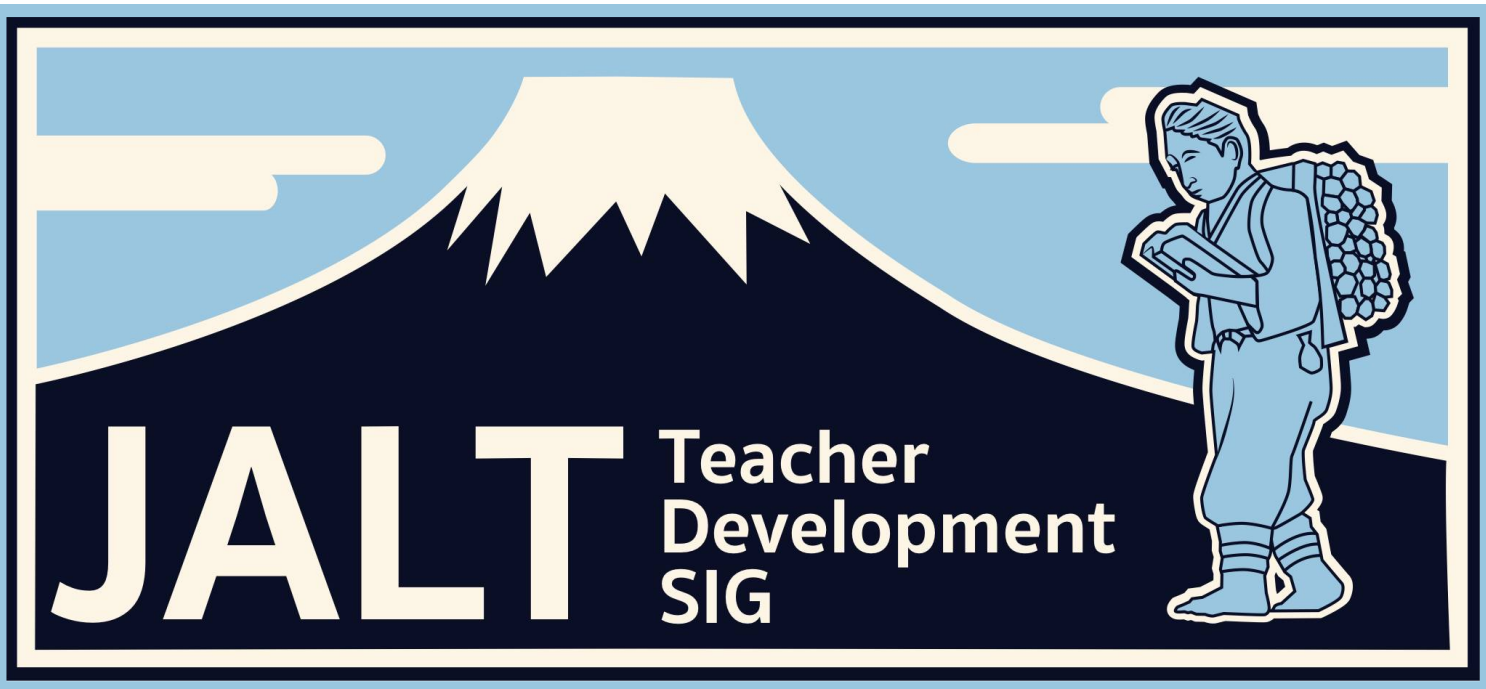

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From the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of Explorations in Teacher Development, volume 26, issue 2! We are working hard to get back on our regular publishing schedule and have already begun to compile submissions for another issue to come out in a few months.

This issue contains six articles which we hope will inform you and stimulate your own development as teachers. Our first two articles look at different difficult aspects of teaching. James Taylor explores factors influencing demotivation among eikaiwa teachers and Luann Pascucci reflects on her own discomfort in teaching students vocabulary that may have derogatory meanings in some contexts. Following these, we are sharing two interviews with leaders of other JALT SIGs carried out at PANSIG 2019, focusing on the conference theme of teacher efficacy. Sam Morris, the TD SIG Treasurer, interviews James Sick, Coordinator of the Testing and Evaluation (TEVAL) SIG and Mike Ellis, the TD SIG, interviews Mark Brierley, editor of the Extensive Reading (ER) SIG journal. Finally, We have two write-ups of presentations at the TD-CUE SIG Forum at JALT National in 2018. Steven Paton writes about how we might encourage students to practice more communicative behaviors in the classroom by getting them to reflect on the non-communicative behaviors they often apply in the classroom would be taken in the world outside the classroom. And Brett Laybutt looks at how teachers at his college have had to adapt to the a growing population of students from Vietnam.

Many of us are now dealing with a changed teaching environment because of the novel coronavirus, having to practice Emergency Remote Teaching. This situation has altered people's understanding of their work and workplace, their relationships with students and colleagues, and also had an impact on teachers' lives outside of work. TD SIG, with its partner West Tokyo JALT, made the decision to move this year's Teacher Journeys Conference online and to have it focus on teachers' responses to ERT through a curated collection of video presentations.

Michael Ellis, the TD SIG Programs Co-Chair and Chair of the Teacher Journeys Conference this year, began sharing the videos from the conference in September. There are currently 24 videos of teachers' stories of how they have lived, adapted, taught, learned, researched, cooperated, and collaborated around the world in this unusual year available on the Teacher Development SIG channel. I'd like to invite you to go to the channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyhoCMnZrzBl-iePXQeRxfA/videos) and view some (or even all) of the videos. You might start here with Michael's welcome video for the conference (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYlkZVrtJZU). Michael tells a story from his own teaching journey, which will be a part of the next issue of Explorations in Teacher Development. Michael will be adding 6 more videos to the channel each week until all submissions to the conference are available. In addition, on November 8th, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm (Japan Standard Time), TD SIG will be hosting a live panel discussion with four of the the participants in this year's Teacher Journeys conference reflecting together on their experience of the conference. More information about this event is available at the Teacher Journeys 2020 conference website: (https://sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2020).

We will be publishing written versions of conference presentations in a special issue of Explorations in Teacher Development to come out following the conference. But I would like to encourage all our readers to consider submitting a research article or reflection on teaching outside of ERT for inclusion in one of our regular issues. You can find the call for papers for Explorations in Teacher Development, including an email address for submissions, elsewhere in this issue.

I want to thank the journal staff and the officers of TD SIG for their support of the production of ETD, especially Daniel Beck for his fine work in the design and layout of the journal. Finally, it is time to say "Thank You" to wonderful people who have helped make ETD possible by reviewing submissions for us over the past year and providing helpful feedback to authors: Gary Barkhuizen, Thomas S. C. Farrell, Chris Carl Hale, Daniel Hooper, Anne Howard, Satoko Kato, Keita Kikuchi, Ewen MacDonald, Sam Morris, Jo Mynard, Jane Pryce, Chhayankdhar Singh Rathore, Guy Smith, Matthew Turner, and Deryn Verity. To all of you, my deepest gratitude for your efforts for Explorations in Teacher Development.

Bill Snyder

Managing Editor

Explorations in Teacher Development		
Bill Snyder *Managing Editor*	**Tracy-Ann Tsuruoka** *Assistant Editor*	**Daniel Beck** *Layout Editor*

Call for Papers

Explorations in Teacher Development is a journal for teachers, by teachers, where we encourage people to share their experiences and reflections.

Papers for the Explorations in Teacher Development (ETD) Journal are accepted on an on-going basis. We encourage both members and non-members of our SIG to submit papers, so please share this information with your colleagues and friends to ensure a rich and diverse publication.

Following is a list of the categories and types of articles we are interested in publishing:

Research Articles (2000-3000 words)

- Narrative Inquiry
- Reflective Inquiry
- Action Research

Explorations (1000-3000 words)

- Reflections on beliefs/practices
- Learning / Teaching Journeys

Columns (500-1000 words)

- "Teacher Reflections"
- "Conference Reflections"

In addition, interviews of relevant educators/researchers as well as book reviews may be accepted at the discretion of the editors. Please contact us if interested in writing an interview piece. TD SIG also publishes the proceedings of our Teacher Journeys conference held in June as well as occasional special issues in collaboration with other JALT SIGs.

If you wish to contribute to the ETD, please pay attention to the following requirements:

- All submissions should use APA style and a maximum of 12 references. Submissions that are not in APA style will be sent back to the authors for reformatting.
- Titles of papers should be 10 words or less.
- Research articles should include an abstract of 100-150 words.
- Explorative pieces do not require references but connections to the literature are encouraged.
- Column contributors are invited to submit at any time, but you may want to send an inquiry regarding your idea.
- All authors should provide their current affiliation and a contact email. A short bio and photo are optional.
- When sending in a submission, please indicate which category of the ETD Journal your article will fit under.

Please note that all submissions for the research and explorations sections of the ETD will undergo a peer-review process and that, if accepted, we will provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Authors are encouraged to include charts, images, graphs, etc. with their articles, which will provide a visual representation to our readers. Questions and contributions may be sent to Bill Snyder at the following email address:

jalt.ted.ete.editor@gmail.com

Exploring Teacher Demotivation in Eikaiwa Schools in Japan

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Private language (eikaiwa) schools are common in Japan (METI, 2019) and motivation among native speaker English teachers in those schools is important but under-researched. Following Taylor's (2017) exploratory study of the experience of foreign teachers at a national eikaiwa chain, this paper draws upon data collected from interviews with native speaker English teachers at national chains and independent eikaiwa schools in order to further investigate demotivating factors, and attempts to ascertain any difference in the demotivating factors present in different types of eikaiwa school. This paper will also show that teachers' perceptions of five aspects of the working conditions at eikaiwa schools were found to negatively affect their motivation: (a) lack of options for career advancement, (b) inadequate training, (c) difficult relationships with colleagues, (d) the management-teacher relationship, (e) company infringement on personal time. The author will suggest areas for future research.

Eikaiwa, or English language conversation, schools comprise a significant portion of the English education market in Japan. A recent estimate valued the industry at $2,772 million (U.S. Commercial Service, 2015). The prevalence of eikaiwa schools in Japan may be due to the perceived inadequacy of the regular school system in providing opportunities to develop students' communicative competence (Aspinall, 2006). There have been calls for more research into eikaiwa schools because despite their prevalence, existing research is scarce (Nuske, 2014; Hooper, 2016; Taylor, 2017). In particular, eikaiwa school teacher motivation is an under-researched but important topic. The large number of instructors employed and learners engaged in studying at eikaiwa schools nationwide (METI, 2019) mean that the impact on English education in Japan is potentially significant.

This research follows Taylor's (2017) exploratory study of the experience of foreign teachers at a national eikaiwa chain, in which teachers' perceptions of five aspects of the working conditions at a national chain were found to negatively affect their motivation: lack of options for career advancement, inadequate training, difficult relationships with colleagues, the management-teacher relationship, and perceived company infringement on personal time.

The purpose of this study was to further investigate the experience of foreign English teachers at eikaiwa schools in Japan, to learn the extent to which those demotivating factors exist in other eikaiwa schools, and to ascertain any difference in the demotivating factors present in different types of eikaiwa school.

In this paper, I define national chains as companies with branches throughout Japan, and independent schools as "smaller, owner-operated companies" (Nuske, 2014, p. 123).

Methodology

Participants

Participants were found through a convenience sample using personal networks and requests posted online. The participants' information is summarised in Table 1. All were native speakers from inner circle countries, and 5 were Caucasian. National chains have been given pseudonyms because some participants worked for the same company, but as there were no instances of any of them working in the same independent school, those institutions have not been given names.

Pseudonym	Gender	Nationality	National chain experience	Independent school experience
Liam	male	Canadian	Yes; National Chain X	Yes; 3 schools (1 as owner)
Mark	male	Australian	Yes; National Chain X	No
Mike	male	American	No	Yes; 2 schools (1 as owner)
Raymond	male	American	Yes; National Chain X	No
Steve	male	South African	Yes; National Chains Y and Z	Yes; 3 schools
Toni	female	Canadian	Yes; National Chain Y	Yes; 1 school

Table 1: Participants

Positionality

I worked as an instructor at National Chain X for almost 2 years (2012-2014) and felt that the issues raised in the previous study reflected the feelings I held by the end of my tenure. This may have impacted upon my interpretation of the data and possibly the interviews themselves in the current study. Additionally, the Caucasian native speaker status of 5 of the 6 participants matched my own, which may have enabled them to relate and respond to me more easily. Furthermore, as participants were drawn from my personal networks, there is a risk that in some cases our prior relationship affected their answers, consciously or not.

Instrument

Participants were interviewed once each for approximately 1 hour. I opted for interviews instead of surveys because interviews allow deeper discussion of motivation and personal experiences (Richards, 2009). Questions were developed with reference to the demotivating factors that emerged from the previous study, and with the intention of encouraging interviewees to expand on their answers. An interview guide can be seen in Appendix A. Follow-up questions were asked via e-mail and social media to clarify certain points that arose during the interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected qualitatively from six current eikaiwa teachers through semi-structured Skype interviews, except for one teacher who was interviewed by phone. Face-to-face interviews were impossible due to the geographical locations and work schedules of myself and the participants. The interviews were transcribed and quotations related to the five demotivating factors outlined in the Introduction were drawn from the data by hand. These factors were chosen as they emerged prominently in the previous and current studies.

In the following section I show the findings of the data collection.

Findings

As in Taylor (2017), data were collated in relation to five areas of interest: (a) lack of options for career advancement, (b) inadequate training, (c) difficult relationships with colleagues, (d) management-teacher relationships, (e) perceived infringement on personal time. As a result of these issues, participants felt a variety of negative emotions that resulted in them not enjoying their work, and in some cases not wanting to continue to work. In this section I will deal with each of these five areas, presenting the data from the interviews.

Lack of Options for Career Advancement

Teachers believed that their options for career advancement in national chains were severely limited, and that although some opportunities did exist, they were seen as mostly undesirable. In National Chain X, Liam believed that part of the problem was that many teachers would only stay short-term, and often treated the job like a "vacation". Raymond referred to a colleague who had been at the same chain for more than a decade but had not moved past middle management, which led him to feel that there was "no way…that we could reach any higher position." Steve and Toni spoke about job openings in various sections of National Chain Y throughout Japan, but Toni explained that she did not pursue them because she "didn't want to move" and because she thought the salary offered for management positions was not different enough considering the extra responsibilities and workload.

In the independent schools, participants also felt the potential for career advancement was limited, although this may be due to the nature of the schools: in a small business, new positions are unlikely to become available frequently. Toni mentioned possibly becoming a manager if her boss opened more branches, but thought this was unlikely as her boss did not have active expansion plans. Toni saw her other options as remaining in the same position or leaving the school and possibly industry. As school owners, Mike and Liam also had limited options for career advancement, but both professed to be happy with their respective situations. It seems, therefore, that teachers in both types of school perceived a lack of chances for career advancement, and when such chances did exist, they were seen as undesirable. This seemed to be more strongly demotivating for teachers in national chains.

Inadequate Training

Provisions for training were criticised by teachers in national chains. Raymond described the initial training in National Chain X as "rushed" and insufficient, adding that he did not receive follow-up training as promised. He saw ongoing training as a waste of time. Liam called National Chain X's training "horrible" and "terrible," but Mark was slightly more positive, conceding that initial training was "probably helpful." Raymond was worried that without a background in Education he would have been "intimidated and confused" by initial training. Similar concerns were voiced by Liam and Mark, who believed that their lack of such a background combined with the quality of the training led to their poor performance early in their careers. Such concerns were also mentioned by Steve and Toni when discussing National Chain Y. They felt that initial training left them insufficiently prepared for teaching alone. Steve said that ongoing training in National Chain Z was not beneficial.

Teachers' experiences of training in independent schools were less negative. Liam recalled a boss who encouraged teachers to attend professional development events, and he felt that "she wanted her teachers to improve." However, that boss did not offer in-house training. Toni enjoyed a "really efficient" training period at an independent school, but was "disappointed" that it was at a reduced salary. Liam and Toni had prior teaching

experience so the lack of training, while disappointing, did not appear to have a drastic demotivating effect. Mike's first experience in an independent school was that the lack of training led to him and the manager "butting heads all the time." He learnt that "if you don't train [your employees] properly, there's gonna be dissatisfaction." The interviewees felt varying degrees of frustration and dissatisfaction when faced with training programmes in both types of school that they believed were insufficient, low quality, and a waste of their time. They felt that the training programmes did not provide them with the tools to do their job to a high standard. Training seemed, however, to be more of a demotivating factor in national chains than in independent schools.

Difficult Relationships with Colleagues

Participants in this study enjoyed mostly positive collegial relationships, but all had colleagues with whom they endured negative relationships for various reasons. Having to work with those colleagues caused the participants to feel stressed and less enthusiastic about going to work.

Several interviewees mentioned their frustration with colleagues in national chains who they felt were not pulling their weight. Toni said she had coworkers in National Chain Y who she thought "were not doing a good job" and that she would try to avoid them. Discussing the same chain, Steve used the phrase "taihen [difficult] teachers" to describe those who he felt were more concerned with partying or travelling than doing their job. When talking about his time at National Chain Z, Steve felt "resentful, irritated" and "angered" by colleagues he thought were lazy, which led him to feel "demotivated." In National Chain X, Raymond referred to a personal situation that arose between him and a colleague that made him decide to keep his distance. Mark had problems with two co-workers, one of whom he thought "set out to destroy" him although he didn't know why, and another with whom he stopped talking because of what he considered the colleague's childishness.

Interviewees expressed fewer problems with colleagues at independent schools, perhaps due in part to the fact that they had fewer colleagues. Problems that did exist revolved around family: Steve had a lazy coworker who was the boss's brother; the administrative worker in the independent school where Toni worked was the boss's son. In both cases, the pre-existing relationship between those others created uncomfortable situations for the interviewees. In the school that he owned, Liam said that he and his co-owner, despite being friends, did not communicate as much as he would have liked due to "hard-headedness" and personality differences. Participants' difficult relationships with colleagues in both types of school caused various negative emotions and made going to work arduous and stressful for them.

Management-Teacher Relationships

The management-teacher relationship also emerged as a demotivating factor. Participants suggested that strained relationships with management made them feel discriminated against, "stressed", "jaded", underappreciated, and harassed.

Raymond felt that communication with the management in National Chain X was "scarce", while Toni believed that National Chain Y's management "didn't really care" about any of the teachers as people. Toni talked about her direct, non-Japanese manager, who she thought was "biased and sexist" in his decisions about scheduling, but when she complained to him and his manager, she said he made her schedule harder. By the end of her time at the company, she felt she was "giving so much and not getting anything" in return. Mark had experience working in middle management in National Chain X, but even in that position he felt that his fellow managers and superiors did not support him in various situations. This made him feel "jaded," "let down," and "very stressed." He said he often found work "very, very non-enjoyable."

According to the interviewees, relationships with managers in independent eikaiwa schools seemed to be more positive, but there were still some negative experiences. Steve worked in a school where he thought the management style was "very laissez-faire" and that the manager did not appreciate any of his work. Mike talked about a manager who seemed to dislike him asking her for help and recalled an occasion where she spent an hour berating him for it. Liam felt that there was "a lot of micromanaging" at one school, including regular phone calls about what he thought were "pointless complaint[s] about something that was really unimportant," such as what colour whiteboard marker he used.

The data give several examples of teachers in both types of school feeling let down and not supported by management, and in more than one case the behaviour almost seems to extend to harassment or bullying. Several interviewees explicitly stated that the negative relationship with management was a factor in them no longer wanting to work for that employer and actively seeking new employment.

Perceived Infringement on Personal Time

The participants in this study also perceived an infringement on their personal time by the national chains and, as in Taylor (2017), travel was a thorny issue for some. Steve and Toni felt that as more experienced teachers during their time at National Chain Y, they were being asked to do more travelling than their less experienced colleagues, which led Steve to feel he was being "used and abused" for his reliability and efficiency. He summarised travel as a "waste of my time, a waste of my effort, my energy, a waste of the company's resources." The schedule at national chains also seemed to have a demotivating effect on the interviewees. Toni said the schedule would often "change suddenly" and spoke at length about how angry she was on one occasion when she was told in the morning that instead of working in her home city from 7.30 PM, she had to go to another city to start work at 1.30 PM. Having made plans for the morning and afternoon, she thought the company had "ruined" her day. As a manager at National Chain X, Mark talked about working 12- to 13-hour days and continuing to do a lot of work at home at the weekends. He also described the recent opening of a new branch, before which he and other teachers were asked to give up their free time to build the furniture.

For non-owners in independent schools, there did not seem to be much perception of infringement on personal time by their employers. Toni said that she sometimes found it "very hard to leave" work after class when her boss kept talking. Liam and Mike, as independent school owners, expressed concern about their long working hours and the negative effect that it had on their family life, but those negatives seemed to be outweighed by the positives that having control over their own work held for them.

Participants in this study felt that their employers were infringing on their personal time through travel, short notice schedule changes, and workload. There seemed to be a greater perception of companies doing this in national chains than in independent schools, and the perceived infringement led to feelings of irritation, anger, and being unfairly treated.

Discussion

Throughout the data there are strong suggestions of negative emotions leading to demotivation caused by each of the five aforementioned factors.

The lack of options for career advancement in both types of eikaiwa school appeared to negatively affect teachers' motivation and cause frustration. According to Raynor (as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), two types of career path exist: open and closed. An open path has options for career advancement, whereas a closed path does not. Pennington (as cited in Kim, Kim & Zhang, 2014) found that the absence of a structure for one's career can negatively affect motivation. Participants in Taylor (2017) felt that the career path in the national chain in which they worked was closed. Interviewees in the current study felt that the career path in both types of eikaiwa school was closed. The fact that teachers often only stay in eikaiwa schools for a short time may discourage companies from opening the career path. However, the closed career path may deter teachers from staying with their employer or in the industry, which may lead to demotivation.

Training provisions in eikaiwa schools were seen by participants in this study as lacking value. Interviewees in Taylor (2017) regarded training in that national chain as inadequate, while Bossaer (2003) and Nuske (2014) highlighted the brevity of training in national eikaiwa chains. Nuske (2014, p. 108) states that "it is unlikely that sufficient teaching expertise can be cultivated" through such training programmes. If the purpose of training is for teachers to learn, develop and be able to confidently function in the classroom, then the participants in this study suggest that eikaiwa training was unsuccessful. Even teachers who had prior teaching experience in other institutions noted that some training is required when entering a new workplace. The feeling of having one's time wasted or of being ill-equipped to do one's job can lead to frustration and demotivation.

Previous literature on teacher motivation shows that relationships with colleagues can have a significant effect (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Nuske, 2014; Oga-Baldwin & Praver, 2008; Taylor, 2017). The prospect of having to work with difficult colleagues could lead to negative feelings regarding going to work, which in turn could become demotivation. Participants' complaints about some colleagues suggest that the hiring practices, particularly of national chains, need to be reviewed.

According to Dinham and Scott (2000), leadership can affect motivation. Fives and Alexander (as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) note that leadership is linked to teacher commitment, which in turn is linked to motivation. A negative relationship between managers and teachers can leave teachers feeling unsupported, undervalued, and without loyalty to their employer (Taylor, 2017). Teachers at the national chain in Taylor's (2017) study were frustrated due to their "perception of the company infringing on and not respecting or valuing their personal time," which suggested a large power distance, i.e. an unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 61). The interviewees in the current study were frustrated and angered by what they

perceived to be an infringement on their personal time by their employers – evidenced through short notice schedule changes, excessive (in their view) travel, and being treated differently to their colleagues – and the resulting negative effects on their private lives.

While the findings from this study reinforce those of the previous study, they also show that demotivating factors are more widespread, as they seem to be present in more than one national chain and in independent schools to varying extents.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. My positionality and prior relationships with some participants may have inadvertently affected the data. Additionally, although between them the six participants had experience in 15 different eikaiwa schools, the sample size is small, so extensive interpretation of the data is not possible. The findings may not be generalisable to the whole eikaiwa industry, which is very broad (Hooper, 2018), but they may be relatable to other people in eikaiwa or in other contexts. Indeed, many of the issues raised by participants in this study have been reported in tertiary education in Japan (Nagatomo, 2015). Despite the limitations, they allow us to see something of the experience of foreign English teachers in eikaiwa schools.

Conclusion

The data collected in this study showed that foreign teachers in national chain and independent eikaiwa schools appear to be affected by five demotivating factors: (a) lack of options for career advancement, (b) inadequate training, (c) difficult relationships with colleagues, (d) the management-teacher relationship, (e) perceived company infringement on personal time. Despite this study's small scale, the data give a glimpse into the experience of foreign English teachers in eikaiwa schools. The data may be relevant for other teachers, owners, and workers in the eikaiwa industry.

The variety of demotivating factors present in eikaiwa schools, in addition to the number of those schools in Japan, suggests that the experience of teachers in those institutions deserves to be more widely researched. Larger scale studies into demotivating factors in different types of eikaiwa schools, studies incorporating non-native English speaker teachers' experiences, and those including input from eikaiwa school managers would be valuable additions to the body of research on eikaiwa schools. Studies into the motivation of long-term eikaiwa teachers would also be enlightening.

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Author Bio

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Stumbling into Slurs: The Most Uncomfortable Person was the Teacher

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Meiji University

In this reflection, the researcher gives an origin story for their reluctant research on learner awareness of derogatory homophobic and racial slurs and a brief overview of their methodology and conclusions. Teaching a content course using authentic literature can be full of surprises, and what was thought to be an enjoyable course on the Lord of the Rings turned out to be an opportunity to explore university students' prior knowledge of four words (gay, queer, chink, and faggot) used in the novels. The words as used by Tolkien were decidedly not derogatory slurs, yet in the current English usage can be. Therefore, it was decided that the instruction should address these meanings and attempt to convey their various contextual meanings. Survey results show that for a group of learners at a Japanese university, the instruction of hateful derogatory slurs was welcomed and viewed as a necessary part of language learning. It is hoped that instruction on uncomfortable, rude, and hateful language not be avoided, despite the potential for discomfort.

I had always loved reading The Lord of the Rings (Tolkien, 1954), and the chance to teach it to my university students sounded like a career pinnacle. It was a full semester of satisfying my nerdy tendencies and helping English learners refine their paraphrasing and other linguistic skills. The course was developed with very high proficiency English learners in mind, at a university in the Tokyo area of Japan, and we were reading the authentic trilogy as well as The Hobbit. Since the course focused heavily on vocabulary, students were required to keep detailed vocabulary logs that were submitted and checked periodically. After the first couple of checks in the early half of the semester, it became quite clear that a few words could cause some confusion and potentially even some rapport damaging discomfort. As it happens, Tolkien uses what modern English users would call antiquated or old definitions of particular words. Naturally, students might have some difficulty deciding which particular definition is meant by the author, but these words in particular are used in many contexts as modern derogatory slurs toward people in a particular racial group or of non-heterosexual orientation. The words in question were queer, gay, chink, and faggot. Tolkien's usage of these words have the meanings of strange; happy; a small cut or chip; and bundle of firewood. Sadly, today they are easily recognizable as words that refer, often derogatorily, to homosexual individuals, or in the case of chink, a racial slur against Chinese immigrants in the US (but which can be used against others of East Asian ethnicity).

How should I approach these vocabulary items? What if students looked these words up in their dictionaries and learned their derogatory and offensive meanings? Why did this have to happen? I just wanted to read and teach about something I enjoyed. I cursed my fate yet saw that there was a research project staring me right in the face. I couldn't in good faith ignore this potential source of confusion, and thus decided to address what turned out to be a gap in the literature on taboo words. I could find research quite easily about what English language learners knew about taboo words related to excrement, interjections, and insults (Burduli, 2014; Dewaele, 2016). However, knowing slurs – what they mean, who might use them, and how to react – is extremely important in, for example, a study abroad situation. If a student in a foreign country were to hear a slur or even be a target of one, that student's knowledge would likely help them judge the safety of the situation, or at the least, whether the speaker of said slur is a person worth investing more time in.

The teaching of slurs in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom could very well be considered as opening Pandora's Box, with the question rightly being asked if this gives license to learners to start using slurs. Slurs cause an immediate reaction when heard, and especially among native speakers, the reaction is almost instantaneous and physical: hearing slurs causes emotional discomfort that manifests in a physical feeling of shock or discomfort. However, for nonnative speakers, slurs may not cause reactions with the same timeliness or physicality (Eilola & Havelka, 2011). Therefore, teaching these words is most likely more uncomfortable for the native speaker teacher than anyone else. It was my idea that having a lesson on these words would be difficult for me, but if my students wanted to learn these words, and saw their impact on a native speaker firsthand, that it would be worth my sacrifice at least. The research inquiry was then set, with two main questions:

1. What is a beginning reference point regarding my students' knowledge of these derogatory slurs?

2. How do they feel about learning such derogatory words in a classroom setting?

Methodology

Participants and Context

In order to address various concerns, for various reasons, not the least of which being the ethical approval process, I decided to have one 90-minute lesson on the four above-named words, sandwiched by two short surveys. Approval to carry out this research and collect data from students was applied for and received from the review committee in the department. Twenty-one students, all native speakers of Japanese and in their third or fourth year of undergraduate study, agreed to allow their survey answers to be used in this research, and both surveys were anonymous and separate.

Instructional Treatment

Following an inductive learning model, I created a worksheet (see Appendix A) which consisted of fill-in-the-

blank items. The items were quotes from the Lord of the Rings and the COCA corpus, with the corpus items representing the derogatory slur usage. Participants were given time to put the four words into each item (2 items for each word). After this task was complete, the participants had to decide if the words were used in a derogatory manner or not. Finally, the last task was to rank the words in order from least offensive (queer, gay) to most offensive (chink, faggot). This ranking was determined partly by examining the degree of reclamation done by the community targeted by the slur, and partly by examining the degree to which people not in the community can use the slur in a non-derogatory way. It was determined that these two words were less offensive, as evidenced by the existence of queer theory in academia, and the mainstream use of queer and gay as descriptive adjectives with neutral or positive connotations. The final wrap-up task was a short explanation that these words have a long and painful history, with many being yelled contemptuously before violent action. Students were clearly able to see my discomfort when discussing this, yet I also tried to show that context, speaker, and intended use matters.

The significance of intent can be most easily observed when examining the word queer; both in Tolkien and modern usage, the word has been subject to several reclamations. Queer is used perhaps most frequently used of the four by Tolkien. In the Lord of the Rings, this word is used to denote 'strange and/or wrong' people or behavior. Today, it is synonymous with a variety of sexual orientations outside of the typical heterosexuality. It is quite notable that this word has been for the most part reclaimed by the non-heterosexual community, even becoming a named academic discipline in queer theory. This reclamation was echoed by Tolkien as well. In book I, chapter 1 of the Fellowship of the Ring, when the topic of Bilbo Baggins was discussed, he was called queer (strange and wrong). However, the Gaffer, Bilbo's gardener, reclaimed the word by equating it with Bilbo's generosity (he had invited the entire Shire to his birthday party): "If that's being queer, then we could do with a bit more queerness in these parts. There's some not far away that wouldn't offer a pint of beer to a friend, if they lived in a hole with golden walls" (Tolkien, 1954, p.31). This same reclamation phenomenon has also occurred with the word gay.

While the instructional treatment primarily dealt with the contrast of archaic yet innocuous and modern yet derogatory, it should be noted that context still allows for a variety of interpretations of these words. Most notably is perhaps the use of the word faggot. In the US context, the word has decidedly only an extremely strong derogatory use, yet in the UK context, the word can mean bundle of sticks or a kind of meatball, as well as the derogatory use. Similarly, the word chink occurred in the COCA corpus either as a slur or in the set phrase chink in the armor, with no other uses detected. While this set phrase may be acceptable in some contexts, particularly in the UK, it should be noted that there is some effort to retire the phrase (Hsu, 2012). Indeed, the phrase weak spot carries no such baggage and does not refer to any figurative armor, which shows that at least in the American context, the phrase chink in the armor is outdated.

Data Collection

The first survey (see Appendix B) was administered on the same day as the instructional treatment, just before it. It was 4-12 questions, and surveyed the knowledge or awareness of each of the four words. For each word affirmatively marked for previous exposure or knowledge, participants were then asked if they knew the older, non-offensive Tolkien meaning as well as the new derogatory meaning. If participants indicated that they did not have any previous exposure or knowledge, they were not asked about either meaning. Time to complete the survey took less than 15 minutes.

Following the first survey, the instructional treatment was given, and the final survey (see Appendix C) contained two yes/no questions and two open-ended questions. Participants were asked if they felt discomfort when learning these words in a classroom environment, whether incidentally or as part of a pre-planned lesson. Participants were then invited to give open-ended answers in English or Japanese to explain their opinions about instruction on derogatory slurs. Many opted to answer in English, but Japanese answers were translated by the author. This survey also took less than 15 minutes.

Questions on both surveys were given in English and Japanese. Results of the surveys will be presented in the following section.

Results

Survey

The first survey would give a picture of the participants' prior knowledge of the words under research. As can be seen in Table 1, the most widely understood term is the word gay, with the least known word being chink. One participant did not indicate an answer for the word queer. This shows that EFL contexts do give the chance for learners to be exposed to these items, and presumably other derogatory terms. The participants reporting prior exposure only, and thus no semantic knowledge, suggest that lack of contextual understanding or cultural knowledge inhibited semantic uptake. Learners are being exposed to these words to varying degrees, but their learning needs seem not to be addressed in most curricula, as will be further discussed.

Survey 2

Participants overwhelmingly reported little discomfort, with 18 reporting no discomfort learning about slurs, and 20 reporting no discomfort when they are deliberately addressed pedagogically. One participant reported discomfort with both the words and a lesson on the words, and two participants reported discomfort in the words but not in a lesson.

Open ended responses were moderately variable, but on the whole the participants felt that learning these words is necessary and important for learning the

Table 1 Participants' Prior Knowledge of the Four Investigated Slurs

Word	Under-stood old meaning	Under-stood new meaning	under-stood both meanings	prior exposure only	No Prior exposure or not sure
Queer	1	1	2	4	12
Gay	3	5	4	2	7
faggot	2	3	0	4	12
chink	0	1	0	2	18

language of English and also about the cultures of the people who speak it. Learners expressed a desire not to inadvertently cause anxiety to others by not understanding the full scope of a word such as a slur (even if it has been reclaimed by the community), and also noted the lack of textbooks and explicit instruction as a detriment. One participant also mentioned that they did not like the idea of a slur being used towards them and not realizing it. Finally, it must also be noted that a couple of participants were thankful for explicit instruction on these words, even if they felt discomfort during the lesson for themselves or out of concern for other classmates.

Discussion

The teaching of these words turned out to not be a Pandora's Box after all. In my class of 21 Japanese participants, one knew the derogatory meaning of a slur directed toward people of East Asian ethnicity. While not verified for statistical significance, any instructor should be able to operate on the assumption that someone in the classroom knows at least one of these kinds of words, and this finding has helped me to conduct my lessons with an increased level of awareness of the broad knowledge and experiences students bring into the classroom. Therefore, I believe that we as teachers do students a disservice when not providing a full repertoire of social and linguistic responses. By not addressing impoliteness, including the use of slurs, and only teaching students to be polite, we limit their ability to understand and respond to situations of rudeness or even danger. Particularly in a study abroad context, this leaves learners unprepared if being insulted, mocked, or even threatened (Valdeon, 2015).

This research has helped me gain a new perspective on language learning and thus inform my teaching practice. I can think of many of my own experiences of rudeness being directed toward me in an unfamiliar culture and language. On occasion in my daily life in Japan, I have wanted the ability to respond with some language that communicates, "I see that you are being rude/racist/xenophobic." Having this ability, would, to me, give me some sense of power over the situation, and to convey that I am choosing not to escalate the situation even though I could. Knowledge is power, and it is our duty to fully empower our learners. By not ignoring derogatory slurs and other rude language, we give a more complete picture of the complexities of English-speaking cultures.

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Appendix A

In-Class Worksheet

Chink Queer Faggot Gay

1. Please fill in the blanks in the sentences with any of the above words. You may use the words more than once.

   a. "You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End's a queer place, and its folk are queer er."

   b. Last year, the owner of Chink 's Steaks in Philadelphia finally gave up his fight to keep his restaurant's name and lost 30 percent to 40 percent of his customer base. " They say,' You bent to the PC police,' " said Joe Groh, who renamed his restaurant Joe's Steak and Soda Shop. He bought the business from its original owner, Samuel Sherman, who'd been nicknamed " chink " as a kid because of his almond shaped eyes.

   c. Growing up in high school, being singled out as somebody who's different is never easy, and it's quite a sad situation for a lot of kids across the world in today's society. And for me, when I was that age, I was called " faggot , " " homo, " " gay boy, " on a daily occurrence. And I was, in some ways lucky that I was never physically bullied, but more mentally bullied.

   d. While literary criticism has tended to become more sexpositive since the rise of queer theory and third-wave feminisms in the 1990s, high postmodernist novels of the 1970s remain particularly fraught among contemporary feminist scholars, who often critique postmodern novelists' unapologetic

investment in virile masculinity and exclusionary discourses.

e. Chink in the armor: Smaug had an empty spot in his gold and jewel armor

f. Picking up a faggot he held it aloft for a moment, and then with a word of command, naur an edraith ammen! he thrust the end of his staff into the midst of it.

g. Another word for happy is gay . The hobbits had a gay time before the adventure became so dangerous.

2.Please identify which instances above are pejorative (expressing disapproval)/highly offensive, and which ones are not.

a. Yes, but uses the original pejorative, not the homophobic meaning

b. Pejorative

c. Pejorative

d. Not pejorative

e. Not pejorative

f. Not pejorative

g. Not pejorative

3. Rank the words from least to most offensive:

a. least: queer, gay

b. most: chink, faggot

4. Write the word or words which has/have been reclaimed by the community: queer, gay

5. Write the word or words that has/have been partially reclaimed by some on the community: chink, faggot

6. Write the word or words that has/have not been reclaimed: chink, faggot

Appendix B

Survey 1 Questions

For each of the four words: Had you ever seen or heard this word before taking this class? 今回の受講をする前に、あなたはこの言葉を見たこと、又は聞いたことがありましたか?

Yes, I had seen / heard this word before taking this class. はい、私はこの授業以前にこの言葉を見たこと、又は聞いた事がありました。

No, I had not. いいえ、私はこの言葉を見たことや聞いた事がありませんでした。

I am not sure

If yes:

Were you aware of its original meaning? あなたはこの言葉の持つ本来の意味を知っていましたか? Yes No

Were you aware of its newer meaning? あなたはこの言葉の持つ新しい意味を知っていましたか? Yes No

Appendix C

Survey 2 Questions

1. Do you see value in learning the offensive meanings of the words listed above in an English class? Please explain why. あなたは、上記の言葉の持つ不快な意味について学ぶことに価値があると思いますか？その理由も合わせてご説明ください。

2. Did learning the offensive meanings of words in an English class have any effect on your level of comfort in the class (Did learning these offensive meanings give you any anxiety or discomfort?) これらの言葉を英語授業で学んだことは、あなたの受講中の居心地レベルに影響がありましたか？（これらの不快な意味の言葉を学んだことで、あなたは不安感や不快感を感じましたか？）

Yes はい。 Noいいえ。

Did having a lesson focused on offensive language make you uncomfortable in class? あなたは、不快な言葉を中心にした授業を受けたことで、授業中に居心地が悪いと感じる事がありましたか？

Yesはい。 Noいいえ。

3. Would you prefer not to learn offensive words or offensive meanings of certain words in the classroom (either incidentally or as part of a lesson)? Please explain why. あなたは、不快な言葉や不快な意味を授業中に学ぶことは（それが付随的、又は授業の一部だとしても）出来ればしたくないと思いますか？その理由も合わせてお答えください。

Author Bio

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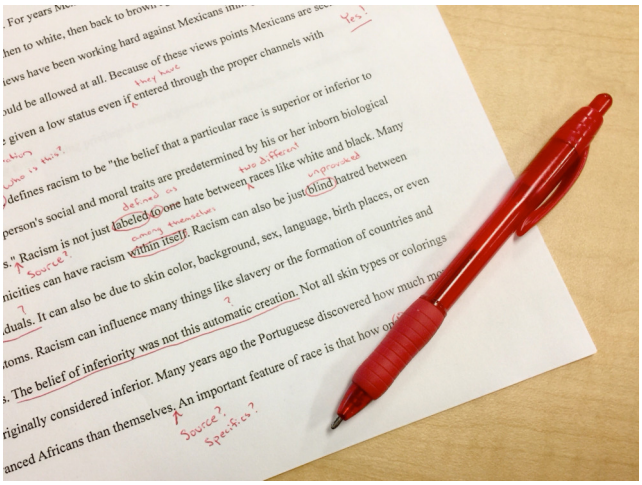
The Teacher Development SIG in Dialogue: An Interview with the Testing and Evaluation SIG's James Sick

Sam Morris
Kanda University of International Studies

This interview is the second of three from our annual forum at JALT's PanSIG conference, with 2019's edition titled - Understanding Teacher Efficacy: SIGs in Dialogue. In this forum, three Teacher Development (TD) SIG officers each conducted short 20-minute interviews with invited representatives from the Mind, Brain, and Education (BRAIN), Extensive Reading (ER), and Testing and Evaluation (TEVAL) SIGs, in order to collaboratively and dialogically explore the topic of teacher efficacy together; one of the central themes of the 2019 JALT national conference. The forum provided the chance, through formal interaction, for a group of SIGs to not only cooperatively construct a richer understanding of teacher efficacy from multiple perspectives, but to strengthen an awareness of each other's group's activities. In this interview, TD SIG treasurer Sam Morris asks questions to James Sick, an officer of the TEVAL SIG about the relationships between teacher efficacy and language assessment. The following exchange has been adapted from the original spoken version, along with additional written communication. It has been edited for readability and clarity purposes.



Sam: Thank you very much for your time today to talk about this important topic, James. I was very interested in talking to your SIG about this issue because assessment is one of the most important parts of our job, but it's also something that many teachers may lack confidence in. I wonder if you could begin by introducing the work that your SIG does?

James: The testing SIG, or TEVAL for short, was founded in 1995 by a group of teachers within JALT who were concerned with the university entrance exams and the negative washback they were perceived to have. The entrance exams at that time primarily focused on discrete grammar points and answering multiple-choice questions about very long and difficult reading passages. There was little in the way of communication that was addressed by these tests.

The SIG quickly widened in scope to address the more challenging question of 'how do we appropriately assess communicative English in the classroom?' Our goals are to support all forms of assessment and evaluation at both the institutional and teacher level. We are interested in all methods of assessing individual language performance, group outcomes, program impact, and washback.

Some of the activities we've carried out in the past few years include providing workshops by experienced assessors at chapter events, sponsoring experts in assessment as featured speakers at JALT conferences, publishing a biannual journal featuring both research and practical articles on assessment, and recently by compiling a full-length book from 20 years of a regular column on testing and statistics by JD Brown. The book, Statistics Corner, is sent as a complimentary gift to all new SIG members. We also publish a biannual newsletter and have run workshops at JALT national and other conferences related to assessment. I became the SIG coordinator in 2008 and have held that role since. Besides being the SIG coordinator, I teach courses in testing and research statistics at Temple University Japan and a few other places.

Sam: As part of the TEVAL mission statement, you note that "tests and assessments serve many purposes" could you briefly define the different kinds of assessment and testing that language teachers typically employ during their work.

James: There recently has been some debate within the profession about what exactly constitutes an assessment. One possible response to that question is that an assessment is nothing more than an activity that is assigned a letter or number when it's completed. At PanSIG 2018 in Tokyo, TEVAL sponsored Jerry Talandis, who spoke about how to turn standard speaking activities into speaking assessments.

With that definition in mind, I would say that individual teachers typically create two categories of assessment: traditional tests and performance assessments. Traditional tests target specific skills or knowledge sets, such as reading or listening comprehension, vocabulary, or grammar points. These assessments are usually comprised of a series of test items scored as right or wrong and then summed to create a single score. They are used as entrance exams, placement tests, or course achievement tests, but short quizzes or other ongoing formative assessments can also fall in that category.

The second type, performance assessments, assign a subjective grade to a speaking or writing performance. This category covers a wide range of activities, such as graded speeches and presentations, one-on-one interviews with a teacher, role-plays with other students, and observed group discussions, as well as graded written

work. More and more, these types of performance assessments are being used not only for classroom assessments, but for placement or program exit standards. And as most JALT members are probably aware, there is now an official plan to incorporate speaking and writing performance as part of university entrance exams. Considering the history of getting the listening section into the center test, my prediction is that this is going to happen eventually, but it's going to be delayed year by year by year. It's going to take some time. Initially, only a few universities will do it, but I predict that this is not only going to have an enormous impact on teaching but also on teachers learning how to construct and grade these kinds of performances in unbiased and fair ways.

Sam: To jump off from that final point, one issue I think that many teachers struggle with is the inherent subjectivity of grading, for example, written papers. Do you have any advice on how teachers might grade their students in an unbiased way?

James: I think the key here is the two Cs: collaborate and calibrate. Work with other teachers to create rubrics that have clear, detailed descriptors of the language or performance aspects you will grade in your assessment. If you're in a program that has a standardized program-wide assessment, that might be easier, but I'd say even if you don't, find a teacher teaching a similar course with a similar kind of assessment and share your rubrics. Talk about them, and even look for some opportunities to see how well you are calibrated. Can these rubrics be used to give reasonably consistent scores to observe performances? Even if you're working independently and are not officially required to have uniform assessments, sharing ideas, and working together to design your rubrics and then testing whether they are sufficient to give consistent grades to similar work can take you a long way toward relieving some of that stress and creating less biased assessment.

I also think there's a whole lot to learn about rubric design. I've done several workshops on rubrics and found that many people use what I would call a quasi-rubric. It has criteria like pronunciation, body language, and content, and it has levels like excellent, very good, good, and needs work, but these cells are just empty. Those are not genuine rubrics. The empty cells need to be filled in with detailed descriptors of what can be observed. And those are then used to calibrate teachers. These kinds of rubrics can be very tricky to write, and really, we need two versions. We need one for the teachers and another simplified version for the students, because they need to get meaningful feedback.

I might also add that subjective assessments will never be completely free of bias or error. You're better off to just accept that and take steps to minimize it, not eliminate it.

Sam: I think creating fair assessments can require statistical knowledge. What are some easy ways for teachers to develop their understanding of statistical techniques?

James: Firstly, I'd like to say that statistical knowledge is definitely helpful, but it's not the only kind of knowledge that is necessary to be competent at assessment. For most people, I would say basic item writing and rubric design techniques come first and are more important than statistical analysis.

Second, I'd say that if you want to analyze your multiple-choice tests (and you should because you can learn an enormous amount about your test making skills, your students, and whether your goals have been achieved), the statistics are not that complicated. The two most important test statistics, which are item facility and item discrimination, are not that difficult to compute or understand. Item facility is simply the percentage of your test takers who answered an item or a set of items correctly. Instead of asking, “How many test problems did individual A answer correctly?” you are asking, “How many individuals answered test problem 1 correctly?” And when test items are tied to curricular goals, that is how you make sound judgments about the degree to which your objectives are being achieved.

Sam: What kind of knowledge and skills do you think a teacher who is ‘confident in testing and evaluation’ needs to have, and how do you think teachers can develop or achieve those skills?

James: To me, the clearest way to identify a teacher who has become strong and confident in testing and evaluation from a teacher who has not, is that the former will be able to quickly and easily identify the connection between specific curriculum goals and specific assessments. Expert teachers enter a course with explicit objectives that they hope to accomplish. These objectives may be general in nature, but an experienced teacher will usually be able to state them in terms of observable outcomes. An experienced assessor will additionally be able to state which assessments will be used to determine the extent to which an outcome has been achieved.

In other words, self-efficacy in testing entails competent syllabus design as well as testing skills. A good teacher begins by saying, "These are five specific goals I hope to achieve in the next 15 weeks, and this is how I am going to determine whether I and my students have been successful." A good assessor will answer the questions, “How am I going to know if these goals have been achieved?” and “What kind of principled observation or assessment or test am I going to make to confirm that they learnt what we set out to learn?”

Sam: Finally, to bring the discussion back to the TEVAL SIG, how would you say that your SIG can support teachers who lack confidence in assessment? What resources or events do you offer that you feel would be of use?

James: One of the most important recommendations I can recommend is the book I mentioned earlier that we have published called *Statistics Corner*. For 20 years, JD Brown has been answering questions about testing and statistics in non-technical, teacher-friendly language in SHIKEN, the TEVAL SIG Newsletter. In 2017, we compiled all those questions and answers into the book. You can purchase that book on Amazon for US$30, or if you join the TEVAL SIG, you’ll receive a complimentary copy. Short of taking a testing course in a master’s program, I think reading that book is probably the best way to get yourself up to speed on both the practical and statistical side of testing.

We have also conducted workshops cosponsored by chapters in the past. We hope to organize more of those so watch for them on the TEVAL website, ELT Calendar, or other JALT information sources. We often do workshops or forums at the PanSIG or the JALT national conference. In the past we've had workshops on basic item writing skills, easy item analysis using Excel, using and interpreting Rasch analysis, and other topics. If these interest you, drop by the events, or drop by the SIG table to talk to us.

Sam: Thank you very much for your time, it’s been very interesting and useful to speak with you.

Bios

Sam Morris is the current treasurer of the TD SIG, a senior lecturer in the English Language Institute at Kanda University of International Studies, and a PhD candidate at the University of Leicester. He is interested broadly in the role that emotions play in second language teaching and acquisition, as well as the affective dimension of teacher psychology. His principal focus is on the situated emotion regulation that teachers employ during their work.

James Sick is the coordinator of the JALT Testing and Evaluation (TEVAL) SIG.

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The Teacher Development SIG in Dialogue: An Interview with the Extensive Reading SIG's Mark Brierley

Michael Ellis
International Christian University High School

Michael: Thank you to Mark for stepping in for Joanne Sato as a last minute change. I'd like to begin by saying that we recognize that the six people speaking in this forum are all white men, and that we need to do better and will make it our goal to provide more diversity in these forums in the future. That said, we're very happy to have Mark here to talk to us. I wanted to reach out to the Extensive Reading (ER) SIG in particular for this forum because, as a fan of ER myself, I've been to a lot of their activities and there was actually a good maybe hour-and-a-half to two-hour run yesterday when we were just going to the same presentations, because ER is so active and so well represented at events like this with presentations throughout the day. But I also feel that ER is a bug that you have to catch and not everyone has caught it. So I'm hoping that today Mark can show some of the great things that the ER SIG does, especially for you who haven't employed ER so much. So with that said Mark would you mind just introducing yourself and explaining your role at the ER SIG?

Mark: Thank you Mike. My name is Mark Brierley. I teach at Shinshu University in Matsumoto. I've been involved with the SIG for about 10 years now. I met Daniel Stewart at a JALT conference and he seemed very active. I joined the SIG and started off doing nothing. But they used to have their forum at the JALT International Conference—the ER colloquium—followed by an Annual General Meeting (AGM), and they used to shut the doors to stop anyone escaping, so they'd all stay for the AGM. I managed to avoid getting volunteered into a position one year but the following year I started helping Daniel doing the newsletter and then after a while I took over as editor of the ER SIG newsletter which I'm still doing now.

Mike: Can you talk about the SIG's goals as a whole. What kind of activities do you do and how do you achieve those goals?

Mark: Well the SIG's mission is to encourage more people to do extensive reading. We hold a seminar each year. We're also involved in the Extensive Reading World Congress which is held every two years. Two years ago it was in Tokyo. This year it is held in Taiwan in August which is very convenient if you live in Japan. We also have a newsletter. If you don't have one please grab a newsletter on your way out. If you do have one please grab another one. And we also have an online journal for more academic research.

There are two parts to our mission. One of them is persuading people to do extensive reading—because it's obvious that you should do extensive reading. And the other part is to get more quality research to demonstrate how effective extensive reading is. And this is very difficult because I think for a start all language-based research is difficult. A lot of it is not very good and it's very difficult because there are so many factors that come into language that you can't possibly control for all the different variables. Very often you see research papers where they've done a treatment. For example I saw one where they were doing extensive reading and looking at grammar, so they had two groups of students. One group they just told to read the books and enjoy the books and ignore the grammar, and the other they told them to read the books and look out for the grammar. And then they tested to see who had noticed more grammar. And they found that the group who had been told to notice the grammar had noticed more grammar. This doesn't really help us very much except that some of the students were listening to what the teacher told them to do, which in itself may be a useful finding. There's a lot of research out there and a lot of it is not very good. It's very difficult to find good research but that's one thing that the SIG supports. At this year's international conference in Nagoya in November, Rob Waring will be speaking at the ER colloquium on the subject of where extensive reading research is now, and where we are going.

Mike: (to audience) How many of you identify as ER practitioners in your own context? Okay it's about half. I think it would be useful if you could just very simply explain what extensive reading is.

Mark: Extensive Reading is reading a lot of easy, enjoyable books. That's Mark Helgesen's definition of extensive reading.

Mike: Yeah I think that that's broad and simple. In that same vein what are some common misconceptions about ER that exist.

Mark: Oh, "We do ER... I got my students to read Wuthering Heights over a 15 week semester." That's not ER.

I think there are lots of hurdles to doing ER. There are people who kind of think it's a waste. Like, these books are far too easy and "our students know 5000 words. They have a vocabulary of 5000 words. Why are they reading these easy books?" Well, they learnt those 5000 words over six years and the most frequent thousand words, they haven't looked at for the last five years. The ones they learned in the last year of high school... If you look at vocabulary frequency then those first thousand words are seventy five percent of the English language, of everything that is written in the English language. The sixth thousand are about half a percent, and the way that schools often work in Japan is they have a thousand

words a year that they have to learn, and so they teach the next thousand each year.

When you look at the high school textbooks, what they've done in order to get those thousand very low frequency words is found a very difficult passage in English, then taken out all the easy words to make it fit into the textbook. So in fact if you look at difficulty of reading, the high school textbooks in Japan are more difficult than even most native-speaker focused books. There's this idea that when you're trying to get them to read something that's got 200 head words, it's far too easy. I guess fluency is something that is often forgotten in the scrabble for more vocabulary and more grammar.

Mike: I'd like to pivot to the conference theme, the concept of teacher efficacy and just ask you to summarize some other methods employed within ER to assess student learning, as I think our efficacy should be defined by how much students are learning right? How can you prove that ER works?

Mark: Short answer: you can't.

Mike: OK, moving on...

Mark: No, I think because it's holistic language acquisition and a lot of the testing is very specific and it's looking at elements and looking at the nuts and bolts, while extensive reading is looking at their whole ability and I think there are all manner of benefits from extensive reading that are much bigger than any single test or indeed any kind of assessment.

Whenever you try and assess something there are two conflicting challenges. I guess the problems are that you want your students to read, as you remember "extensive" means "a lot" and, for practical purposes, a lot is hundreds of thousands of words, so you want your students—you need your students—to read that much. Where there is research a lot of it is on how many words you need to show progress. According to research by Hitoshi Nishizawa in a six-year combined high school and college, he found about one hundred thousand words is how many words a student needs to read to break the translation habit, for them to read without translating without the natural knee jerk reaction to seeing something in a foreign language that you don't know. It's quicker to translate it into your language in order to understand it and to break that habit takes about 100,000 words.

He then found about three hundred thousand words is how many words you need in order to start getting positive results in formal, discrete-item language tests. So that's about three hundred thousand words. If your students have to read that many words, for a start if you want to test whether they've read each one of those words, that's going to be incredibly cumbersome. It's either going to be impossible or very intrusive, and there's a great danger that the assessment will put them off reading, especially when their fluent reading level is at a very low level and the kind of books they're reading are only a few hundred words long. If they have to read, and then if you're expecting them to write a book report they're going to spend an hour writing a few words which is going to be very painful and very time consuming for them. You're going to pick this up and think, "Well, this doesn't really show me whether they read it or not." So there's far too much writing for them if they do book reports and far too little writing for you in order to prove that they've read what they've read.

So the short answer is basically you can't possibly test with 100 percent reliability whether they have read the quantity that they need to read. There are various other ways. MReader and XReading are two systems that do have some kind of accountability. There are also various kinds of peripheral activities that you can do related to books that students have read which will be difficult for them to do if they haven't read the books. And very simple things like get the students to read in class and spend some class time reading.

Personally, I think it's very important to spend some of your class time reading because you can see whether they are reading or not. I mean they may just have their eyes open and be flicking over the pages. And of course there'll always be some people who will do that. But I think also it's very important to show the students that extensive reading is important: it's so important, we're going to spend some of our valuable class time reading, and the message that you send by spending time reading I think is very powerful as well.

If assessment is basically impossible, what you can do is just try and assess as many different points around the reading as possible. Also, I just trust my students and the fact that I'm trusting them I think gives them learner agency. One of the great things about extensive reading is it really puts the control into the students. I'm not going to tell you exactly which book to read. I'm gonna give you reading time in class but you can read at home, you can read wherever you want to outside the class. You can read which book you want; if you don't like the book just stop reading it, and go and pick up another book.

You don't need to read the whole book. When I read a book I don't do a test on it and I don't write a book report,

so I don't see why you should do that when you're reading a book in a foreign language.

Mike: The purpose of the report is only because you need to be assessed. That's what it comes down to?

Mark: Yes. Right.

Mike: Well I'd like to stay with the topic of assessment for the next line of questioning. I wanted to take on the role of one of my colleagues who kind of scoffs and laughs at extensive reading. On the topic of assessment. I think that there's a range of ways to assess that can be on one side a huge burden for the teacher to work through whether students have read -- reports and so on, if the teacher takes the time to do so. But on the other extreme, it can be very unsatisfying for the student if they just list their books and the teacher checks them off. How can we find a happy medium to assess effectively and satisfactorily?

Mark: I think just the simpler record of books, let the students say which books they've read and trust them, with some monitoring; for example if your student has read four Harry Potter books in a week in the wrong order, that's a bit suspicious. You have an idea of what reading level your students are, and if they're reading books that are way out of their level. If they say they've read a book that you know is not in the library, that's also something that you can bring up with the student, and maybe ask them where they found the book. Another thing is that sometimes I think our students mostly ignore what we say and copy people. Basically people copy what other people do. If we're trying to find the easiest, laziest way of doing things then our students will also find the easiest, laziest way of doing things and to some extent we need to try.

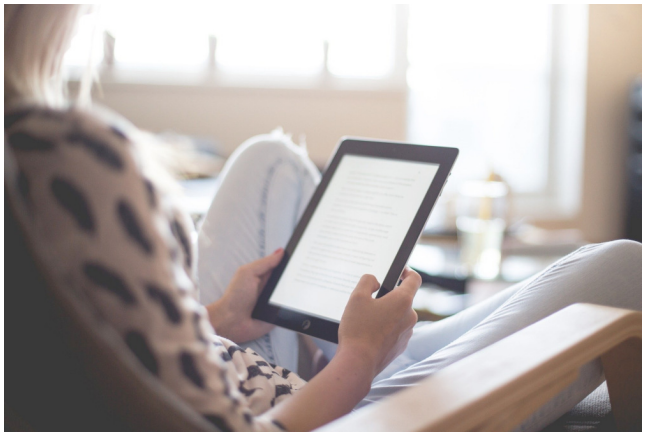
Mike: That's very true. So my colleague would say, holding a book called Three Great Works of Shakespeare that's maybe half a centimeter thick, "Is this really great works of Shakespeare?" Can graded literature have literary value and does that matter for extensive reading?

Mark: Yes. Yeah of course it has value. Shakespeare, apparently, used to edit the works of Shakespeare and when he was putting on a play he would sometimes add scenes and sometimes take out scenes, and sometimes the words would change. He wouldn't always have the same lines. Sometimes the actors would come in and say something different. Shakespeare is not set in stone.

Every single work of literature has been written for a particular audience at a particular level, often a particular age, sometimes a particular person: Alice in Wonderland is an example of a book that was written for one person, and everything is edited. Works of literature are often changed and adapted when they're translated.

If you read Shakespeare in Japanese, is that still Shakespeare or what? Shakespeare also spoke very different English; the language has changed a great deal since the first Elizabethan times. I think David Crystal has done work trying to reconstruct what Shakespeare actually sounded like. If you heard a Shakespearean play, if you could go back in time you wouldn't understand a word of it. So when we hear Shakespeare's plays being delivered in modern English then it's all... Literature... This idea of some books being sacred and this is an authentic text is I think not really relevant. Everything is adapted all the time.

The other thing is, when you say the argument: can students appreciate literature if it has been adapted? Well they can't appreciate literature in its original form because it's often much too difficult for them. So maybe eventually their English will get to a level where they can truly appreciate the literature in its original form, but appreciating in a simplified or modified form is a really important step. So that's a lot better than nothing.



Mike: Thank you. We're running out of time but I'll try to just ask two more questions, first one more challenging. You spoke before about trusting students that they're following the rules and I completely agree with that. We need to build an atmosphere of trust. But as you said, students do try to cheat and they get better at cheating over time. In an exit survey that I gave out last year a lot of the students who went through three years of ER expressed frustration that their classmates were cheating the system. How much should we and how much can we address noncompliance with ER?

Mark: This is a very difficult question. I think the bigger your programs are the more difficult it gets, and when you start to have programs across different teachers it becomes even more difficult. I think that's an ongoing question. In a way, if you make it more difficult to cheat, the students will just try harder to cheat, and be more difficult to find.

Mike: Right.

Mark: So, if it's easy to cheat it's easier to catch them. You can see it and then you can catch people cheating and make it known that you know that they didn't read Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.

Mike: That's interesting because I just add more and more rules over time to the point that I forget all the rules.

Mark: Yeah I think that's what tends to happen is that we make rules and the rules become more and more complicated and often that's working against us, because some students will spend a lot more effort—as you know if you have been a student yourself once—you'll spend much more effort avoiding doing the work. For example when I'm typing something on a computer, I'll use copy and paste to copy this word from over here and it would've been much quicker just to type of the word, but I'm going to use copy and paste because I can, and I think students are like that as well. So fewer rules!

Mike: To conclude. Do you have any messages for anyone who might be interested in getting involved with the SIG and how they can go about doing that?

Mark: Yes, please, please get involved! To stay in contact, come along to one of the ER SIG events at JALT International.

Bios

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The Teacher Development SIG online:

We keep an active online presence through Facebook and Twitter, our YouTube channel, and our own website. On Facebook and Twitter, we share information on upcoming SIG events, reports of past workshops and sessions, JALT activities, language teaching conferences throughout Asia, special member requests, and more... We also use these sites to interface directly with our members and those interested in our group. Our YouTube channel hosts recordings of some featured speakers' presentations, with plans to add more content soon. On our website, visitors can learn more about our various SIG activities.

Website – https://td.jalt.org

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Thought Experiments: Raising Awareness of Classroom Culture

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English language education in Japanese schools is often criticised for being too-heavily geared towards university entrance tests rather than communicative competence. As university English teachers, many of us are charged with teaching and facilitating interactive, communicative speaking classes, but find our students remarkably reluctant to participate actively. Teachers can be disappointed, disillusioned, and confused when even those students who express an interest in improving their English skills don't take advantage of the communicative opportunities that we design and provide in class, opting instead for reticence. Brown (2004) called this phenomenon "bafflingly counterproductive learning behavior" (p. 15). What factors compel so many of our students to be uncommunicative in the classroom, and what can be done to help them feel more comfortable interacting? I have found that simply raising students' awareness of the usually-unspoken cultural rules that sanction silence and passivity within classrooms is often enough to facilitate adjustments towards greater communicability. Bringing usually-unexamined automatic classroom behaviours to light, tactfully and critically, can lead students towards questioning the appropriateness of those behaviours, and can lead students to opt for more active and communicative participation.

Classroom silence

A culture of classroom silence is a significant impediment to the success of Japan's foreign-language education. A tacit expectation that communication within classrooms will be largely unidirectional (teacher to students) is at odds with not only the most effective methods of teaching, but also the objectives of policymakers. Efforts and initiatives intended to make language education more communicative meet with resistance when they are applied, as they can differ greatly from what students are accustomed to. Most teachers will know from experience that simply requesting or requiring that classrooms suddenly become lively interactive spaces is, most often, not effective.

The work of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), which examined various aspects of national cultures the world over, has striking explanatory power when it comes to the aspects of Japanese classroom culture that can impede communicative approaches. Amongst their six dimensions of national culture is Collective vs. Individual, which looks at how members of certain cultures see themselves less as individuals than as members of groups in which everyone shares responsibility for cohesiveness and uniformity. This sheds light onto the tendency of Japanese students to rarely if ever volunteer answers, to rarely ask clarifying questions, and to object to being singled out with questions from the teacher. In a speaking class, when each student might be expected to contribute comments and answers from their own viewpoint, often about themselves, students can feel 'put on the spot', and opt to remain silent rather than stand out or be the center of the attention even briefly. The dimension of *Power Distance*, which looks at the degree of inequality between authority figures (such as teachers) and regular citizens (such as students), explains why students can tend to be so deferential to teachers, rarely voicing comments or disagreements and instead expecting the teacher to act as the sole source of knowledge and information throughout the class. In cultures with a high degree of power distance, students are typically receptive rather than proactive, and can feel unable to ask for repetition or clarification (Banks, 2016).

Conflicting intentions

Obviously there are far more, and more complicated cultural and historical factors that account for the broader classroom culture of Japan. Questions about cultural imperialism aside (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), when the goals of our communicative classes are incongruous with the cultural environment in which we're charged to bring them about, decisions need to be made. Either the culture of classroom silence or the goal of communicative competence has to defer to the other. To over-respect, accommodate, and accept non-communicative behaviours on the grounds that they are based in culture and therefore ought to be respected and side-stepped is to perform a disservice to our students. Surely, there is little point teaching or encouraging our students to communicate in a foreign language in a manner that comports with the norms and confines of a silent, teacher-centered classroom culture. The students will soon be leaving that unique environment, and once they do we want to have equipped them with knowledge, skills, and strategies that they can use for real-world communication with people from vastly different cultures. Future foreign-language interlocutors are sure to bring with them vastly different communicative expectations to those of the Japanese classroom environment, and there is likely to be a price to pay for long drawn-out silences, terse answers, and non-responsiveness.

It is our duty as language educators to direct our students *past* classroom silence, and to do so in a way that students can understand and agree to on their own terms. Whereas some researchers have prescribed an increased understanding of the culture of classroom silence as an end in itself, and as something of its own solution to the problems that classroom silence causes (Harumi, 2011), others go beyond that and instead recommend concerted action to overcome it (Banks, 2016). Given the goals I have for my students, based on my awareness of their potential as English speakers, I have come to view Japan's

culture of classroom silence as a problem that needs to be overcome with some urgency. I have long been testing ways to help students recognise and break through some of the impediments to effective participation that they, through no fault of their own, bring along with them into the language classroom.

Leveraging students' beliefs

Decades of teachers' frustration (Miller, 1995) and ineffectual educational reforms attest that the culture of classroom silence is a heavy weight to lift. Perhaps, however, we can lead our students towards perceiving *for themselves* that behaving the way they ordinarily might in a classroom would possibly be aberrant, peculiar, and potentially embarrassing in a communicative English speaking class. Can classroom silence and avoidance strategies be effectively stigmatised on the students' terms, rather than only by means of rules dictated and enforced by their teacher (which might meet resistance)? How can a teacher leverage the students' own beliefs, values, and motivations so as to have the students themselves re-frame what has always been *appropriate* classroom behaviour as instead being inappropriate, undesirable, and even *weird*? Can a teacher foster beliefs and ideals in the students that establish active participation and communicability as the easier and more desirable path forward? If so, students might be positioned to observe for the first time that communicative competence in English is perhaps far easier to attain than what they've ever previously believed.

Juxtapositions

As a means of reframing certain problematic tendencies as humorous rather than directly as negative, I try to portray a funny juxtaposition of familiar reticent behaviours *onto* the kinds of interactions the students likely have every day in non-classroom contexts. The communication lags, the drawn-out silences, the discomfort of being called upon for an answer, the reluctance to admit to not knowing, ... how would such behaviours look if they were transplanted into ordinary, day-to-day communicative contexts?

I've created some resources and techniques, some of which I display on the projector screen and others which are more verbal, which are designed to re-package and re-present accepted and comfortable non-communicative behaviours as instead being uncomfortable, awkward, and difficult. Watching the students coming to view non-communicative classroom silences in potentially negative terms is satisfying and exciting, as it can be a first step in their opting for more communicative participation in class.

Thought experiments

When called upon by a teacher to give an answer or even a simple response, students can often spend a long time planning an answer, rehearsing it mentally, even checking it first with neighbours and partners before finally delivering it. Accuracy is more of a concern than timely interaction. Many teachers have had the experience of asking a student a simple, conversational question, and despite there being no reason to expect anything other than a simple, informative answer, being met first with a drawn-out period of silence and nervousness.

I experienced such a situation in a class of English majors some years ago, whilst sitting amongst a group of five or six students. I asked one student a simple question, and she gave her short, simple answer only after a very, very prolonged silence. What occurred to me to do was not to instruct the student that she ought to have answered more quickly, or to ask why she had made everyone in the group wait for so long for her answer, but instead to abruptly ask her what country she wanted to travel to with the English she was learning. After clarifying my meaning, which may indeed have seemed to have taken the conversation off on an irrelevant tangent, she answered that she wanted to go to Canada. I then asked her how long she thought the Canadians that she would meet there would wait for an answer to such a question as the one I had just asked her, without becoming confused or concerned. In other words, how many seconds of complete silence did she imagine her Canadian friends would wait through after asking her a simple question? Within a second or two her face lit into a slightly-embarrassed smile as she realised the strangeness of making someone wait upwards of twenty seconds for a reply to a simple question in the context of a friendly conversation. When I saw her realisation, I somewhat sarcastically suggested that the answer was perhaps somewhere between 0.4 and 1.3 seconds, whereas she had made me wait something like twenty! *Naruhodo*! Shifting her mental context out of the classroom, where a carefully-arrived-at and accurate answer is allowed to take as long as it takes, and having her juxtapose the very same interaction onto a non-classroom context, suddenly reframed her silence as strange, confusing, and potentially embarrassing. Performing this mental juxtaposition was a great way for her and the members of her group to understand the kind of natural, everyday communication that I was inviting them to engage in in the class.

The effectiveness and good-natured acceptance of my intervention here led me to use such an approach again and again when met with similar silences and evasions. I eventually came up with a slide to display whenever such an exchange occurred in subsequent classes (See Figure 1) asking students to imagine, "What if a friend asked you exactly the same question?" Flashing this up on the projector screen brings to students' minds the incongruity of long, drawn-out pauses, hedging, avoidance, or a concern with providing an accurate or correct answer, with what their own friends or associates might expect and accept in any number of non-classroom contexts. This mental re-situating has been like a panacea for helping students realise which personal beliefs had caused classroom interactions to become uncomfortable, stressful, or awkward. It wasn't the question itself that was *difficult*, but the belief that it must be addressed and answered in a particular *classroom-appropriate* way. Bringing such beliefs to light is especially effective in helping students identify where they had unknowingly mis-assigned difficulty, gravity, or importance to actually simple conversation topics or questions.

Figure 1

"What if a friend asked you exactly the same question?"

This consciousness-raising question ("What if a friend asked you exactly the same question?") has been especially effective in a recent semester when using a textbook that contained group discussion questions that I noticed my students were taking too seriously: "*What do you think are the best ways to combat global warming?*", "*What factors make a city a good choice to host the Olympic games?*" Concern with not knowing the correct answer was leaving groups of students staring at their textbooks not saying a word for minutes at a time despite being competent speakers. I have been able to reframe those questions *out* of a classroom/textbook context by simply asking: "What if your friend asked you about your thoughts on global warming? You might say that you didn't know, but maybe it has something to do with reducing air pollution, or certain types of fuel, or something. What if your friend asked you?" Time and time again this kind of simple intervention was the necessary spark that set off long, natural, enjoyable conversations, free of any pressure to give academic, *classroom-appropriate* answers.

I've even jokingly set classes the homework task of, when interacting with friends at lunchtime, staring at the ceiling or the floor for ten to fifteen seconds silently before answering any question their friend asks. The very thought of doing so amongst friends is ridiculously awkward and usually raises a laugh, and I'm instantly in a better position to suggest that such silence is equally out-of-place in a communicative classroom.

Parodies of awkwardness

As teachers, we often want to gauge the understanding of our students by asking questions, and an "I don't know" or an "I don't understand" is a very useful indication that we might not have been effective in getting our teaching point across. Many teachers will have seen students' awkwardness when asked a question to which they don't know an answer. It's very difficult to gauge the understanding of the students when the silence that means "I don't know" is indistinguishable from the silence of preparation, non-comprehension, or simply embarrassment at being singled out. Compounding the problem is the fact that students often anticipate some sort of penalty for not being able to answer with the *correct* answer, and take measures to avoid that. Assuring students that "I don't know" is as good an answer as any other is usually not effective in eliciting it, so it's something that needs to be re-framed and re-conceptualised.

I ask students to imagine what an ordinary conversation with a friend would look like if saying "*wakaranai*" or "*shiranai*" ("I don't understand/know") was prohibited or avoided in the same kinds of ways that it is in a classroom context. On my iPad, I have scribbled up a sequence of cartoonish pictures of two friends sitting together drinking coffee (See Figure 2) , which I display in sequence on the projector screen. After the blank speech bubbles have bounced back and forth several times symbolising an ordinary conversation, one suddenly contains a question mark, and I suggest that the friend might be asking a question as innocuous as, "So, what time are you going to go home today?" or "What are you going to have for dinner tonight?". The interlocutor on the right, however, doesn't have an exact, accurate, correct answer to this—but rather than admitting as much he erupts into an exaggerated, panicked avoidance. Suddenly, his eyes bulge in fear, his jaw drops, his hair is suddenly disheveled. He looks behind himself for someone who might be able to help, he looks at the table, back at his friend, back at the table, behind himself, at the table, up, down, over and over and over, thoroughly trapped by his (in this context) irrational and inappropriate refusal to simply announce the truth--that he doesn't know what time he's going home, or what he'll be having for dinner. Students almost always laugh at the absurdity of this response, and seem to be more receptive to affirming "I don't know" in my class. I assure them that doing so is preferable to any degree of discomfort and awkwardness, for both them and me.

Figure 2

"But… but… I don't know!"

At another stage of the course, I like to teach students a communication strategy called "A-A-A", standing for *Answer-Add-Ask*. Upon being asked a question, a good communicator will *answer* it, then voluntarily *add* some

amount of additional information, then *ask* a question of their partner, who should do the same, thus keeping the conversation flowing. When demonstrating this strategy, I attempt to perform a self-deprecating satire of the avoidance strategy I've so often seen in students who doubt their ability to communicate in English. Such students will often only give a terse quiz-like answer to the question before reverting to silence. I request that a random student simply ask me one random question from the page of the textbook that we're on, usually something such as, "Who do you live with?" I'll instantly give the shortest answer I can possibly think of, such as, "Family!" and then stare at the floor. The silence that follows is awful, I look like a fool, the student who asked the question invariably squirms and looks around not knowing what to do, until I break character and mercifully let them off the hook. A few performances like this can persuade students that they don't want to look as silly as me, and that following the communication strategy is a much better option. ("I live with my family. My wife and three children. Who do you live with?")

Again, I'll suggest that the students try responding to their friends' questions at lunchtime with nothing beyond the same kind of quiz-style response, allowing the students another chance to determine for themselves that such a manner of response really is a strange impediment to smooth communication that they can easily overcome whilst in the communicative classroom.

Conclusion

Teachers will be able to come up with their own ways of juxtaposing the impediments to communication that they observe in their classrooms with the kinds of ordinary communicative contexts that their students are familiar with. The art, of course, is to do so without mockery, and to always keep in mind the goals and potentials of the students. Taking this approach has helped my own students to make the choice to participate and interact during speaking activities in a more efficacious way. After years being taught English within the confines of silent, non-interactive classrooms, helping students to imagine English outside of a classroom context might even be the most important and far-reaching work we do.

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Bio

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Vietnamese EFL Learners in Japan: Instructor Experiences

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With the number of international students at Japanese universities and colleges increasing, new challenges have arisen in terms of how to successfully integrate these students into a formerly quite homogenous student body and help them adapt successfully to the classroom environment. According to the Japan Student Services Organization, total international student numbers have risen from 184,155 in 2014 to 267,042 in 2017 and of this total the two largest groups of international students are those from China and Korea (JASSO, n.d.). However, while the number of students from these two countries has actually dropped slightly over this period, the number of Vietnamese students has nearly doubled (MEXT, n.d.) and now constitutes the third largest group of international students in Japan. While there has been some discussion of how these Vietnamese students have adapted to studying abroad in Japan (see, for example, Lee, 2017) there has been little discussion of how this has impacted EFL classes and how teachers have had to adapt to a sudden influx of foreign students. In this paper, I shall share the experiences of a group of instructors at a private vocational college (*senmon-gakkou*) in Kawasaki in terms of how they have adapted to the needs of a new group of Vietnamese students and how it has affected their classroom teaching practices.

Strange as it may seem, the first classroom difficulty for the foreign English-speaking instructors was the low level of Japanese ability of the Vietnamese students. The most commonly used Japanese proficiency test scale, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) assigns students a proficiency grade from basic N5 to academic-level advanced N1 (Watanabe& Koyanagi, 2013). Previous foreign students, mainly from East-Asian countries such as China, Korea, or Singapore, were only admitted to the school upon obtaining an N2 Japanese grade or higher. Due to a school policy change however, it was decided to admit the new Vietnamese students with an N4 grade, or lower. Therefore, while most of the other East-Asian international students already had a relatively high level of Japanese and/or English ability, the Vietnamese students arrived with neither. For instructors, this presented a number of unique classroom management challenges.

The lingua franca of the college is Japanese, which means that if a Chinese student is talking to a Korean student they will mostly use Japanese as their primary means of communication. In the classroom, while the primary linguistic task may be English-focused, a lot of the task negotiation between students--deciding seating arrangements, turn-taking, repair strategies, etc.--was done by the students themselves in Japanese independently of the instructor. As a result of the Vietnamese students' lack of Japanese abilities, pair- and group-work had to be more overtly managed by the instructor, which decreased the amount of classroom time spent that could otherwise be spent on-task. Additionally, the use of Japanese L1 as means to lower nervousness and, hopefully, increase willingness to communicate in the English L2 among Japanese students (Matsuoka, 2008) could instead have the opposite effect of isolating the Vietnamese students.

The second linguistic factor that caused difficulties in the classroom was pronunciation. Similar to the situation in Japan, the Vietnamese education system for English generally favors exam-focused vocabulary and grammar instruction leaving the students with little opportunity to practice oral skills (Van Van, 2010). As a result, the students often have heavily Vietnamese-accented English pronunciation. When encountering the often entrenched 'katakana' pronunciation of the Japanese students (Martin, 2004) they can be all but incomprehensible to each other, leading to obvious frustration for both parties. This extended even to basic spelling. For example, in Japan the letter "A" is generally pronounced /ei/, while in Vietnamese it is closer to /ai/. Also, whereas Japanese is a syllabic language, Vietnamese language is tonal and final consonants are often dropped when speaking English (Nguyen, 2002). Therefore, the number 'six' would be pronounced /shi-kku-su/ in Japanese whereas it would be /si/ in Vietnamese. As a result, even for more grammatically-advanced classes, instructors were forced to spend more time than they normally would on basic pronunciation activities, even down to sounding out the alphabet, in order to get the students to a level of mutual understanding before any communicative speaking activities could take place.

Another source of difficulty for instructors was in the slight differences in classroom expectations between Japanese and Vietnamese students. As in Japan, higher education instruction in Vietnam is generally teacher-led lecture style instruction, which results in "a passive attitude to learning" (Tran, 2012). For Japanese students, however, English classes led by *foreign* ("native") instructors were perceived differently to those led by Japanese instructors, where the foreign instructors were expected to be 'entertaining' but not necessarily 'knowledgeable' (Shimizu, 1995). Japanese students thus tend to respond more positively to active communicative games in the classroom, whereas these were viewed more as a waste of time by Vietnamese students (Yen, 2014), who expect the teacher to stick to the textbook or lesson outline clearly (Nguyen, 2002). However, this attitude may have just been due to a lack of experience with a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach on the part of the Vietnamese students, and they could in fact be just as competitive as the Japanese students during games. Rather, the Vietnamese students needed more

overt explanation as to the justification for, and encouragement to participate in, communicative student-to-student language activities than may previously have been required with Japanese students.

Another result of differences in classroom expectations that instructors encountered is that, as Nguyen (2002) points out, Vietnamese students tend to take a more collaborative attitude towards learning. The classroom is seen as a 'family' where all the members are expected to contribute and help each other. This had two major consequences. First, Vietnamese students are not used to small group activities, which are seen as akin to separating family members from each other. Second, students tend to help each other during tests and evaluation. In other contexts, this can be seen as cheating. In fact, several Vietnamese students were caught sharing answers in exams constituting 40% of their final grade which resulted in a zero mark, yet they seemed genuinely surprised to be so harshly censured. For instructors then, activities had to be adapted to allow for more collaborative and whole-class input while the importance of final exams and the consequences of cheating in them had to be repeatedly stressed beforehand rather than being taken for granted.

The final thing that instructors had to deal with was the impact of a sudden influx of large numbers of international students on what had previously been a predominantly Japanese student body. The foreign-born population of Japan is less than 2% of the total population and so, coming from mostly homogenous high school learning environments, many Japanese students were not used to or were unprepared for such large differences in not only language and culture but also classroom behavior and learning expectations such as those outlined above. Similarly, instructors that could previously count on a body of shared knowledge with their Japanese students, such as geography, foods, and general cultural knowledge, now had to find new ground with a group of Vietnamese students who did not share this. Lesson topics and instructional approaches like using cultural background knowledge to introduce vocabulary or grammatical structures had to be either adapted or discarded.

However, I personally believe that this has had a positive impact on the Japanese students. Any 'cross-cultural' or 'international' communication the Japanese students had previously encountered in high-school textbooks was overwhelmingly with American culture. They typically do not see themselves as having any connection to an imagined L2 English-speaking community – it being too remote and disconnected from their lives in Japan – and consequently do not have the motivation to study English (Yashima, 2009). With an increase in numbers of Vietnamese students however, the Japanese students were pushed into an L2 language community in their own backyard, so to speak, that provided a unique opportunity for all students to interact with different cultures and hopefully provide an increased motivation to become more confident global citizens.

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