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English Learning Motivation in Japan

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Abstract

Narrative inquiry is used to explore English learning motivation in Japanese students. Two university students aiming to become English teachers in the future were selected as participants. English learning motivation generally decreases over time in Japan, but that is not the case in these two stories. The experiences of these participants were written into narrative texts and then coded for themes. The expected results were that the demotivating and motivating factors would match with a previous study. The overall results were similar, with important factors including lesson styles, teachers, non-classroom related English usage, career advancement, and international posture. Participants' stories show that communicative activities in lessons are highly motivating, while lessons focusing on grammar and test preparation are demotivating. The importance of assistant language teachers (ALTs) is significant in both stories, as with the previous study, but there is a lack of research connecting motivation and ALTs in Japan.

Keywords: English education, Japan, motivation, narrative inquiry, SLA.

1. Introduction

In general, learner motivation toward English decreases over time in Japan. After the intensive high school test preparation English that focuses heavily on grammar and translation of texts, university students are generally believed to have little interest in English (Kikuchi & Hamada, 2023). So, when university students show an interest in English and demonstrate effort in learning, this is an exceptional situation, and it is worth exploring how such students maintain such a positive attitude and effort despite their context.

Specifically in this study, two students who are aiming to become English teachers in the future were selected as participants. They both have above-average English academic achievement and communicative ability. I was interested to know the history of their English learning experience and specifically how their motivation changed over time. Further, I wanted to gain a better understanding of what factors they able to identify as influencing their motivation.

2. Literature Review

2-1. Language Learning Motivation Research

Language learning motivation research has recently taken on a diverse approach. Two excellent reviews of the history of language learning motivation research have been written by Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012) and Al-Hoorie (2017). While early research placed emphasis on the social and psychological dimensions of motivation, theories such as *self-determination theory* (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and *L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei, 2009) have been the most used approaches. However, recently there has been a move toward more varied approaches to understanding motivation (Al-Hoorie, 2017). Dörnyei (2019) argued that research on L2 motivation had focused too much on social context and future goals and not enough on the L2 learning experience. He called for renewed efforts to understand the L2 learning experience itself in relation to motivation, not only the social context or future goals of the learners.

2-2. Motivation Research in Japan

Research on language learning motivation in Japan has focused on three issues: demotivation, students' motivational change over time, and how English relates to self-identity (Ushioda, 2013). Research on motivation has used Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Kikuchi & Hamada, 2023) and self-determination theory (Tanaka & Takeuchi, 2024) as theoretical approaches.

As learners advance from elementary school through to university, their motivation changes over time, and demotivation becomes increasingly significant. Research on demotivation in English learning in Japan suggests that as students age, they become increasingly demotivated toward learning English (Kikuchi & Hamada, 2023). Six main factors in demotivation in Japan include teachers, characteristics of classes, failure, the class environment, class materials, and lack of goals or interests (Kikuchi, 2013). These factors vary in their intensity and fluctuate over time.

Specific to identity, Yashima's (2002) concept of *international posture* has played a significant role in helping to understand students' motivation in English language learning. International posture is a general interest in the world outside of Japan, whether it be for a specific reason or a vague interest in the international community. Yashima's concept links the attitude of international posture with learner motivation toward English since English is the foreign language taught in Japan as well as the linga franca of the international community.

2-3. Narrative Inquiry Use in Language Learning Motivation Research in Japan

Narrative inquiry has not been used in Japan to research motivation. Outside of Japan, Hivers et al. (2019) explored learners' construction of narratives as it relates to their L2 learning experience, but there do not appear to be any published studies on language learning motivation using narrative inquiry in Japan. The number of studies using this methodology, however, has increased with, for

example, Hiratsuka who used narrative inquiry to study assistant language teacher identity (2022) and teacher identity of Japanese teachers of English (2023). Earlier narrative inquiry studies in Japan also focused on teacher identity such as comparisons of teacher acculturation (Howe, 2005), and explorations of the identity of teachers as global citizens (Howe & Arimoto, 2014; Howe, 2014). The most similar methodological approach to narrative inquiry usage in studying motivation in Japan is Gillies's "Narrative Identity as Drama: Exploring Links Between L2 Learning Experience and the Ideal L2 Self" (2023), which provides an in-depth case study analysis.

3. Methodology

Based on my previous research conducted using narrative inquiry, this study aims to contribute further rich, descriptive qualitative research on the issue of motivation in Japanese students toward learning English. While many studies have been conducted on this topic, results have proven inadequate in addressing this ongoing challenge in Japan.

Narrative inquiry was selected because it allows for better understanding of the issue within its context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and it can help us understand how the learners have organized their experiences (Barkhuizen et al., 2014).

The research questions are the same ones used in my previous study (Ikoma, 2022) to allow for a comparison between the data of the two studies. The research questions are:

1. What stories do Japanese students construct of their experiences learning English in academic and non-academic settings? and
2. What motivating and demotivating factors can students identify in their own stories of learning English?

Using narrative inquiry, the participants were interviewed primarily in English with some use of Japanese. Then, the interview data were used to create a story from each participant's data. The participants then had a chance to read their own narrative texts and "restory" the text (make revisions). The texts were edited until the participant felt the story accurately reflected their experience, but in this study no edits were made by participants. The final texts were then analyzed, coded for themes, and used to identify motivating and demotivating factors in students' experiences of learning English.

I followed the definition by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021), which is that motivation is the direction and magnitude of behaviour including choice, persistence, and effort. However, within the interviews, I described motivation as "attitude, effort, and time" to simplify the concept for participants.

The participants were selected through convenience sampling, and specifically because these two participants were both university students who had a common interested in becoming English teachers in the future. I decided on this limiting factor to create narrative texts that could be more easily compared since they have the same level of education and an English-language related goal in common.

4. Data

Following the interviewing, storying, and restorying process, narrative texts were created. Both participants agreed that the final narrative text adequately told the story of their experiences learning English. Specific identifying locations such as cities or school names have been excluded, and pseudonyms have been used for both participants.

4-1. Ibuki's Story

Ibuki had very few encounters with English in elementary school. Despite having his first English activities in grade three, he has very few memories of English. His earliest learning memories are good ones of learning the alphabet song from an American teacher and talking with classmates and teachers in English using easy questions such as "what food do you like?" In grade five and six, regular English lessons taught by a Japanese elementary school teacher were easy and much more relaxed than other lessons, but the English teacher was not their homeroom teacher, and sometimes she got angry with the students because they were messing around and not doing the lesson activities. However, he remembers introducing local and Japanese things to ALTs and learning about ALTs' countries such as the US or Canada. He had little motivation to learn English, but when he talked to English teachers and they understood what he was saying, he gained confidence. His experience is that elementary school students find English interesting even if they have little motivation to learn.

In junior high school, English became progressively more difficult, grammar-focused, and test-orientated. From the first year of junior high school, Ibuki's classes were focused on textbooks, and the grammar was especially difficult. He was thankful when he had teachers who helped him understand English, but he found the grammar and writing assignments became progressively more uninteresting and difficult. He was highly demotivated by frequent tests and studying for the entrance exam. There were some interesting things in English, though. In the first year especially, there were games and chances to talk with his classmates in English, which he enjoyed. Also, his school had two ALTs who would sometimes come to class, but since the students could not understand them, the English teacher would simply translate the English to Japanese for the students. Sometimes the ALTs did some communicative and memorization activities. He became more interested in English when he talked to ALTs. They had some exchange students who came from Wales and joined their class, but since Ibuki could not understand their English, he did not have much chance to talk with them. Overall, his classroom experience of English became demotivating.

Despite this, two factors more than counteracted these negative experiences. First, his grandmother had been an English teacher. She taught him English and told him about her experiences abroad. She said that there were many beautiful things to see, so he had better learn English for travel. Second, he became interested in soccer. He watched European soccer, and he

wanted to watch games in England or Spain, so he decided that he had to learn English. So, his motivation to learn English increased despite his classroom experience. Ibuki thinks that since all Japanese students feel that test-preparation English is difficult, it is in junior high school that students begin to dislike English, so by high school they do not like English.

In high school, he was in a high-level academic stream, and they had two types of English classes. The first was a once per week communication class taught by international teachers who used an English-only textbook. In this course, students talked to their classmates and made presentations in English, which they enjoyed, and it developed his interest. The second, which was seven or eight times per week, was focused almost entirely on test preparation English. He could not speak to other students, and they generally studied grammar and test-preparation English composition. It was only writing and listening, so it was uninteresting and there was no effort to help students enjoy English. Also, Ibuki and his classmates could not understand the teacher's English or the lessons, then the teacher would get angry at the class for not being able to understand, and the teacher would tell them that they needed to try harder. Ibuki hated this teacher and was highly demotivated by this class in high school. But, during this time Ibuki began to think of becoming an English teacher as a career. He had originally wanted to teach social studies, but due to his grandmother's influence, during high school he was 50/50 on whether he should teach social studies or English. One thing was for sure, though: he decided that he did not want to become like his high school English teacher. He studied hard for the entrance exam every day and found that he began to enjoy studying English by himself - he would have preferred to study on his own rather than learn from the teacher.

Again, things outside of class had an outsized influence on his motivation. His grandmother continued to tell him how studying English makes life better. He watched soccer interviews in English and became more interested in international travel. He also began watching more movies in English. He sometimes watched movies twice – once with Japanese subtitles and then a second time with English subtitles. His personal interests and his goal of teaching English increased his motivation.

In university, his motivation for English is at an all-time high. He is happy that he has many chances to use English, and he feels there is nothing demotivating anymore. All his English classes "use English," which means that he can talk with other students and English teachers in English, and he can read books and write reports in English – speaking, reading, writing, and listening. He is enjoying reading books, doing presentations, and talking to his classmates and feels that his English has developed. He was especially happy because one of his teachers also likes soccer and invited Ibuki to a local soccer event held by a local international group. He really likes talking to people from other countries, so he was so happy to join this event. In university, he is looking forward to studying abroad, doing personal travel overseas, and doing academic and extra-curricular activities in English. He has a clear career-goal of becoming an English teacher, so he is highly motivated to learn.

4-2. Takeru's Story

Takeru's English classes in elementary school were mostly ALTs introducing themselves or doing games in English, with basic question and answer activities such as: "What do you like?" "I like baseball." But, he wanted more, so he did not like these classes, which were more like playing than learning. He wanted to talk in English with the ALTs who taught the classes, but he felt that he could not because he did not know basic English syntax, and he had no idea about how to learn it. From elementary school he thought international people were cool and he wanted to be able to connect to people from other countries, but he did not know how. For him, English was a way to connect to people around the world. His interest level was high, but his English classes were too infrequent and did not provide the structure for him to be able to learn or communicate in English. Looking back, he feels that elementary school students need to study English more often. There are, in his opinion, many unnecessary lessons in the Japanese school system, so replacing some of these lessons with English would provide a better foundation for learning. He believes that elementary school students enjoy English class, so it would be better to increase the amount of time and content in these early years because it would make later study easier, students could learn before negative attitudes develop, and it would pre-empt the busy high school years when students have many different priorities. So, Takeru looks back on his elementary school experience of English wishing things had been different for him.

From junior high school, Takeru was able to study hard. His first year and second year teacher was a great English teacher. From elementary school, Takeru had wanted to become a teacher, but it was because of this junior high school English teacher that he decided that he wanted to teach English. She gave the students many opportunities to talk with their classmates – they would learn English vocabulary or grammar and then practice it by speaking with classmates, although many of Takeru's classmates did not like speaking in English so they often spoke in Japanese instead. In his first year, some Korean students joined Takeru's class for about two weeks, so he was very glad. He tried hard to speak to them, and was somehow able to communicate through actions, but he struggled because he did not have the English skills to talk with them. So, he needed to study harder. His English teacher encouraged students to talk with ALTs in class and outside of class. His school had two ALTs, from Ireland and the US, so he learned about differences in cultures, accents, and habits in the two different English-speaking countries. He would often talk with the ALTs or have them check his writing. Takeru also developed several study habits outside of school: he studied vocabulary on his own and watched TED Talks in English with Japanese subtitles.

In third year, he was still able to go to ALTs to have them help him with English, but his classroom English teacher changed, and Takeru did not like the new teacher. Takeru was so bored because he could not understand the teacher's lessons, which were mostly in Japanese. Students could not understand the teacher's English because he spoke in broken English. Further, studying for the

entrance exam was extremely demotivating because there were no speaking activities. At home, Takeru studied for the entrance exam. Since entrance exams do not have speaking components, Takeru wonders if this is a factor in why Japanese students do not want to speak in English.

In the first year of high school, Takeru was able to learn English syntax using the foundational vocabulary that he had already learned. It made him want to study because he could understand the texts that they studied in class. In his second year, he had a new English teacher and ALT, and both did many communication and speaking activities, so the lessons were interesting. The communication activities often used the learned language skills for conversation, group work, or presentations. His teacher told Takeru that he should become an English teacher so she let him teach lessons in class three times – it was fun, and his classmates told him that he would become a great English teacher. His ALT also encouraged him to become an English teacher, and she told him that he should travel to America, but that he had to study hard. Takeru really liked his second-year English teacher and ALT, and they motivated him to study harder. Unfortunately, the teacher went on parental leave after his second year, and the teacher who replaced her was "old" and just focused on studying for the entrance exam, which had a negative impact on his motivation. The ALT also changed, and her replacement was not friendly, so Takeru had no speaking opportunities. Sometimes the textbook topics were interesting, but the lesson style of test preparation was demotivating. Also, the teacher had an attitude that all students should be treated the same, but that meant teaching easier content, and she would not allow Takeru to study other English during class. This contrasted with his former teacher who told him that he needed to study advanced English for his future. Takeru wanted to skip class and study on his own. Despite this negative experience, Takeru was very motivated to learn English. Takeru continued listening to TED Talks, but he had to study for the entrance exam and do his club activity, so he did not have much time for English. Sometimes he would talk to foreigners at the train station. He feels that talking to foreigners is better for learning English than studying grammar, vocabulary, and listening.

In university, his English classes have many speaking activities and presentations, so he is very glad. Further, several of his friends made a pact that they would all go on study abroad programs. So, despite the pressures of other courses and his part-time job, he is highly motivated to practice English even though he has little time for independent study. He would also like to study for a standardized English test when he has a little more time.

5. Discussion

Lesson styles, teachers, personal activities, career-related goals, and international posture were the five key motivational factors that were found in the narrative texts. Lesson styles, teachers, and personal activities had both a motivating and demotivating effect on the individuals. Career-related goals and international posture were motivating. As should be expected with successful learners

who aim to be English teachers, the instances in the story that describe positive motivating factors are about twice as frequent as instances of demotivating factors. Compared to my previous study (Ikoma, 2022), the factors are similar with some difference in relative importance and with the notable exception that proficiency was not a key factor of the current study's data. Although Takeru did experience proficiency as a factor, it was not a major theme in his story.

5-1. Lesson Styles: Communication-based lessons versus grammar and test preparation lessons

The lesson styles that motivated both Ibuki and Takeru were lessons in which students were able to communicate in English and have materials and activities that were appropriate for their level. Ibuki's story is especially emphatic on the motivating effect of communicative classes. In junior high school, he was motivated by classes in which communicative activities and games were done with his classes. Of his two types of high school classes, the one in which he did presentations and talked with his classmates was motivating. And in university, four-skills courses in which he could talk to his classmates and teachers were motivating for him. Takeru's story also includes several instances in which teachers encouraged students to talk to their classmates in English and how that motivated him. Takeru had a highly successful beginning of high school because the level of the textbook was appropriate for him.

In contrast, lessons that focused on grammar and test preparation were demotivating. While Takeru was uninterested in elementary school English because the lessons seemed unstructured and he did not feel like he learned anything, the most significant demotivating lessons were those that were boring, difficult to understand, and focused on tests and grammar. In Takeru's third year of junior high school, the lessons changed from interesting communicative lessons to lessons primarily in Japanese meant to prepare students for high school entrance exams. Problematically, Takeru did not think that these lessons helped with his entrance exam since his primary test preparation studying was done outside of class and independently from lesson materials. So, grammar and test preparation lessons were demotivating for both Ibuki and Takeru and they had little value in improving their English skills.

5-2. Teachers: From encouraging to incompetent

In these two narrative texts, specific people played important roles in motivation with teachers playing a significant role in both stories. Takeru had some strongly influential English teachers. His junior high school English teacher who encouraged her students to use English actively both inside and outside of the lesson times is the reason he decided to teach English as a career. Takeru had an encouraging high school teacher who saw his potential and encouraged him to learn. Ibuki also found teachers to be motivating even at the university level where a shared interest in sports helped him connect with an English teacher and increase his motivation for learning. All these instances are

deeply personal connections between the students and their teachers.

Unfortunately, teachers also had a strongly demotivating effect in both stories. The emotions are so strong in describing teachers who demotivated students. Ibuki hated his high school teacher, and this teacher was often angry at the students for their lack of improvement and interest in the lessons. Ibuki's teacher became a model for him of what not to become as an English teacher in the future. Takeru did not like one junior high school teacher whose lessons were boring and whose English was insufficient to teach the subject. Takeru also had a terrible experience in high school with an "old" teacher who Takeru felt had outdated attitudes and teaching methodologies.

5-3. Personal Activities: Outside of the classroom English

Extracurricular activities played a key role, although extracurricular activities had opposite effects in the two narrative texts. While Takeru had some positive experiences of watching TED Talks in English, the major extracurricular influence on his motivation toward English learning was that he was busy with other activities. In high school, his club activity and other academic work had little relation to English language learning and the result was that he had little time or energy to devote toward English outside of class. In university, his busy schedule which included a full courseload and a part-time job did not allow for independent language study. Despite a perceived self-interest, other activities have limited his time spent toward learning English.

Ibuki, on the other hand, had a grandmother who instilled an interest in English and spent time tutoring him. Since he enjoyed watching European soccer from junior high school onward, his motivation increased due to his hobby. In high school, this interest expanded to English-language movies, so he was able to increase his motivation through the necessity of English in watching both soccer and movies.

5-4. Career goals

As would be expected of two individuals who are aiming to become English teachers, their choice of career had a strongly positive effect on their motivation to learning English.

5-5. International Posture

Both narrative texts show a strongly positive influence of international posture on motivation. The language becomes more specific as they grew older. From elementary school, Takeru had a general sense that "international people were cool" and that English could be used to communicate with non-Japanese people. In junior high school, Ibuki seemed to gain an international posture thanks to his grandmother's stories and Takeru felt a growing interest in communicating with students who had come to his class on a study-abroad program. By junior high school and high school, both Takeru and Ibuki had a powerful desire to travel abroad. Takeru thought about going to the United States,

and Ibuki wanted to go to England and Spain. Finally, in university, they both have plans to study abroad during their time in university.

6. Conclusions

Based on the data, five key motivational factors were lesson styles, teachers, personal activities, career-related goals, and international posture. Of the five factors, lesson styles, teachers, and international posture are the three areas which could be addressed in order to improve motivation toward English in Japanese education.

Lessons are the area where the Ibuki and Takeru felt the strongest motivational change in both positive and negative directions toward English. Given the data, a solution would be to promote communicative language teaching (CLT) as the preferred method of instruction throughout students' English education. This would also be in line with current educational theories regarding language education (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Government policy has stated for a more than a decade that foreign language education (i.e. English) should focus on communication, but it is clear from these data that there are still many instructors who are using a test preparation or grammar-translation approach to English. It is concerning that both Ibuki and Takeru had high school English teachers who neither helped students learn communication nor taught materials to help them on their entrance exams. The consistency of comparable stories among Japanese learners, including in my previous study (Ikoma, 2022), shows the need for improvement in this area. Understanding L2 learning experience has been underexplored (Dörnyei, 2019), but the analysis of the data in this study shows that the advantages of CLT should be promoted in English education in Japan. The continued influence of university entrance exams without a speaking assessment for English, however, is likely to continue to lead to a lower emphasis on oral communication in the classroom.

Teachers should also be recognized as a major influence on student motivation toward English. There is such a dramatic difference between in-class motivation depending on who the teacher is. Kikuchi (2015) lists teachers as one of the main sources of demotivation in Japan. Takeru had an exceptional teacher who heavily influenced not only his English learning but also the direction of his future career. From the data, there does not seem to be any differentiation between Japanese or non-Japanese teachers related to motivation, but simply that people in teaching roles strongly influenced learner motivation. Specific to these two stories, ALTs had a significant role, but there is still no research on the relationship between ALTs and learning motivation. In fact, there is limited data on the effectiveness of ALTs in general (Hiratsuka, 2022). My previous study (Ikoma, 2022) also produced data that indicates that ALTs are an important motivating factor for learning English, but it is difficult to understand the relationship between ALTs and learner motivation without more data.

Finally, international posture had a strongly positive influence on motivation for both individuals. This is consistent with my previous study and other research on learning motivation in Japan

dating back to the seminal work by Yashima (2002). Despite the importance of international posture, most of the influence seems to have come from outside of school in this study. It may help English teachers to engage their students more easily in the content if there were some tools easily available to them to help promote international posture in lessons, which could include educational materials, opportunities to go abroad, or activities that promote international relationships between students and their peers in other countries.

7. Limitations and Further Research

The small sample size of the participants is a limitation of this study. While the research explored a targeted group – university students aiming to become English teachers – and followed up on my previous study, the data would be more helpful with a larger number and more diverse group of participants. Both participants in this study as well as the three participants in the previous study were able to do an interview primarily in English, which suggests that their English-language ability is above average. It would be helpful to compare these results with students who achieved average or below-average proficiency.

For further research, there has been no major study on the impact of ALTs on English-language learning motivation. In fact, as Hiratsuka (2022) lamented, there have been very few (if any) major critical studies on the effectiveness of ALTs in Japan. More research is needed into the role of ALTs in English-language education in Japan. One other factor that needs further consideration is teaching methodology. While government policy expects English classes to be taught primarily in English using a communicative approach, the two stories give evidence that many teachers still focus on grammar-translation and test preparation as their main methods of instruction. It would be valuable for researchers, educators, and policymakers to know how pervasive these practices are in secondary education.

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イコマ・キース

要　旨

「ナラティブ研究（ナラティブ・インクワイアリ―)」の手法を用いて日本人学生の英語学習に対するモチベーションを探る。参加者は、将来英語教師を目指す 2 名の大学生である。日本では一般的に、英語学習に対するモチベーションは時間の経過とともに低下するが、この 2 名の体験はそうではない。参加者の経験は物語として書き起こされ、その後テーマごとにコード化された。結果として、モチベーションの低下要因と向上要因は、以前の研究とほぼ一致した。重要な要因としては、授業スタイル、教師、授業外での英語の使用、キャリア志向、国際的志向性などが挙げられた。授業中のコミュニカティブな活動はモチベーションを上げるが、文法や受験対策に重点を置いた授業はモチベーションを下げるという結果であった。また、いずれの物語においても、以前の研究結果と同様にALT（外国語指導助手）の重要性が大きいが、日本ではモチベーションとALTを関連づけた研究は少ない。

キーワード：英語教育、日本、モチベーション、ナラティブ研究、第二言語習得

名詞修飾節構造の特徴から見た
英語系中級学習者の名詞修飾節構造の読みの変化

桑原　陽子

要　旨

　本研究では、英語系中級学習者１名が論文を読む過程を約半年にわたって観察し、読み誤った名詞修飾節構造についてその構造上の特徴の分析を行った。分析の結果、調査前半と比べて調査後半は読み誤った事例の修飾節が短いこと、修飾節中に読点や複数の動詞を含む事例が減少していることが示された。また、修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含むものは調査前半にしか見られなかった。これらの結果から、時間の経過とともに、読点や複数の動詞、別の名詞修飾節構造を含む長い名詞修飾節構造を正しく読めるようになっていることが示された。一方、「内の関係」「外の関係」については、分類が難しいものがあり両者の間の違いを分析することはできなかった。

キーワード：英語系中級学習者、名詞修飾節構造、読解過程、縦断研究、「内の関係」「外の関係」

１．はじめに
１−１．研究の目的

　本研究は、英語系中級学習者１名が論文を読む過程を約半年にわたって観察したデータから、読み誤りが生じた名詞修飾節構造の構造上の特徴の分析を行う。具体的には、修飾節の長さ、修飾節中の読点の有無、修飾節中に含まれる動詞の数、修飾節中に含まれる別の名詞修飾節の有無、内と外の関係である。

　筆者はこれまで、中級日本語学習者の読みの過程を長期間観察し、学習者にとっての読みの困難さが何に起因し、それがどう変化するかを分析している。その１つである桑原（2024）は、英語系中級学習者１名の約半年の読みの観察データから、名詞修飾節構造の読み誤りの分析を行った。調査期間を二分し、調査前半、後半それぞれ３ヶ月分のデータについて、読み誤りの数とその質の違いを分析した。その結果、読み誤りの数は調査後半に半減しており、時間の経過とともに名詞修飾節構造が正しく把握できるようになっていた。さらに、その読み誤りについて次の４点が明らかになった。

(a) 名詞修飾節構造の読み誤りには「修飾節と被修飾語の関係の捉え方に関わる誤り」「修飾節の範囲の特定の誤り」「修飾節の意味の解釈の誤り」の３つがある。

(b)「修飾節と被修飾節の関係の捉え方に関わる誤り」は、修飾節構造を意識した読み方により文全体の構造を適切に理解できるようになり、後半には減少する。

(c)「修飾節の範囲の特定の誤り」は、修飾節の読点が修飾節の切れ目と一致しないと気づくことにより、後半には減少する。

（d）「修飾節の意味の解釈の誤り」は、省略された情報を適切に補うことの難しさや、表現自体の難しさによって生じており、調査後半でも減少しない。

　桑原（2024）は、学習者が論文を読みながら作成した英語の翻訳文と日本語の原文との意味のずれ、学習者が読んでいる最中に話したことと論文に書き込んだこと、調査者とのやりとりの中で話したことを分析の対象としている。

　それに対して桑原（印刷中）では、同じ英語系中級学習者の読みの観察データから、正しく理解できた名詞修飾節構造について分析した。その構造上の特徴を調査前半と調査後半とで比較し、どのような違いがあるかについて、次のように報告している。

（e）調査前半と調査後半を比較すると、修飾節の文字数は調査後半のほうが長い傾向がある。

（f）修飾節に読点がある事例数は、調査後半が前半の 2 倍以上である。

（g）修飾節に動詞を複数含む事例数は、調査後半のほうが多い。

　これらの結果は、時間の経過とともに修飾節に読点や複数の動詞を含む長い名詞修飾節構造が正しく読めるようになったことの裏付けとなる。また、（f）が示すように、時間の経過とともに修飾節に読点を含むものを正しく読めるようになったことは、（c）のように修飾節中の読点の解釈の変化によって読み誤りが減ることと関係する。

　そこで本研究は、桑原（2024）で分析対象とした読み誤りの事例について、桑原（印刷中）のように名詞修飾節構造の構造上の特徴からの分析を通して、学習者の読みの変化について考察する。具体的には、修飾節の長さ、修飾節中の読点の有無、修飾節中に含まれる動詞の数以外に、いわゆる「内の関係」「外の関係」（寺村, 1981）と修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含むものについて分析を行う。

２．調査

　本研究で分析対象とするデータは桑原（2024）と同一であり、従って調査の概要も桑原（2024）と同じである。

２−１．調査対象者

　日本で教育を研究する大学院生（調査当時）である（以後「R」とする）。母語は英語で、調査開始時の日本語学習歴は 1 年半である。最初の 1 年間は所属する大学の日本語初級クラスで『みんなの日本語初級 1 』『みんなの日本語初級 2 』を使って学習し、その後は独学で『上級へのとびら』を学習した。論文の読み方について学習した経験はなく、調査当時の日本語を読む力は中級前半であった。

２−２．調査期間

2021年 6 月〜12月に合計19回の調査を実施した。実施時期は以下のとおりである。

　　第 1 〜 3 回： 6 月　　第 4 〜 6 回： 7 月　　第 7 〜10回： 9 月

　　第11〜13回：10月　　第14〜16回：11月　　第17〜19回：12月

　第 1 回から第10回までを調査前半、第11回から第19回までを調査後半とする。調査はほぼ 1 週間に 1 回実施し、 1 回の調査時間は 1 〜 2 時間である。

２−３．読む対象

　調査で読む対象は、R自身が（h）を選択した。以後、これを「資料」と呼ぶ。これは、現職の中学校の教頭が、学校教育における評価のあり方や授業実践についての考えを同僚教員に向けて綴ったものである。Rは研究のために日本の中学校の授業実践を詳しく知る必要があり、この資料を読む対象として選んだ。調査で読んだのは（h）のp.1からp.10までである。

（h）大橋巌（2021）「『教頭通信』で語るvo1.1評価を変える、授業が変わる」

２−４．調査方法

　iPadやスマートフォンなどの機器を使って普段通りに資料を読みながら、英語の翻訳文を作成してもらった。翻訳文の作成は、読んだ内容を記録したいというRの希望である。１〜３文の翻訳が終わるごとに、調査者が日本語文の意味を適切に反映した翻訳文になっているかどうかを確認し、日本語文の意味を説明した。それをもとに、必要に応じてRが翻訳文を修正した。特に、係り受けや主語の特定、名詞修飾節の範囲の特定など文の構造の把握の誤りや、語の意味の誤りなどがあった場合は、なぜこのように考えたか、何が難しかったかについて質問した。翻訳の過程を記録するために、Rの許可を得て翻訳文を作成するのに使用したiPadの画面を録画し、筆者とRとのやりとりもすべて録音した。

３．結果

３−１．名詞修飾節構造の概要

　読み誤った日本語文の名詞修飾節構造32例[1]の概要を表１に示す。

表１　読み誤った名詞修飾節構造（日本語文）の概要

	調査前半	調査後半
事例数	22	10
修飾節の文字数平均（SD)	32.1（19.9）	18.4（10.5）
修飾節に読点がある事例数	9	3
修飾節に動詞が複数ある事例数	12	4
修飾節中の動詞の数の平均（SD)	2.4（1.7）	1.5（0.7）
修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含む事例数	9	0

　まず、修飾節の文字数は調査前半よりも調査後半のほうが短い（$t = 2.55, p < .05$）。桑原（印刷中）では、正しく理解できた名詞修飾節構造について、(e)「修飾節の文字数が後半のほうが長い傾向にある」ことが示されている。本研究では、読み誤った修飾節の長さは逆に調査後半に短くなることが示された。これらの結果を併せて考えると、調査後半には長い修飾節が正しく読めるようになっていることがわかる。

　また、修飾節中に読点がある事例数は、後半に３分の１に減少している。このことは、修飾節の範囲の特定の誤りが後半に減少するという桑原（2024）の（c）の結果と一致する。

修飾節中に複数の動詞を含む事例は、調査後半が前半の 3 分の 1 に減少し、修飾節中の動詞の数の平均は、前半よりも後半のほうが少ない（t＝2.15, p<.05）。これは、正しく読めた名詞修飾節構造では調査後半に複数の動詞を含む事例が増えるという（g）と一致する結果と言えるだろう。

修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含む事例については、3-3．で述べる。

3-2．内の関係と外の関係

寺村（1981）は、「内の関係」を「ある文の中の補語である名詞を取り出して、被修飾語の位置に転じさせてできたというように説明できるような連体修飾における修飾部と底との関係」（p.92）とし、「外の関係」は「そのような関係が認められないような」（p.93）場合と定義している。

本研究の分析対象32例について、「内の関係」と「外の関係」に分類したところ、表 2 のようになった。「内の関係」「外の関係」ともに、調査後半に事例数が減少している。

表 2　名詞修飾節構造の「内の関係」「外の関係」の分類

	調査前半	調査後半
「内の関係」	9	6
「外の関係」	9	3
分類が難しいもの	4	1

このうち、分類が難しいものとは（1）（2）のようなものである。例文では被修飾名詞を四角で囲み、修飾節を下線で示す。また、（　）に何回目の調査のものかを記す。

（1）いずれもテキストの内容についての理解を問う 設問 である。　　　　　　　　　　（第 1 回）
（2）小問 4 では、新聞の「声の広場」への投稿を封筒で郵送するという設定で、条件にしたがって封筒に投稿先の住所と宛名を書かせるという 設問 である。　　　　　　　　（第 1 回）

（1）（2）ともに「設問」が被修飾名詞である。（1）は被修飾名詞と修飾節の間に「という」が使われていないが、（2）と同様に「テキストの内容についての理解を問うという設問」のように「という」を挿入することができる。修飾節の部分を「設問」の内容補充とすれば、（1）（2）ともに「外の関係」である。また、「設問が／で理解を問う」「設問が／で書かせる」のような格関係を考えることもでき、その場合は「内の関係」になる[2]。分類が難しい 6 例の被修飾名詞はすべて「設問」に関連するもので、（1）（2）のようにテスト問題について例を引用しながら述べた文であった。

「内の関係」の15例の被修飾名詞と修飾節中の述語との関係は、表 3 のとおりである。

表3　被修飾名詞の役割

	調査前半	調査後半
主語	8	3
目的語	1	0
その他	0	3

　被修飾名詞が主語になるものが15例中11例を占める。たとえば（3）の被修飾名詞「弁当の魅力」は「述べられている」の主語であり、「「弁当の魅力」が本文で述べられている」となる。（4）は「その他」の例で「模範解答用紙に自己採点の結果が書き込まれた」となり、被修飾名詞は「書き込まれた」の着点である。（3）（4）ともに動詞は受動態であり、このように動詞が受動態のものは11例中6例あった。

（3）本文で述べられている 弁当の魅力 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　（第1回）
（4）自己採点の結果が書き込まれた 模範解答用紙 と実際の答案用紙を見比べながら、一人一人に
　　 意見や感想を求める。　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　（第19回）

「外の関係」の例には次のようなものがある。

（5）まずはテキストの内容を読み取る問題、次にテキストを利用したり、テキストに基づいて自分
　　 の意見を論じたりするなどの「活用」する力を問うという 構成 になっている。　（第1回）
（6）これまでの学びが定着している 証拠 だ　　　　　　　　　　　　　　（第19回）

　日本語記述文法研究会（2008）の分類にしたがえば、（5）は「内容補充修飾節による名詞修飾[3]」（p.53）、（6）は「付随名詞修飾節による名詞修飾[4]」（p.54）である。「外の関係」11例のうち、8例が内容補充修飾節によるもの、3例が付随名詞修飾節によるものであった。内容補充修飾節によるものと分類された名詞修飾節構造の被修飾名詞は「授業、設定、構成、批判、姿勢、姿勢や態度、工夫、機会」であり、付随名詞修飾節の場合は「力、能力、証拠」であった。

3-3．別の名詞修飾節構造を含む修飾節
　別の名詞修飾節構造を含む修飾節とは次のようなものである。修飾節中の別の名詞修飾節構造の修飾節は二重下線で示す。

（6）石川氏と言えば、本通信No.115でも紹介した「思考コード」について述べていた 人物 である。
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　（第7回）

「人物」の修飾節「本通信No.115でも紹介した「思考コード」について述べていた」の中に、「思考

コード」を被修飾名詞とする名詞修飾節構造「本通信No.115でも紹介した「思考コード」」を含む。

　修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含むものは 9 例で、そのすべてが調査前半で観察された。念の為に正しく読めた事例中の同様の構造を持つ名詞修飾節構造の事例数を確認すると、前半 8 例、後半10例であり、後半に読み誤った事例がないのはこのような構造を持つも名詞修飾節構造がなかったからではないことは明らかである。

　具体的な事例を 2 つ示す。（8）は（7）を、（10）は（9）をRが翻訳したものである。

（7）小問 2 は、<u>本文で述べられている</u> 弁当の魅力 を説明した 文 として最も適切なものを選択させる 問題 である。　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　（第 1 回）

（8）question that asks you to choose the most appropriate item in the part/sentence explaining the content where the charm of a lunch is mentioned.

（9）その過程で、<u>情報化社会の象徴である Apple社 の社名の由来に触れて、リンゴと「情報」をつなげていくという 工夫</u> が見られるのである。　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　（第 9 回）

（10）Through this process, the origin of the name of the Apple company that is a symbol of the information society is mentioned and you can see the idea/scheme of connecting apple and "information."

　（7）は、「問題」を被修飾名詞とする修飾節中に、二重下線部分「本文で述べられている「弁当の魅力」を説明した文」という別の 2 つの名詞修飾節構造を含む。ここでは、この二重下線部分「本文で述べられている「弁当の魅力」を説明した文」を取り上げる。

　この（7）の名詞修飾節構造は、「本文で述べられている」が「弁当の魅力」を修飾し、その「弁当の魅力」を目的語とする「説明した」が「文」を修飾している。つまり、「説明した」の主語である「文」が被修飾名詞となっている名詞修飾節構造において、その目的語である「弁当の魅力」自身も被修飾名詞となっており、2 つの「内の関係」の名詞修飾節構造がその一部を共有して構成されていると言える。

　一方、（9）は「工夫」を被修飾名詞とする「外の関係」の名詞修飾節構造の中に、「Apple社」を被修飾名詞とする名詞修飾節構造「情報化社会の象徴であるApple社」を含む。被修飾名詞「工夫」の前には「という」が介在し、「情報化社会の象徴であるApple社の社名の由来に触れて、リンゴと「情報」をつなげていく」が「工夫」の内容を補充している。2 つの名詞修飾節構造が（7）のようにその構成要素の一部を共有し、文が成立しているわけではない。

　このような構造上の違いによって、読み誤りの様相も異なる。（7）について（8）の翻訳と照らし合わせると、この 2 つの名詞修飾節構造の理解が曖昧であることがわかる。（8）の翻訳では「弁当の魅力」とそれを修飾する「本文で述べられている」の関係が曖昧であり、「弁当の魅力」が「説明した」の目的語であることが明確ではない。2 つ名詞修飾節構造を構成する主語、述語、目的語の関係が捉えられなかったことが読み誤りの原因であると言える。このような読み誤りの事例は、9 例中 2 例であった。

（9）の場合、読み誤りの原因は修飾節の範囲の特定を誤ったことである。修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含む構造であることは、読み誤りの直接の原因とは考えにくい。このような事例は他にも見られる。たとえば、（11）は「是非」の意味を"without fail"と取り違えたことによるものであり、桑原（2024）の（d)「修飾節の意味の解釈の誤り」に該当する。

（11）<u>2020年の東京オリンピック・パラリンピック、2025年の大阪万博の開催の是非を、過去に日本</u><u>で開催された</u> もの と比較しながら、多面的に論じられることが求められる 問題 　（第 8 回）

（12）"To hold 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, 2025 Osaka World Fair without fail, discuss in multiple ways, while comparing with the event that was hosted by Japan in the past"

（9）（11）のような、修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含む構造であること自体が読み誤りの直接の原因と考えられないものは、9 例中 7 例であった。

なお、（7）（9）（11）を見てもわかるように、別の名詞修飾節構造を含むことによって、その修飾節は長くなる。9 例の修飾節の平均文字数は44.4（$SD=23.4$）であり、調査前半の文字数平均32.4（表1）を10文字以上上回る。（11）は読み誤った事例の中で最も修飾節が長いものである。

4．考察

　本研究の結果から、調査後半には修飾節中に読点や複数の動詞を含む長い修飾節の読み誤りが少なくなっていくことが示され、時間の経過とともに修飾節の長さが読み誤りに影響しなくなっていることが示唆された。このことは、正しく読むことができた文について分析した桑原（印刷中）の結果と一致する。

　名詞修飾節構造が「内の関係」か「外の関係」かが学習者の理解に与える影響については、山中（1999）が英語母語話者を対象に検討している。同研究によると、名詞修飾節の理解時間、英訳時間、意味の理解の正しさ、理解の難易度についての自己評価のいずれにおいても、「外の関係」のほうが「内の関係」よりも理解が困難であることを示しているという。本研究の結果は、32例中 6 例の分類が難しいことから、山中（1999）の指摘を確認することは難しい。また、山中（1999）では「外の関係」の理解の難易度について、被修飾名詞が「感覚名詞」「因果名詞」「位置名詞」の順に難しくなるとしているが、本研究では、感覚名詞、位置名詞の出現はなかった。

　一方、Kanno（2007）は、「内の関係」について、被修飾名詞が目的語の場合のほうが主語の場合よりも理解しやすいことを指摘している。本研究の「内の関係」の場合、被修飾名詞が主語のものが多数を占めており（表 3）、Kanno（2007）の指摘を支持するように思われる。しかしながら、本研究の「内の関係」では述語が受動態のものが約半数であり、Kanno（2007）で用いられた名詞修飾節構造とはその構造の複雑さが異なる。

　Kanno（2007）も山中（1999）も、調査で使用した名詞修飾節構造を含む文について、文字数や単語の難易度などを統制しているため、本研究の結果との比較は容易ではない。「内の関係」「外の関係」と読みの困難さの関わりについては、学習者の読みの過程も分析対象として検討する必要があるだろう。

　修飾節中に別の名詞修飾節構造を含むという複雑な構造を持つ名詞修飾節構造も、山中（1999）、Kanno（2007）には見られないものである。これは、本研究が研究に関わる論文・資料の読みの過程を観察しており、学習者の読みの現実に近いためであると言える。そのような状況下で、調査後半に読み誤りの事例がなかったことは、やはりRが複雑で長い名詞修飾節を読めるようになっていることを示唆する。

　今後の課題は、名詞修飾節構造に加えて名詞節の読みを分析対象とすることである。たとえば、(11)の名詞修飾節構造には「2020年の東京オリンピック・パラリンピック、2025年の大阪万博の開催の是非を、過去に日本で開催されたものと比較しながら、多面的に論じられること」という長い名詞節が含まれる。桑原（2024, 印刷中）および本研究では名詞節は分析対象としていないが、修飾節の範囲の特定同様に「こと」がどこからどこまでの部分を受けているのかを特定することは容易ではなく、このような名詞節を含むことが読みの難しさに影響することが推測される。このような名詞節も併せて読みのプロセスについて分析を行いたい。

注

１．桑原（2024）の分析対象の事例数は33例である。再分析した結果、日本語文の意味が曖昧なものが１例あったためそれを除外し32例とした。

２．（２）は「という」を介在するが、格成分名詞修飾節と被修飾名詞との間に「という」が介在する例もある（日本語記述文法研究会, 2008 p.66）ことから、本研究では（１）と同様に分類が難しいものとしている。

３．内容補充修飾節は、「一定の内容をもつ被修飾名詞に対し、その内容を説明する修飾節」（日本語記述文法研究会, 2008 p.53）と定義されている。

４．付随名詞修飾節は、「事態により生じたもの、事態の成立に関わるもの、事態に備わっているものにあたる名詞」に対して「事態を述べることで修飾する節」（日本語記述文法研究会, 2008 p.54）と定義されている。

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Changes in reading comprehension of noun-modifier structures by an Intermediate English-speaking Japanese learner: An analysis of structure characteristics

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The author conducted a six-month observational study examining the reading behaviors of an English-speaking learner of Japanese at an intermediate proficiency level. This study focused on analyzing structure characteristics of misread noun-modifier structures. The results showed that the modifier length in the second half of the session was shorter than in the first half, and the number of commas and verbs in the modifier was reduced in the second half. Furthermore, modifiers that included another noun-modifier structure appeared only in the first half of the session. These findings demonstrated that learner can read long noun-modifier structures over time, even those containing commas, multiple verbs, and other noun-modifier structures. However, the effect of "Inner relation" and "Outer relation" on reading difficulties was not evident.

Keywords: an English-speaking Japanese language learner at intermediate level, noun modifier structure, reading process, longitudinal study, 'Inner relation' and 'Outer relation'

英語ライティング課題の編集における生成AIの活用と効果
—日本の地方国立大学1年生の英語授業（初級レベル）での実践—

ヘネシー　絵美

要　旨

　機械翻訳の発展や生成AIの台頭により、今後の外国語教育の在り方が大きく問われる今日、このようなテクノロジーを活用して言語学習を効率化し、学習効果を上げられるような課題設計はできないものか。本稿では、この問いを検証するため、日本の地方国立大学の英語授業で行った実践内容、およびその効果について報告する。

　当該授業では、学生が指定のテーマについて教室内で書いたエッセイを、オンデマンド授業にて生成AIを活用して編集するという課題を、学期中に計5回課した。また、学生は最終化したエッセイの内容を対面授業にてペアで発表し合う等のアウトプットを行った。この取組の効果を、情意面はアンケートの実施、言語面は英語ライティングテストの実施により検証した。

　この結果、特に情意面において著しい正の影響が確認できたほか、生成AIを外国語の授業に活用する意義および今後の課題設計における留意点や課題について、深く考察することができた。

キーワード：EFL、授業改善、ライティング、外国語教育とテクノロジー、生成AI

1．はじめに
1-1．背景

　2022年11月に対話型AI「ChatGPT」が公開されて以来、世界中で生成AIが一気に大衆化し、日本においてもその潜在的な可能性と脅威が様々な文脈で話題に上るようになった。日本の高等教育現場でも、生成AIの教育への活用について様々なメリットが期待され、議論される一方、その問題点や悪影響が広く懸念され、2023年7月には文部科学省が「大学・高専における生成AIの教学面の取扱いについて（周知）」を公表した（文部科学省 2023）。但し、この中で生成AIの教学面の取扱いに関する判断や指針の策定は各教育機関に委ねられており（文部科学省 2023）、一貫した対応は定められていない。また、それを受け、各教育機関が対応を検討しているが、少なくとも筆者が所属する地方国立大学では、生成AIを利用する際の留意事項が指摘されるに留まっており（福井大学 2023）、教学における使用の是非や使用方法についての明確な指針は示されていない。

　では高等教育の現場、特に外国語科目の授業への影響はどうか。筆者は地方国立大学、工学部1年生の英語の授業（必修科目）を担当しているが、特にライティング課題において、翻訳サイトの活用によるものと考えられる不自然な英文を目にすることが年々増えており、以前から懸念材料となっていた。筆者が担当する授業は、学生の英語力が初級レベル（目安としてCEFR A1-A2レベル相当）で

あり、自分の英語力に対する自信や学習へのモチベーションが総じて低い傾向にある。このような状況の中、ChatGPTのような文章生成が可能なAIが、翻訳サイトに並ぶ、またはそれ以上に学生の英語ライティングを助ける「便利なツール」として使用されることになれば、使い道によっては当該授業が目指すべき学習効果を得られない状況にもなり得る。一方で、文部科学省が前述の文書の中でも指摘しているとおり、「教育分野において生成AIを適切に利活用することで、学修効果が上がり、また教職員の業務効率化を図ることができるなどの効果が期待される」という側面もある（文部科学省 2023）。「AIの利活用に関して組織的な方針が欠如している状況下では、教員は授業における戦略を自ら工夫する必要がある（筆者翻訳）」（Praphan P. & Praphan K. 2023）。ではその戦略を定めるにあたって、どのような工夫が考えられ、またどのような判断基準で方針を決定し、学生に伝えればよいのだろうか。

1-2．先行実践・問題

　これらの問いを考えるうえでの最大の問題は、生成AIが広く一般化してからまだ 2 年弱と日が浅く、過去の実践例、特に特定の文脈における事例が少ないため、参考になる研究結果やデータが限定的である点にある。例えば、宮添（2024）による日本の理系大学での予備調査は、学生による英文校正ツールとしてChatGPTなどの生成AIの利用が一般化していることや英語ライティング課題における生成AIの多様な活用可能性を示唆しており、筆者と授業の実践環境や関心分野が類似している。しかしながら、筆者が担当する理系学生、少なくとも本授業実践の対象となった27名の履修学生のうち、学期開始時のアンケートにおいて英語学習に生成AIを活用したことがあると回答した学生は 3 名のみであった。多くの学生が、本授業を履修するまで生成AIを「使用する機会がなかった」または「使い方がよくわからない」と回答しており、生成AIの使用に慣れている学生と同じように生成AIの活用を進めてもよいものかは判断が難しい。また、同論文では授業設計のプロセスが例示されているが、その設計に基づく具体的な授業実践内容やその結果はまだ報告されていないようである。その他にも日本の大学で生成AIを英語学習に活用した事例がいくつか報告されているが、AI自動翻訳サービスなど、特定のサービスを活用した授業実践に関する報告も多く、ChatGPTのような誰でも利用が可能な生成AIを日本の大学での英語学習に活用した具体的な事例は現段階では発見することが難しく、実践や研究が現在進行中であり、まだ報告に至っていないことが考えられる。

　海外大学における事例を見ると、例えばMarzuki他（2023）はEFLの英語授業で生成AIを英語ライティングの補助ツールとして活用したインドネシアの 4 つの大学での取組について報告しており、これらのツールの使用が学生の英語ライティングの質の向上をもたらす可能性を示唆している。但し、この結果は授業者である教員の見解をまとめたものであり、「学生の見解やこれらツールの使用により学生の英語ライティングが改善されたことを示す測定値などは含んでいない（筆者翻訳）」（Marzuki他 2023）。一方、Song（2023）の研究では、中国のEFLの学習者がChatGPTを英語ライティングの補助ツールとして利用することについて、量的および質的手法により効果を分析したところ、英語ライティング力およびライティングに対するモチベーションのいずれも向上したことが報告されている。しかしながら、ここでの研究対象は 2 年以上大学の英語科目の履修歴がある学生の英語のアカ

デミック・ライティングであり、量的研究のプレおよびポスト・テストにはIELTSのアカデミック・ライティングの問題が使用されている。対して、筆者が授業を担当する学生は大学工学部の１年生であり、授業で扱うライティングは学術的な内容ではなく初級者向けの日常的な話題であるため、そのまま同じ手法を使うこと、また同様の結果を期待することには懸念がある。

　このように、日本の大学１年生の初級レベルのライティングにおいて、ChatGPTなどの対話型生成AIを使用した授業実践の報告は現状珍しい。誰もが気軽に使用できる「便利なツール」を英語学習において学生が闇雲に活用し、本来の学習効果を得られない状況を避けるためにも、また、このような学生が生成AIを活用することにより得られる学習効果やメリットがないものか、新しいテクノロジーの可能性を模索するうえでも、関連する授業実践により、今後多くの事例が検証されるべきだろう。

1－3．試験的取組とその目的
　これらの背景を踏まえ、筆者は次のような問いに基づき、2024年４月初旬から７月末まで担当した授業内で生成AIを活用する試験的な取組を行うこととした。

「生成AIのようなテクノロジーを利用して英語学習を効率化し、効果を上げることにより、学生が学習のモチベーションを向上できるような課題設計はできないか」

　生成AIを試験的にでも活用する判断に至った理由は大きく二つある。
　一つは、学期開始時に実施したアンケートの結果によると、90%近くの学生は英語学習のために翻訳サイトの使用経験があり、また一部の学生は生成AIの活用経験も持ち合わせていた。このような状況下、仮にこれらテクノロジーの使用を全面的に禁止する場合、その徹底的な管理は難しく、また使用を発見した場合の各学生への指摘等にも相当な時間と労力がかかる。そもそも明らかに全ての文章を「便利なツール」により書いたような場合を除き、判断が難しいケースも多くあるほか、全ての疑わしい文章について学生に逐一指摘をして減点する、または書き直しを命じることが、本当に学習効果に繋がるのかは疑問が残る。それどころか学生と教員間の信頼関係に悪影響を及ぼす可能性もあり、場合によってはそもそも学習意欲の低い学生が、教員からの否定的な指摘によりさらなる英語への拒否感を募らせるきっかけになり得るのではとの懸念もある。
　二つ目は、テクノロジーを英語学習に活用することに対する学生の興味・関心である。前述のアンケートの中で、「今後、英語学習において機械翻訳やAIを活用していきたいと思うか」という問いに対し、92.3%の学生が「積極的に活用したい」または「機会があれば活用したい」と回答した。また、「機械翻訳やAIを活用した効果的な英語学習法があれば知りたいと思うか」という問いに対しても、「知りたい」という回答が88.5%あった。これだけ学生の関心が高いテクノロジーをうまく利用して、英語学習への動機付けに繋げることはできないものか。
　このような理由、考えから、生成AIを敢えて取り入れた授業実践の取組を進めるに至った。取組の具体については、次章にて詳述する。

２．実践内容

２-１．授業・学生

　本章で報告する実践の具体についてより深く理解いただくため、ここでは実践を行った授業の位置づけおよび学生に関する情報を整理する。

　実践を行った授業は、筆者が2024年 4 月初旬から 7 月末まで担当した共通教育の英語科目（必修）である。工学部機械工学系の学生向けの授業であり、週に 2 回、各回90分間の授業が学期中に30回実施され、一定以上の成績を修めた学生には 2 単位が付与される。授業の設計は、学期末に最終プレゼンテーションを組み込むこと以外、使用する教科書を含め各教員に一任されており、英語のスキル別や専門的な内容を扱う授業ではなく、英語の四技能を踏まえたいわゆる一般英語の科目である。

　当該授業の履修学生は計27名（男子学生26名、女子学生 1 名）であり、全体的な英語レベルの目安はCEFRのA1-A2相当である。参考までに、英語検定試験の受験歴に関する学生からの自己申告によると、実用英語技能検定 2 級、準 2 級、 3 級を持つ学生が各 3 名ずつ、残りの学生は受験歴がないとのことであった。学期開始時のアンケートによると、英語に苦手意識があり自信がない学生が多いものの、「英語学習は楽しいか」との問いに対しては、半数弱の48.1%の学生が「楽しい」、40.7%が「楽しくない」、11.1%が「普通」と回答した。

２-２．実践内容

　ここでは、授業全体のデザイン及びその中で取り組んだ生成AIを活用した実践内容について紹介する。

　授業は、教科書を用いたスピーキング及びリスニング重視の対面授業を中心に展開した。使用した教科書はCEFR A1からA2レベルの学生向けの四技能統合型の教科書であった。授業では、教科書で扱ったテーマについて学生自身の経験や考えを英語で表現する機会として、 4 回の授業のうち 1 回はオンデマンド型の授業とし、英語ライティングの課題を課した。英語ライティング課題は、以下のような手順に沿って取り組んでもらうこととした。

表 1 ．英語ライティング課題の段階的取組内容

段階	取組内容
1	4 回中 3 回目の対面授業の最後の30分間、指定されたテーマ（教科書で扱ったもの）について自力で辞書のみを用いて英語のエッセイを書く。書き終わったエッセイは教員が回収する前に学生が各自で写真を撮り、データを手元に残す。
2	4 回中 4 回目のオンデマンド授業の課題として、まずは 1 の内容をタイピングして文字に起こし、その内容を教員が指定するプロンプト（参考資料 1 ）を用いてChatGPT（本授業実施時の無料版はChatGPT-3.5であった）で添削にかける。
3	2 で得られた修正の提案およびその理由に関するフィードバックを踏まえ、使用されている語句や表現が自分のレベルに合ったものか、また自分が言いたいことを適切に表現できているか確認しながらエッセイを編集し最終化する。
4	上記プロセスの中で新たに学んだ語句や文法、表現を赤字に変換する。
5	3 で最終化した内容を指定のウェブサイトを利用して音声化し、音の確認をしながら次の対面授業の中で口頭プレゼンテーションができるよう練習する。（練習の成果を撮影し、ビデオプレゼンテーションとして提出を求めることもあった）。

6	2～4の段階的な編集内容を記載したワークシートおよび5でビデオプレゼンテーションを課した場合はその動画を、オンデマンド授業の課題として教員に提出する。
7	新たな4回の授業中1回目の授業の冒頭に、5で練習した内容をペアで発表し合う。

　本授業では、このプロセスを計5回繰り返し、計5テーマ分の課題提出を課した。各課題は筆者も全ての内容に目を通し、生成AIによる添削の段階を経ても修正し切れていない箇所、意味が通じない箇所、使用されている語句や表現が学生のレベルに合っていないと判断される箇所等について適宜フィードバックを行った。

3．実践結果

3-1．授業の質および授業者としての所感

　ここでは、上記のような流れで展開した授業の質を評価するにあたり、学期半ばおよび学期末に行った学生アンケートの回答内容を踏まえて検証するとともに、授業者としての所感を述べる。

3-1-1．授業の質

　本授業において英語ライティング課題の編集に生成AIを使用したことについて、学期半ばおよび学期末に行った学生アンケートの回答結果を見ると、生成AIの活用に関して非常に肯定的な意見が多く、効率的かつ効果的な英語学習に大いに役立ったとの声が大多数を占めた。一方で、特に中間アンケートにおいては、「英文をAIで添削にかけた後の編集作業にあまり時間をかけずに提出してしまう」という声も一部あり、課題への取組に対する個々の学生の姿勢によっては効果が限定される可能性も示された。但し、取組全体に対する所感としてはメリットを感じる声が圧倒的多数であった。

　また、中間アンケートの中で一部見られた「AIの使用になかなか慣れない」という声については、学期末アンケートの段階では皆無となったため、学生は課題の数をこなすほどに生成AIの使用に慣れたことがうかがえる。これは、「本授業の英語ライティング課題の編集においてAIを使用する際、教員によって与えられたプロンプト（指示文）以外のプロンプトを使うなどしてAIに英語で質問、またはAIと英語で会話（チャット）をしたことはありますか」との質問に「何度かある」「何度もある」と答えた学生が、中間アンケート時に比べ学期末に大幅に増えたことからも同様のことが言えるだろう。

　次に「本授業の英語ライティング課題の編集においてAIを使用したあと、その内容をペアで発表することが、学んだ知識の定着に役立っていると思うか」との質問に対しては、中間、学期末ともに90%以上の学生が「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」と回答しており、編集後のエッセイをただ提出するだけではなく、口頭プレゼンテーションという形で再度アウトプットするという課題設計に多くの学生が高い意義を感じたことが示された。

　最後に、生成AIによる英文添削の質がどうであったかという点については、数名の学生がアンケートでも回答しているとおり、その質は完璧ではないため注意が必要である。但し、筆者が学生からの提出課題を確認した中では、ChatGPT-3.5を活用した事前の添削により文法的なミスは大幅に軽減されており、表現もより自然な形に修正されているケースが大半であった。一方で、書き手の意図と異

なる内容の未修正、不要な修正、固有名詞の未修正、意味が通じない内容に対する修正の不足、学生のレベルに見合わない修正の提案など、修正の過不足も一定数確認された（参考資料 2 ）。このことから、ChatGPT-3.5を活用した英文添削の質は、少なくとも実践の対象期間の時点では完璧であったとは言えず、教員による最終的な課題の確認およびフィードバックは必要不可欠なプロセスであったと言える。但し、生成AIは日々進化しており、2024年 7 月にはChatGPTにおいても無料版のデフォルトがGPT-3.5からより性能が高いとされるGPT-4oに切り替わっており、これによりフィードバックの質に変化があるかは今後の要分析課題の一つである。

3-1-2．授業者の所感

　このような種々の問題はあるが、生成AIを英語ライティング課題の編集に活用することについて、授業者としてはメリットを感じることの方が多かった。例えば課題を確認する際、生成AIによる添削により初歩的な文法ミスや単語の修正等が完了していると、教員はエッセイの内容に集中することができ、効果的な話の展開の仕方や内容の深め方など、より意義のあるフィードバックを行うことができた。

　また、学生が生成AIを使用して編集、最終化したエッセイを元に対面授業内で行ったペアでの口頭プレゼンテーションでは、学生がいつもの会話練習以上に生き生きと発話している姿が毎回見られた。これは、前述のアンケートの中で「本授業の英語ライティング課題の編集においてAIを使用することが、編集後のライティング課題に対する自信に繋がっているか」との質問に対し、中間、学期末とも80%以上の学生が「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」と回答しているように、ある程度自分の成果物に自信を持った状態でアウトプットできていることに関係しているのだろう。

　そして何より、専門的な内容を扱うには英語の基礎力が足りず、とはいえ英語の教科書によく載っているような一般的な話題を普通に扱うだけでは英語学習に対するモチベーションがあまり上がらない学生たちの知的好奇心を適度に刺激し、かつ効果的な英語学習にも繋がる手段として、生成AIは使い方によっては非常に有効なツールになり得ると感じた。

　以上のことから、細かな問題や今後の検討事項は一部あるものの、授業実践としての今回の取組は学生、教員ともに満足感の高いものであり、学生が学習効果を感じられる課題設計ができたと言える。では、「実践の効果」という点ではどうであったか。この点についてさらに深く考察するため、筆者は「情意面での効果」および「言語面での効果」の二つに着目し、前者については中間および学期末アンケートによる学生の意識調査、後者については学期始めに行った英語ライティングのプレ・テストと学期終盤のポスト・テストの比較により評価することを試みた。

3-2．実践の効果（情意面）

　英語ライティングの編集課題に生成AIを活用することについて、学生がどのように受けとめ、どのように感じたかを段階的に把握するため、学期中に行った中間および学期末アンケートの結果を以下に紹介する。

　まず、本授業の英語ライティング課題の編集において生成AIを使用することが、「新たな英単語や表現の習得に役立っているか」との質問に対しては、中間、学期末アンケート時ともに85%以上の学生が「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」と回答している（図１）。次に、「文法力の向上に役立っているか」についても中間、学期末アンケート時ともに85%以上の学生が「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」と回答しており（図２）、この２項目に関しては中間時に比べ学期末の方が「そう思う」よりも「強くそう思う」と回答した学生の割合が増えており、課題数をこなすことにより生成AIの使用に慣れ、効果に対する実感も強くなったことが想像できる。「エッセイの内容を深めることに役立っているか」については「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」との回答が中間は81.5%、学期末が92.6%と微増しており（図３）、こちらも同様のことが言えそうである。続いて「本授業の英語ライティング課題の編集においてAIを使用することにより、瞬時に自分が書いた英文に対するフィードバックを受けられることが、学習意欲の向上に繋がっているか」との質問に対し、中間は「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」との回答が74%、学期末は77.8%と全体的な割合には大差がないが、学期末は「全くそう思わない」と回答する学生が０になり、一方で「そう思う」に比べ「強くそう思う」と回答した学生の割合が大幅に増えた（図４）ことは特筆に値するであろう。最後に、学期末アンケートのみに含めた「本授業の英語ライティング課題の編集におけるAIの使用が、自身の英語ライティング力の向上に役立ったか」との質問に対しては、27名中23名、割合にすると85%の学生が「そう思う」または「強くそう思う」と回答、「全く思わない」と回答した学生は０であり（図５）、大半の学生が総じて学習効果を感じたと言える。
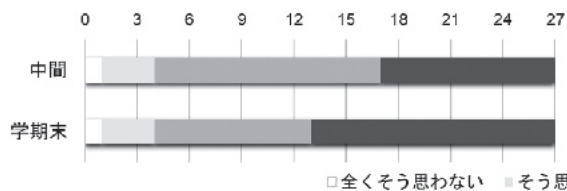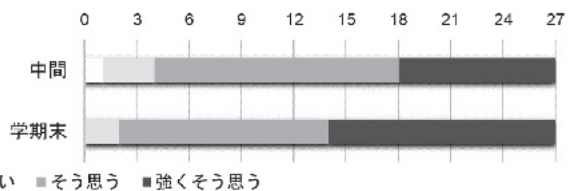

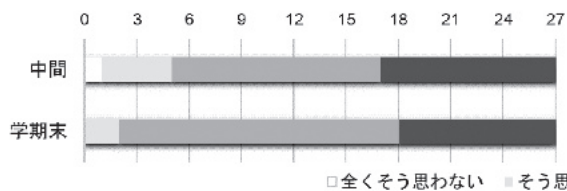**図１．中間・学期末アンケートの比較：**
**　　　新たな英単語や表現の習得について**

図２．中間・学期末アンケートの比較：
**　　　文法力の向上について**

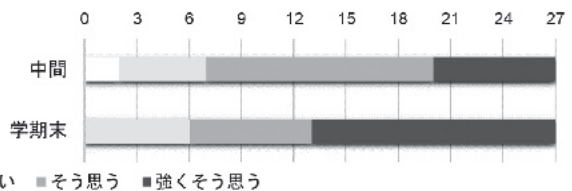**図３．中間・学期末アンケートの比較：**
**　　　エッセイの内容を深めることについて**

図４．中間・学期末アンケートの比較：
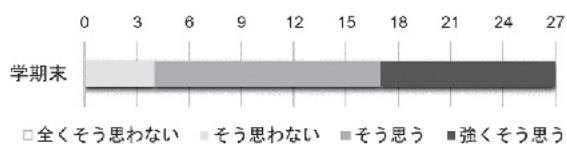**　　　学習意欲の向上について**

図５．学期末アンケート：
**　　英語ライティング力の向上について**

　以上の結果から、学生は英語ライティング課題の編集において生成AIを使用することが新たな英単語や表現の習得、文法力の向上、エッセイの内容を深めることに正の影響をもたらしたと感じる傾向があり、それが自己の英語ライティング力の向上に繋がったとの自己評価に反映されている。さらには編集の過程が学習意欲の向上にも繋がっていると実感している。従って、本授業の情意面での実践の効果としては、学生の英語ライティング力および学習意欲の向上を学生自身が感じることに繋がる、非常に肯定的なものであったと言える。

3-3．実践の効果（言語面）

　前項では学生が「どう感じたか」という情意面に着目し、大きな効果が見られた。では学生の英語ライティング力は、学生が感じたように本当に向上したのだろうか。ここでは、英語ライティングの編集課題に生成AIを活用することにより、学生の言語面での発達に影響があったか否かについて実践した内容を報告する。

　この影響の有無および度合いを把握するため、本授業では学期始めと終わりにそれぞれ英語ライティングのプレ・テストおよびポスト・テストを行った。各テストにおいて、学生は30分間、辞書のみを用いて指定するテーマについて英語でエッセイを書いた。エッセイのテーマは二種類用意し、半分の学生がプレ・テストではテーマ①、ポスト・テストではテーマ②について書き、残りの学生はプレ・テストでテーマ②、ポスト・テストでテーマ①について書くこととした。エッセイのテーマを二種類用意した理由は、プレ・テストとポスト・テストで同じテーマについてエッセイを書く場合、一度書いたことのあるテーマについて再度書くことによりポスト・テストの質に影響が出る可能性を排除するためである。また、プレ・テストとポスト・テストで書くエッセイのテーマを半分の学生ずつ交代した理由は、テーマの違いによる書きやすさがエッセイの質に与える影響を極力排除しようとしたためである。

　これらのテスト結果の比較による言語面への影響を知るため、ライティングの単語数と「6 Traits of Writing」（Bridges 2018）に基づくルーブリックの評価値を、プレおよびポスト・テストのそれぞれについて算出し、その比較を行うこととした。単語数はライティングの流暢さを測るため、ルーブリック評価は総合的な英語ライティング力を測るためにそれぞれ行った。「6 Traits of Writing」に基づくルーブリック評価（Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence fluency, Conventionsの6項目に関する5段階評価）は、英語教員2名（日本人教員および英語を母語とする外国人教員）による評価および生成AI（ChatGPT-4を使用）による評価を2回行い、教員および生成AIとも、その平均値を割り出し比較することとした。生成AIによる評価を取り入れることとした理由は二つある。一つは、例えばETS社のTOEFL iBTライティングテストも、「自動採点システムと採点官による採点を併用している」（ETS 2024）ように、機械と人間による評価を併用することが一般的になりつつあるためである。また、二つ目は、最近の研究によると、外国語として英語を学ぶ学習者のエッセイを評価する際、ChatGPT-3.5およびGPT-4とも、教員の採点者よりも一貫した、より関連性の高いフィードバックを提供できるという結果が示されたためである（Li他 2024）。

　このような言語面での評価結果については、現在採点プロセスおよび結果の分析を進めているとこ

ろであるため、本稿で詳しく紹介することはできないが、単語数についてはプレ・テストに比べてポスト・テストの値が1.7倍以上に上昇した。また、第一回目の生成AIによるルーブリック評価の結果も、プレ・テストに比べてポスト・テストの値が上昇しており、T検定により差に有意性があることが確認できている。このことから、現段階において、少なくとも英語ライティングの編集に生成AIを活用することが学生の言語面での発展を後退させることを示すデータはなく、むしろ一定時間内に産出する単語数が大幅に増えるなど、正の影響がありそうだと言える。

４．考察

　現時点で明らかになっている実践の効果を踏まえて以上の実践結果をまとめると、まず授業実践としての今回の取組は、学生の反応も良く、心配していた生成AIの使い方も課題設計の工夫により、学生自身が相応の学習効果を感じられる形で進めることができた。また、教員としても学生が知的好奇心を保ちながら英語学習に取り組む姿勢を確認することができ、本授業実践の動機であった「英語力に自信がなく学習へのモチベーションが低い学生に前向きに英語学習に取り組んでもらう方法はないか」との兼ねてからの悩みに対し生成AIの活用という一つの可能性を見出すことができた。実践の効果としても、少なくとも今回の実践においては、情意面ならびに言語面とも学生に正の影響を与えることはあっても負の影響を与えることはないようであった。特に情意面においては、正の影響が顕著であり、生成AIを授業に組み入れることが言語面での向上に対する学生自身の自己評価および英語学習に対するモチベーションの向上に大きく貢献したと言える。

　以上の実践結果を改めて俯瞰すると、「生成AIのようなテクノロジーを利用して英語学習を効率化し、効果を上げることにより、学生が学習のモチベーションを向上できるような課題設計はできないか」というはじめの問いに対しては、工夫次第で大いに可能となり得るということが今回の授業実践をとおして確認できた。生成AIという誰にでも利用可能な現代のツールの使用を頭から否定せず、使い方次第で学習の効果を得得る「便利なツール」として紹介し実際に使用してもらうことで、学生は生成AIが決して完璧なツールではないと身を以って感じ、利用にあたっては注意が必要であると納得感をもって理解した。アンケートにも「何でもかんでもAIに任せればよいというわけではないことがわかった」「AIは時々誤った情報の提示や違った解釈をするが、AIの添削を元に単語の意味を調べたりなど新たな勉強の仕方ができた。AIに頼りきりにならず、自力でも調べることで正しい情報を素早く手に入れることができるのではないかと考える」「（AIを使用すると）自分で考えなくなって、AIに全任せになり、考える力などが低下すると思っていたが、AIをうまく使えばとても便利なものだと思うが使い方は考えなければならないと思った」等の意見があり、情報教育という意味でも学生は多くの気づきが得られたようであった。

　但し、今回の授業実践の結果はあくまで履修学生27名に対して行った実践の結果であり、例え同じ大学、学部、学科の学生を対象に同様の授業を行っても同じような結果が出るかは不明である。また、授業の効果は情意面、言語面ともに、英語ライティング課題の編集において生成AIの活用を指導した授業と指導しない授業を比較した結果ではないため、観察された効果がどこまで生成AIの活用や課題設計の質によるものか、結論づけることはできない。今後はこれらの問題点も踏まえ、学生がより高

い学習へのモチベーションと学習効果を得られるよう課題設計を工夫し、同様のテーマに基づく研究として発展させていきたい。

5．結論

　本稿では、地方国立大学工学部 1 年生の必修の英語授業を担当する筆者が、「生成AIのようなテクノロジーを利用して英語学習を効率化し、効果を上げることにより、学生が学習のモチベーションを向上できるような課題設計はできないか」という問いを検証するため、2024年 4 月初旬から 7 月末に行った授業実践の取組について報告した。具体的には、英語ライティング課題の編集において、生成AI（ChatGPT-3.5）を活用すること、またその方法と最終化した課題を口頭プレゼンテーションとしてアウトプットすることについて指導した。その結果、学生は課題設計およびその効果について非常に肯定的な反応を示し、高い学習効果と英語学習へのモチベーションの向上を感じたようであった。学習効果については、少なくとも現時点で明らかになっている効果を踏まえると、英語学習における生成AIの活用は情意面、言語面とも、正の影響はあっても負の影響はないようである。特に情意面は、学生の英語ライティング力および学習意欲の向上を学生自身が感じることに繋がる、非常に肯定的なものであった。今後は、今回の授業実践をとおして考察した問題点なども踏まえ、学生がより高い学習へのモチベーションと学習効果を得られるよう課題設計を工夫して授業実践を継続させ、実践内容と効果の事例を増やし、このテーマについての研究として発展させていきたい。

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参考資料 1

英語ライティング課題の編集における使用プロンプト

#Instructions:

As an American professional English teacher, your task is to provide corrections and   suggestions based on the following constraints and input sentences.

#Constraints:

Ensure the text is easily understandable for someone with a TOEIC score of 500.

- Keep sentences concise.

- Correct any grammatical errors and highlight them in bold.

- Suggest more appropriate words or expressions using italic.

- Provide a list of reasons for each correction and suggestion.

#Input:

(ここにタイピングした自分のエッセイを貼り付け)

#Output:

参考資料 2

ChatGPT-3.5による英語ライティング課題添削の結果と問題パターンの例

	学生による記載内容	ChatGPT-3.5による修正提案
1．書き手の意図と異なる内容の未修正	I have four families	I have four families. （「4人家族」という書き手の意図が組まれず未修整）
2．不要な修正	In summer	In *the* summer （前後の文脈から"the"の追加は必須ではないが加筆が提案されている）
3．固有名詞の未修正	Fukui University	Fukui University （正式には"the University of Fukui"であるが、未修整）
4．意味が通じない内容に対する修正の不足	It's too difficult for other people to know that.	It's *difficult for others to do so.* （前後の文脈からも意味が通じない内容に対し、表現のみの修正が提案されている）
5．学生のレベルに見合わない修正の提案	This reminds me that it takes talent to do things well, but it also takes effort.	This *serves as a reminder* that *while talent is important, effort is equally crucial.* （修正の提案内容と学生のレベルに乖離があり、学習効果が限定される可能性がある）

The Use and Impact of Generative AI in Editing English Writing Tasks: Practices and Effects in Beginner-Level English Classes for First-Year Students at a Regional National University in Japan

HENNESSY Emi

The rapid advancement of machine translation and generative AI necessitates a critical reevaluation of foreign language education practices, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. This paper presents a practical implementation aimed at determining whether EFL instructors can design tasks that leverage these technologies to enhance the efficiency of language learning and improve outcomes for beginner-level university students. Specifically, it reports on the practical implementation and effects observed in English classes during the spring semester of 2024 at a regional national university in Japan.

In the English classes, students were assigned to write essays on designated themes, which they subsequently edited using generative AI in on-demand sessions, totaling five assignments throughout the semester. Students also engaged in peer presentations of their finalized essays as a form of output. The effectiveness of this approach was assessed through surveys measuring affective responses and English writing tests to evaluate language proficiency.

The results revealed a significant positive impact on students' emotional engagement, suggesting that integrating generative AI can substantially enhance language learning for beginners. This practical implementation not only highlights the benefits of generative AI in language education but also outlines essential considerations and challenges for future task design.

Keywords: EFL, classroom improvement, writing, technology and language teaching, generative AI

Project-Based Learning for Community Revitalization at a Japanese National University:
A Qualitative Analysis of Student Experiences

Christopher Hennessy

Abstract

From 2017 to 2024, the author co-designed and facilitated Project-Based Learning (PBL) courses focused on community revitalization for second-year students at a Japanese national university. These courses promoted Fukui's culture and history to domestic and international audiences. With upcoming curriculum changes in 2024, the PBL course is undergoing significant revisions. This paper reflects briefly on the previous six years of PBL before focusing on the 2023-2024 course, in which the author collaborated with a community organization in Katsuyama City, Fukui Prefecture. In this project, seven students were divided into two teams: one developed disaster prevention materials for non-Japanese residents in partnership with the local city hall, while the other created social media content to attract international tourists. Data from questionnaires completed at the start, midpoint, and end of the course provide qualitative insights into students' evolving experiences in *Cultural Engagement and Local Knowledge*, *Leadership and Team Dynamics*, and *Mentorship and Role Differentiation*. This analysis highlights key learning outcomes, including shifts in students' roles, interactions with mentors, and skills gained. In conclusion, the author will try to connect these themes to create a preliminary theory, often a feature of grounded theory research, to describe the experiences of the students and how they developed in this PBL course.

Keywords: project-based learning, grounded theory, active learning, community revitalization, regional Japan

1. Introduction

Since 2017, the integration of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in the Japanese higher education landscape has allowed students to engage directly with community-based projects, bridging academic goals with practical, localized impact. At the University of Fukui, a national university in Japan, PBL courses have been particularly transformative for second-year students tasked with community revitalization initiatives that promote cultural and historical aspects of Fukui Prefecture to both domestic and international audiences. Over seven years, these courses have evolved in their

goals, structure, and partnerships, reflecting broader curricular shifts and pedagogical innovations. With upcoming curriculum changes set for 2024, the PBL course itself is entering a new phase, necessitating a close reflection on past iterations and an in-depth analysis of the recent 2023 course.

The 2023-24 PBL course marked a distinct collaboration between the author and a local community development leader in Katsuyama City. The course was divided into two specialized teams, each with distinct objectives tailored to Katsuyama City's community needs. One team partnered with the city hall and community leaders to develop disaster prevention resources for non-Japanese residents, addressing the urgent need for inclusivity in public safety. The second team focused on creating social media content to attract foreign tourists, directly supporting Katsuyama City's tourism goals (Katsuyama City 2024). This structure provided students with diverse experiences, combining government collaboration with the challenges of digital promotion, and fostered a nuanced understanding of how academic learning intersects with real-world community needs.

In this paper, the author will give an exploratory qualitative analysis of the 2023-24 yearlong course based on student feedback collected through three questionnaires administered at strategic points: pre-course, mid-course, and post-course. The analysis emphasizes students' perspectives on their evolving roles within PBL teams, their interactions with the instructor and community organization leader, and the practical skills they developed through the project. By applying a constructivist grounded theory approach, the study aims to reveal the mechanisms through which students adapted to and internalized their experiences, particularly in the areas of community engagement, leadership/team dynamics, and mentorship. This research contributes to the growing understanding of PBL's role in fostering experiential learning, adaptability, and community-oriented competencies in diverse educational settings. The findings also provide insights into how future PBL courses may be designed to support community revitalization in rural Japanese settings, integrating both local and global perspectives for maximum student and community benefit.

2. Literature Review

2-1. Background of Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning (PBL) appears under various names throughout educational history. However, many contemporary versions trace back to early 20th-century American education and John Dewey's promotion of experiential, action-oriented education. The PBL trend in the 1900s reflected a broader educational shift toward "experiential, democratic and social behaviorist ideals" (van Lier, 2006, p. xi). Today, PBL is seen as essential for providing students with authentic, contextual learning experiences. Capraro, Capraro, & Morgan (2013, p. 2) describe PBL as "composed of several problems students will need to solve," emphasizing that it creates a meaningful scaffold for understanding science, technology, engineering, and mathematics concepts, while also integrating

language arts, social studies, and art.

Despite these perspectives, a precise, standardized definition of PBL is difficult to find due to the overwhelming number of definitions in existence. Prince & Felder (2006) contribute a structured view, identifying eight core characteristics of PBL: (1) collaborative teamwork, (2) open-ended assignments, (3) real-life relevance, (4) student-developed strategies, (5) evaluation against goals, (6) broad problem scope, (7) focus on the end product, and (8) emphasis on applying integrated knowledge rather than simply acquiring it. Grounded in these foundational theories and characteristics, the author has developed both STEM-oriented PBL—centered on engineering-based design challenges— and non-STEM PBL, focused on regional revitalization, over the past decade.

3. Context of the Study

3-1. PBL in the School of Global and Community Studies – University of Fukui

The PBL course discussed here is part of a broader departmental commitment to project-based learning, an important part of the School of Global and Community Studies (GCS) – University of Fukui curriculum. All GCS students engage in PBL courses during their first, second, and third years, with certain projects extending across multiple semesters or even up to two years. By their second year, GCS students select from various PBL courses or projects. The course described here, unique in its integration of English language instruction, is the only option at the second-year level that includes short-term international students, aiming to bridge the local community with broader global perspectives. This aligns with the emphasis on PBL as a means for students to engage meaningfully with both local and international contexts, fostering adaptability and interdisciplinary collaboration (Capraro, Capraro, & Morgan, 2013).

3-2. The DEEP Fukui Project

Since 2017, the author and a colleague have annually designed and delivered a one-year PBL course for second-year students called "The DEEP Fukui Project." While the course content adapts each year based on student input and resource availability, its overarching goal remains to showcase Fukui's lesser-known cultural elements to a broader audience, often using English for international outreach. Project examples include creating English-language pamphlets on local sake producers for distribution in major tourist areas both within and outside Fukui Prefecture, developing English Wikipedia pages to introduce Fukui's attractions and cultural sites, and producing videos that highlight lesser-known aspects of Fukui culture.

3-3. Descriptions of Previous PBL Course Content

Each year's project builds on the lessons learned from prior experiences, with evolving levels of student autonomy, involvement of local stakeholders, and focus on community impact. Here is a brief

overview of these projects:

2017 – Local Sake Pamphlet: This initial project involved creating bilingual pamphlets promoting local sake producers. Students visited companies, interviewed stakeholders, and produced pamphlets distributed within Fukui and beyond. The project benefited from expert training but required recalibration to allow more student independence.

2018 – Local Experience (*Taiken*) Pamphlet: Building on the 2017 framework, this project focused on *taiken* experiences (hands-on local activities) and the production of a pamphlet. Students gained more independence through researching and choosing their own *taiken* activity, which helped balance class activities and fieldwork. However, quality control and managing larger student numbers posed challenges.

2019 – DEEP Fukui Project Video: In this project, students independently explored lesser-known aspects of Fukui, creating English-language videos aimed at a broader audience. While the project fostered significant autonomy, it depended heavily on student motivation, and language learning often was not emphasized.

2020 – Simple English Wikipedia Articles: This smaller-scale project, affected by COVID-19, had students research and contribute to Simple English Wikipedia pages on Fukui-related topics. Though conducted online, the project demonstrated that digital PBL could be effective and manageable with smaller groups.

2021 – Local Organization Promotion: This project shifted towards promoting local organizations on social media. Students joined local events, devised public relations strategies, and created content for Instagram and YouTube. The structure worked well, but there was a noticeable decline in the global (English-language) component.

2022 – Local Area Promotion Pamphlet and Event: In collaboration with a local organization, students planned events and designed promotional pamphlets. Despite strong student preparation in PBL skills, communication issues with the facilitating organization revealed areas for further refinement.

Through these projects, several key takeaways emerged: student dedication and the involvement of stakeholders significantly impact project quality and balancing scaffolded support with autonomy is essential. Additionally, multiple facilitators and priming activities (such as initial mini-projects)

can substantially enhance the project's overall effectiveness. These insights shaped the continuous development of the PBL framework the author had developed and informed the ongoing exploration of PBL's role in community engagement and student learning. In the next section, the author will describe the methodology used as well as the background of the 2023-24 PBL course that is the main focus of this paper.

4. Methodology

4-1. Background of the 2023 Project Based Learning Course for Community Revitalization

The 2023 course involved seven students, divided into two teams with distinct project goals. Students chose which of the two projects they wished to participate in. As with previous iterations of the course, it was conducted over one academic year (Spring semester and Fall semester). One team consisting of four students (two female, two male, all Japanese nationals) national collaborated with a community organization leader and Katsuyama City Hall to develop disaster prevention materials tailored for non-Japanese residents in the city. The other team (three female, all non-Japanese but full-time degree-seeking students fluent in Japanese) worked exclusively with the community organization leader to create social media content aimed at attracting foreign visitors to Katsuyama.

4-2. Data Collection Method - Questionnaires

For this research, the author aimed to understand what students initially sought from their relationships with the course instructors and organization members, and how these relationships ultimately influenced their learning by the course's end. Specifically, the focus was on what students expected to gain and what they felt they had gained afterward. To capture these perspectives, the author administered a longitudinal questionnaire: the first questionnaire was conducted prior to the course's start (April 2023), and the second followed the first semester's course's completion (July 2023). The final questionnaire was conducted after completion of both semesters of the one-year course (February 2024). All three questionnaires were nearly identical in structure, with differences only in verb tense to capture future expectations (April 2023, July 2023) versus reflections on the past (July 2023, February 2024). The questionnaires were administered via Google Forms, and received responses from all seven students.

4-2-1. Questionnaire content descriptions

Pre-Class Questionnaire (April 2023)

The pre-class questionnaire aimed to capture students' motivations and expectations as they began the PBL course. Eight questions focused on understanding why students chose this course, specifically probing their interest in Katsuyama City and its community revitalization needs. It explored their personal development goals, particularly skills like communication and problem-

solving, which they saw as valuable for both individual growth and teamwork. Students were also asked about their preferred roles within the group, allowing them to reflect on how they envisioned contributing to the project. Additionally, the questionnaire sought insights into students' expectations of the instructor's role, particularly around the level of guidance and support they anticipated receiving. Finally, questions centered on what students hoped to learn from local organization members, with a focus on community perspectives that they believed would be essential for contextualizing their work in Katsuyama City.

Post-Spring Semester Questionnaire (July 2023)

The mid-course questionnaire prompted students to reflect on their progress in relation to their initial goals, encouraging them to evaluate how the course activities had helped them advance toward these objectives. Twelve questions centered on team dynamics, asking students to assess how roles had been distributed within the group, as well as the effectiveness of collaboration in achieving project goals. The role of the instructor was revisited, with questions focusing on how the instructor's guidance influenced their approach to the project and supported their learning. Additionally, students were asked to consider their interactions with local cooperating organization members, specifically regarding the practical support and community knowledge these members provided. The questionnaire also included prompts about new skills and insights, particularly those related to project management, that students may have gained through the hands-on activities and community engagement.

Post-Fall Semester Questionnaire (February 2024)

In the final questionnaire, students were asked to reflect on their overall outcomes and to assess the extent to which they achieved their initial goals. Twelve questions encouraged them to consider personal growth, specifically through leadership roles and responsibilities they assumed within the group, and how these experiences shaped their confidence and accountability. The evaluation of relationships with both the instructor and community members was further explored, with an emphasis on mentorship and the role of these figures in guiding the project's direction. Students were also prompted to reflect on practical learnings gained from working with the community, including insights about tourism and local issues. Finally, the questionnaire asked students to consider how they might apply the skills and knowledge gained from this PBL course to future endeavors, allowing for a comprehensive reflection on the course's long-term impact on their development.

4-3. Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach

This research utilizes a Grounded Theory Approach (GTA) to analyze the data, adhering to a constructivist perspective as described by Charmaz (2014). Depending on the chosen methodology,

literature reviews in GTA can occur before framework development (Clarke 2005) or after data analysis (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978) to avoid preconceived biases, referred to as "received theory" (Glaser & Strauss 1967). However, as the author has prior experience and publications on the topic, a completely unbiased stance as suggested in early GTA iterations is not feasible. Instead, the research framework and questionnaire are shaped by the researcher's accumulated experience and extensive literature review.

The constructivist GTA emphasizes iterative data analysis through techniques like coding, memo writing, and the constant comparison method, where new data are continually compared to existing data to refine insights. Analysis begins with line-by-line coding to minimize researcher bias, progressing to focused coding to identify prevalent patterns. This is followed by categorization, where codes are elevated to abstract categories through memo writing, ultimately forming interconnected theoretical concepts. While GTA aims to develop organized theories explaining and predicting phenomena, this paper focuses on establishing initial categories rather than constructing comprehensive theories due to the scope and complexity of the research (Charmaz 2014).

5. Analysis

In this section, the author will examine and describe here the grounded theory approach analysis individually to each of the questionnaires distributed during the yearlong PBL course: April 2023 at the beginning of the course, July 2023 at the end of the first semester, and February 2024 at the end of the second semester. In the next Discussion section, the author will describe how, collectively, these analyses revealed three principal thematic categories: *Cultural Engagement and Local Knowledge*, *Leadership and Team Dynamics*, and *Mentorship and Role Differentiation*. The codes that built the categories did not unilaterally point to the development of any given category but instead reflected the prevalent themes and patterns derived from the majority of students' responses. Representative quotes illustrate how these themes emerged in each phase of the study.

5-1. Pre-Class Questionnaire Analysis

Cultural Engagement as a Motivator

In pre-course responses, students described an eagerness to connect with the culture of Katsuyama City and to contribute to community development. This phase reflected motivations rooted in cultural discovery and relationship-building within the community. Many students framed their early perceptions of Katsuyama City with curiosity and anticipation, forming an initial foundation for engagement. One student expressed this clearly: "I want to mingle more with the locals and to gain

as much new knowledge as possible about the place where I'm studying"[1] (April 2023). Another added, "The organization is like windows that help us to see deeply into the target place… valuable sources for our investigation" (April 2023).

Anticipation of Personal and Professional Growth

Participants articulated strong intentions to improve skills like effective communication and collaborative problem-solving, seeing these as integral to their growth. These goals set up how they approached teamwork and accountability within the course. One student noted, "I was a little bit shy, also I tend to follow others' ideas… but personal ideas are important in group working so I want to be brave to state my points" (April 2023). Another commented, "I want to become more observant… I want a study which I can challenge myself and learn new things" (April 2023), showing a desire for both personal and academic growth.

Role of Instructor and Local Organization Members as Guides

Students anticipated that the instructor and organization members would act as mentors and cultural liaisons. They expected the instructor to guide while allowing autonomy, and they viewed local members as crucial for contextualizing their work within Katsuyama City's cultural landscape. As one student observed, "Chris will be an instructor who guides us on how to run the project appropriately and smoothly… we are trying to aim to be perfect" (April 2023). Another remarked, "They will teach us what they are doing in the front line of tourism industry in Katsuyama City, and the goals or targets they are aiming for" (April 2023).

5-2. Post-Spring Semester Questionnaire Analysis

Immersive Cultural Engagement

By mid-course, students' initial curiosity had deepened into a more immersive engagement. They began to experience meaningful interactions with locals, which expanded their understanding of Katsuyama City's daily life and values. This phase marked a shift from observation to active cultural participation. One student noted, "My goals to communicate more with the locals… along the process, I got to know and meet more locals which is totally helping me to achieve my goals" (July 2023). Another reflected on this engagement by stating, "The activities involved in this project so far were really useful because… I got to know the hidden gems… totally worth discovering in Katsuyama" (July 2023).

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[1] Student responses in questionnaires were written in either English or Japanese. English responses are written here as is. All Japanese responses were translated by the author.

Development of Collaborative Dynamics and *Team Roles*

Responses at this stage showed students developing an increased awareness of team roles and dynamics. They coordinated tasks and adapted to each other's strengths, forming a cohesive group identity. One student shared, "We divided tasks almost equally and each person did them, after that, combined them" (July 2023), while another noted, "In a group work, I am more to a manager... even in Tiktok group, I am the one who arrange the schedule" (July 2023).

Instructor's Role as a Facilitator of Autonomy

The instructor's role evolved into that of a supportive guide, as students appreciated the non-directive approach. The author's guidance was valued for fostering independence while aligning students with course objectives. One student said, "Chris is more guide than instructor... he just gives recommendations and feedbacks that are helpful in making our projects run smoothly" (July 2023). Another added, "Chris acts as the bridge between us and the people related to Katsuyama... whenever we encounter difficulties... we can turn to him for help" (July 2023).

5-3. Post-Fall Semester Questionnaire Analysis

Emergent Leadership and *Responsibility*

By the course's end, students expressed a shift toward leadership, describing how guiding peers fostered confidence and accountability. This transition underscored their movement from external guidance to self-directed responsibility. As one student reflected, "At first, I thought I wanted to be the helper... However, I ended up as leader because nothing will move if I haven't done anything" (February 2024). Another student said, "My role was almost the leader... I think I worked well with the teammates but there was a phase when the progress turned to be a little bit slower" (February 2024).

Self-Efficacy and *Professional Readiness*

Students' final reflections demonstrated growth in professional and interpersonal skills, such as networking and teamwork. They recognized how these competencies prepared them for future roles demanding cultural sensitivity and collaboration. One student stated, "I got the chance to explore a lot of places and know the locals better... This really help my growth especially related to teamwork and networking with other organizations" (February 2024).

Cultural Mediation by Local Organization Members

Interactions with local organization members were essential for understanding Katsuyama City's unique needs. These members provided cultural insight and practical advice, enhancing the students' project relevance and community connection. As one student observed, "They are our first window to

understanding Katsuyama and the people who have provided us with the most practical help. Without them, our impression of Katsuyama would have remained superficial" (February 2024). Another added, "They helped us to connect us with any help around Katsuyama City... to find more places and experiences that we can do to contribute into our project" (February 2024).

Though the data is scant with seven students, across the longitudinal data a tentative but cohesive model emerged depicting a process where *Cultural Engagement and Local Knowledge*, *Leadership and Team Dynamics*, and *Mentorship and Role Differentiation* formed an interconnected framework of student experience. Initially motivated by curiosity and self-development, students gradually internalized a sense of cultural enquiry, which fostered autonomy and leadership. Their interactions with the instructor and community members reinforced the value of experiential learning in building professional and interpersonal competencies. In the next section, the author will attempt to further explain and connect these overarching themes among the data in this research project, as well as against data collected in similar past research projects.

6. Discussion

This overall analysis of the data in this research project analysis highlighted in the previous section led to three core categories: *Cultural Engagement and Local Knowledge*, *Leadership and Team Dynamics*, and *Mentorship and Role Differentiation*. These categories illustrate a process of collaborative and community-driven learning where students developed community revitalization awareness, cultural engagement, and practical skills. In this section, the author will briefly explain how the data analyzed come together to create these categories.

Furthermore, as the author has conducted a similar longitudinal research project in a past PBL (Hennessy 2023) with nearly exact same questionnaires, this section will focus not only on the new codes and categories created in grounded theory process as described in the previous sections, but the author will try to integrate the data collected from these students with previous the previous research results. The main codes from the previous research study connected to this research include *promotion skills*, *teamwork*, *self-reliance*, *critical thinking*, *problem-solving*, and *communication*.

6-1. Cultural Engagement and Local Knowledge

Cultural Engagement in the context of this data set refers to the active participation of students in understanding and interacting with the cultural context of Katsuyama City. It involves activities such as exploring local traditions, engaging with community members, and learning about the region's unique history and challenges. Students described their motivations to explore the community beyond superficial observations. This engagement emphasizes practical immersion and interaction with the local environment as a means of learning and contributing to the community.

Alignment with Prior Themes

Themes of *teamwork* and *communication* emerged strongly throughout the research projects past and present, as students consistently described organization members as key sources of insight into Katsuyama City's community. Students expressed a desire to engage deeply with the community, valuing the organization members as critical resources for understanding local culture. As one student noted, "The organization is like windows that help us see deeply into the target place... valuable sources for our investigation" (April 2023). Another emphasized the cultural relevance of this engagement connecting with *communication*, stating, "They're our first window to understanding Katsuyama" (February 2024). The data suggests an overall *Immersive Cultural Engagement* through a search for *Local Knowledge*.

Divergence from Prior Themes

Contrary to earlier findings where *promotion skills* were a focus, in the 2023-2024 iteration of the PBL course, cultural inclusivity took precedence. Rather than seeking to promote Katsuyama City, students aimed to learn how to make it more welcoming for residents and tourists. For example, a student stated, "I want to mingle more with the locals... gain as much new knowledge as possible about the place where I'm studying" (April 2023). This search for inclusivity led to students wanting to promote the area as they learned more about it. This shift highlights how PBL goals in a rural setting may naturally emphasize inclusivity and local understanding which in turn can lead to stronger outward promotion.

6-2. Leadership and Team Dynamics

Self-Reliance and Problem-Solving

The PBL course fostered a clear increase in *self-reliance* and *problem-solving skills*, consistent with past findings. Many students reported growing into proactive roles within their teams. The representative quote, as noted above, is, "At first, I thought I wanted to be the helper... However, I ended up as leader because nothing will move if I haven't done anything" (February 2024). This quote emphasizes the theme of emerging autonomy and leadership demonstrates how the PBL course reinforced self-reliance and adaptability. These themes found in the previous research align with *Emergent Leadership* and *Responsibility* demonstrated in this research study, as well as *Self-Efficacy*, *Professional Readiness, Development of Collaborative Dynamics,* and *Team Roles*.

6-3. Mentorship and Role Differentiation

Instructor as Facilitator and Guide

As students' roles became defined, the instructor's guidance was increasingly valued. Students viewed the instructor as a non-directive guide, with one describing him as "more to guidance... instead of

controlling everything, just gives some recommendations" (February 2024). Another noted, "Chris was the bridge between us and Katsuyama, supporting us whenever we encountered difficulties" (February 2024). These observations align with previous findings that highlight the facilitator role of instructors within PBL, where guidance supports students' self-directed learning. This category is supported by the previous section's codes including *Instructor's Role as a Facilitator of Autonomy, Development of Collaborative Dynamics* and *Team Roles,*

Practical Mentorship from Organization Members

Organization members provided not only project-relevant knowledge but also a broader sense of how to navigate real-world community issues, something noted less frequently in prior PBL research. For example, one student reflected, "I learned how some random things that we found... can be very helpful for a better result" (February 2024). Additionally, they described the organization as essential to understanding Katsuyama City's cultural context: "Without them, our impression of Katsuyama would have remained superficial" (February 2024). *Cultural Mediation by Local Organization Members* from this research study supports this category.

6-4. Comparative Insights Between Current and Previous Research Projects

As noted above in this section, previous research studies the author conducted based on other PBL iterations (see section *3-3 Descriptions of Previous PBL Course Content*) and this current research study on PBL share core themes such as teamwork, self-reliance, communication, and problem-solving, highlighting students' growth in independence and collaborative skills. These studies emphasize the dual mentorship roles of instructors and community organization members in fostering metacognitive and technical skills. While earlier studies focused heavily on practical skills like social media promotion, event management, and technical skills, they also hinted at the potential for cultural engagement through themes such as local knowledge and community interaction (Hennessy & Malcolm 2021; Hennessy 2023). However, these aspects were not explicitly framed in terms of cultural inclusivity.

In contrast, this study brought cultural engagement and mentorship differentiation to the forefront, reflecting a shift toward fostering broader cultural awareness and long-term impact. This shift builds upon the groundwork of earlier iterations through the experiences of the author and expands the scope to include cultural engagement and the students' role in creating inclusive environments for local residents and visitors. This progression demonstrates how earlier practicalities laid the foundation for more integrated, reflective objectives, underscoring the adaptability of PBL to meet evolving educational and community needs.

7. Conclusion

This study examined a unique iteration of a project-based learning course focused on community revitalization, conducted at a national university in Japan. Through a partnership with a community development organization in Katsuyama City, students engaged in two distinct projects: one creating disaster prevention materials for non-Japanese residents, and the other developing social media content to attract international tourists. Using qualitative methods and data collected from pre-course, mid-course, and post-course questionnaires, along with data from past research projects, this research identified three core themes in the students' learning experiences — *Cultural Engagement* and *Local Knowledge*, *Leadership* and *Team Dynamics*, and *Mentorship* and *Role Differentiation*. These themes reflect students' adaptive learning journeys as they assumed meaningful roles in community-based projects, deepening their cultural understanding, collaborative skills, and real-world problem-solving abilities.

Despite the valuable insights gained, this research is not without limitations. The study's small sample size, consisting of only seven students, restricts the generalizability of the findings to other PBL courses or cultural contexts. Additionally, the data relies on self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to personal bias, especially as students reflected on their perceived learning gains and role adjustments over time. Future studies could benefit from integrating additional data sources, such as direct observation of student activities, or interviews with community members involved in the projects, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of PBL on both students and the community.

Looking forward, paths for future research emerge. First, expanding the scope of PBL research to include a larger, more diverse sample across multiple universities in Japan would help to clarify how regional and cultural factors influence learning outcomes in community-based PBL programs. Also, exploring the long-term impact of such courses on students' professional development and community engagement after graduation would provide valuable insights into the lasting effects of PBL experiences. Future research could also build on the themes identified in this study by developing a cohesive framework that interconnects cultural engagement, leadership dynamics, and mentorship in project-based learning contexts. By exploring these themes in greater depth and across diverse educational settings, subsequent studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these elements collectively contribute to student learning and community impact.

This study underscores the potential of project-based learning in the curriculum to cultivate adaptable, culturally aware, and community-minded individuals. As universities in Japan and beyond consider curriculum revisions, insights from this research can contribute to a broader understanding of how structured partnerships with local organizations enrich PBL experiences. By continuing to explore and refine the role of project-based learning in diverse educational contexts, future research can further inform best practices for integrating experiential learning with community revitalization goals.

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日本の国立大学における地域創生を目的とした課題探究プロジェクト教育：学生経験に基づく質的分析

ヘネシー・クリストファー

要　旨

2017年から2024年にかけて、筆者は日本の国立大学において、地域創生を目的とした課題探究プロジェクト（＝PBL【project-based learning】）のコースを共同でデザインし、実施した。このコースは、国内外に対して福井県の文化と歴史の普及を促進するものであった。2024年のカリキュラム変更を控え、PBLコースの内容は大幅な改訂が進行している。本論文は過去６年間のPBLの活動を簡単に説明し、2023-2024年のコースに焦点を当てる。特に本コースでは、筆者が福井県勝山市の地域創生の団体と連携し、７名の学生が２つのチームに分かれて活動した。１つのチームは地元市役所と協働し、外国人住民向けの防災資料を作成し、もう１つのチームは国際観光客の誘致を目的としたSNS内容を制作した。学生の「文化的関与と地域知識」「リーダーシップとチームダイナミクス」「指導と役割の区別」のテーマに関する経験の変化を質的に把握するために、コースの開始時、中間、および終了時に実施されたアンケートのデータを用いて分析を行った。この分析により、学生の役割の変化、指導者との交流、習得したスキルの成長が明らかになる。結論として、著者はテーマを結びつけることで、グラウンデッド・セオリー研究に使われている理論を構築し、PBLコースにおける学生の経験やその成長過程を記述しようと試みる。

キーワード：課題探究プロジェクト、課題解決型学習、アクティブラーニング、地域創生、地域・地方

The MATATAG Curriculum and Japanese Lesson Study:
Exploration on Collaborative Expertise Sessions (CES) in the Philippines

William Tjipto

Abstract

The need for students to adapt to 21st-century skills has necessitated the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum beginning AY 2024-2025 in the Philippines. This research note is an exploratory analysis into one of its core components, the Collaborative Expertise Sessions (CES), which focus on teacher collaboration to improve lesson quality. Lesson study, renowned for its focus on professional development and collaborative learning among teachers, is mirrored in CES. This research examines CES methodology and implementation by using MATATAG training materials, and reviewing research on MATATAG and CES. The author has approached CES through the perspective of established Japanese lesson study, a similar teacher collaborative methodology.

Currently, there is limited published research on the new curriculum, making it an opportune moment to explore its emerging implementation. These early findings suggest that there are several factors that contribute to effective CES teacher communities. This has enhanced teacher support and professional development, fostering a collaborative teaching environment. However, challenges such as implementation consistency across pilot schools, varied support from stakeholders, resistance to change, and difficulties balancing CES participation with teaching responsibilities have hindered standardization.

Our analysis of CES aligns with lesson study implementation in some aspects. Key differences highlighted are CES is required as policy, following guided discussions, whereas lesson study is often introduced voluntarily, adapted based on local needs and context, and routinely includes lesson observations. Continued monitoring of CES implementation will be crucial to understanding how the Philippines addresses these challenges and adopts a sustainable model of teacher collaboration.

Keywords: Japanese lesson study, MATATAG Curriculum, Collaborative Expert Sessions, professional development, teacher collaboration

1. Background of the MATATAG Curriculum

The 21st century has created unprecedented opportunities through technological advancements that connect people around the globe, but it has also exposed new challenges, particularly for developing nations like the Philippines. The need for students to cultivate creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, emotional intelligence, and digital literacy skills has driven a need for change in the existing curriculum (Estrellado, 2023) and the rolling implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, beginning in AY 2024-2025. Acknowledging the importance of holistic education, the curriculum integrates values education across all subjects and grade levels. This strategy aims to cultivate not only academic excellence but also character development and essential life skills. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating values education through interactive and experiential learning methods, ensuring that students can apply these values in real contexts. The integration of values education aims to ensure that students grow not only in academic competencies but also in personal integrity, empathy, and social responsibility, thus preparing them to be well-rounded citizens capable of making positive contributions to society.

One of the essential components of MATATAG is the Collaborative Expertise Sessions (CES), scheduled collaborative meetings designed to foster teacher collaboration where educators can share best practices, develop and critique lesson plans, analyze student performance, and strategize solutions to educational challenges. CES sessions are held regularly, usually twice a week, and involve teachers from various schools working together, sometimes even across school districts, to enhance their practices in the goal of improving student outcomes.

2. Lesson Study

Japanese lesson study is a practice aimed at enhancing professional development through collaboration, implemented widely in the Japanese educational system and adopted in various countries globally. It is usually a process that involves teachers collaboratively identifying, planning lessons, observing the lesson together, and reflective post-discussions (Lewis & Takahashi, 2013) with the goal of improving instructional practices and student learning outcomes. The process generally includes identifying a specific teaching challenge or goal, collaboratively designing a lesson, observing the lesson being taught (often by one teacher while others observe), and then engaging in reflective discussions to assess the effectiveness of the lesson and suggest improvements.

International studies on lesson study underscore the transformative effects of lesson study on both teaching practices (Inprasitha, 2022) and student learning behaviors (Norwich & Ylonen, 2015), contributing to the development of a positive, student-centered school culture. Lesson study's adaptability to different cultural contexts, as demonstrated by its implementation globally, further attests to its potential as a robust framework for teacher continuous professional development and collaborative learning among teachers.

3-1. Literature Review

The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, including CES, has garnered significant attention, although it remains in its early stages, with only a limited number of published studies available. This research note analyzed 21 available early reports on MATATAG, focusing on CES. Given that CES is an integral part of teacher development, the author aimed to map available evidence, identify key factors contributing to its effectiveness, and understand the challenges faced during its initial rollout. The introduction of CES as a Ministry-led mandate, compared to the voluntary nature of lesson study outside Japan, presents a unique context for analysis.

3-2. Positive Results

3-2-1. Collaboration: Studies such as those by Kilag et al. (2024) and Domingo & Masapbi (2024) demonstrate that CES encourages teachers to share best practices and adopt innovative pedagogical approaches, ultimately enhancing lesson quality.

3-2-2. Professional Development: By providing a structured environment for collective problem-solving, CES has facilitated more informed instructional practices, underscoring its role in promoting teacher professional development and enhancing collaboration (Uy et al., 2024). Teachers actively participating in CES report a sense of camaraderie and professional growth, which translates into improved student engagement and better learning outcomes.

3-2-3. Curriculum Changes: Among many other changes, values education is now integrated across various subjects, fostering holistic learning (Kilag et al., 2024). CES has supported this integration by encouraging teachers to work collaboratively on values-based instruction, leading to more cohesive and consistent character education across different classrooms. Teachers who participated in CES felt more equipped to deliver values education effectively, ultimately contributing to positive behavioral changes among students (Uy et al., 2024).

3-3. Challenges

3-3-1. Resource Constraints: Several studies emphasize that CES's potential is hindered by practical limitations such as inadequate time, insufficient training, and lack of administrative support. Lagbao (2024) and Kilag (2024) both highlight concerns about time constraints. Teachers struggle to balance CES activities with their other teaching responsibilities, a situation exacerbated in under-resourced schools where they often take on multiple roles, leading to reports feeling overwhelmed by the amount of preparation required for CES meetings, which can involve detailed presentations and formalized discussions.

3-3-2. Adoption Issues: Adoption of the new curriculum and the structured discussions mandated in CES sessions have proven to be a consistent challenge for some teachers (Ubias, 2024). Many educators struggle with adjusting to the new collaborative frameworks, particularly due to the

additional workload that CES entails. The mandatory, Ministry-led nature of CES (Kilag et al., 2024), coupled with the need for exhaustive lesson preparation and adherence to structured discussion topics, has led to some resistance. Furthermore, the varying levels of experience among teachers and the disparity in institutional support exacerbate these challenges, making consistent adoption across different schools difficult.

3-3-3. Resistance to Change: Another critical challenge involves resistance to the collaborative approach inherent in CES. As noted in two articles by Uy et al. (2024), some educators are resistant, particularly those unfamiliar with collaborative frameworks or those who see it as an added workload rather than an opportunity for growth. In contrast, lesson study practices outside Japan are often voluntarily adopted and can be customized to fit the specific needs and context of a given school or district. This top-down implementation of CES limits the autonomy of educators, leading to varying degrees of engagement and resistance.

3-3-4. Institutional Support: Furthermore, the review identified disparities in the support provided by administrators across different schools. The level of administrative commitment greatly affects the effectiveness of CES implementation (Loza, 2024). In schools where leaders are highly supportive, CES is seen as a tool for professional development and continuous improvement. However, in schools lacking such support, CES often becomes an additional burden rather than a valuable opportunity for growth.

4. Differences

There are several distinctions between CES and lesson study. The most highlighted challenge of MATATAG is that CES is a Ministry-led policy mandate that must be implemented by all schools, whereas lesson study is typically introduced voluntarily and adapted in frequency and focus, fitting for each localized context. This distinction results in a more rigid structure for CES, with scheduled meetings and structured discussion topics guided by curriculum guides (Dayola et al., 2024). While such structure can be beneficial in ensuring uniformity, it may also restrict teachers' flexibility and creativity in collaboration. This, coupled with the lack of observation sessions that defines the basis in lesson study, possibly reduces the overall effectiveness of CES in fostering in-depth reflection and more personalized professional growth.

5. Recommendations

For CES to succeed, it is essential to address the challenges identified among all the reviewed articles. Providing adequate resources, targeted professional development, and reducing administrative burdens on teachers could help make CES a sustainable practice in the Philippines. Additionally, adopting more flexible meeting schedules and incorporating observation elements similar to lesson study could enhance the depth of collaboration, motivation of teachers and

administrators, and ensure continuous professional growth.

Lessons from Japanese lesson study can potentially offer guidance for overcoming these barriers, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, autonomy, and sustained administrative backing in fostering teacher learning communities. By examining the CES in the Philippines within the lesson study context, valuable insights might be discovered.

6. Gaps

In exploring the research currently available, several research gaps appear that may warrant further exploration. The current body of literature lacks other comparative analysis between CES and similar collaborative frameworks like lesson study, particularly in the Philippine context. This research note does not include the determination of which methodology is more effective, only identifying the perceived and potential benefits or drawbacks of each method, only seeking to understand and highlight the commonalities and differences of CES and lesson study in most contexts. While Uy et al. (2024) and Olipas (2024) provide insights into CES's impact on professional development, there remains limited evidence regarding its long-term effectiveness compared to other collaborative practices. Another identified gap is the variability in CES implementation across schools with different capacities and resources. This variability points to a need for a more nuanced exploration of how context-specific factors influence CES outcomes, compared to the current search for how best practices can be standardized across these broad educational settings.

7. Conclusion

The MATATAG Curriculum, with CES as one of its core components, represents a promising effort to adapt the Philippine education system to meet the demands of the 21st century. The student-centered, holistic approach aims to simplify competencies, allowing teachers to develop collaboratively and focus on student learning. While CES is designed to foster teacher support networks, the current challenges highlight the complexities involved in achieving effective adoption across different schools. While some comparisons with lesson study can be drawn, the flexibility, voluntary implementation of lesson study, and inclusion of class observation contrast it with CES. Further study into implementation and integration with aspects of well-established lesson study may address some of the challenges identified by the pilot MATATAG schools.

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MATATAGカリキュラムと日本の授業研究：フィリピンにおける協働専門セッション（CES）の探求

ティップトー・ウィリアム

要　旨

　21世紀のスキルに適応するため、フィリピンでは2024-2025学年度からMATATAGカリキュラムが実施されます。本研究は、その主要コンポーネントの１つである協働専門セッション（Collaborative Expertise Sessions or CES）について探索的に分析を行った。CESは、授業の質を向上させるための教師間の協力に焦点を当てており、教師の専門性向上と協働学習に重点を置いた「授業研究」と類似している。本研究では、MATATAGの研修資料やMATATAGおよびCESに関する研究を活用して、CESの方法論と実施状況を検討する。また、著者は、日本の授業研究という確立された教師の協働手法の視点からCESについて分析を行った。

　現在、新カリキュラムに関する先行研究は限られており、本研究の意義は非常に高いと思われる。予備調査結果によれば、効果的なCES教師コミュニティの構築にはいくつかの要因が貢献していることが示されている。そういったコミュニティでは、教師支援や専門性向上が強化され、協力的な教育環境が育まれている。しかしながら、パイロット校間での実施の一貫性、ステークホルダーからの支援のばらつき、変化への抵抗、CESへの参加と授業責任との両立の難しさなどの課題が標準化を妨げている。

　CESの分析結果は、授業研究の実施といくつかの面で一致している。主要な違いとして、CESは政策として義務化され、指導付きの議論を行う一方、授業研究は通常、任意で導入され、地域のニーズや文脈に応じて適応され、授業観察を定期的に含む点が挙げられる。これらの課題にどのように対応し、持続可能な教師協働モデルを採用するかを理解するためには、CESの実施状況を継続的にモニタリングすることが重要であると考える。

キーワード：授業研究、MATATAGカリキュラム、協働専門セッション、専門能力開発、教師協働

Factors leading to diverging instructor perspectives in an EMI intercultural communication university course in Japan

Ivan Lombardi, Hazuki Shimono

Abstract

This exploratory paper examines the factors that led to diverging experiences that two instructors of the same intercultural communication course (ICC) at a Japanese national university have encountered when planning, teaching, and assessing student performance. The course, situated within a Global and Community Studies program, is taught using English as the medium of instruction (EMI) and aims to foster cross-cultural interaction skills among Japanese and international students. This is considered a cornerstone course to prepare students for working in an increasingly intercultural local community. Therefore, ICC is a compulsory course for all second-year students of the program. This paper explains the course design, development, and materials before introducing the background and identity of the two instructors, as this is one of the factors that was found to be more significant to the diverging experiences mentioned above. Then, factors running in parallel will also be discussed: the number of course takers and their background (e.g., nationality and previous experiences with cross-cultural communication), their English proficiency, their customization of the class content, in addition to three minor but noteworthy influences. Finally, this paper will explore the potential of engaging in research in the development of intercultural communication skills of Japanese university students within the context of an EMI course (which focuses on content and skill learning, as opposed to, for example, a CLIL – content and language integrated learning – course where content and language are scaffolded in parallel). While the authors are aware that measuring learning outcomes in intercultural communication education presents some challenges, the institutional setting is deemed appropriate for a case study, and the factors introduced in this paper can be alleviated to establish a research design featuring a test group and a control group. In addition, it is deemed necessary to include student voices as part of the research design in some capacity.

Keywords: intercultural communication; intercultural competence; EMI; EFL discussion; teacher reflection

1. Introduction

This article narrates the stories, perspectives, and discoveries of two university instructors in Japan who teach the same introductory course to Intercultural Communication (henceforth ICC) to two different groups of students. The course follows the EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) concept, building on students' preexisting English language proficiency to introduce intercultural communication as an academic subject. ICC is a compulsory course for all second-year students at the School of Global and Community Studies (GCS), University of Fukui. In fact, the course can be considered to be at the forefront of the first of three main objectives upon which the School is founded, labeled *education for intercultural understanding* (異文化理解教育 [*ibunka rikai kyōiku*]) (School of Global and Community Studies, n.d.). ICC is professed in English to enable both domestic and international students to participate actively and enhance their intercultural competence in an international environment through discussions and cross-cultural exchanges. Active learning in the form of discussions and analysis of intercultural scenarios is a core component of the ICC syllabus.

In the academic year 2023-2024, the two instructors paired for the first time to facilitate the course. This experience was a learning opportunity for both and opened several possibilities for research, which will be explored further in this paper and future combined efforts. Having a unified syllabus and course materials allowed the two facilitators to compare class engagement, dynamics, and student efforts and achievements. This cooperation made us realize that classroom stories and experiences can differ, sometimes greatly, based on a number of factors. In this paper, we will highlight three main factors (the number of students and their background, life experiences, and knowledge of the world; the student's ability to use English in an academic context; and their individual contributions to the course content) and other minor influences, to then describe how each of these factors shaped the teaching and learning environment.

2. Literature Review

In the Japanese university context, courses taught in English are not a novelty – according to Brown and Bradford (2017), some form of content instruction in English has been a feature of university curricula for the last thirty years. The most recent data by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2021) reveals that academic courses in English are available at 307 universities at the undergraduate level and 232 institutions at the graduate level. The report, however, encapsulates all forms of teaching using English under the label 英語 による授業 [*eigo ni yoru jugyō*] (instruction offered in English), leaving a gap in our understanding of whether this involves a) using academic content in English to scaffold academic language skills, b) approaching academic subjects to achieve a shared goal of learning a language and a topic, or c) using English as the language used in classroom interactions, as well as the learning materials. These

three approaches are known in the literature as CBI (content-based instruction), CLIL (content and language integrated learning), and EMI (English medium instruction), respectively. While it would be an oversimplification to introduce the three approaches as part of a continuum, as they can employ different sets of language education strategies to reach their goal (Carrió-Pastor, 2021), it is not impossible to visualize CBI as one of the extremes (focusing on the language used in academic content), EMI as the opposite extreme (focusing on content and not the teaching and learning of English), and CLIL as a midway point that can shift more or less closer to one of the extremes depending on circumstances such as the instructor or student English proficiency.

2.1. English as a medium of instruction

One reason to design the ICC course using an EMI approach is its familiarity to students, as many second to fourth-year courses offered at our department are taught using some variations of EMI. In addition, this approach allows students who will be studying outside of Japan for a semester or year after completing the course to experience being immersed in an English discussion-based environment, similar to what they will likely find when studying abroad. Similarly, EMI provides a smoother transition to studying at a university in Japan for international students with lower Japanese proficiency and higher-to-native English abilities. It should be pointed out, however, that adopting an EMI approach in our context does not entail completely disregarding the language development of students who do not speak English natively. As Brown and Bradford (2017, p. 330) point out "content mastery does not have to be the only outcome of EMI; it is merely the primary focus. EMI classes may incorporate elements of language sensitivity and language support". The latter description fits the ICC course design well; the extent to which language support was offered (and needed) is one of the differences between the two parallel sections and echoes the findings of Rose et al. (2020).

One further reason to promote an EMI approach to the teaching and learning of intercultural communication, specifically, is the course design choice to prioritize building intercultural competence, rather than focusing solely on understanding other specific cultures. This allows the course designers to leverage what Cummins (2017) calls *language-independent* information, or knowledge and abilities that can be transferred from the students' L1 and L2. This approach has proven to have neutral to positive outcomes in content learning (Lin & Lei, 2021) and has the potential to enhance learning motivation, academic skills, and language proficiency in case studies conducted at other Japanese higher education institutions (Rose et al., 2020; Sim, 2018).

2.2. The teachability of ICC skills

When designing a skill-based course in the field of intercultural communication, it is necessary to tackle the elephant in the room – whether the ability to function in an intercultural environment

can be effectively facilitated as part of a university course, regardless of the language the course is taught. This position is notoriously held by Balboni and Caon (2015), who maintain that the constantly changing nature of contemporary culture, especially due to the influence of mass media and social media, and the sheer number of existing cultures make describing intercultural competence difficult and teaching intercultural communication unfeasible.

The course designers acknowledge Balboni and Caon's position; however, they believe it is possible to *foster development*, if not explicitly teach, in students' attitudes towards intercultural exchanges, communication strategies that can work across cultures and help bridge cultural gaps, and an overall mindset of acceptance towards people from different backgrounds and cultural habits. This philosophy of facilitating "intercultural skills" seems compatible with Byram and Golubeva's (2020) definition of intercultural (communicative) competence and also coherent with the goals of the GCS department (School of Global and Community Studies, n.d.).

2.3. Intercultural competence in Japanese education

Japanese tertiary institutions have followed the Ministry of Education's mandate to cultivate "global talent" (グローバル人材, *gurobaru jinzai*) for more than thirty years at the time of writing – yet, as Tsuneyoshi (2018, p. 50) points out, "there are inconsistencies in the calls for 'internationalization,' implying that while internationalization may be being promoted, a multicultural perspective may be lacking". An example of such inconsistencies is the confusion or interchangeability of "foreign language education" and "English language education" in both official policy documents (e.g., MEXT, 2021) and vernacular uses, suggesting that "internationalization" may sometimes be used as a portmanteau for "English ability". Sakamoto (2022, p. 216) agrees when stating that "[i]n Japan, *gurobaru jinzai* policies have been criticized for having a disproportionate, inappropriate and ineffectual emphasis on quantitative FL [foreign language] proficiency goals […] and for failing to adequately articulate what the *gurobaru jinzai* concept entails and how educators can support the development of these graduates".

What is highlighted above is not limited to language – Tsuneyoshi (2018) acknowledges that in Japan the concept of internationalization is introduced in elementary school through the portrayal of English-speaking sojourners, often visiting temporarily, or foreign workers or spouses of Japanese nationals. Therefore, promoting intercultural competence in the Japanese context entails first and foremost deconstructing this image and the widespread belief that all foreigners to Japan speak English. Then, emphasis should be placed on building an inclusive cross-cultural perspective as opposed to the Japanese and 国際人 (*kokusaijin*, "international person") duality (McVeigh, 2015) by raising awareness of ethnic minorities in Japan and of non-English speaking and non-mainstream

cultures. A further step is suggested by Sakamoto (2022), who encourages educators to foster an environment in which students can become comfortable expressing themselves through discussion, which in turn will create opportunities for them to work on their adaptation and negotiation skills in (culturally) diverse situations.

The irony of attempting the above through an English-medium university course is not lost on the authors. However, this paradox may be mitigated if the course instructors do not completely fit the stereotypical image described above and if they are able to cultivate an interculturally vibrant learning environment. This is why the identity, background, and experience of the ICC course facilitators are relevant and will be introduced in the next section.

3. ICC course description

3.1. Course instructors

While the two instructors facilitate the course using a shared syllabus and teaching materials, their life and work experiences differ in a way that can (and we think *should*) influence the course dynamics. Both class instructors are highly proficient users of English, but neither identifies as a native speaker.

The first instructor, Hazuki, is a native of Tokyo, but attended high school and college in the U.S., in a very culturally diverse environment of the New York metropolitan area. The experience of learning English and conducting academic studies in the U.S. coincided undoubtedly with multi-layered intercultural communication experiences, assisted by teachers and peers of multiple cultural backgrounds. Following several years of professional experience working in advertising firms, she pursued her graduate studies in the field of religious studies, and gained exposure to various approaches to religious themes in the world, which led the way for teaching ICC in 2024. In facilitating the course she encouraged students to critically look into several aspects of Japanese culture and their own historical perceptions in order to support their acquisition of intercultural skills.

Ivan, the other instructor, is a white male whose first language is Italian; he was born and raised in Italy and moved to Japan (with no previous knowledge of the Japanese language and scarce previous interactions with Japanese culture) in his late twenties. He received some informal experience in intercultural interaction and mediation through volunteering activities teaching Italian to refugees in Milan, and formal training in intercultural sensitivity development at the University of Venice. He has been responsible for developing and teaching the ICC course at GCS since 2017. This background allows him to bring to class the perspective of a learner of English (albeit dated) and Japanese, which tends to resonate with both the Japanese and non-Japanese students populating the course.

In addition, he can leverage the experience of having taught the course multiple times and having a tentative grasp on what students find engaging or boring, easy or difficult, relatable or unrelatable.

3.2. Course logistics and materials

As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, this fifteen-week EMI intercultural communication course is required for all regularly enrolled second-year GCS students, regardless of their current English proficiency level. The course is also open to exchange students until the maximum course capacity for each section (24) is reached. There is no formal English requirement for international students, but all prospective course takers are asked to meet with one of the instructors to verify that they can understand the course materials and logistics. In 2023-2024, GCS students were prompted to choose one of three sections of the ICC course. The two sections described in this paper were illustrated to the students as being EMI courses taught completely in English (section a) and English with a small degree of Japanese language support (section a). The remaining section uses Japanese as the language of instruction to a larger extent and adopts different class materials (in English). As a result, while the third section follows many of the tenets of the two sections introduced here, its differences cause it to fall outside the scope of the research thread that this paper hopes to inaugurate.

The main constituents of the ICC course are discussion preparation, class discussions, learning journals, and four interim tests related to the class content.

1. Discussion preparation: Prior to the average class meeting, students are assigned a portion of the course critical reader (see below) to read and annotate as well as a set of discussion questions and real-life cross-cultural communication scenarios they need to respond to. This elaborate preparation ensures that students can come to class ready to engage in peer discussions (that is, they know what they want to say and can, if needed, research ahead of time the English they need to convey their opinions).

2. Class discussions: Students are randomized in small groups (of three, when possible) and given *carte blanche* on how to set up and navigate the class discussion. There is no requirement to cover all discussion questions prepared in advance. One or two additional questions are sometimes revealed at the beginning of the class discussion to elicit more spontaneous answers.

3. Learning journals: At the end of each class meeting, students are tasked to reflect on what they learned from the reading, the discussion, and the interaction with their peers.

4. Tests: Throughout the semester, students complete four short open-book tests designed to reiterate and reflect on the concepts first introduced in the course booklet and through

discussion. Often the test questions are inspired by the content of student discussions.

As part of the orientation, ICC course takers are made aware that all the constituents above contribute to their final grade for the class. In this instance, they also receive a *critical reader*, i.e. an introduction to the main ideas and findings in the field of intercultural communication that will constitute the main reading material for the course. The concepts introduced in the critical reader are adapted from a selection of topics featured in most Intercultural Communication college textbooks, rewritten by one of the authors and collaborators adopting lexical and structural simplification techniques to make the content accessible to non-native speakers of English. In their class practices, the course instructors liberally supplement further readings, news articles, and videos – however, the critical reader itself is unchanged for the two sections, and so is the scheduling of the course. In other words, both sections follow the same materials at the same pace for ease of comparison and, in the future, research design.

All of the class assignments, as well as the critical reader itself and the syllabus, are distributed on the course LMS. Conversely, all peer discussions happen in the classroom, in a face-to-face environment.

4. Instructor perspectives and reflections

The two facilitators kept close contact and met almost weekly to ensure that the course pace was appropriate for the students and to discuss the class dynamics, student reactions to the assignments, as well as to share ideas, insights, and supplementary materials. Throughout these reiterative negotiations, and upon reflection at the end of the course, the two instructors realized that some differences they identified in the way students approached their coursework and their development of intercultural competence was influenced by several factors. In this paper, we choose to highlight: (1) the number of students in each section and their national and intercultural background, (2) the students' ability to express themselves in English, (3) the role of student responses in shaping class discussions, and (4) miscellaneous minor influences.

4.1. Student numbers and identity

Both section a and section a reached full capacity as soon as course registration opened. On the one hand, a class of 24 in an active learning context is an ideal number, as it allows learners to work in pairs or groups of three or four, and the facilitators to plan groups flexibly. On the other hand, this number of students is significantly larger than any other discussion-based EMI course taught by the same instructors. Both thought this would inevitably hinder their ability to act as facilitators during the discussions, which proved true early in the semester. As a further reflection, Hazuki pointed out that having seven to eight small groups working simultaneously in the classroom made it difficult

for the instructor to pull together all the various strands of discussion at the end of each class meeting. This is consistent with Ivan's experience and not limited to the 2024 cohort. In Ivan's case, an additional hindrance was the classroom size, which barely fits all the students and makes moving around the classroom to facilitate group work akin to an agility training workout.

Regardless of numbers, the instructors agree that student identity (including nationality and life experiences) is one of three chief factors determining the diverging development of class dynamics in the two sections. Ivan's section (section a, or "English only") comprised 17 Japanese students aged 19-21, and 7 international students aged 20-27 from France, Hungary, Malaysia, Taiwan, and the United States. Meanwhile, Hazuki's section (section α, or "English with Japanese language support" had 20 Japanese students aged 19-22, and 4 international students aged 22-24 from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Korea. The exchange students were enrolled into each section based on their strongest language: English, for section a, and Japanese for section α. This decision created an involuntary situation whereby section α was populated by international students from East and Southeast Asia who could participate in a discussion in English as well as Japanese if needed; on the other hand, section a hosted a broader range of cultural backgrounds and included three students who were absolute beginners in Japanese but proficient in English. As a consequence, in section a, the initial learning journals from some Japanese students echoed a mix of excitement and panic at the thought of starting their first EMI class with students from other cultures while being unable to use their mother tongue should they not be able to express themselves in English at first. In section α, instead, the student reflections suggest that many seemed at a loss as to what to do at first, but they were guided by students with experience in taking discussion-based classes in English, which included but was not limited to the international students.

Nationality was not the only factor contributing to the different development of class life in the two sections. In the section taught by Ivan, a small number of Japanese students and all three European students had previous study or living abroad experiences, where they gained direct exposure to the realities of cross-cultural communication, be it from a very young age or through au pair or work opportunities. In contrast, the core of Japanese students had limited chances to interact with peers from other cultures before joining the University of Fukui. Similarly, four exchange students were just beginning their first experience outside of their home country and were still adjusting to life in Japan. As a result of this gap, some of the ideas discussed as part of the course contents (e.g., barriers to intercultural communication, and culture shock/reverse culture shock) were made more poignant through the anecdotes shared by the students with intercultural experience – something that many course takers acknowledged in their reflections. The students' diverse life experiences were also central in section α and originated episodes like the following. When discussing intercultural

barriers, students engaged in a discussion on the influence of historical precedents and events in shaping societal identities and contributing to intercultural conflicts. Hazuki expanded on the question and introduced the topic of collective memories of the past wars of the early twentieth century, asking the students: "How are we to deal with the memories of WWI and WWII when they are not our direct memories?", "Why is it important to know that Japan was not only a victim of war, but a perpetrator?", and "What would be some good ways to form mutual understanding amongst people from opposing camps of the war?". Students in section a, which consisted predominantly of Japanese students with a mix of international students from Asia, were able to share their perceptions of history and what they have learned about the wars in schools. Their reflections reveal a newly gained understanding of the causes of friction between Japanese nationals and people from other Asian countries, which often traces back to the different perceptions of what took place during wartime.

4.2. Student English proficiency

A second major factor contributing to the class dynamics and ultimately to the success of the class discussions was, predictably, students' confidence in using English and their underlying proficiency in the language. As described above, students were tasked to prepare for discussion before each class meeting. Specifically, they were asked to prepare discussion notes by answering ten to twelve discussion questions and submitting them the day before the class meeting. In the classroom, students shared their views with their peers based on these notes. Reflecting on the experience of facilitating the English-with-Japanese-support section, Hazuki notes that there was a significant difference between what the students were able to produce as answers to the discussion questions. The more proficient students could write a paragraph-long answer to each question, while others could only contribute one simple sentence or note. To help bridge the gap, the instructor of section a shared some exemplary answers from international students in class, so that others would be encouraged to write longer notes in the next assignments. In addition, it became clear that some students translated the discussion questions into Japanese, answered them, and then fed their answers in Japanese to an online translator, copying and pasting the English output onto the submitted forms. This strategy can be thought to demonstrate the students' willingness to participate in the class discourse and provide original contributions to the discussion despite them not feeling confident doing this directly in English. While allowing students to use machine translation may raise criticism, we would like to point out that, in an EMI setting, this strategy gave students the means to communicate their thoughts, experiences, and opinions in English in the classroom, which they may not have been able to do otherwise. In other words, this was a fundamental steppingstone in building their intercultural competences (and potentially strengthen their language abilities, although this would need to be confirmed in a research setting). During the discussions, the atmosphere was positive, and once the classroom was filled with voices of students engaged in cheerful discussions either in English (or

sometimes Japanese), even the rather quiet students seemed compelled to speak with their peers. To alleviate the issue of discussions switching to Japanese, Hazuki started to take into consideration the students' characters and idiosyncrasies when planning additional questions and discussion groups that would ensure lively discussions.

In Ivan's section, the difference in written output in discussion preparation was not as visible – if anything, the class preparation activities were taken more seriously by the Japanese students, while at times it was clear that the more proficient students cut corners intending to speak off the cuff during the class discussions. In the classroom, however, the language barrier became more evident as each discussion question unfolded and left its original thread to follow the students' unique takes and sharing of experiences. Here the more proficient students, regardless of their nationality, were able to navigate the developing conversation with more ease while others struggled to follow and relegated themselves to a more passive role, reacting to their peers' ideas rather than adding their own. This tendency created some friction among classmates and, on two occasions, resulted in one (international) student complaining about their group members and asking the facilitator to be part of a "less reticent group" *(sic)* for the following discussion. To mitigate the issue, Ivan also started planning the discussion groups based on class observation and student feedback, making sure that the students' hard work was well represented and valued within each group while still maintaining cultural diversity when possible.

4.3. Student responses: Building class upon students' voices

Because the ICC course is designed based on discussions and students are expected to have an idea of how they would answer the questions by the time they participate in discussions, students' responses submitted before the class provided valuable additional content for in-class discussions. In other words, student voices were another major factor determining the unique development of each of the two sections.

In section a, for example, in answer to the prompt, "Why is 'knowing everything' not an option in the field of intercultural communication?" one student answered: "In Japan, it is considered important to be reserved when speaking with superiors, but this might be very different in other cultures. Therefore, it is impossible to know everything about appropriate behaviors and communication styles in particular cultures." What the student expressed here was the impossibility of knowing what to say or how they should behave in their own cultural environment. This concern made way for a few questions to be posed to the entire class on cultural expectations students face when they start working in Japan. Usually, new graduates who start working at companies in Japan go through intensive training in business manners and proper language to be used in the workplace, e.g., how to

greet customers and business partners, how to answer phones, how to respond to emails, where to sit in meeting rooms so that respect is properly paid to those with whom they conduct business. As exemplified in the use of honorifics, cultural expectations are *real* concerns for young college students. Hazuki encouraged the students to think about such cultural expectations in Japan by asking students how they feel about them, what the pros and cons of such expectations are, and how these are adapting to today's globalized society. In this snippet of section *a*'s class life, a student's voice gave everybody the chance to expand on the particular cultural expectations young people face in Japan and how they can manage them.

In section a, a comparable episode happened while discussing the topics of profiling and covert racism. Here, the stories shared by the international students about their life in Fukui (which, within the Japanese context, could be thought of as a rather rural area) fueled a debate on whether it is more appropriate to use Japanese or English when starting a conversation with a tourist, sojourner, or foreign resident. What became clear from the student voices was that the Malaysian and Taiwanese students were almost exclusively addressed in Japanese in their daily interactions in the local community, as well as on campus. Conversely, the American, French, and Hungarian students reported being spoken to in English or interaction being avoided when using English was not an option. The class meeting then turned into an extended learning opportunity for all actors involved as some students argued that speaking English to a person who does not "look Japanese" *(sic)* is a choice made out of consideration and *omotenashi* (おもてなし, "hospitality"), while others adopted an egalitarian view arguing that the choice of language to speak should not be dictated by one's appearance and Japanese should be the default choice in Fukui, with English being the backup choice should interaction in Japanese fail.

4.4. Other factors

While the discussion in this paper revolved predominantly around three major factors, the ICC course facilitators also identified a set of less preeminent influences that shaped the diverging development of the two sections which are still worth mentioning: the facilitators' experience, the students' lack of experience in taking discussion-based courses, and some students' erratic attendance and inconsistent attitude towards classwork.

The first factor is the facilitators' experience teaching an ICC course following an EMI approach. There was a significant change on the part of the instructor in section *a* in managing her first discussion-based class. At first, the instructor was not confident enough to let the students have discussions freely, fearing that they might start to diverge in Japanese. Around the fifth class meeting, however, Hazuki was reassured that students were comfortable conducting their discussions

on their own and that they even preferred to manage their own talking time rather than being urged intermittently by the facilitator. This was a great learning experience as she understood that instructors need to trust students' abilities to take agency of their own learning in the classroom. This experience differs from section a's, where Ivan felt comfortable letting the students take the lead in the classroom, mostly as a result of having taught six previous iterations of the same ICC course.

Related to the previous one would be the second factor of students' acculturation to discussion-based learning. In the early stages of the course, one Japanese student asked the instructor to share the "correct answers" to the discussion questions on the course LMS, so that students could verify their answers. In response to this, Hazuki made a patchwork of exemplary (rather than "correct") answers from different students, but this effort did not have to continue for long as the student figured out that with minimal aid from translation tools they could contribute significantly to in-class discussions, as they indeed had a lot to say but needed to articulate their thoughts in Japanese first. This case was a prime example where EMI provided content learning on the topic of intercultural communication, as well as improvement in English language skills. Again, this did not happen in section a, most likely because all international students had previous experience of class discussions and all but three Japanese students were previously enrolled in an English communication course designed specifically to develop the ability to lead and participate in discussions in an English-speaking context.

A third factor worth mentioning at the tail end is some students' wavering engagement in class preparations, learning journals and tests, as well as inconsistent attendance. This was particularly the case in Ivan's section where, as the course unfolded, a significant number of exchange students started to submit shorter and sloppier assignments and often did not submit any evidence of discussion preparation or reflection altogether. This trend was also accompanied by increasingly frequent absences, from individuals or groups, particularly following national holidays or long weekends (for reference, the course meets on Mondays). Conversely, the regularly enrolled students were more consistent in preparing for class discussions, submitting tests and journals, and attending class meetings. In Hazuki's section, students' engagement in class was rather consistent although there was certainly a discrepancy between students with exemplary preparation and participation and others who struggled writing their answers to discussion questions and learning reflections after each class. As the students were required to submit their outputs in English, it would be advisable to evaluate how their performances rely on their varying commands of the English language, and whether less proficient students should be encouraged to enlist the aid of translation tools in producing their outputs. This is the kind of reflection that makes us think our course needs to adopt a research paradigm.

5. Research potential and future development of the ICC course

The idea of publishing our reflections as research notes stems from our belief that the ICC course has the potential to contribute to the academic discourse on facilitating intercultural competence and skills in Japan. Each factor described above, in fact, could develop into an independent research thread. Since the main purpose of this course (and one of the pillars of the School of Global and Community Studies) is fostering our students' ability to function competently in an intercultural setting we predict that our future research efforts will move in this direction and will reshape the ICC course to support the students' personal development.

The extant structure of the course, with two sections running in parallel following the same syllabus and educational goals and striving to maintain the same pace, lends itself well to a comparative study that can be designed to understand the extent to which the factors narrated in this paper influence the intercultural growth of ICC students and how the facilitators can scaffold this process while preserving and empowering each student's unique personal history, personality, and talents. At the onset of this research design, the authors are leaning toward an implementation of Sakamoto's (2022) framework for the development of global competence, a set of guidelines informed by the specificity of the Japanese context as well as the realities of international students in Japan. Sakamoto's findings identify the following traits as requirements to attain global competence: an attitude of openness, willingness to engage, relational abilities, self-expression, emotional stability, independent and critical thinking, foreign language ability, and specific knowledge about the diversity of cultures and the influence of one's own cultural background. Sakamoto's project concluded that the Japanese education system falls short in cultivating students' independent critical thinking, self-expression, and awareness of cultural diversity. The author also suggests that this is an area in which *educator agency can be transformative*. We believe that, with a few structural changes and a research-oriented approach, the ICC course can further this research thread and become a case study in promoting intercultural competence at the tertiary education level in Japan.

The course goals, syllabus, materials, structure and philosophy, and student enrollment being constants, we foresee first and foremost a change in the way data (chiefly student reflection as this proved to be one of the main factors influencing the course development) is collected and analyzed. The learning journal has been a useful tool to gather a general appreciation of each student's progress, but its current free format can generate a dilution of students' voices. In addition, it does not allow the facilitators to gather quantitative data. Revising this data collection tool to include both a quantitative and qualitative component (as seen in Sim, 2018) is a priority as this would allow data triangulation. In addition, the researchers are considering changing their approach to analyzing the students' written reflections from content analysis to narrative inquiry, this being "the only methodology that provides

access to language teaching and learning as lived experiences" and "can be viewed as a matter of investigation of the development of second language identities of time" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 12). Adopting such an approach would enable the researchers to: a) shed light on the ICC students' acquisition of intercultural skills, b) minimize the influence of translator- and AI-enhanced student reflections, as the focus would shift from keywords to development patterns, and c) track any changes in the way learners use English in the classroom, thus closing the EMI circle.

6. Conclusion

This reflective piece of writing narrates how the experiences of two instructors/facilitators teaching parallel sections of an intercultural communication EMI course at the University of Fukui underscore the unique challenges and opportunities of fostering intercultural competence in an inherently culturally diverse classroom environment. The differences in student identity, language proficiency, course contributions and engagement not only shaped class dynamics but also revealed valuable insights that the authors would like to investigate further in a qualitative research setting. This can be achieved by tapping into an existing framework for global competence in Japan and implementing small changes to the course to favor data collection and analysis and to properly describe intercultural education strategies that can prove effective within Japan's evolving higher education landscape and immigration realities.

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日本の国立大学におけるEMI異文化コミュニケーション：教員による視座の違いとその要因

ロンバルディ・イヴァン、下野葉月

要　旨

本論文は、日本の国立大学において「異文化コミュニケーション（ICC）」を担当する 2 名の教員が、授業設計や実際の授業、及び学生の成績評価を行うにあたり遭遇した経験の相違点とその要因を考察する。「国際地域」プログラムの一環として開講されている「異文化コミュニケーション」は英語を主言語とし（EMI, English Medium Instruction）、日本人と留学生の異文化交流能力を育成することを目的としている。今後ますます多様化が進む地域社会において求められる能力を培うためのコースとして位置付けられているため、ICCは「国際地域」プログラムの 2 年生全員の必修科目となっている。本稿では、授業の設計、開発、及び教材について言及した後に、2 人の講師の略歴を紹介する。同じ授業を担当しながらもクラスにより相違点が顕著であるのは、担当教員の専門や経験の違いに由来するところが大きいからである。次に、受講者の人数や背景（国籍や異文化コミュニケーションの経験など）、英語力、授業内容のカスタマイズ、さらにその他の注目すべき影響について検討する。最後に、本稿ではEMIコース（授業内容の学習と技能の学習に重点を置くコースであり、例えばCLIL（内容言語統合学習）コースのように内容と言語の学習が並行して行われるコースとは異なる）の文脈において、日本の大学生の異文化コミュニケーション能力育成に関する研究が可能であるかを探る。著者らは、異文化間コミュニケーション教育における学習成果の測定にはいくつかの課題があることを認識している一方、現段階におけるクラス設置の様式はケーススタディーとして適切であると考えている。本稿で紹介する要因を調整し、実験グループとコントロールグループを特徴とする研究デザインを確立することも可能であろう。また、学生の声を何らかの形で研究デザインに取り入れる必要もあると考えている。

キーワード：異文化コミュニケーション、異文化間能力、EMI、EFLディスカッション、教員の振り返り

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