaching skills and the reasons behind the change
Miura (2018)	1. To understand the change of pre-service teachers' learning 2. To grasp pre-service teachers' growth and areas in which they need to improve
Sugita (2014)	To examine the effects of training portfolios adopted in an English teaching methodology course on the improvement of basic teaching ability
Sugita (2017)	1. To examine the extent to which an English teaching methodology course improved the student teachers' fundamental teaching skills using training portfolios 2. To explore the measures in the ELT methodology course that facilitates greater reflection and develops better skills
Takagi (2015)	1. To investigate the effectiveness of the J-POSTL as a tool for promoting reflection for pre-service teachers 2. To investigate the types of reflection student teachers engaged in using can-do descriptors in the J-POSTL
Warabi (2018)	1. To investigate how the teacher's instruction and students' evaluation transformed through the teaching of presentation and interaction 2. To capture how students' output transformed through instruction and evaluation
Yoneda (2015)	To investigate effectiveness of teaching practicum with ALT in an elementary school
Yoneda (2016)	1. To evaluate the effects of teaching practicum on teaching skills

	and knowledge. 2. To identify the skills and knowledge of English and English teaching that should be prioritized in pre-service education 3. To obtain implication for improving practicum
Yoneda (2017)	To capture pre-service teachers' learning and awareness-raising as well as the reasons behind the awareness teaching practicum in elementary school
Yoneda & Ota (2017)	1. To investigate the effects of an active-learning project and the English teaching ability of pre-service teachers 2. To obtain information to improve the project
Yoshizumi (2018)	1. To investigate what kind of reflection pre-service teachers perform using the J-POSTL self-assessment descriptors as a tool for reflection on their microteaching class. 2. To investigate how the student teachers' reflection has changed by using J-POSTL descriptors
Yukawa, Shinto, Yamaoka, & Ota (2014)	To grasp the current didactic competences of apprentice teachers based on their self-assessment

5.2 Characteristics of Studies

This section describes characteristics of studies on the J-POSTL in terms of participants and the country where the research was conducted, length of research, research methodology, and use of the J-POSTL in practice and data collection (see Appendix 2).

5.2.1 Participants. Participants of ten studies were pre-service teachers and those of four were in-service teachers. With regard to school type, one study had teachers in elementary school; one study had teachers in elementary and junior high school; and six studies had teachers in junior high and high school in pre-service teacher education. In in-service education, one study had junior high school teachers; one study had junior high and high school teachers; and two studies had high school teachers. As for the number of the participants, three studies had less than ten participants; 11 studies had between 10 and 76. Many of the participants were one cohort of a particular year in pre-service education program in university, but two studies included two cohorts of students in two consecutive years. The year of the participants in pre-service teacher education included first and third year (one study), second and fourth year (one study), third year (two studies), third and fourth year (three studies), and unknown (two studies).

5.2.2 Research Methodology. Research methodology consisted of five qualitative, two quantitative, and seven mixed methods research.

5.2.3 Use of the J-POSTL. Nine studies used the J-POSTL in practice. Three studies used all the main sections (PS, SA, and D); three used PS and SA; and three used only SA. The results revealed that few researchers investigated the use of D. When I looked at the use of SA (see Appendix 3) in detail, I found one study used 96 SAD (all the descriptors in an earlier version of the J-POSTL for pre-service teachers); one used 63 descriptors related to practicum in elementary school; one used 63 descriptors; one used 53 descriptors related to practicum in elementary school; one used 35 descriptors related to mock teaching; one used 34 descriptors in subcategories "Speaking," "Writing," "Learner Autonomy," and "Portfolios"; and one used six descriptors related to independent learning. Depending on the research purpose, the number of descriptors used was varied.

With regard to the use of J-POSTL in pre-service teacher education, three studies were only in class; two were only in practicum; one was in class and mock lessons; one was in class and practicum; and one was in class, mock lesson, and practicum. Concerning the length of using the J-POSTL, one study covered two days; one covered three months; six covered one year; one covered one and a half years; and one covered two years. More than seventy percent of the studies used the J-POSTL for a relatively long time. Two studies, which used J-POSTL only for data collection, used it just once.

Eleven studies used the J-POSTL as a tool for data collection. All these studies used SA, and none used PS nor D. Nine out of 11 studies converted SA into a five Likert-scale questionnaire and conducted quantitative data analysis. Five studies used the J-POSTL for only data collection. One used only the SA and did not use the other research methods, while four used other research methods in addition to SA. Seven out of nine studies that used the J-POSTL for practice also used the J-POSTL for data collection. Other data collection methods included open-ended questionnaires (five), closed-ended questionnaires (four), interviews (three), reflective reports (two), comments on practicum and the J-POSTL, syllabus, and handouts. In addition, 12 studies employed more than two kinds of data collection methods.

5.3 Summary about Research on the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL
When we consider the trend to study the purpose of research on both the ESPOTL and the J-POSTL, nine studies on the EPOSTL aimed to capture participants' perception of use of the EPOSTL. In contrast, none of the studies on the J-POSTL had this aim. This is probably because the effectiveness of the EPOSTL was already identified in the research on the EPOSTL, so Japanese researchers might have thought that they did not need to verify the effectiveness of the J-POSTL. Three studies on the EPOSTL focused on how the portfolio is used or how teacher educators support the enhanced use of it, but no research on the J-POSTL dealt with these issues. This indicates that further research is necessary to investigate how the J-POSTL should be used or how teacher educators facilitate the use of the portfolio. Another point that

deserves attention is that some research on the J-POSTL focused on the "change," such as change of contents of reflection, change of teaching, and improvement of didactic competences; this was not dealt with in research on the EPOSTL. Lastly, 12 studies (six studies each in the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL) used the portfolio as a tool for data collection without using it in practice. These studies are not directly related to the main five purposes of the J-POSTL, but we need to examine carefully what kind of purpose is appropriate to use the portfolio as a tool for data collection.

The main participants in the studies on the EPOSTL were pre-service teachers, and the portfolio was used in various situations for different lengths of time, so research results on the EPOSTL have some implications for use of the J-POSTL in practice and in research. However, there are few research studies in which participants were in-service teachers, so continued research on them in a Japanese context is necessary. Because SA is widely used, many studies clarify the effectiveness of this section, but few studies have dealt with the other two sections. Thus, more research is needed to investigate how the other two sections should be used in practice and research.

6. Implication and Future Prospects Based on the Article Review

Sections 4 and 5 outlined the trend of research purposes (research questions) and characteristics of studies based on published articles about the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL. To enhance further utilization of the J-POSTL in practice and research, I will address implications and problems that should be considered in future research.

First, research is needed to clarify how the J-POSTL could be used to enhance reflection and autonomy and improve didactic competencies and self-assessment ability of pre-service and in-service teachers. According to the trend of research purposes (research questions) of the EPOSTL, half of the studies aimed to capture the participants' perceptions about the use of the EPOSTL, while only two studies focused on concrete ways of using the EPOSTL. For the studies on the J-POSTL, five out of nine studies that used the J-POSTL in practice investigated change of contents of reflection or improvement of didactic competencies. The research on the EPOSTL that captured the participants' perceptions proved that the portfolio enhances reflection and autonomy. However, few researchers investigated the use and effectiveness of the portfolio, which contributes to the main purposes mentioned by the authors of the portfolio. One of the main purposes of the J-POSTL is "to promote discussion and collaboration between student teachers and their peers, teacher educators and mentors," but few researchers referred to this purpose. More research is needed on how teacher educators should support pre-service and in-service teachers in the use of the J-POSTL.

In Mehlmauer-Larcher (2012), the EPOSTL was used in three phases in teaching

practicum with the support of teacher educators. In the first phase, some SADs were selected for discussion among classmates before the practicum. Student teachers became aware of the underlying knowledge base and conceptual framework of a particular descriptor they learned about in class.　In the second phase, student teachers continued to work on relevant SADs and discussed their lesson plans in groups with their colleagues, mentors, and teacher educators. In the third phase, each student teacher chose a basic descriptor they were particularly interested in and studied relevant theory underlying their chosen descriptor. After the practicum, the descriptor served as a springboard for the reflective talks between each student teacher and the teacher educator in charge of the practicum. As this study suggests, collaboration between student teachers and their peers, teacher educators, and mentors will occur if SA is used as a discussion tool in some practicum phases. For other examples of collaborative reflection, see Schauber (2016) and Kiyota (2015).

Second, we should reconsider how to use SA in practice. Some studies on the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL used all of the SADs. Depending on the purpose of the study, the number and categories of SAD used should be varied, but we should keep in mind the original purpose of the portfolio as designed by its authors. Negishi (2017) conducted her study with two cohorts of pre-service teachers using the J-POSTL for three years (one and a half years for each cohort). After her experience, she mentioned that SA is "only a checklist, so we cannot deny that it is unreliable if each student conducts self-assessment (p.24)." However, Newby (2011) claims that SA should not be regarded as a checklist, but instead should be used to enhance discussion among student teachers, teacher educators, and mentors, as well as raise awareness about pre-service teachers' professional development. Negishi (2017) used 63 SADs, which might have been too many to encourage student teachers' reflection at a deeper level. This is why the author might have had an impression that SA is a checklist.

According to Newby (2011), SA has two functions: the reflection function and self-assessment function. He claims that it is not necessary to cover all of the descriptors during teacher education because teachers develop their competencies throughout their career. Taking this into consideration, he suggests selecting particular SAD in the section on "Speaking" in the category of "Methodology," for example, to promote collaborative deep reflection according to the phases of teacher education program. Moreover, JACET SIG on English education (n.d.) recommends which category(ies), section(s), or descriptor(s) should have more emphasis. In summary, selecting a certain number of SADs according to the purpose of using the J-POSTL will promote a deeper reflection on underlying theory and skills of a particular descriptor.

Here, I will discuss two examples in which SADs were selected according to the purpose of the study. Yoneda (2017) selected 53 SADs related to English teaching practicum in elementary school and used them from the second semester in the third

year to the end of practicum in the first semester of the fourth year. Because she used questionnaires in addition to selected SADs related to practicum, she was able to promote not only the student teachers' reflection, but also grasped the student teachers' learning and awareness and the process of learning in detail, and obtained implications to improve the program.

In the second example, Kiyota (2016) selected 34 descriptors in subcategories "Speaking," "Writing," "Learner Autonomy," and "Portfolios" for two in-service teachers. The objective of the research was to investigate the effectiveness of a project to develop teachers' awareness of their didactic competences through autonomous reflection using two types of portfolios: a language portfolio for students and a self-evaluation portfolio for teachers. These SADs were selected because one of the main focuses of this project was to improve students' productive skills (reading and writing). Choosing the appropriate SAD helps teachers focus on particular aspects of didactic competencies they wish to improve and enables them to reflect on their teaching methods at a deeper level.

Third, some studies about the J-POSTL quantified SAD on a scale of one to five and used the score as a data collection tool. When the results of self-assessment for SAD are analyzed quantitatively, the basis of the participants' self-assessment is unclear. In addition, the reasons for and basis of self-assessment vary among individuals, so interpretation can be limited based on the results of statistical analysis. Self-assessment arrows are not quantified in any way in the EPOSTL. The author of the EPOSTL points out that didactic competencies, unlike language competencies, are difficult to quantify (Newby, 2011).

Thus, in studies that focus on practice in the J-POSTL and in which quantitative data is drawn from self-assessments done with SAD, other methods such as interviews and reflective reports should be used to obtain evidence of self-assessment of a particular descriptor. For example, Bagarić (2011) used closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires and Yoshizumi (2018) did closed-ended questionnaires and reflective reports. Moreover, as can be shown in some research about the EPOSTL (e.g., Cakir & Balcikanli, 2012; Cindrić, I., Andraka, M., & Bilić-Štefan, 2015; Jones, 2011; Jones, 2012), it is not necessary to use SAD itself as data, depending on the research purpose such as grasping the change of content of reflection and trajectory of teachers' development.

Fourth, we need to promote the use of PS and S in practice as well as in research. Newby (2011) mentions that the EPOSTL is "the property of the student," and he did not check how the students actually assessed themselves in SA. However, he looked at the evidence that the student teachers provided for a particular assessment in their dossier or in their online reflective journal. Some studies I investigated in this study used PS or D, but few discussed how or whether they actually used these sections in practice.

In regards to how SA should be used in practice, my study showed that the use of SA tends to be focused on in practice and in research regarding the J-POSTL. However, the PS and D sections also play an important role in self-assessment; PS is an introduction to the portfolio and D serves as evidence of self-assessment. Kityota (2015) gives an example of how PS could be utilized. As an introductory activity in English teaching method class, student teachers were asked to write their opinions, derived from their own learning experiences, about the qualities of a good English teacher. Subsequently, they exchanged their opinions among the members of their groups. Based on the results of the discussion, students confirmed which qualities referred to the SAD.

Lastly, more research that focuses on personal transformation should be conducted. Many research studies on the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL investigated the perception or effectiveness of the portfolios of a whole group of participants. Teacher development is longitudinal, and its trajectory is different with each person. In addition, when individual teachers use the J-POSTL, their purpose and needs vary. If we accumulate and assess research that focuses on personal transformation, we could identify and clarify the various ways the J-POSTL could be used.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Characteristics of articles on the EPOSTL (U=Unknown, E=Elementary, J=Junior high school, H=High school, MM=Mixed methods, Quan=Quantitaive, Qual=Qualitative)

Authors	Participants				Country	Method	Use of the EPOSTL (Practice)							Use of the EPOSTL (Data Collection)		
	Pre- or In-service	Types of school	Number	Year			PS	SA	D	Class	Mock lesson	Practicum	Duration	PS	SA	Others
Bagarić (2011)	pre-service	U	25	U	Croatia	MM		✓		✓		✓	1 and a half year		✓	questionnaire (closed-ended/open-ended)
Bergil & Sarıçoban (2017)	in-service	U	38	4	Turkey	Quan							N/A		✓	
Cakir & Balcikanli (2012)	pre-service	U	25	3	Turkey	Qual		✓		✓	✓		1term			interview
Cindrić, Andraka & Bilić-Štefan (2015)	pre-service	E	77	3·4·5	Croatia	MM	✓	✓	✓	✓			various			questionnare (closed-ended/open-ended)
Haggag (2018)	pre-service	U	30	4	Egypt	Quan	✓	✓				✓	1 year			core didactic competencies scale, portfolio assessment rubric
Hoxha & Tafani (2015)	pre-service	U	38	U	Albania	MM		✓		✓		✓	1 and a half year			questionnare (closed-ended/open-ended), interview
Ivanova & Skara-Mincāne (2016)	pre-service	U	66	U	Latviya	MM	U	✓	U			✓	various			questionnare (closed-ended), reflective essay
Jones (2011, 2012)	pre-service	E	17	U	England	Qual	✓	✓	✓			✓	4 weeks			interview
Kupetz & Ruhm (2012)	pre-service	U	3	U	Germany	Qual	✓	✓	✓			✓	1 year		✓	report

Study	Service	Level	N	Grade	Country	Method							Duration		Data collection
Mehlmauer-Larcher (2012)	pre-service	U	124	U	Austria	MM		✓		✓		✓	9 hours	✓	questionnaire(closed-ended), reflective talk, interview
Mirici & Hergüner (2015)	pre-service	U	60	3	Turkey	MM							N/A		interview
Okumuş & Akalin (2015)	pre-service	U	8	3	Turkey	Qual		✓	✓	✓		1 term	✓		interview
Önal & Alagözlü (2018)	in-service	E/J/H	75	N/A	Turkey	Quan							N/A		✓
Schauber (2015)	pre-service	U	40	1・2	Switzerland	Qual		✓	✓	✓		✓	1 year	✓	class observation, class observation report
Seitova (2017)	in-service	U	7	N/A	Kazakhstan	Qual	U	✓	✓	✓	U		1 year		interview
Straková (2015)	pre-service	E/J	37	4	Slovakia	Qual							N/A		✓
Straková (2016)	pre-service	U	36	U	Slovakia	MM	✓	✓	✓	✓		3 weeks	✓		questionnaire(closed-ended), group discussion
Yüksel (2015)	pre-service	U	26	4	Turkey	Qual							N/A	✓	interview

Appendix 2. Characteristics of articles on the J-POSTL (U=Unknown, E=Elementary, J=Junior high school, H=High school, MM=Mixed methods, Quan=Quantitaive, Qual=Qualitative)

Authors	Participants				Method	Use of the J-POSTL (Practice)							Use of the J-POSTL (Data Collection)	
	Pre- or In-service	Kinds of school	Number	Year		PS	SA	D	Class	Mock lesson	Practicum	Duration	SA	Others
Kiyota (2015)	pre-service	J/H	38	U	Qual	✓	✓	✓	✓			2 days		class observation, while-and post-questionnaire (open-ended), interview
Kiyota (2016)	in-service	H	2	U	Qual	✓	✓			N/A		1 year	✓	interview
Negishi (2017)	pre-service	J/H	13	3~4	Qual	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 and a half year×2	✓	comments on practicum and J-POSTL
Miura (2018)	in-service	H	1	N/A	Qual		✓			N/A		1 year		interview, syllabus, handouts
Sugita (2014)	pre-service	J/H	18	2・3	MM							N/A	✓	report
Sugita (2017)	pre-service	J/H	41	3	Quan							N/A	✓	
Takagi (2015)	pre-service	J/H	76	3	Qual	✓	✓		✓			1 year	✓	reflective report
Warabi (2018)	in-service	J	1	N/A	MM							2 years	✓	journal, students' manuscript, performance tests
Yoneda (2015)	pre-service	E	10	4	MM		✓				✓	3months	✓	questionnaire (open-ended)
Yoneda (2016)	pre-service	E	12	3~4	MM	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	1 year	✓	questionnaire (closed-ended/open-ended)
Yoneda (2017)	pre-service	E	10	3~4	MM	✓	✓	✓			✓	1 year	✓	questionnaire (closed-ended/open-ended)
Yoneda & Ota (2017)	pre-service	E/J	23	2・4	MM							N/A	✓	comments on rational of self-assessment section in J-POSTL, questionnaire (open-ended), feedback from teachers in school who taught pre-service teachers

	pre-service / in-service	J/H	36 / 41	3·4 / N/A	MM / Quan					1 year / N/A		questionnaire (closed-ended), reflective report
Yoshizumi (2018)	pre-service	J/H	36	3·4	MM	✔		✔	✔	1 year	✔	questionnaire (closed-ended), reflective report
Yukawa, Shinto, Yamaoka, & Ota (2014)	in-service	J/H	41	N/A	Quan		✔			N/A	✔	questionnaire (closed-ended), reflective report

Appendix 3. Categories and subcategories of Self-Assessment section, and numbers of descriptors in the EPOSTL and the J-POSTL used for practice

Categories and subcategories of Self-Assessment section, and numbers of descriptors used	Authors
195 descriptors	Cindrić, Andraka, & Bilić-Štefan (2015), Hoxha & Tafani (2015), Jones (2011, 2012)
160 descriptors in "Methodology", "Lesson Planning", "Conducting a Lesson", "Classroom Management" and "Assessment of Learning"	Haggag (2018)
144 descriptors in "Methodology", "Resources", "Lesson Planning", "Conducting a Lesson", and "Assessment of Learning"	Bagarić (2011)
96 descriptors (old version of J-POSTL)	Takagi (2015)
93 descriptors	Kupetz & Ruhm (2012)
63 descriptors related to English teaching practicum in elementary school	Yoneda (2015), Yoneda (2016)
63 descriptors	Negishi (2017)
53 descriptors related to English teaching practicum in elementary school	Yoneda (2017), Yoneda & Ota (2017)
35 descriptors related to mock teaching	Yoshizumi(2018)
34 descriptors in subcategories "Speaking", "Writing", "Learner Autonomy", and "Portfolios"	Kiyota (2016)
16 descriptors selected from Methodology category	Yukawa, Shinto, Yamaoka, & Ota (2014)
16 descriptors related to fundamental English teaching skills	Sugita (2014), Sugita (2016)
6 descriptors related to independent learning	Miura (2018)
descriptors related to teaching plan	Kiyota (2015)
selected descriptors	Cakir & Balcikanli (2012), Mehlmauer-Larcher (2012), Schauber (2015)
unknown	Ivanova & Skara-Mincāne (2016), Okumuş & Akalin (2015), Seitova (2017), Straková (2016)

【Research Note】
Japanese Portfolio for Elementary English Educators: Specifying Self-assessment Descriptors for Student Teachers

Takane Yamaguchi, Eri Osada, Ken Hisamura, and Gaby Benthien

Abstract

This paper discusses the results of a questionnaire conducted at the third stage of developing the *Japanese Portfolio for Elementary English Educators*. The questionnaire was distributed to university faculty in charge of elementary and secondary English language education courses in Japan. During the first stage, comments and opinions on the original 180 *J-POSTL* self-assessment descriptors made by teachers who had taught at elementary schools were collected, and consequently 167 self-assessment descriptors were developed as part of the second stage. The aim of the third stage is to identify appropriate self-assessment descriptors for elementary school English teachers. Utilizing mainly questionnaire responses from participants active in elementary English education (*n*=46) in order to identify such descriptors for elementary school language educators, 93 descriptors were found to be suitable for long-term portfolio usage. Furthermore, findings suggest that university faculty involved in secondary language education do not appear to be very interested in elementary school English education. In addition, attitudes toward elementary school English education point to being different depending on teaching experience at elementary schools. Finally, challenges on the long-term implementation and usage of the portfolio and the new English teaching courses for the elementary school teacher license are discussed.

1. Backgrounds to the Study

1.1 The Development of the "Portfolio for Elementary School Teachers of English"
1.1.1 Background. The *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages*, or *EPOSTL* (Newby et al., 2007), is a reflection tool targeted at language teachers in elementary as well as secondary education. In the *EPOSTL*, core competences of language teachers in elementary and secondary education are not distinguished as plurilingual and pluricultural education has become common. In addition to the EPOSTL, the *European portfolio for pre-primary educators: The plurilingual and intercultural dimension* (*PEPELINO* in French) was developed for pre-primary

educators and other people working in this area by Goullier, Carré-Karlinger, Orlova, & Roussi (2015).

The Japanese version of the *Portfolio for student teachers of languages* (*J-POSTL*) based on the *EPOSTL*, was developed in 2014 by the JACET SIG on English Language Education. The *J-POSTL* was adapted to suit the Japanese educational context, and consequently promoted as a reflection tool for pre-service and in-service language teachers in secondary schools. Initially, it was not intended for usage by elementary school (ES) teachers, as unlike in many European countries, foreign language education in Japanese elementary schools is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, the *J-POSTL* has also been used for ES teacher training and development. Osaki (2016) reported that many of the ES English teachers' competences mentioned in previous documents match the *J-POSTL* self-assessment descriptors (SADs).

However, research also indicates that the *J-POSTL* in its present form is not an ideal reflection tool for ES language educators. For example, Yoneda (2015, 2016), investigated the effectiveness of the *J-POSTL*'s use in teaching practice in elementary schools, and concluded that if the *J-POSTL* were to be used for ES language educators, the number and wording of the SADs would need to be modified.

English language education in elementary schools is to be fully implemented as *foreign language activities* in Year 3 and Year 4, and as a proper subject in Year 5 and Year 6 from the 2020 academic year. Thus, the education and training of pre-service and in-service teachers is of major importance to achieve the aims of *the English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization* (MEXT, 2013), including linguistic competence for all Japanese citizens and the smooth transition between elementary and secondary education. While the *J-POSTL* SADs were developed for secondary school teachers, it seems that these descriptors, albeit modified to suit the ES language environment, would also be useful for ES English teachers. Therefore, a potential usage evaluation of existing *J-POSTL* SADs, and the addition of descriptors suitable to the Japanese elementary education environment, will make it possible to specify core-competences of ES teachers of English. Furthermore, the development of such a portfolio is expected to support the establishment of consistent and systematic English education in primary and secondary education in Japan. With this in mind, a project for the development of a *Japanese Portfolio for Elementary English Educators*, or *J-POSTL Elementary* was initiated in 2016.

1.1.2 Development stages of the *J-POSTL Elementary*. The project to develop *J-POSTL Elementary* is being carried out in five stages as follows:

Stage 1: Collection of comments and opinions on 180 *J-POSTL* SADs made by teachers who have taught at elementary schools, obtained during five interview sessions and 10 emails. Ninety people participated in the interviews (June 2016 to

January 2017).

Stage 2: Two advisory conferences with seven invited members which resulted in the creation of a draft consisting of 167 SADs for ES EFL instructors (May 13 and July 8, 2017).

Stage 3: Distribution of the first nation-wide questionnaire on the 167 SADs developed in Stage 2 among university faculty in charge of EFL training courses to actualize a preliminary version of the SADs for student teachers (January to August 2018).

Stage 4: Distribution of the second nation-wide questionnaire among in-service ES teachers to categorize SADs in terms of a competency matrix (novice, apprentice, practitioner, and expert) (October to December 2018).

Stage 5: Distribution of the preliminary *J-POSTL elementary* version among pre-service teachers enrolled in courses at seven universities to specify SADs or to eliminate problems in wording etc. Commencement of a long-term study focusing on the usage of the preliminary version among students in teacher training courses at seven universities to specify SADs for student and novice teachers (September 2018 to March 2020).

While this paper focuses on the results obtained in Stage 3, the selection process for SADs used in the preliminary version during Stage 2 is also discussed. How the SADs were contextualized at Stage 2 in relation to the Course of Study (COS) and the Japanese primary school setting is addressed in the next section.

1.2 A SAD Draft of *J-POSTL Elementary*

1.2.1 Policy. During the first stage, 90 ES teachers were invited to offer comments and opinions about the 180 SADs used in the original *J-POSTL*. These responses to the SADs indicate that in spite of a foreign language not being formally designated as a subject, many of the respondents are actively developing an extensive knowledge of EFL teaching at elementary schools. In order to expand upon these comments, six educators from this group comprising four in-service ES classroom teachers, two assistant EFL instructors and one specialist ES English researcher were invited to participate in a round-table conference with eight members of the JACET SIG on English Language Education. In the end, it was required to hold the conference on two occasions. The initial comments and opinions obtained were carefully sorted out and edited in relation to the new COS, and after 15 hours of discussion, a draft for ES SADs was produced.

The following guidelines were used to produce the draft.

The *J-POSTL elementary* should:
■ be based on the 180 *J-POSTL* SADs;
■ aim to contribute to foreign language teaching at ES;

- take into account both "foreign language activity" and "foreign language teaching" at elementary schools;
- ensure that core-competences required of EFL teachers at elementary schools are transparent;
- encourage users to reflect on didactic competences and basic knowledge and skills;
- promote discussion between users and between users and mentors;
- help users enhance core-competences and self-assessment skills related to teaching;
- be an instrument which helps chart progress;
- be consistent with the latest COS.

1.2.2 Contextualizing *J-POSTL* SADs into elementary education. Based on the above-mentioned guidelines, *J-POSTL* SADs were carefully discussed descriptor by descriptor. The outcome of this discussion is as follows:

- 19 descriptors were adopted without any modification.
- 60 were adopted with minor wording changes for example the term "learner/learners" was replaced with "child/children", and other word changes in the Japanese version without changing the original meaning.
- 60 were adapted to ES EFL education.
- 41 were deleted.
- 28 were newly added.

This result indicates that approximately 80% of *J-POSTL* SADs were more or less applicable to the ES context. These SADs include almost all the descriptors on 'Culture', 'Projects' and 'Portfolios' which are labeled as upper levels of competency for EFL teachers at secondary schools (SS). While there may be differences in quality and content, these descriptors are recognized as core competences required by all educators.

On the other hand, more distinct characteristics of ES educators appear in the deleted, added or replaced descriptors. For example, nearly 75% of deleted SADs (30 descriptors) are in the category of "Methodology", particularly those concerning the four macro skills, grammar and vocabulary. While the *J-POSTL* descriptors for these skills are considered appropriate for A2-B1 level learners in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (*CEFR*), those of *J-POSTL Elementary* need to be made comparable to A1 or lower as indicated in the COS (Hisamura, 2018). Thus 30 descriptors needed to be replaced by 22 newly created SADs.

In addition, four SADs in the 'Homework' category of 'Independent learning' were also omitted and replaced by a new one. The committee unanimously agreed that it is not appropriate to give children foreign language related assignments as homework; instead, they should be encouraged to learn how to study on their own.

2. Purpose of Stage 3

The purpose of the survey at Stage 3 is to examine the appropriateness of the 167 SADs in the draft, and to select SADs for the preliminary version of *J-POSTL Elementary*. As of April 2019, Elementary school foreign language teaching methodology (two credits) and English for elementary school (one credit) have become compulsory in ES teacher training courses. However, it is unrealistic to expect that students with limited L2 methodology knowledge, skills, and teaching experience will be able to assess themselves on as many as 167 SADs. In fact, it is most likely that they will feel overwhelmed.

In order to produce the *J-POSTL,* 100 out of 195 SADs were first selected, then investigated over a period of two years among students of teacher training courses, and finally narrowed down to 65 SADs (JACET SIG on English Language Education, 2010, 2012, 2013). This project is using the same process.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A mailing list of universities which provide teacher's license for both elementary and secondary teacher education was compiled based on information available on the MEXT website (2016, 2017). The Stage 3 survey was subsequently sent out to all university faculty responsible for English teaching in teacher training programs.

3.2 Questionnaire

3.2.1 Structure. The questionnaire comprised two parts; personal data and a list of SADs. The participants were asked to rate each descriptor on a scale of one to three as follows:

- 3 (Yes or somewhat necessary)
- 2 (Not sure or Neither necessary nor unnecessary)
- 1 (Somewhat unnecessary or No)

Please refer to the appendix for the complete survey. While three options may seem insufficient for this kind of questionnaire, it was felt that responding to 167 SADs may be overwhelming or demanding for respondents.

3.2.2 Questionnaire distribution. Based on the list in Section 3.1, 240 and 320 questionnaires were sent to universities with ES and SS teacher training courses respectively on January 20, 2018. The response deadline was set for March 10, 2018.

3.2.3 Aggregation and analysis. Microsoft Excel 2010 and SPSS 25 were used to aggregate and analyze the data respectively. A Z-test was conducted to clarify the differences between the three options for each SAD among the responses.

4. Results and Perspectives on the Selection of Descriptors

4.1 Response Rates

Table 1 shows that the response rate from elementary school teacher educators (ESTEs) is nearly 20%, while the number of responses from the secondary-school teacher educators (SSTEs) is much lower than expected.

Table 1. Response rates

	Number of the questionnaires sent	Number of responses received	Response percentage
ESTEs	240	46	**19.1%**
SSTEs	320	17	**5.3%**
Total	560	63	**11.3%**

4.2 Respondents

4.2.1 Type of university. 75% of the respondents work for private universities (n=47) and the rest for national or public institutions (n=16). 87% of the 46 universities with elementary education teacher training courses also provide secondary education courses (n=40), while 11% provide pre-primary as well as elementary education courses (n=5).

4.2.2 Respondent's personal data. 94% of the respondents (n=59) work full-time. 89% specialize in English education (n=56), while 10% specialized in ES English education (n=6). Of the 46 respondents from universities with elementary education teacher courses, 30% have teaching experiences at elementary school (n=14). In contrast, 70% of all the respondents have taught English at junior- or senior- high school (n=44).

4.3 The SAD Draft for *J-POSTL Elementary*

4.3.1 The overall results. Considering the purpose of this survey, the number of descriptors is tabulated by the response rates of Option "3. Necessary". The bottom two rows of Table 2 are the aggregated results of the two different respondent groups.

Table 2. Number of SADs by response rate of option 3 (Overall)

	90% or more	80s%	70s%	60s%	50s%	40s%	30s%	20s%
Total	21	43	34	32	24	10	3	0
ESTEs	28	44	28	26	21	16	3	1
SSTEs	7	34	51	41	30	4	0	0

As can be seen in Table 1, 98 SADs were rated over 70%. in Table 1, suggesting that 58% of the draft SADS can be used as a baseline for creating a SAD preliminary version for student teachers. However, other factors including the respondent's personal data and the results gained from the analysis by category also need to be taken into consideration to finalize the preliminary version. Furthermore, the results are considerably different between ESTEs and SSTEs as shown in Table 2.

4.3.2 ESTE responses. Regarding teaching experience at elementary schools, 14 respondents among the 46 ESTEs have taught at elementary schools and 28 have not. Table 3 shows the number of SADs by response rate for Option 3 tabulated in two groups: experienced and non-experienced.

Table 3. Number of SADs by response rate of Option 3 (divided by teaching experience)

	90% or more	80s%	70s%	60s%	50s%	40s%	30s%	20s%	10s%
ESTEs with teaching experience (*n*=14)	**44**	**25**	33	20	17	12	**9**	**6**	**1**
ESTEs without teaching experience (*n*=28)	**23**	**45**	34	21	25	15	2	2	0

The difference between the two groups seems distinct in the two left columns of Table 3. The number of SADs in the columns is almost the same. However, looking carefully at the descriptors contained in them, 54 descriptors are found common to both, and 29 descriptors are in either of the two groups, with a total of 83. These SADs can possibly be included in the SAD preliminary version for student teachers. Further analysis is required for the responses to SAD categories and sub-categories.

4.3.3 Results of the SAD categories. The number before a slash in the bottom row indicates the number of descriptors which were chosen by respondents as to be necessary (Option 3), and the number after the slash that of the descriptors in a category.

Table 4. Response rate for Option 3 by category

Context	Methodology	Resources	Lesson Planning	Conducting a Lesson	Independent learning	Assessment of Learning
84.6%	72.5%	71.7%	82.3%	79.7%	52.8%	70.8%
13/18	20/47	3/11	16/22	14/24	0/23	6/22

A *Z*-Test was conducted and the seven categories were divided into three groups which are found significantly different at 5% level from each other:

Independent learning <Methodology, Resources, & Assessment of Learning,
< Context, Lesson Planning & Conducting a Lesson (*p*=0.05).

This result can be interpreted as exemplifying the attitudes of ESTEs towards ways of prioritizing teaching procedures. While this result must be considered, it cannot be given precedence as the number of SADs by category may become imbalanced: that is, descriptors in the "Independent Learning" category would not be included.

Similar problems arose in the sub-categories, for example, in the category "Methodology" in Table 5.

Table 5. Response rate of Option 3 in sub-category "Methodology"

Spoken interaction	Spoken presentation	Writing	Listening	Reading	Grammar	Vocabulary	Culture
91.7%	82.2%	76.8%	79.3%	60.3%	68.1%	64.8%	65.7%
6/6	4/6	2/6	2/4	3/10	0/2	2/5	1/8

Table 5 clearly shows that the number of SADs will become highly imbalanced from sub-category to sub-category if the only consideration for inclusion of SADs is response rates of Option 3. If this approach were to be taken, no descriptors would be included from "Grammar" and only one from "Culture". Therefore, when the SADs for the preliminary version of *J-POSTL Elementary* for student teachers are selected, it is necessary to adjust the number of descriptors in reference to results shown in Table 2 and Table 3, as well as other criteria.

5. Selection of SADs

5.1 Suitability

The results of this questionnaire indicate that academic staff involved in elementary and secondary education considers all 167 SADs to be applicable to language education at ES. More than half of the participants chose Option 3 "Necessary" for 92% of SADs, a total of 154 descriptors (see Table 2). Furthermore, even among the descriptors with scores of 50% or less in Option 3, there were none which the majority of the participants regarded as unnecessary.

Even responses for the least suitable descriptor, SAD #50 (*I can set different activities in order to develop reading strategies (e.g. skimming, scanning etc.) to gather necessary information from a text*.) were evenly divided between Option 1 "Unnecessary", Option 2 "Neutral" and Option 3 "Necessary". The responses chosen by elementary teacher educators indicate indecision in regard to this item, as the response

rate for Option 3 is 20 percent range, whereas that for Option 2 amount to 50 percent. Similar responses could be observed for SAD #161 (*I can assess a child's ability to understand and interpret a spoken text such as listening for gist, specific or detailed information, implication, etc.*)*,* with a response rate of 60% for Option 2. Responses by ES teachers with teaching experience at ES for Option 3 were 10 percent, while more than 60 percent of these respondents chose Option 2, as indicated in Table 3. In sum, the result of this survey reveals that none of the 167 SADs is regarded as inappropriate for core competences of ES English educators.

5.2 Selection Criteria

The survey results have provided four criteria for selecting the SADs to be used in Stage 5: *baseline, preferential selection, exceptions,* and *overall SAD balance*. The 98 SADS which obtained a necessity level of 70% or over in Table 2 were selected as baseline SADs, whereas the 83 SADs scoring 80% above in Table 3 by either experienced or non-experienced teachers comprised preferential selection SADs. SADs in the "Independent Learning" category were retained as exceptions, and SADs in categories such as "Grammar" and "Culture" were selected to keep the overall balance of the baseline SADs.

5.2.1 Breakdown of preferential selection SADs. With the baseline of Table 2 (Section 5.2) taken into consideration, the breakdown of SADs rated 80% and above for Option 3 in Table 3 is as shown in Table 6. Eighty-two SADs were ultimately selected to be included in the draft (see Appendix).

Table 6 Breakdown of SADs with a response rates of 80% as chosen by respondents with/without experience of teaching at elementary schools

Categories	SADs chosen by respondents with both experience and no experience at ES	SADs chosen by either respondents with experience or no experience at ES
Context	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15. 16	10, 12, 14, 18
Methodology	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 37, 38, 42, 43, 53, 56, 58	25, 26, 33, 39, 41
Resources	66, 67, 69	70
Lesson Planning	77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 87, 88, 91, 94, 95, 98	81, 83, 86, 90, 97
Conducting a Lesson	99, 100, 107, 108, 113, 114, 118, 119, 122	101, 102, 104, 105, 116, 120, 121
Independent Learning	None	None
Assessment of Learning	146, 153, 158, 163	149, 152, 154, 164, 166, 167

5.2.2 SADs in the category of "Independent Learning". In comparison to the other categories, SADs in the "Independent Learning" category rated lower in importance. This category consists of six sub-categories such as "Learner Autonomy," "Projects," and "Portfolios", etc. The SADs in this category cover most of the language activities which encourage "independent, interactive, and reflective learning," i.e., active learning, which is emphasized as a desirable means of improving classroom teaching in the COS. In the surveys leading up to the development of the *J-POSTL*, respondents' perception of this category was also significantly lower than in the other categories (Hisamura, 2016; Kurihara & Hisamura, 2017). One possible reason for the respondents to rate these SADs as unnecessary is a lack of familiarity with concepts such as "Learner Autonomy", "Projects", or "Portfolios". Furthermore, the L2 methodologies and theories behind these concepts, in addition to challenges related to using ICT resources and presentation tools effectively in the L2 classroom, may also have contributed to the low necessity rating of SADs in this category. However, considering the importance of this category, the researchers felt that some SADs should be selected for the long-term survey to specify SADs for novice and student teachers (Stage 5) as outlined in Section 1.1.2. Therefore, SAD #125 (*I can help children to reflect on their own learning processes and outcomes.*) and SAD #126 (*I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help children to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences.*) are included in the draft, even though their response rates for "Necessary" are in the 60 percent level. Since both SADs are in the sub-category of "Learner Autonomy", and clearly relate to the importance of reflecting on learning processes and outcomes, knowledge, and competences, they are regarded as basic SADs to contemplate the meaning of reflection (in L2 education) as well as teaching methods.

5.2.3 Overall SAD balance. In order to balance the overall SAD selection, it was decided to include the following SADs: #32 and #34 in "Writing", #51 in "Grammar", and #60 in "Culture", all from the methodology category. In addition, #9 in the sub-categories of "the Role of the Language Teacher," # 68 in "Resources", #96 in "Organization," #103 in "Using Lesson Plan" and #112 in "Interaction with Children" were also selected. The response rates of "Necessary" for these nine SADs are all around 75%.

5.2.4 Final Selection of SADs for long-term survey (Stage 5). The selection process described in Section 5.2.1 to 5.2.3 yielded the following SADs for inclusion in Stage 5, tabulated in Table 7 by category.

Table 7. SADs for inclusion in Stage 5

Categories	SAD
Context	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15. 16, 18
Methodology	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 51, 53, 56, 58, 60
Resources	66, 67, 69, 68, 70
Lesson planning	77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98
Conducting a lesson	99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122
Independent learning	125, 126
Assessment	146, 149, 152, 153, 154, 158, 163, 164, 166, 167

6. Challenges and Implications

6.1 SSTEs Questionnaire Responses

The results presented in Table 1 imply the possibility that university faculty in charge of secondary EFL teacher training courses are not particularly interested in the teaching of EFL at elementary school. However, while in the past there was a clear distinction between language classes at elementary school and secondary school, the new COS and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd *Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education* (MEXT, 2017, 2015) highlight the importance of a smooth transition between elementary school, junior high school and senior high school. Thus, EFL teacher educators cannot be indifferent to the smooth curricular and instructional transition between elementary and secondary schools. The response rate from faculty involved in secondary EFL education courses was only a little over five percent, and not suitable for statistical analysis. Nevertheless, even such a small number of responses are worth analyzing, as the respondents are all professionals in EFL teacher education.

The average of the response rate for Option 3 in the following three sub-categories is quite different between the responses from ESTEs and SSTEs. The averages of the six SADs in 'Identification of Learning Objectives' in the category "Lesson Planning" were 90% for ESTEs, while the average for SSTEs was 67.6%. A disparity of 30% was found among three of the six SADs in this sub-category. A similar result was observed for two SADs in the sub-categories "Culture" and "Error Analysis" respectively, both in the category of "Assessment". The response rates from SSTEs are in the 40 to 50 percent level compared to the 70 to 80 percent level from ESTEs.

These results seem to indicate that more emphasis is placed on identification of children's learning objectives, assessment of children's awareness of and interest in culture, and error analysis by ESTEs than SSTEs. Since "a foreign language (English)" will be a subject from 2020 in all Japanese elementary schools, it is necessary for

SSTEs to understand the trends and characteristics of elementary school foreign language education, and pass this knowledge onto pre-service teachers in their courses.

6.2 Differences between Responses by ESTEs with and without Teaching Experience at Elementary School

Different response rates among ESTEs with and without teaching experience at elementary school could be observed in a number of SADs. For example, SAD #90 (*I can take on board children's feedback and comments and incorporate this into future lessons.*). The response rate for Option 3 on this SAD was 100% from the ESTEs with teaching experience while the response of ESTEs without teaching experience was 75%. Although 75% is not very low, the ESTEs with teaching experience tend to regard interaction with children as a more essential element in teaching than those who have not taught in elementary schools. Similar tendencies were found in other SADs regarding interaction with children. For instance, SAD #110 (*I can cater for a range of learning styles.*) with teaching experience, 76.9%; without teaching experience 51.9%), SAD #121 (*I can encourage children to relate their knowledge of Japanese to English learning contents where and when this is helpful.*) with teaching experience, 92.3%; without teaching experience, 66.7%), SAD #149 (*I can identify strengths and areas for improvement in a child's L2 (English) performance.*) (with teaching experience, 92.3%, without teaching experience, 66.7%).

These SADs concern the assessment of individual children, on which ES teachers place much importance. University faculty involved in elementary foreign language education thus need to work together to reach a consensus about the importance of individual SADs to ensure that pre-service teachers will not be disadvantaged if taught by ESTEs who have never taught in elementary schools, and to avoid differences of opinions which can confuse pre-service teachers.

6.3 Key Issues for Stage 5

6.3.1 Survey methods and research cooperators. The Stage 5 long-term study commenced in September, 2018. In this study the 93 SADs shown in Table 7 are used for the purpose of examining their validity and utility and identifying SADs for ES pre-service teacher education. The cooperators of this study comprise seven university teachers who teach ES foreign language teaching methodology at their respective institutions in one-semester length courses or one-year courses. It is expected that by August 2021, the number of SADs for the pre-service teacher version of the portfolio will be reduced from 93 to about 60, while in Stage 4 the remaining 74 descriptors for the in-service teacher version will have been labeled in terms of competency matrix consisting of novice, apprentice, practitioner, and expert.

6.3.2 Incorporating foreign language teaching into the elementary education curriculum. This section addresses possible issues which may be raised by incorporating foreign language teaching specific classes into elementary education courses in Japanese universities.

Firstly, the inclusion of such classes may cause problems at the curricular level. Even at present, a high proportions of credits required to obtain a teacher's license are compulsory. The two new compulsory courses added for ES foreign language education (*Elementary school foreign language teaching methodology* and *English for Elementary School*) will thus increase the number of compulsory teacher license subjects for students. This might prevent students who are taking teacher license credits in addition to another specialization from taking elective classes in which they can acquire general knowledge. On the other hand, it must be questioned whether two English education classes are sufficient to prepare pre-service teachers for the teaching of a foreign language at elementary school. In subjects other than English a "teaching methodology" class is compulsory while "background knowledge about the subject" is usually an elective. Consequently, two compulsory classes for English teaching cannot be regarded as insufficient if compared with other ES subjects. In contrast, the EFL curriculum for secondary schools includes two year-round "teaching methodology" classes and about ten half-year "basic knowledge" classes which are required to gain a secondary school foreign language teacher's license, In other words, educating pre-service ES teachers within such a small number of compulsory classes poses a great challenge.

The second issue relates to teacher educators. If more than one teacher educator is in charge of a compulsory course, they must try to reach a consensus on course content. On the other hand, if there is only one educator, even course content stipulated by the core curriculum may be adjusted due to time constraints.

Finally, there are issues concerning pre-service teachers' interest in the English language and their English proficiency. For example, it is often the case that university students have only one 90-minute-long English class a week in their first and second year (Nishizaki, 2017). The Core Curriculum assumes that the English ability of students to conduct foreign language lessons can be developed sufficiently in the 90-minute semester-length English for elementary school class. In addition to English, however, basic knowledge about the English language (phonology, vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, orthography), basic knowledge about second language acquisition, children's literature (picture book, songs and poems), and cross-cultural understanding are also expected to be taught in this class. Therefore, it is highly likely that teacher educators will not be able to find enough time to enhance the English proficiency of their students.

Teachers at elementary schools in Japan are usually required to teach all subjects. However, during teaching practicum in fourth year, student teachers may only be able to conduct lessons in one or two subjects, often Japanese or arithmetic, but not English. In

fact, if student teachers are assigned to Year 1 or Year 2 classes, they may not even observe English classes. Even if they are assigned to classes in the upper years, they have only a few opportunities to teach English since the teaching practicum only lasts for four weeks.

Considering the issues outlined in this paper, English language teaching courses at university should be made as effective as possible by offering numerous opportunities for micro-teaching. The self-assessment descriptors of the *Japanese Portfolio for Elementary English Educators* are thus expected to fulfil an important role not only as a guideline for teacher educators, but also serve as a stimulus for pre-service as well as in-service ES teachers to attain required core competences, and to develop professional awareness among all parties involved in elementary school foreign language education.

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Appendix
Elementary EFL Educators Core Competences Questionnaire

1. Respondent's personal data

Please circle the appropriate number(s) for the following multiple choice questions.

(1) Affiliated university

  1. University type:

      1. National   2. Public (Local government-run) 3. Private

  2. Types of teacher certification obtainable at your university:

      1. Early childhood (Kindergarten) 2. Elementary school

      3. Junior high school   4. Senior high school

  3. The number of students you are currently teaching in teacher training course(s):

      1. Less than 10 2. 11-20   3. 21-30   4. 31-40

      5. 41-50   6. 51-70   7. 71-100   8. Over 101

(2) About yourself

  1. Working condition: 1. Full-time   2. Part-time

  2. Research field(s)

    1. English education/applied linguistics   2. (English) linguistics

    3. Anglosphere literature   4. Language/literature other than English

    5. Communication   6. Comparative literature   7. Area studies

    8. Intercultural education   9. Elementary education   10. Others

  3. Teaching experience at university (including part-time employment)

      1. Less than 5 years   2. 5-9 years   3. 10-19 years

      4. 20-29 years   5. 30-39 years   6. More than 40 years

  4. Teaching experience at elementary/secondary school

    4.1 Have you ever taught at a kindergarten?   1. Yes.   2. No

    4.2 Have you ever taught at an elementary school?   1. Yes.   2. No

    4.3 Have you ever taught at a secondary school?   1. Yes.   2. No

2. Japanese Portfolio for Elementary English Educators self-assessment descriptors (Preliminary version)

The following 167 descriptors are being developed for elementary EFL educators as a trial. The portfolio is aimed at encouraging elementary school teachers to reflect on didactic knowledge and skills, and help them assess their own didactic competences.

Question: Do you think it is necessary for student teachers to acquire the competence indicated in each descriptor by the completion of the teacher training program?

Please respond to each item using the following scale:

Yes or somewhat necessary	Not sure or Neither necessary nor unnecessary	Somewhat unnecessary or No
3	2	1

Ⅰ CONTEXT			
A. Curriculum			
1. I can understand the requirements set in the Course of Study.	3	2	1
2. I can design language courses and year-round teaching programs around the requirements of the Course of Study.	3	2	1
3. I can understand the content of Japanese documents other than the Course of Study (e.g. Core Curriculum, Curriculum Management).	3	2	1
B. Aims and Needs			
4. I can understand the value of learning English.	3	2	1
5. I can take into account the attainment of targets based on the Course of Study and children's needs.	3	2	1
6. I can take into account children's motivation to learn English.	3	2	1
7. I can take into account children's intellectual curiosity.	3	2	1
8. I can take into account children's sense of achievement.	3	2	1
C. The Role of the Language Teacher			
9. I can explain the value and benefits of learning English to children and parents.	3	2	1
10. I can take into account children's knowledge of Japanese, and make use of it when teaching English.	3	2	1
11. I can critically assess my teaching based on the understanding of children's cognitive, mental and social development.	3	2	1
12. I can critically assess my teaching based on child feedback and learning outcomes and adapt it accordingly.	3	2	1
13. I can accept feedback from my peers and mentors and build this into my teaching.	3	2	1
14. I can observe my peers and offer them constructive feedback.	3	2	1
15. I can identify specific pedagogical issues related to my children or my teaching while planning, teaching, and reflecting on classes.	3	2	1
16. I can gather information related to teaching and learning.	3	2	1
17. I can appreciate and make use of the value added to the classroom environment by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds.	3	2	1
D. Institutional Resources and Constraints			
18. I can assess how I might use the resources and educational equipment available in my school and adapt them to my teaching as required.	3	2	1
Ⅱ METHODOLOGY			
A. Speaking			
A-1 Spoken Interaction			
19. I can create a supportive atmosphere and provide specific situational English usage opportunities that invite children to actively take part in speaking activities.	3	2	1
20. I can evaluate and select meaningful interactional activities to encourage children to greet people they know or meet for the first time, and to respond to or decline instructions / requests from them.	3	2	1
21. I can evaluate and select meaningful interactional activities to encourage children to express their feelings and opinions about familiar topics.	3	2	1
22. I can evaluate and select various activities to help children make	3	2	1

effective use of non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures, etc.) and engage in interaction with others.			
23. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to help children develop interactive competences to initiate or respond to simple utterances.	3	2	1
24. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to help children develop skills to confirm and clarify utterances made by the other person.	3	2	1
A-2 Production			
25. I can evaluate and select various activities to raise child awareness of stress, rhythm and intonation.	3	2	1
26. I can evaluate and select a range of oral activities to encourage children to communicate using vocabulary they have learned or non-verbal communication without hesitation.	3	2	1
27. I can evaluate and select various activities to help children develop the ability to describe their everyday life or events by using simple phrases and expressions.	3	2	1
28. I can evaluate and select various activities to help children develop the ability to describe likes, interests, or strengths by using simple phrases and expressions.	3	2	1
29. I can evaluate and select various activities to help children develop the ability to describe their feelings or opinions about the area they live in, school life, friends and acquaintances, etc. by using simple phrases and expressions.	3	2	1
30. I can evaluate and select a variety of materials to stimulate speaking activities (visual aids, texts, authentic materials, etc.).	3	2	1
B. Writing / Written Interaction			
31. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to motivate children to copy or write letters, words, phrases and expressions.	3	2	1
32. I can evaluate and select activities which help children copy or write familiar phrases and expressions.	3	2	1
33. I can evaluate and select activities which help children write familiar words, phrases and expressions, paying attention to lower and upper case letters, word units, basic symbols, etc.	3	2	1
34. I can evaluate and select familiar sentences for copying to help children become aware of word order.	3	2	1
35. I can coordinate a variety of activities which help children exchange notes or letters about familiar topics by using learnt vocabulary and word order.	3	2	1
36. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to encourage children to develop their creative potential.	3	2	1
C. Listening			
37. I can select texts appropriate to children's interests.	3	2	1
38. I can encourage children to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text before listening.	3	2	1
39. I can structure activities in such a way that children are able to identify the main points of a text.	3	2	1
40. I can help children learn to identify the pronounced letters of the alphabet and cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary of a text.	3	2	1

D. Reading			
41. I can set activities to help children identify the letters of the alphabet and learn their proper pronunciation.	3	2	1
42. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of children.	3	2	1
43. I can use picture book storytelling strategies such as voice and actions to get children interested in the content and text.	3	2	1
44. I can encourage children to use their experiences and knowledge related to a topic when reading phrases or sentences.	3	2	1
45. I can encourage children to read familiar phrases and sentences on their own.	3	2	1
46. I can apply appropriate ways of reading a text in class (e.g. aloud, silently, in groups, etc.).	3	2	1
47. I can help children develop different strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text.	3	2	1
48. I can set developmental activities based on the contents and expressions I have taught.	3	2	1
49. I can recommend books and materials appropriate to the interests and language levels of the children.	3	2	1
50. I can set different activities in order to develop reading strategies (e.g. skimming, scanning etc.) to gather necessary information from a text.	3	2	1
E. Grammar			
51. I can recognize that grammar underpins communication, and can create a variety of language activities (for introducing a grammatical item) that will help children become aware of grammatical patterns through meaningful contexts.	3	2	1
52. I can provide various activities which help children become aware of English-specific rules such as word order and inflections.	3	2	1
F. Vocabulary			
53. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help children use the vocabulary they have become familiar with.	3	2	1
54. I can select and recommend appropriate dictionaries (e.g. English pictorial dictionaries, Japanese-English dictionaries) and help children learn how to use them.	3	2	1
55. I can help children learn vocabulary by paying attention to high / low frequency words or receptive / productive vocabulary.	3	2	1
56. I can introduce vocabulary which will enable the children to be able to express themselves appropriately.	3	2	1
57. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance children's awareness of register differences.	3	2	1
G. Culture			
58. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which awaken children's interest in and help them develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the target language culture.	3	2	1
59. I can evaluate and select activities (role plays, simulated situations etc.) which help children develop their socio-cultural competence.	3	2	1
60. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance the children's	3	2	1

cultural awareness.			
61. I can evaluate and select a variety of source materials and activities to make children aware of the interrelationship between culture and language.	3	2	1
62. I can create opportunities for children to explore various regions, people and cultures by using the ICT.	3	2	1
63. I can evaluate and select a variety of source materials and activities which make children aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural 'norms of behavior'.	3	2	1
64. I can evaluate and select a variety of source materials and activities which encourage children to reflect on the relationship with others and get aware of or understand different value systems.	3	2	1
65. I can evaluate and select a variety of source materials and activities to make children aware of stereotyped views and challenge these.	3	2	1
Ⅲ RESOURCES			
66. I can identify and evaluate a range of materials appropriate for the age, interests and the language level of my children.	3	2	1
67. I can select expressions and language activities from textbooks or source materials appropriate for my children.	3	2	1
68. I can locate and select materials appropriate for the needs of my children from a variety of sources, such as pictorial books, encyclopedia, illustrated books, literature, mass media and the Internet.	3	2	1
69. I can make use of ideas, lesson plans and materials included in teachers' handbooks and resource books.	3	2	1
70. I can design learning materials and activities appropriate for my children.	3	2	1
71. I can help children use the library and the Internet for information retrieval.	3	2	1
72. I can recommend dictionaries and other reference books useful for my children.	3	2	1
73. I can design ICT materials and activities appropriate for my children.	3	2	1
74. I can use and critically assess ICT learning programs and platforms.	3	2	1
75. I can select and use appropriate ICT materials and activities in the classroom which are in line with the children's interests and abilities.	3	2	1
76. I can help learners produce materials for their own use and for other children.	3	2	1
Ⅳ LESSON PLANNING			
A. Identification of Learning Objectives			
77. I can identify the Course of Study requirements and set learning aims and objectives suited to my children's needs and interests.	3	2	1
78. I can plan specific learning objectives for individual lessons and/or for a period of teaching.	3	2	1
79. I can set objectives which challenge children to reach their full potential.	3	2	1
80. I can set objectives which take into account the differing levels of ability and special educational needs of the children.	3	2	1
81. I can set objectives which encourage children to reflect on their learning.	3	2	1

82. I can set objectives for the four macro skills of listening, speaking (spoken interaction and production), reading and writing respectively, according to the focus of individual lessons and/or a period of teaching.	3	2	1
B. Lesson Content			
83. I can plan activities to ensure the interdependence of listening, spoken interaction and production, reading, and writing.	3	2	1
84. I can plan activities to emphasize the interdependence of language and culture.	3	2	1
85. I can plan activities which link grammar and vocabulary with communication.	3	2	1
86. I can accurately estimate the time needed for specific topics and activities and plan accordingly.	3	2	1
87. I can design activities to make the children aware of and build on their existing knowledge.	3	2	1
88. I can vary and balance activities to enhance and sustain the children's motivation and interest.	3	2	1
89. I can vary and balance activities in order to respond to individual children's learning styles.	3	2	1
90. I can take on board children's feedback and comments and incorporate this into future lessons.	3	2	1
91. I can structure lesson plans flexibly based on the year-round teaching plans.	3	2	1
92. I can involve children in lesson planning.	3	2	1
93. I can plan to teach elements of other subjects using the target language (cross-curricular teaching, CLIL, etc.).	3	2	1
C. Lesson Organization			
94. I can select from and design a variety of organizational form (teacher-centered, individual, pair, group work) as appropriate.	3	2	1
95. I can plan for child-to-child interaction.	3	2	1
96. I can plan for child presentations.	3	2	1
97. I can plan lessons taking into account where, when and how to use English, including metalanguage I may need in the classroom.	3	2	1
98. I can plan lessons and periods of teaching with other teachers and/or assistant language teachers.	3	2	1
Ⅴ CONDUCTING À LESSON			
A. Using Lesson Plans			
99. I can start a lesson in such a way that the children become interested in a topic.	3	2	1
100. I can be flexible when working from a lesson plan and respond to children's interests as the lesson progresses.	3	2	1
101. I can time and change classroom activities to reflect individual children's attention spans.	3	2	1
102. I can wrap up a lesson effectively and efficiently.	3	2	1
103. I can adjust my time schedule when unforeseen situations occur.	3	2	1
104. I can ensure smooth transitions between activities and tasks for individuals, groups and the whole class.	3	2	1
B. Content			

105. I can relate what I teach to children's experiences and knowledge, current issues, and the culture of those who speak the language.	3	2	1
106. I can present language content (new and previously encountered items of language, topics etc.) in ways which are appropriate for individuals and specific groups of children.	3	2	1
C. Interaction with Learners			
107. I can gain children's attention at the beginning of a lesson.	3	2	1
108. I can be responsive and react supportively to children's initiative and interaction.	3	2	1
109. I can encourage children's participation whenever possible.	3	2	1
110. I can cater for a range of learning styles.	3	2	1
111. I can help children develop appropriate learning strategies.	3	2	1
112. I can keep and maximize the attention of children during a lesson.	3	2	1
D. Classroom Management			
113. I can provide opportunities for and manage individual, partner, group and whole class work.	3	2	1
114. I can manage and use resources effectively (flashcards, charts, pictures, audio-visual aids, etc.).	3	2	1
115. I can take on different roles according to the needs of the children and requirements of the activity (resource person, mediator, supervisor etc.).	3	2	1
116. I can manage and use instructional media efficiently (OHP, ICT, video etc.).	3	2	1
117. I can supervise and assist children's use of different forms of ICT both in and outside the classroom.	3	2	1
E. Classroom Language			
118. I can conduct a lesson in English, but can make effective use of Japanese if necessary.	3	2	1
119. I can design activities which motivate children to use English.	3	2	1
120. I can use appropriate strategies if children have trouble understanding classroom English.	3	2	1
121. I can encourage children to relate their knowledge of Japanese to English learning contents where and when this is helpful.	3	2	1
122. I can explain learning content and methods in English using visual aids, gestures, demonstrations, etc.	3	2	1
Ⅵ **INDEPENDENT LEARNING**			
A. Learner Autonomy			
123. I can assist children in choosing tasks and activities according to their individual needs and interests.	3	2	1
124. I can guide and assist children in setting their own aims and objectives and in planning their own learning.	3	2	1
125. I can help children to reflect on their own learning processes and outcomes.	3	2	1
126. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help children to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences.	3	2	1
B. Homework			
127. I can set tasks outside of allocated classes to motivate learners to work independently.	3	2	1

C. Projects			
128. I can encourage children to reflect on their work (diaries, logs etc.).	3	2	1
129. I can plan and organize cross-curricular project work myself or in cooperation with other teachers.	3	2	1
130. I can plan and manage project work according to relevant aims and objectives.	3	2	1
131. I can assist the children in their choices during the various stages of project work.	3	2	1
132. I can help children use relevant presentation tools.	3	2	1
133. I can assess the process and outcome of project work in cooperation with children.	3	2	1
D. Portfolios			
134. I can set specific aims and objectives of portfolio work (for coursework, for continuous assessment etc.).	3	2	1
135. I can plan and structure portfolio work.	3	2	1
136. I can supervise and give constructive feedback on portfolio work.	3	2	1
137. I can assess portfolios in relation to valid and transparent criteria.	3	2	1
138. I can encourage self-and peer assessment of portfolio work.	3	2	1
E. Virtual Learning Environments			
139. I can guide learners how to use ICT resources appropriately (email, web sites, computer programs, etc.).	3	2	1
140. I can collect learning resources on the Internet for children and share them with other teachers.	3	2	1
141. I can set up and facilitate various learning environments (learning platforms, homepages, discussion forums, etc.).	3	2	1
F. Extra-curricular Activities			
142. I can set aims and objectives for extra-curricular activities to enhance and support language learning (exchanges and international cooperation programs, etc.).	3	2	1
143. I can recognize when and where the need for extra-curricular activities to enhance learning arises.	3	2	1
144. I can help to organize exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions.	3	2	1
145 I can evaluate the learning outcomes of extra-curricular activities including, exchanges and international cooperation programs.	3	2	1
Ⅶ ASSESSMENT			
A. Designing Assessment Tools			
146. I can evaluate and select valid assessment procedures (portfolios, self-/peer-assessment, etc.) appropriate to lesson aims and objectives.	3	2	1
147. I can design and use in-class activities to monitor and assess children's participation and performance.	3	2	1
148. I can negotiate with children how their learning and improvement should best be assessed.	3	2	1
B. Evaluation			
149. I can identify strengths and areas for improvement in a child's English performance.	3	2	1
150. I can present my assessment of a child's performance and progress in	3	2	1

the form of a descriptive evaluation, which is easy to understand for the child, parents and others.			
151. I can use reliable assessment procedures to chart and monitor a child's progress (reports, checklist, grades, etc.) and explain the result in an easy-to-understand manner.	3	2	1
152. I can use a valid grading system in my assessment of a child's performance.	3	2	1
153. I can assign grades using procedures which are reliable and transparent.	3	2	1
154. I can assess a child's ability to work independently and collaboratively.	3	2	1
155. I can use the process and results of assessment to inform my teaching and plan learning for individuals and groups (i.e. formative assessment).	3	2	1
C. Self- and Peer Assessment			
156. I can help children set personal targets and assess their own performance.	3	2	1
157. I can help children engage in peer assessment.	3	2	1
D. Language Performance			
158. I can assess a child's ability to speak and write.	3	2	1
159. I can assess a child's ability to engage in spoken interaction according to criteria such as content, appropriate language usage and conversational strategies.	3	2	1
160. I can assess a child's ability to engage in written interaction according to criteria such as content and appropriate language usage.	3	2	1
161. I can assess a child's ability to understand and interpret a spoken text such as listening for gist, specific or detailed information, implication, etc.	3	2	1
162. I can assess a child's ability to understand and interpret a written text such as reading for gist, specific or detailed information, etc.	3	2	1
E. Culture			
163. I can assess children's level of awareness in terms of being able to make comparisons between Japanese culture and other cultures.	3	2	1
164. I can assess the children's motivation, interest and passion towards learning about different cultures.	3	2	1
165. I can assess the child's ability to respond to and act appropriately in encounters with different cultures.	3	2	1
F. Error analysis			
166. I can analyze children's errors and provide constructive feedback to them.	3	2	1
167. I can deal with errors that occur in class in a way which does not disrupt the flow of the lesson or communicative activities.	3	2	1

--Some of the descriptors above are adopted from or modified those of the original document the *EPOSTL* (Newby et al. / Council of Europe, 2007).

【Research Note】

English Classroom Activities that Enhance Students' Intercultural Competence: Based on the New English Materials Developed to Align with the Revised Course of Study

Natsue Nakayama, Rika Wakamatsu, Junya Narita, and Kagari Tsuchiya

Abstract

For children living in a rapidly globalizing world, the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) will become increasingly important. According to Byram (1997), persons with ICC are capable of interacting with peers from other countries and cultures in a foreign language. They are able to negotiate a compatible mode of communication and act as mediators between people of different origins. Factors that seem to overlap with ICC are observable in the revised course of study for elementary school English classes announced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2017. In order to prepare for its full-scale implementation in 2020, MEXT has published new teaching materials for English classes that support the revisions. If the new curriculum includes factors that overlap with ICC, we can assume that factors that foster ICC development should also be included in the new teaching materials. However, we must keep in mind that the simple introduction of fragmental facts on a superficial level could, in the worst case, promote undesirable cultural stereotypes. In this paper, we propose three ICC activities developed from the new teaching materials. After assessing the student responses gathered after their participation in these practice lessons, we consider the pedagogical implications of delivering English lessons that can also enhance student ICC in Japanese elementary schools.

1. Background of the Study

The recent globalization trend is not only affecting the lives of adults but also those of children. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2016), the number of children in Japanese schools who need support learning the Japanese language has exceeded over 40,000, the largest number on record. This implies the existence of growing linguistic and cultural

diversity within Japanese classrooms despite regional differences in the degree of progression. We can assume that this trend will accelerate after the revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act passed by Japan's National Diet legislature on December 8, 2018. This act aims to augment the foreign labor force in Japan to cope with a depleting national workforce caused by Japan's aging society. Of the two newly established work visa statuses (Designated Skills 1 and 2), a holder of the latter would be allowed to have their visa indefinitely renewed and to be accompanied by his/her family members during the length of the work contract in Japan. With this legislation, we can easily assume that community diversity including in our educational institutions will continue to escalate. Considering these recent transformations throughout Japanese society, the development of children's intercultural communicative competence (ICC) seems likely to be even more important. According to Byram (1997), someone with ICC is able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. They are able to negotiate a mode of communication and act as mediators between people of different cultural origins (p.71). Furthermore, since children are exposed to "otherness" in their own environment, Byram (2008) suggests the need to "include in the aims of primary foreign-language teaching the development of intercultural competence" (IC; p.78). As for the characteristics of education entailed in the enhancement of students' intercultural citizenship, Byram (2008) stressed the importance of comparison. By "making the familiar strange and the strange familiar" through comparison, Byram (2008) explains that the critical perspective, such as "questioning that which is otherwise taken for granted" (p.188), would be fostered. Carton (2015) explains the significance of intercultural education as the "escape from self-centered perspectives by recognizing others, opening one's mind, reflecting on alternative ways of thinking, accepting the idea that others can be different, and understanding those differences as being right" (p.10). He posits "decentralization" as a way to overcome intercultural misunderstandings or gaps, explaining the concept as follows:

> Decentralizing is the process of being aware of other viewpoints and ways of thinking, as well as alternative ways of doing things that require one's initiative and effort. This is because it is natural to be cautious of strangers, foreigners, unfamiliar people, and others. Decentralization is to understand the positions of others and interact with them while overcoming one's anxiety. In this way, the cultures of others will no longer be considered a threat, rather a resource that enriches oneself. (Carton, 2015, p.10).

The discussions of Byram and Carton highlight the importance of "being able to shift perspectives away from one's own" in IC development. Through the experiences of encountering different perspectives, comparing them with one's own, shifting among

the different perspectives including one's own, and seeing the world through different eyes, students can be taught to develop the ability to view cultures more critically and in relative terms. Specifically, foreign language teaching has the potential to give learners rich experiences related to otherness, including different expressions and values from their own language and culture. Therefore, it stands to reason that nurturing ICC would be a very important objective. Byram (2008) states that "foreign language education has the potential to make major contribution if it offers learners experience of 'tertiary socialization', a concept invented to emphasize the ways in which learning a foreign language can take learners beyond focus on their own society, into experience of otherness, or other cultural beliefs, values and behaviors" (p.29). Byram (2008) adds that through this process, young people acquire ICC.

Focusing on English education in Japanese elementary schools, major reforms based on revisions to the new curriculum (MEXT, 2017) will be officially implemented in 2020. One of the major changes to be observed will be the very nature of the subject. Previously, English was taught in fifth and sixth grades in a class called Foreign Language Activities. However, after the revisions, English will become a compulsory subject in fifth and sixth grades called Foreign Languages, and the previous Foreign Language Activities class will continue to be taught in third and fourth grades. With these changes, the lesson hours of Foreign Languages for fifth and sixth graders will double from thirty-five to seventy credit hours per year. Along with the increase in teaching hours, the contents dealt with in the Foreign Languages will be more advanced. For example, in the former Foreign Language Activities course, the objectives will continue to be the promotion of interest in learning English among the students; therefore, the lessons focus on listening, speaking, and understanding foreign culture. The new Foreign Languages course will include instruction about writing the letters of the alphabet, grammar, and reading. At the same time, and seemingly influenced by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), factors that overlap with ICC are observable in the new course of study. One example is a new concept to be introduced with the revisions called a "way of seeing and thinking," described as "a core essential significance" in the study of foreign languages. The Course of Study manual (MEXT for Elementary School: Foreign Languages, 2017) defines this concept as a method "<u>to grasp foreign languages and the culture behind them by focusing on the relationship with society, the world, and others</u>, as well as to form, organize, and restructure information and one's ways of thinking depending on the purpose, scene, situation etc. to express and communicate in foreign languages (underlined by the author)." The aforementioned course of study manual (hereafter the manual), explains that the underlined part indicates "the importance of being considerate to the communication partner ... when communicating using a foreign language." In addition, the manual (2017) describes "the importance of using appropriate language elements; thinking, evaluating, and organizing information; and

forming and restructuring one's own ideas" in order to "express and communicate in foreign languages" (pp.11-12), which is emphasized above with a dashed line. To summarize, the perspective of intercultural understanding and the attitude of respect and consideration for others—as included in the newly introduced concept a "way of seeing and thinking"—can be interpreted as factors that would overlap with ICC. In addition, the manual (2017) explains that the aforementioned underlined segments should be emphasized in foreign language education in elementary schools during the introductory period. On the other hand, the manual does not explicitly describe how these concepts can be put into practice.

If the revised course of study includes elements that overlap with ICC, it is natural to assume that the new teaching materials created to align with the revised course of study, (e.g., "We Can! 1 & 2" and "Let's Try! 1 & 2"), will also include contents to enhance student ICC.

Between the announcement of the revised course of study and its official implementation, there is "a transition period." In order to enable a smooth transition to the new curriculum, MEXT (2017) expected the preliminary incremental implementation of the curriculum to start in 2018. Thus, in order to ensure a smooth transition, MEXT created revised teaching materials to support the new curriculum. These are called "We Can! 1 & 2" for fifth and sixth graders, and "Let's Try! 1 & 2" for third and fourth graders.

Nakayama (2017) analyzed the newly published teaching material "We Can! 1 & 2" to see what IC elements could be observed and compared with the results of her previous study (Nakayama & Kurihara, 2016) that analyzed the preceding teaching material, "Hi Friends! 1 & 2," that were written based on the former curriculum (MEXT, 2008). Results showed that the new teaching materials, "We Can! 1 & 2," include additional pages covering cultural topics and cultural diversity. Nakayama (2017) explains that one of the reasons for this increase was the new "Let's Watch and Think" section that accompanied a video. Although there are limits in language elements that can be used for elementary school teaching materials, with the help of the visuals such as the accompanying video, teachers have resources to introduce different cultural topics. As for limitations of the new teaching materials, Nakayama (2017) points out that although there are many pages that introduce cultural facts, there are relatively few pages that include additional activities to broaden comprehension of the newly introduced culture. Inda (2010) suggests a possible disservice to students when dealing with a wide range of cultures. "One should be careful not to simply introduce fragmental cultural facts because it might lead to stereotyping of each country's image" (p.173). Thus, the present study aims to propose three activities that enhance the ICC of students by using cultural topics found in the new teaching materials "We Can! 1 & 2" and "Let's Try! 1 & 2." Moreover, we discuss suggestions for planning and conducting these ICC activities.

2. Research Objectives

In this paper, we propose three intercultural activities based on topics of study included in the new English teaching materials designed for the curriculum transition period. One unique characteristic of these materials is that they are now accompanied by videos. Thus, two of the activities, explained in upcoming sections, are based on cultural topics approached in the videos. By making use of these videos for certain cultural topics, we propose an activity that promotes learner awareness of different ways to view the world. The activity proposed and explained in this paper is based on a cultural topic familiar to the students and taken directly from the teaching material. Through the proposed activity, we encourage the students to reflect critically on their instinctive views by creating an opportunity for them to compare their familiar perspectives with unfamiliar ones introduced through various visual materials and discussions with others. Finally, after assessing student responses gathered throughout these activities, we discuss points of consideration to better plan and conduct future intercultural activities.

3. IC Activities Utilizing Digital Teaching Materials

3.1 Background of the Practice

Culture was often one of the most popular topics in the previous elementary school English teaching materials, such as "Eigo-Note" and "Hi, Friends!1 & 2." These materials introduced culture mainly through illustrations and audio CDs. On the other hand, the recently introduced foreign language education materials for the transition period, "Let's Try! 1 & 2" and "We Can! 1 & 2," also include videos. As mentioned in the introduction, "Let's Watch and Think" is an activity incorporating related videos that has been introduced in the new curriculum material. Cultural topics covered include school lives, greetings, symbolic sites, and national costumes from around the world. One of the benefits of using digital teaching materials includes the ability to record demonstrable changes in the students' attitudes. For instance, students try to infer the contents or unknown words by making use of the increased visual information. Moreover, cultural topics in these materials, especially those familiar to the students, can be used as starting points to enhance students' IC development. With these benefits in mind, three IC activities that make use of "Let's Watch and Think" activities were planned. Finally, by reviewing the responses of the students, including their tweets and descriptions of the reflection cards collected after the class, suggestions can be made regarding the use of digital teaching materials for IC education.

3.2 The contents of the Practice and the Reactions of Students
3.2.1 Practice 1: "We Can! 1 Unit 3." What do you have on Monday?

  (1) The Practice. This practice was conducted in the fifth grade (27 students) utilizing the video about school life around the world (Table 1). It describes school settings in Russia, Egypt, the United States, Belgium, and Laos. Before watching, students reviewed words that are spoken in the video and had previously been introduced in classes, such as subject names, months of the year, and numbers. They were instructed to concentrate on these key words while watching the video that was played a total of three times, each time with different tasks for the students to focus upon. In the first viewing, the students' understanding of key words and basic comprehension were verified. In order to improve comprehension, the video was paused in the second viewing precisely at the places where the sentences containing key words began, after which the changes in student content comprehension levels were assessed through interaction. In the third viewing, students were told to concentrate on the cultural information offered in the videos, for example, the different layouts of each country's classrooms or the clothing worn by students.

  (2) Student Reactions. "Is the classroom in Egypt wide enough?" was a frequent student response when they saw ninety children studying together in one class. They also agreed that "it looks more like a cave than a classroom." Other responses included the following: "How many classes do they have?", "Ninety students is about the same number as our entire first grade level!", "I am surprised that there are so many children in one class."

      By comparing and relating the facts learned from the video with their own ideas and current situations, the student reactions demonstrated their attitudes toward understanding unfamiliar perspectives. As a developmental activity, based on our observations it seems possible to plan a project in which students can further explore the findings gained through this practice. For example, students can make presentations that explain the similarities and differences of school life worldwide compared to their own by incorporating the key English expressions that appeared in the videos.

Table 1. Excerpt from the script of Unit 3 of "We Can! 1"

… Let's look at Egypt. There are many children in each class. Sometimes, over 90 children study together in one classroom. In America, many children go to school by school bus. School starts in September. Japanese manga and animations are very popular…

3.2.2 Practice 2: "Let's Try! 2" Unit 2. Let's play cards.

  (1) The Practice. This lesson was conducted in the fourth-grade class (37 students) using a video about weather forecasts in different countries. It was also played three times. During the first viewing, students were asked to focus on the words or phrases

used to describe the weather for which they were already accustomed, after which their comprehension was verified. They were able to understand many weather-related words, including umbrella, strong wind, and gloves. In the second viewing, the weather characteristics in each country were recorded. In the final viewing, students were asked to concentrate on other information rather than the words and expressions previously used.

(2) Student Reactions. In this video, the United States national flag was being blown sideways by strong hurricane winds. One student said that the U.S. storm looked wilder than those in Japan. Afterward, I asked the native English-speaking assistant language teacher (ALT) from the United States to discuss a hurricane that struck his hometown. He told the students about his experience at the age of ten. By listening to the teacher's real story, students seemed to develop closer feelings about what they saw in the video. One asked the ALT how to say *taihu* (typhoon) in English. After the students realized that a *taihu* was a typhoon in English, they were intrigued by the similarity observed between the languages.

3.2.3 Suggestions to make better use of digital materials for IC activities. By assessing student responses during these two practices, I suggest the following three factors as points for consideration when utilizing digital teaching materials for IC education.

(1) Visuals should contain authentic cultural aspects. In order to broaden the understanding of vocabulary and content, videos were prepared and included among the materials published for the curriculum transition period. While many are short fictional monologues or dialogues that present the functions of language elements through actual use, the videos used in these practice lessons are examples of those that show authentic cultural aspects. In terms of IC education, these types of videos are more effective.

(2) Topics familiar to the students are easier to manage in class. If the cultural topics introduced through videos are familiar to the students, and students can envision the equivalent in their own culture (e.g., school life or food, etc.), it is easier for students to compare and relate. In turn, this leads to a better understanding of the phenomenon.

(3) Teachers should plan and conduct lessons with the specific intention of enhancing the intercultural competence of students. However, points 1 and 2 are not absolute conditions. A teacher's effort to introduce unfamiliar viewpoints while encouraging learners to associate the new culture with their own can lead to enrichment of the students' IC. In these occasions, it is important that the teacher creates an environment in which students can express their own ideas freely rather than merely be prompted to repeat stereotypes.

In addition to visual materials, we should also keep in mind the important role ALTs play in conducting IC activities. They offer authentic cultural experiences and sometimes bring unique and unfamiliar perspectives to a class. In our practices, students

could familiarize themselves and gain awareness of a different culture. This was possible not only because they had watched the video alongside the ALT but also because they had an opportunity to listen to the real stories and experiences of the ALT. Therefore, when planning and conducting IC lessons, ALT support can be an important enhancement.

4. Activities to Promote the Transition of Students' Perspectives

4.1 Background of the Practice

When we plan English classes featuring themes of cross-cultural understanding, teachers tend to rely on the presentation of cultural facts of foreign countries as their lesson objective. However, we should keep in mind that this might only result in an increase of discrete knowledge and information that has little or no relationship with the experiences and knowledge of the students' own culture and language. As stated by CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 136), the main objective of teaching a foreign language is refinement of knowledge and mastery of the native language, learning different cultures or languages can be an opportunity to reevaluate the culture and the language of one's own which have been taken for granted. By reconsidering learners' familiar perspectives through comparisons with those of different cultures, it is expected that learners can better understand their own culture and language and increase their attachment to them.

Our classroom practice was inspired by the digital teaching material of Unit 3 of "We Can! 1" that contains video and audio recordings that refer to Japanese animation and *manga* (comic) cartoons. The lesson aims to promote the transition of students' perspectives. In other words, the goal of this lesson is to facilitate students' awareness from familiar perspectives (the world as seen from Japan), and the unknown (Japan as seen by the world, or the acceptance of Japanese culture in the world) through the implementation of popular Japanese video games and animations *Pokémon*, which has been translated into many languages and beloved by children worldwide.

4.2 Details of the Practice

Our subjects for the practice lessons were fifth and sixth grade students from general public elementary schools in Japan; in other words, they were not selected from designated schools specializing in research about foreign language education. As a guest teacher, one author conducted the lesson in place of the homeroom teacher. The major language chosen for the class was English, but the teacher allowed the students to use their native Japanese in situations where deep thought and discussion were necessary. Each lesson consisted of four activities as follows:

(1) Students watched the video of the *Pokémon* 2018 World Championship held in the United States. They soon realized that Japanese-created *Pokémon* have been translated

into dozens of foreign languages and are beloved worldwide.

(2) Through quizzes about Japanese, English, and Chinese names of Pokémon characters, students understood, through direct experience, the efforts required to localize the character names rather than make literal translations.

(3) Students learned through listening activities that *Pokémon*'s most symbolic character, *Pikachu,* is pronounced similarly in many languages.

(4) Students discuss the reason and significance of point 3 in Japanese.

4.3 Results

Students' reactions, together with the outline of the practices and the teachers' instructions in English, will be explained in order of the four activities mentioned above:

 (1) In the videos shown to students at the beginning of the lesson, children and adult participants from various countries (including Japan, the Netherlands, and Ecuador, etc.) were involved with something unknown while the lively audience watched enthusiastically. The students first thought it was a sporting event such as soccer, but they eventually realized that it was the world championship of the *Pokémon* video game. After watching the video, the author explained to the students that *Pokémon* was a game originally created in Japan, and that it is beloved worldwide, as they witnessed in the video.

Examples of English use:

"Can you guess the event?" / "In which country was Pokémon originally created?"

(2) The author chose five typical Pokémon characters and conducted three quizzes to determine the Japanese, English, and Chinese equivalents of their names. The first quiz covered the entire class, and students answered freely with whatever came to mind. In the second and third quizzes, students were placed in groups and told to discuss several possible answers among their respective groups.

The first quiz was about a cat-shaped Pokémon named *Nyāsu* (ニャース). The author presented its English name, *Meowth*, and its Chinese name, *Miāo miāo* (喵喵) to students using texts and audios. Without revealing its appearance or Japanese name, students immediately understood that both names were related to the sound of a cat's cry and could immediately associate them with the Japanese name, *Nyāsu* (Figure 1).

Examples of English use:

"In English, it is called 'Meowth.' 'Meow' is a cry of cats." / "Can you guess what Pokémon character this is?"

The second question was about a Pokémon character whose form and name changes as it grows. In the actual game, it is called *Shinka* (Evolution). The author first explained a *shinka* case in Japanese about a lizard-type Pokémon with fire

characteristics that evolved in this order: *Hitokage* (ヒトカゲ) *to Rizādo* (リザード) *to Rizādon* (リザードン). Subsequently, the author explained an English case of a Pokémon *Charmander* evolving into a *Charmeleon* and then into a *Charizard*. After confirming that all three English names have "Char" at the beginning, the author had the students find a single *kanji* character common to the three Chinese names of the same Pokémon characters, with multiple answers allowed. Through group discussions, and after considering that this Pokémon had fire characteristics and that all the English names began with "Char", they derived several alternatives, such as "火 (fire)," "炭 (charcoal)," "炎 (flame)," "燃 (burn)," and others. The actual Chinese names were "小火龍 (small fire dragon)" evolving into a "火恐龍 (fire dinosaur)" and then a "噴火龍 (eruptive dragon)," with the common *kanji* character being "火 (fire)" (Figure 2). Examples of English use:

"In English, the same word "Char" appears in the names of these Pokémon." / "What kanji characters fits these boxes?"

Figure 1: Slide used in quiz 1

Figure 2: Slide used in quiz 2

The third quiz served as the main question that would connect with the final activity in point (4). The author first showed a picture of a rat-shaped Pokémon *Pikachū* (ピカチュウ), the symbolic character of this game, and let them think of its Chinese name. Students were unaware of the correct Chinese language notation, so the author provided a supplementary explanation in Japanese to help them determine what it would be if translated into a Chinese-like name using *kanji* (Chinese characters used in Japan) instead of merely guessing the correct answer. Students proposed various Chinese-like translations by combining *kanji*. Since each *kanji* conveys certain meaning, students created new names by considering the features of *Pikachū* (rat-shaped with electronic characteristics and a yellow body) by consulting their dictionaries and textbooks. Some of the students' ideas are shown in Figure 3. 電気 or 電 means "electricity," 黄 means "yellow," 稲妻 means "lightning," 光 means "light," and 鼠 means "rat or mouse." One student named it "主支" (supporting the master.) This idea was apparently derived from the fact that *Pikachū* and its master *Satoshi* have strong bonds between them.

Interestingly, one group considered its English name as well, e.g., *pikadon* (*pika* + *don* [onomatopoeia of thunder]), *pikasandar* (*pika* + *sandar* [misspelling of thunder]), and *sundarmus* (sundar [misspelling of thunder] + mus [misspelling of mouse]). This can be interpreted as the students' efforts to make full use of their English knowledge based on sounds.

Examples of English use:

"Can you guess the Chinese name of *Pikachū*? Let's think as a group and write your ideas."

(3) The students watched the actual trailers of the movie in Chinese and English, and the author had them pick the name of *Pikachū* in each language. When they isolated the sounds of *Píkăqiū* (皮卡丘) in Chinese and *Pikachu* in English, they were so thrilled that they shouted, "It said *Pikachu*!" At the end of the lesson, the author explained in Japanese that the name *Pikachū* had been chosen to sound similar to Japanese in all language versions.

Examples of English use:

"I will show you the English version of the *Pokémon* movie. Please listen carefully and try to catch the English name of *Pikachū*."
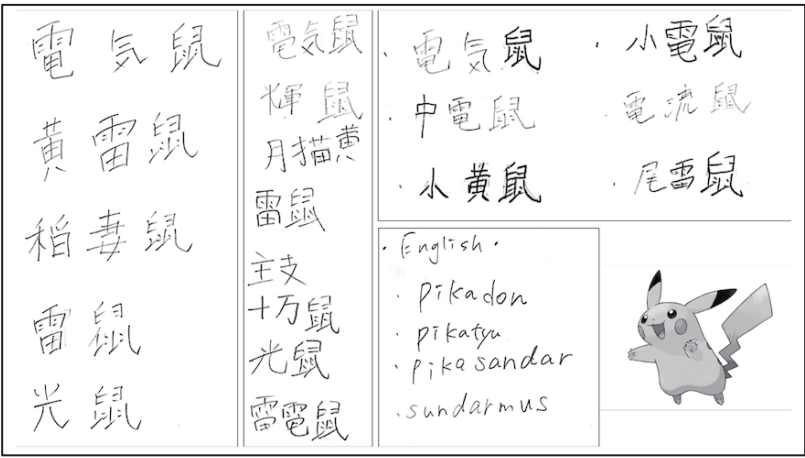

Figure 3: Chinese-like translations of *Pikachū* in the third question (excerpt)

(4) The author questioned students in Japanese, "Why do you think *Pikachū* has a very similar name in all languages?" and asked them to discuss in groups. After the discussion, students shared their findings and opinions in the class: "*Pikachū* is one of the main characters, so its name is special." "People all over the world can share the same name even in different languages," and "the game maker wants people worldwide to love this Japanese-created character." In fact, this was the intentional global strategy of the Nintendo Company who originally published the game, but the author did not explain this to the students in order to avoid emphasizing its commercial aspect. The

author did not provide an explicit explanation in order to concentrate on providing students with the experience of grasping familiar things from different perspectives.

Among the comments written by students after the lesson, some referred to the broad acceptance of *Pokémon* worldwide: "I found that *Pokémon* is loved all over the world," or "*Pikachū* had the same name even in different languages. I think it is because *Pikachū* is loved so much as a special character." Other comments showed awareness and interest in foreign languages that arose through comparisons of several languages: "I found that some foreign languages have pronunciation similar to Japanese, while others do not." "I had totally different impressions after seeing different words or letters used for the same character." "I now want to know the names of other Pokémon characters in foreign languages."

4.4 Considerations

As seen from the student responses, we can say that this practice appeared to have improved students' intercultural awareness by promoting their comprehension of unfamiliar perspectives even within their familiar culture, in this case *Pokémon*, and by shifting between these different perspectives. The lesson achieved much more than simply providing students with information about different cultures. It is important to incorporate these perspectives when planning English classes that include themes of cross-cultural understanding. As a teacher, we should promote students' interests in both foreign cultures and languages simultaneously rather than deliver classes only for the purpose of acquiring English language skills.

5. Activities to Broaden the Understanding of Others

5.1 Background

This practice lesson was proposed to promote the understanding of others by adding IC activities to the original lesson plans suggested in the teaching material "We Can! 2 Unit 5: My Summer Vacation." The understanding of others is one of the most important elements in the new course of study (MEXT, 2017a) for Foreign Language Activities (English classes for the third and fourth grade in the new curriculum), and Foreign Languages (the newly introduced English course for fifth and sixth grades). Further, this element is included in the goals of the two aforementioned subject areas and thus reflected in the teaching guides for the "Let's Try! 1 & 2" and "We Can! 1 & 2" teaching materials intended for use during the transitional period. In the new course of study manual (2017a) for Foreign Language Activities (third and fourth grades), the term "others" refers to friends and teachers (including ALTs) who are always with the students in the classroom, whereas in Foreign Languages (fifth and sixth grades), the term also includes a broader perspective of foreign students and foreigners living outside the classroom.

Also, among the unit goals of this lesson, the component "to understand others" is described in relation to one of the three competencies to be enhanced through this revised course of study. In other words, the goal of "motivation to learn and humanity" is outlined as follows: "(Objective 3) Try to communicate about memories of your summer vacation while paying attention to others." However, in this context, the element is limited to respect and consideration for other listeners, readers, speakers, and writers who are present in the class. As the teaching plan provided by MEXT shows, it focuses primarily on the content that enhances the skills of listening, speaking, and writing about memories in summer vacation, and there are very few viewpoints that relate to others in a broader sense of consideration, including those outside the class. One of the explanations for this might be the consideration of the students' limited linguistic skills at this stage. As the manual in the Foreign Languages course of study states, only "familiar and easy things related to the students' daily lives" should be chosen (MEXT, 2017b). However, the author of this paper believes that it is important to understand the background and culture of the other person with whom you are communicating. Only understanding superficial information represented by words is insufficient for a better and more meaningful mutual understanding. Specifically, considering that the target students for this practice lesson were sixth graders, the author believes it was a suitable time and age to enhance the understanding of others by relativizing oneself and others in a broader social and global context.

Another reason why I wanted to work on this activity is because "summer vacation memories" can be a delicate topic as the recent family and daily lives of the child are central to their recallable experiences. In fact, I heard one of the students say, "I don't care for summer vacation because I did not go anywhere like everyone else." However, if we had considered this theme from a different angle, the concept of "summer vacation" might not necessarily have been a universally common concept. By turning away from students' familiar situations and looking at others living in areas or countries outside of the classroom, I thought it could provide an opportunity to promote awareness of different perspectives from around the world.

5.2 Purpose

The primary aim of this practice lesson was to cultivate a deeper understanding of others, broaden students' perspectives of people abroad, and of similarly aged children worldwide. First, the students were asked to imagine the daily lives of children in other countries and then imagine how they might spend their time in a period equivalent to the Japanese summer vacation in an attempt to broaden students' understanding and consideration of others. In the Japanese curriculum, the learning element as defined in the present practice (i.e., enhance students' attitudes of understanding others) could be delivered in classes other than Foreign Languages, for example, Moral Education or Comprehensive Learning periods. However, one of the advantages of conducting this

lesson in the Foreign Languages class is that learners in many cases would naturally try to imagine the feelings of others and be considerate of them while communicating using a foreign language. Thus, my hope is that students will become aware of the importance of understanding their communication partner when using a foreign language.

In terms of language use in the practice, English was used by the teacher to moderate all activities, including procedural guidance as well as interaction with students and groups. However, where the priority of the activity was to understand the content, Japanese was selected. Also, *Syria* contained Japanese subtitles as the girl named Hiba spoke in Arabic. Although English was not used for this video, it was selected because the lesson designer (the author) thought it best matched the goals of Foreign Languages (MEXT, 2017a), that is, the aim was to broaden the understanding of culture and the lives of others experientially, to cultivate a wide range of language skills, and form the basis of international sensibility.

5.3 The Practice

The present practice lesson was conducted in Grade 6 at B Public Elementary School in A ward (90 people). The implementation date was September–October in 2018. In this school, English class is held once per week (45 minutes). The present practice lesson was used for the second half of the class for two consecutive weeks, yielding about forty-five minutes in total. For this class, the author prepared two movies under the theme of "summer vacation memories" to broaden the understanding of others of the same age living outside the classroom and in other parts of the world. One was about brothers who cannot go to school (Movie 2: "*Brothers Who Keep Working in the Cacao Plantation*," Fuji TV, Figure 5). The other featured a girl who barely attended school while attempting to escape from the Syrian civil war (Movie 3, *Syria: Hiba's Three Wishes*, Japan UNICEF Association, Figure 6). After watching both movies, we used groups of five or six students each for joint learning and planned activities to encourage them to think about how children might spend summer vacations based on the daily lives and school settings of others. The specific flow of these activities for each class is described in the following sections.

(1) The 1st period. In order to provide students with meta-knowledge about children around the world and their school lives before actually watching the two aforementioned movies, the quiz-style movie 1 *Bokura Chikyu Tyosatai* (*We are the Earth Research Team*) by JICA (Figure 4) was viewed. Each group was then given time to discuss three questions. The answer to the first question could be found in the movie:
(1) "How many children cannot attend primary school in the world?"
The other two questions required the students to think.
(2) "Why do you think some children cannot go to school? Explain your reasons."
(3) "What do you think will happen to someone who cannot go to school?"

The reason for adopting group discussions for this activity was to give learners a chance to brainstorm. Group discussions followed our prepared worksheets (See Table 2).

Table 2. Worksheet used in the 1st period

Q1: How many children cannot attend primary school in the world?
Why do you think so? Explain your reasons.
Q2: What do you think will happen to someone who cannot attend school?

At the end of the activity, students were given time to fill out their "reflection sheets" like they do after every class. In this process, learners are required to summarize their discussion and think by themselves.

(2) The 2nd period. At the beginning of the class, the two aforementioned movies were presented, with each lasting about 3 minutes. *Brothers Who Keep Working in the Cacao Plantation* touched upon the problem of child labor and trafficking. *Syria: Hiba's Three Wishes* takes place within the context of war. Both are fundamentally unfamiliar problems for Japanese children. After viewing these movies, students were divided into the same groups as in the first period and asked to imagine the summer vacations of "others" before answering the two worksheet questions, namely, Q3 (1) and (2), with each corresponding to movies 2 and 3. At the end of the activities, students were again given ample time to complete their reflection sheets individually.

Figure 4: Movie 1 "*Bokura Chikyu Tyosatai*" (JICA)

Figure 5: Movie 2 "*Brothers Who Keep Working in the Cacao Plantation*" (Fuji TV)

Figure 6: Movie 3 "Syria: Hiba's Three Wishes" (Japan UNICEF Association)

5.4 Results

Student reactions extracted from the two worksheets (Table 2) and reflection sheets are described and analyzed in the following section.

5.4.1 Student reactions as seen in the worksheets.

 (1) Responses collected from worksheets used in the 1st period. With the worksheet used in the first period (Table 2), students were asked to explain why some children cannot attend primary school. The following are sample responses:

Response 1: They have to do a lot of housework because they live in developing countries. They have no time to go to school.

Response 2: The world's population is over 7 billion. There are many poor countries in the world.

In response to Q2, "What do you think will happen if one cannot go to school?", the following responses were offered by the students after group discussions:

Possible reasons: You cannot get a proper job without the ability to read and write; you cannot work in society; you are not aware of possible dangers; you will not receive vital information required to live; without learning good versus evil, you might lack an adequate sense of security; and you might not be able to make friends.

 (2) Responses collected from the worksheets used in the 2nd period. After watching the second movie, *Brothers Who Keep Working in the Cacao Plantation* and the third, *Syria: Hiba's Three Wishes*, the students answered the worksheet's two questions (free-form responses).

For Q3-1, the following are sample responses for "How do you think these children spent their summer vacation?"

Referring to children in Movie 2: There is no summer vacation, or the concept of summer vacation is nonexistent; summer vacation is the same as their daily lives; children have to work; children have to harvest cocoa all day.

Referring to Movie 3: There is a summer vacation, but they have to help their family; They have no time to play with other children; They cannot travel.

Responding to Q3-2, the following responses were collected for "What do you think is different compared to your own summer vacation?"

They cannot play; they cannot study or play games; they cannot read *manga* (comic books); they cannot do what they want to do; we are not working, but Syrians are working hard; they cannot spend their time having fun; they are not allowed to have freedom.

5.4.2 Students' reactions observed from their Reflection Sheets. After collaborative groupwork, it is important to allow learners some time to think individually, to organize thoughts, and to reflect on what they have learned. The students' thoughts as described in their reflection sheets can be classified into the following three levels: thoughts related to awareness or knowledge of others, thoughts that arise after the awareness, and the transition of their perspectives (reflecting on oneself and thinking of others). The thoughts extracted from the reflection sheets are summarized and categorized into the aforementioned three levels by the author (See Table 3).

Table 3. Thoughts extracted from the reflection sheets

Stages	Thoughts
Thoughts related to awareness or knowledge of others	・Their lives are quite different from mine. I feel sorry for them. Their lives seemed to be tight. It was a hard situation. ・I think that depending on where you are from and who you are, your lifestyle will be considerably different, even if you are about the same age.
Thoughts that arise after awareness	・I feel very sorry for them. I think I am living such an easy life. Is there anything that I can do to help them? ・I think I want to help them after watching the movie.
Transition of perspectives	・I didn't know anything about what we did today when thinking about summer vacation. In order to understand, I feel that I need more knowledge of foreign countries. ・I found that children in other places in the world are leading such lives because of conflict or problems in their countries. Even in Japan, if the dispute took place, elementary school students would have to live like that. Therefore, I want to study more and study English… and if I am able to speak English fluently, I want to work to help them. ・What does the government of that country think about their problem? ・I did not go to other places during summer vacation because I belong to a basketball club. I said to my parents, "I want to go to somewhere else other than basketball practice!" I felt embarrassed about myself. Even though there was a child who did not have any summer vacation and a child who could not go to school, I said such a thing… I felt embarrassed while I watched the movie. First of all, I want to eliminate my selfish thoughts and speak out by remembering the situations in other countries and the lives of children there. Also, I think there are things that I can do to improve the situation, like being more ecological and helping others. I would like to take another look at my own life from those viewpoints. I also want to share what I have learned today with my family and get involved with these issues even if what I can do to help is so little.

5.5 Consideration

By adding the IC viewpoint to an original unit plan that primarily focuses on linguistic skill development, this practice session developed into a lesson that can broaden the understanding of others. In group discussions, students seemed to be

shocked to witness the situations of the children in the movies compared to themselves. Some were so disturbed that they were unable to organize their thoughts or proceed to discuss them. Nevertheless, many students were able to reflect on themselves and organize their thoughts, as observed in comments on their reflection sheets. In these sheets, completed at the end of every practice lesson, the elaboration of individual thoughts and viewpoints was observed through each student's careful and detailed descriptions. Specifically, from the description in level three, Transition of perspectives (Table 3), is the following, "I want to study more and study English… and if I am ever able to speak English fluently, I would like to work to help these children." From this it is clear that the student has attained the class goal of understanding others while using foreign languages.

In order to broaden the understanding of others, the first step is to know with whom we are communicating and their backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, the three levels observed in the reflection sheets are thoughts related to awareness or knowledge of others, thoughts that arise after awareness, and the transition of perspectives (reflecting on oneself and thinking of others). These are useful indicators for planning and practicing IC lessons that aim to deepen the understanding of others.

6. Implications

6.1 The Importance of Teachers' Pragmatic Competence to Conduct ICC Oriented Lessons

Nakayama's study (2017) posits that there are many authentic cultures shown in the new teaching materials, especially "We Can! 1" that includes the accompanying videos. However, by simply conducting a lesson based on the model teaching plan suggested in the teaching manual, most of the lessons will simply introduce surface or superficial culture. Conversely, as long as the surface culture introduced is authentic, we can utilize this as a seed to plan an ICC-oriented lesson. Nakayama (2015) states that "the teacher's ability to conduct ICC-oriented lessons is more important than the types of textbooks used" (p.79). Fundamental to conducting ICC-oriented lessons is a teacher's pedagogical competence to notice and value the seed as a factor in the teaching materials that can be further developed for enhancing students' ICC, and to create opportunities using these factors that foster the students' intercultural perspectives. In fact, the three activities proposed in this paper demonstrate that even though not all original topics are designed for ICC development, a teacher's instructions can lead students to become more aware of the existence of different perspectives and sociocultural norms apart from their own. Byram et al., (2002) explains, "Themes treated in textbooks can lend themselves to development from an intercultural and critical perspective. The key principle is to get learners to compare the theme in a familiar situation with examples from an unfamiliar context" (p.21).

6.2 The Importance of Experience When Shifting Perspectives

All three activities proposed in this paper first introduced new perspectives for the students by making use of different kinds of visual materials. In addition, activities were planned to explore the introduced perspectives by comparing them with their own familiar perspectives. From the students' responses, we observed that through comparisons between new perspectives and their own, students were able to identify common points and differences between the perspectives (e.g., common features of school life at home and abroad). Also, the student responses confirm that the activities provided them with opportunities to see their own familiar culture from a different perspective. For instance, some students realized that their very normal concept of "summer vacation" was not universal. Other students noticed that in order to be popular throughout the world, the names of well-known Japanese animation characters seemed to be modified to account for the context of each culture. Figure 7 summarizes the process of ICC development as partly observed through the present practice.
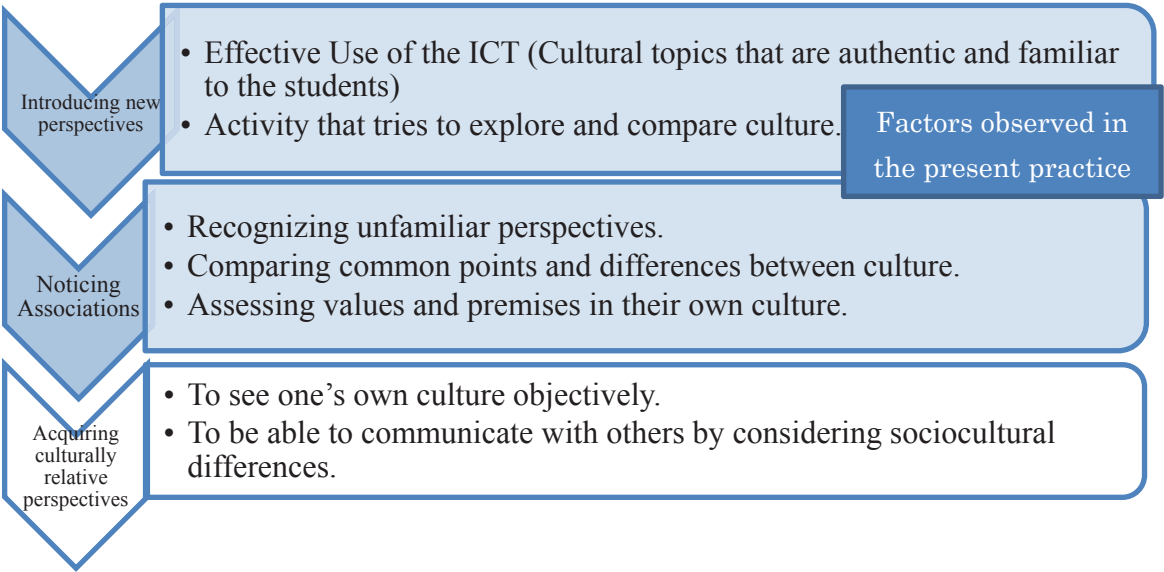
Introducing new perspectives
- Effective Use of the ICT (Cultural topics that are authentic and familiar to the students)
- Activity that tries to explore and compare culture.

Factors observed in the present practice

Noticing Associations
- Recognizing unfamiliar perspectives.
- Comparing common points and differences between culture.
- Assessing values and premises in their own culture.

Acquiring culturally relative perspectives
- To see one's own culture objectively.
- To be able to communicate with others by considering sociocultural differences.

Figure 7. The process of ICC development through ICC lessons.

Through the present practice lessons, we found that by encountering new perspectives students seemed to assess alternative views and compared them with their own, a process that sometimes led to associations between the two perspectives, familiar and unfamiliar. Building upon these experiences would hopefully lead to culturally relative perspectives that are an important prerequisite for the development of ICC.

6.3 Some Suggestions for Better ICC Lessons

This paper proposes three ICC activities by further developing topics derived from the new English teaching materials designed for the Japanese curriculum transition period. Teachers intending to develop students' ICC through activities should design them to encourage students to recognize the existence of profound cultural differences including diverse perspectives and values that lie below the minimal surface culture covered in the transition materials. ICC is an important competence for students that can enable them to prosper in a rapidly globalizing world, and overlapping competencies are observed throughout the revised course of study developed by MEXT. However, we must keep in mind that there is considerable room for further discussion about the best methods to put these concepts into practice.

Through these three practice lessons, what frequently arose as a common point was the importance of ensuring that students experience a shift of perspectives, that is, they become aware of different perspectives and can interpret the world even from those that are new to them. In order to plan effective ICC lessons, consideration should be given to how new perspectives are introduced and how to encourage learners to associate them with their own familiar perspectives. In regular Japanese public schools, teachers generally deliver all subject classes every day; therefore, it is easy to surmise that they might face time constraints when planning these kinds of lessons on a daily basis. In order to circumvent these constraints, one realistic alternative might be to collect and share teaching plans created by teachers who are familiar with the concept and methodology of ICC with the intention of enhancing students' ICC. In fact, in Europe, attempts have been made to improve the educational environment for teachers involved with intercultural education, including the creation of a database of teaching materials for ICC activities and documentation for teacher training. One example is the database of teaching plans and the online teacher-training kit of the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches (FREPA) developed by the Council of Europe's European Center for Modern Languages. Similar attempts that account for Japanese educational content and social context should be considered.

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【Overseas School-visit Report】
A Report on CLIL Class Observation in Turin and Nearby Schools

Yoichi Kiyota

Abstract

In order to obtain suggestions for how to improve the quality of English education in Japan, the author conducted a survey of project-based learning in European countries. This is a class-visit report of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in an elementary school and secondary schools in Turin and the surrounding area.

Keywords:

North Italy, CLIL, project-based learning, didactic competences.

1. Introduction

Teachers and researchers are challenging various accepted learning methods in order to improve the current state of foreign language learning in Japanese schools. Project-based learning, which aims at fostering higher-level thinking skills and cultivating an attitude of cross-cultural understanding, is drawing these researchers' attention. CLIL is one of those learning methods which have been conducted in many countries. In this survey, the author visited educational institutions engaged in project-type foreign language learning and evaluated their processes and results. The survey covers Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom. This report focuses on CLIL education in primary and secondary schools in and around the city of Turin, in northern Italy.

2. School Visit List

Table 1. shows the schedule from May 14 to 31, 2018, when the author visited schools and observed CLIL classes.

Table 1. School-visit list

Date	Names of school, etc.
5/14	Avogadro Secondary School
5/15	Vallauri Secondary School
5/16	Lower Secondary school – Scuola media
5/17	Primary and Lower Secondary school in Torino I.C Tommaseo
5/18	Conference at Liceo M.D'AZEGLIO (Educational conference of smart technology)
5/21	Liceo Buniva (art school in Pinerolo) Roletto Scuola Primaria
5/22	Secondary school, Liceo Porporato in Pinerolo

5/23	CLIL cooperative lessons at a secondary school in Pinerolo Liceo Scientifico
5/31	Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia (Meeting with CLIL researchers for discussion of educational aspects of CLIL in Italy)

3. Observation Report

This is a report on CLIL classes which are thought to be helpful examples for further discussion of introducing CLIL into Japan. The classes are listed in chronological order, as per the above table.

3.1 Avogadro Secondary School

Avogadro Secondary School is located in Turin. The school offers quality engineering education. The author visited three classes (two CLIL-oriented classes and one regular English class). CLIL classes at Avogadro Secondary School are usually conducted in the target language by teachers who are licensed to teach a specific subject. The teacher of the classes that the author visited was an English language teacher. The teacher expected that the benefits of the CLIL method for general English classes would be "priority of learning content" (i.e., content determines language learning) and an "emphasis on learner independence." Therefore, these classes should be defined as CLIL-oriented classes. The majority of the students in these classes are Italians. Others are from a range of countries, including Cameroon, Tunisia, Morocco, China, and the Philippines.

First and Second Classes

Subject	English (CLIL-oriented class)
Topic	The Big Data society
Material	Handouts
Main concept	Pros and cons of using Big Data

Procedure: The main topic of these classes was the Big Brother society, a bleak, authoritarian society founded on extensive surveillance and social control, depicted in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. After reading the novel, students discussed the following topics:
- how technology augments and threatens peoples' privacy;
- the relationship between technology and medicine;
- military applications of technology (e.g. drones, autonomous weapons, and robot soldiers);
- possible applications of technology to public education (robot teachers and robot mediator for autistic children)
- automated vehicles;

- ethical problems arising from the above issues and beyond.

In order to facilitate discussion of the affirmative and negative points of a society founded on the use of Big Data, the teacher used a graphic organizer to develop each theme into further, fuller discussion.

Points of Note: The teacher encouraged her students to consider these topics, which are relevant to contemporary life and may therefore represent something that her students can feel passionately about. These topics are expected to motivate students to be active in discussion not only because the topics invite students to exchange their personal opinions on important social issues, but because these discussions invite students to evaluate many different opinions.

3.2 Vallauri Secondary School

A general high school in Fossano, outside of Turin. The author observed 4 CLIL classes. The classes and all interactions with students were conducted in English.

First Class

Subject	Literature
Topic	Novel / short story, poetry/ drama
Material	Book, handout, music
Main concept	Visual images

Procedure: Before reading the assigned material, the teacher played music to stimulate her students' imaginations. Afterwards, she asked the students about the kinds of images (e.g., color, scenes, settings, etc.) which came to their minds while listening. The teacher tried to utilize this procedure of making mental images to promote and enhance her students' reading comprehension and depth of engagement with the material.

Points of Note: Although this was a literature class, the teacher employed supplementary materials such as music and photographs to prime her students for their engagement with the material. Her use of music in particular appealed to her students' creativity, helped activate their imaginations, and helped them engage with the reading material.

Second Class

Subject	Biology
Topic	Respiratory organs
Material	Video/ handout

Main concept	Comprehension of respiratory organs

Procedure: The class started with a quiz, which confirmed students' knowledge about the target topic. Various activities followed the quiz, including a video which explained the human respiratory system and its functioning. At the end of the class, the teacher summarized what the students had learned with a song.

Points of Note: This was a well-organized CLIL class. The teacher used a variety of activities and media, including a video/visual aids, handouts, and music. The students seemed to be familiar with these procedures and were actively involved in the lesson.

Third Class

Subject	Mathematics
Topic	Fibonacci sequence
Material	Handout
Main concept	Comprehension of Fibonacci sequence

Procedure: The teacher explained the concept of the Fibonacci sequence using the example of the Mole Antonelliana, a landmark tower in the city of Turin.

Points of Note: This class, like some of the others, used familiar objects to introduce new topics to students and to aid their engagement with the material.

Fourth Class

Subject	IT programming
Topic	Presentation of students' IT program
Material	IT program/handout
Main concept	Virtual museum of walls

Procedure: Students presented the final stages of their projects in front of their peers in a programming class. Working in groups, students had created virtual renderings of well-known historical walls (such as Hadrian's Wall and the Berlin Wall). Taken together as a class, these group projects came together to form a virtual museum.

Points of Note: These projects involved learning about subjects outside of programming, such as history and architecture. As a result, these projects fostered cross-curricular learning. Student creativity was encouraged at various levels throughout this project.

3.3 Scuola Lower Secondary School

A lower secondary school in Asti, outside of Turin. The author observed 3 CLIL classes. The classes were all conducted in English.

First and Third Class

Subject	Geography
Topic	Cities in the U.S.A.
Material	Computer/ digital board
Main concept	Introduction to cities in the U.S.A.

Procedure: Students presented on cities in the United States as if they were members of a travel agency, creating leaflets and posters to advertise these cities.

Points of Note: Students were actively involved in this project. Generally, students in CLIL classes are expected to use English as well as learn it. Therefore, it is important to choose learning material which is substantial enough to encourage students to learn independently by using the language with one another and further design their learning according to their needs and interests. In this case, having students present their projects promoted students' self-awareness of the importance of using, as well as learning, the target language. These projects demonstrated the importance of giving students many opportunities to immerse themselves in the target language under varying circumstances.

Second Class

Subject	Biology
Topic	The human heart
Material	Textbook/ video
Main concept	Comprehension of textbook "An Organ of a Body: A Heart"

Procedure: After confirming the students' basic knowledge of the subject matter with a textbook reading and a supplementary video, the teacher asked additional questions in English to confirm students' understanding.

Points of Note: The textbook used in the class had a "CLIL" label on the cover and was used in tandem with a video, which provided related visual information to aid student comprehension. The author found such textbooks and digital materials in several classes.

3.4 Liceo Porporato Secondary School

After observing CLIL classes in a general high school, the author discussed the concept of CLIL and CLIL procedures with teachers at Liceo Porporato Secondary School.

Second Class

Subject	History
Topic	The American Civil War
Material	Handout/ photo
Main concept	Comprehension of the American Civil War

Procedure: The teacher introduced some relevant historical background by showing photographs to the students. The teacher also tried to enhance interaction by asking the students their opinions on the American Civil War.

Points of Note: The teacher's use of photographs helped enhance students' comprehension of the topic. These visual aids seemed to be an effective support for conducting CLIL as many learners are at a disadvantage because they are learning in the target language. The most impressive feature of this school was that teachers collaborated to develop teaching materials for CLIL. For example, one of the teachers developed a game for the introduction of new material in a philosophy class.

3.5 Roletto Scuola Primaria

A primary school in Pinerolo, outside of Turin. The author observed 2 CLIL classes. The classes were all conducted in English.

1st Class

Subject	Art
Topic	A painting by Vincent Van Gogh
Material	Handout/ photo
Language	Prepositions in English

Procedure: Viewing a Van Gogh painting of a room, the teacher introduced the idea of arranging furniture. The students then placed paper cut-outs of furniture on their worksheets, which depicted an unfurnished room. Through this activity, students learned the related English prepositions. After this activity, students wrote poems on the theme of rooms to consolidate their learning.

Points of Note: This class impressed the author with how it combined fine art and a

literary activity. The class was very well-organized despite being comprised of several different learning activities.

Second Class

Subject	Geography
Topic	Geographical features: river, seas, and mountains
Material	Physical activity/handout/digital board
Language	Comparison in English

Procedure: To introduce students to the subject matter, students were asked to represent the geographical features of seas, mountains, and rivers through gestures. After that, they developed their geographical knowledge through different activities regarding famous rivers, seas, mountains, and lakes in Italy. Through these activities, students learned comparison in English.

Points of Note: The teacher had a clear concept of how to conduct a CLIL class and employed each of the main concepts in CLIL learning: tuning (activation of prior knowledge), discovery (through activity), sorting, and reflection. In order to facilitate student reflection, the teacher had students actively and physically express the knowledge they had learned. This fostered a more engaged learning atmosphere.

3.6 Discussion at Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia

The author discussed CLIL education with two CLIL researchers, Prof. Coonan and her colleague. Both of them are advisors to schools in Italy which engage in CLIL. The author pointed out the creative attitudes of some teachers who had developed original teaching methodologies and materials for their CLIL classes. The attitudes of these teachers seemed different from those of teachers who rely primarily on textbooks.

Prof. Coonan and her colleague suggested that teachers should not use fixed textbooks when conducting CLIL. Instead, these teachers should design their lessons and develop teaching materials according to the content. If this happens, they suggested that conducting CLIL could enhance both the students' learning and their teachers' ability to effectively teach materials.

When discussing the contents of CLIL, the author and researchers agreed that lesson contents should be selected with student interest in mind. However, we agreed that interdisciplinary themes could also be appropriate contents for CLIL.

After the discussion, Prof. Coonan introduced a graduate student who is researching CLIL. The student is researching English language learning in collaboration with the Natural Science Museum in Venice. The student had worked at the museum and utilized this experience in her research. She told the author that many of Italy's museums are actively engaged in education and they often collaborate with schools. (In practice, the

author found CLIL activities for secondary school students at one museum in Venice.) Since the basic concept of CLIL is the integration of content- and language-learning, the idea of utilizing museums' wide resources to foster English learning struck the author as an effective means of collaborating between institutions which might possibly be applicable to English language education in Japan.

4. Summary

In Italy, CLIL classes are compulsory in the final year of secondary school. Therefore, CLIL has been introduced to Italian students not just in secondary school, but earlier, so that they are well-prepared for the compulsory CLIL classes later in their education. Although Italians recognize the need to further develop CLIL teaching strategies, the author noticed differences in the didactic competences of teachers who taught CLIL classes. These differences occur mainly because large parts of CLIL lesson design are left to the teachers' discretion.

In the classes the author observed, many of the teachers tried to be creative in their selection of teaching materials and methodologies. On this point, Prof. Coonan and her colleague pointed out that CLIL methods may improve not only the quality of learning in CLIL classes, but also the quality of learning in non-CLIL classes because the teaching skills and creative methods employed in CLIL are applicable in any classroom.

It is possible for teachers to use not only the target language but also students' native language during CLIL. In such classes, it is important for teachers to keep in mind not only the proportion of the students' native language which is used, but the timing of language use in relation to the lesson, especially when introducing new materials. The outcomes of CLIL depend in large part on teachers' didactic skills. Considering these observations, providing substantial teacher training in CLIL would be a significant first step toward introducing CLIL programs to Japanese educational institutions.

Acknowledgements

【Chronicle】

April 2018 ― March 2019

Presentations by the SIG members:

Date	Title and Presenter(s) Venue	Event
April 14	"Using J-POSTL in English Language Teacher Training" Yoichi Kiyota & Kaori Yoshizumi. Aoyama Gakuin University	Lecture sponsored by Aoyama Gakuin English Education Research Center and JACET KANTO
May 10-12	**May 11** 1. "A Challenge for CLIL Practice in the Pre-service Teacher Education in Japan" Eri Osada. 2. "The Spread of CLIL in Foreign Language Education in Japan" Rie Adachi. The University of Huelva, Spain	International Conference on Quality of Bilingual Programs in Higher Education
June 23-24	**June 23** "An Exploratory Study on Japanese Children's Oral Interactive Ability in English Based on Skype Exchanges with Australian Children." Sakiko Yoneda & Yoichi Nishimura. **June 24** "The Possibility and Challenges of CLIL in Japan" Rie Adachi In CELES Study Project : The Possibility of Teaching Foreign Languages with CILL and Active Learning(Leader: Akio Inuzuka). Shizuoka University	The 48th Annual Conference of Chubu English Language Education Society
June 27-29	**June 27** 1. "Japanese Portfolio for Elementary Educators of English: Challenges and Opportunities" Ken Hisamura, Hisatake Jimbo, & Shien Sakai. 2. "The Problems and Expectations of Spreading CLIL in Japan" Rie Adachi & Yoshihiro Nigo. **June 28** 1. "Japanese Teachers' Perceptions of Developing Intercultural Competence in the EFL Classroom" Fumiko Kurihara. 2. Poster : "The Educational Value of Foreign Language Teaching in the Context of Japanese Elementary Education" Junya Narita & Shien Sakai. Macau University, China	Asia TEFL 2018

July 8	"Core Competences of Elementary EFL Educators: Findings from the Surveys among University Faculty in Elementary Teacher Training Courses" Takane Yamaguchi & Ken Hisamura. Kanda University of Foreign Languages, Makuhari Campus, Chiba	The 11th JACET Kanto Chapter Conference
July 28-29	1. "Teachers' and Students' Perceptions on Teaching and Learning Synthetic Phonics at Elementary School" Eri Osada & Seiko Akai. 2. "Problems and Prospects of J-POSTL Elementary as a Self-reflection Tool" Rika Takeda, Kagari Tsuchiya, & Rika Wakamatsu. Nagasaki University	JES 18th Convention
August 18-19	1. "Giving Elementary School Children Appropriate Handwriting Instruction of English Letters" Kagari Tsuchiya, Shino Abe, & Shien Sakai. 2. "Responding to the Questions about English Teaching from Elementary School Teachers" Shien Sakai, Aki Matsunobu, Rika Takeda, & Kazuyo Hasegawa. Hakuo University, Tochigi.	KATE 42th Convention
August 25-26	1. "Responding to the Questions about English Teaching from Elementary School Teachers" Shien Sakai, Aki Matsunobu, Kagari Tsuchiya, Kazuyo Hasegawa, & Mari Yasuda. 2. "Chocolate Project: Connecting Cultures and Languages" Rie Adachi, Shino Abe, Yuki Kitano, & Hiroko Moroki. Ryukoku University	JASELE 44th Convention
August 28-30	1. "Using J-POSTL in English Language Teacher Training Curriculum: Aiming to Improve Quality of Teacher Training Classes" Yoichi Kiyota, Chitose Asaoka, Satsuki Osaki, & Kaori Yoshizumi. 2. Symposium: "Developing Japanese Portfolio for Elementary English Educators: Rational and Practice" Ken Hisamura, Eri Osada, Junya Narita, Shino Abe, & Kagari Tsuchiya. 3. "Enhancing Intercultural Competence at Elementary School English Classes: A Questionnaire-Based Study. " Natsue Nakayama.	The 57th JACET International Conference

	4. "Action-oriented Teaching and Learning English – A New Textbook for Student Teachers in Japan." Hisatake Jimbo, & Fumiko Kurihara. Tohoku Gakuin University	
September 8	"Story-telling and CLIL" Rie Adachi. Aichi university, Nagoya	The Forth Seminar of CILL and Active Learning
September 14-17	"The Effect of Linguistic and Intercultural Awareness Activity in a Japanese Elementary School" Rie Adachi & Kagari Tsuchiya. Poster: "Teachers' Anxiety about English Education as a Required Subject and Ways to Support Teachers" Shien Sakai & Junya Narita. Poster: "Using Portfolios to Encourage the Personalization of English Language Teaching" Yoichi Kiyota. Bukkyo University	JUSTEC 2018
October 21	"Activity Plans to Promote Intercultural Competence in Elementary School English Classes: Focusing on the New Teaching Materials, 'We Can! 1&2', for the Transitional Period." Natsue Nakayama, Rika Wakamatsu, Junya Narita & Kagari Tsuchiya. Osaka Seikei Univerisity	JASTEC 38th Autumn Convention
November 11	Workshop: "Illustrating Ways to Motivate Children" Nanae Yukioka, Yuki Kitano. Osaka Kyoiku University.	JACET Sig on English Education Seminar
December 1	1. "Using J-POSTL in Teacher Training for Interactive Deep Learning" Yoichi Kiyota. 2. "The Revised Course of Study and J-POSTL" Kaori Yoshizumi. 3. "Deep Learning and Intercultural Understanding" Natsue Nakayama. Bunkyo University Koshigaya Campus	Seminar on Educational Problem Solving Hosted by the Center for Bunkyo University Lifelong Learning
March 2	Host: Rie Adachi. Aichi University	The Fifth Seminar of CILL and Active Learning
March 10	Language Education Exposition 2019 Waseda University	JACET Sig on English Education Conference
March	**March 26** "A View on New Foreign Language	International

25-28	Education Using Machine Translation" Shien Sakai. **March 27** 1. "Developing Global Competence through EFL Teaching: An Insight from Survey Results on J-POSTL Self-assessment Descriptors" Hisatake Jimbo, Ken Hisamura, & Fumiko Kurihara. 2. "The Effectiveness and Challenges of International Project-based Learning at Japanese Primary Schools" Rie Adachi. 3. "Promoting the Dissemination of Digital Textbooks in Foreign Language Education at Elementary Schools in Japan" Kagari Tsuchiya. 4. "Language Learning in Cooperation with Museums" Yoichi Kiyota. 　　Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat Munchen, Germany	Conference March 2019: Educating the Global Citizen: International Perspectives on Foreign Language Teaching in the Digital Age

Abbreviations

JACET: The Japan Association of College English Teachers

JES: The Japan Association of English Teaching in Elementary Schools

KATE: Kantokoshinetsu Association of Teachers of English

JASELE: The Japan Society of English Language Education

JUSTEC: Japan-U.S. Teacher Education Consortium

JASTEC: The Japan Association for the Study of Teaching English to Children

Language Teacher Education
Submission Guidelines

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言語教師のポートフォリオ

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