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Special Issue on Dialogue and Advising in Self-Access Learning

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Edited by Hisako Yamashita and Jo Mynard

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Dialogue and Advising in Self-Access Learning: Introduction to the Special Issue

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Welcome to the special issue on *dialogue and advising in self-access learning*. Both of us have been involved in promoting reflective dialogue through advising for some time, yet we know that there is so much more to explore in this field. Through this special issue, we hope to make a small contribution to our developing profession and provide opportunities for us to learn from research and practices around the world. In this short introduction, we would like to touch on some of the key points related to dialogue and advising in order to put the contributions that follow into context. We will then introduce the contributions to this special issue, which include three research papers focusing on areas which have not been explored in depth before: gender, emotional dynamics, and affect in advising dialogues. We also have articles featuring exciting new initiatives and updates from various parts of the world. Finally, we will conclude with some comments about future directions of this growing field.

Dialogue

Dialogue happens all the time both in our daily lives and with our learners. In self-access contexts we engage in dialogue with learners in advising sessions, at writing centers, in conversation lounges, in situations where student staff help SAC users, and when learners collaborate on work. Indeed, dialogue is a form of communication that permeates our daily lives, yet we tend to forget how powerful each dialogical interaction can be for those involved. According to Bakhtin (1986), something special occurs when one person addresses another: “an utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing outside it that is given and final. It always creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable, and moreover, it always has some relation to value” (pp. 119-120).

Dialogue is like a living being and is always in motion. Each person’s utterances represent that person’s voice which includes their perspectives, beliefs and values. In addition, the dialogue does not occur in a vacuum. The social environment where the dialogue takes place also plays an important part. Scollon (2001) refers to this kind of environment as a ‘site of engagement’ which is a place where particular social practices and use of language occur. Unique dialogues emerge from the people and the environments involved, and that is the exciting aspect of advising. However, patterns emerge in particular contexts. Goffman (1959) used a dramaturgical analogy whereby interactions taking place frequently might be compared with a script where each participant plays the dual roles of actor and audience. For that reason, in order to continue to understand and develop our field, it is useful to study the patterns and features of the dialogues being used in particular contexts and research their effect on the participants. More specifically, as Candlin (2012) writes, advising “requires us to analyse the linguistic, discursive, pragmatic and social psychological features of such a process among persons in defined sites of engagement" (p. 13).

How can we make use of the unlimited opportunities dialogue provides in our self-access contexts? What are the ways in which we can help learners take ownership of their own learning? What are the factors that could influence the dialogic interactions? These are some of the questions this special issue tries to explore.

Advising

Esch (1996) writes that advising is a "system of interventions which aims at supporting students' methodology of language learning by means of 'conversations', i.e., by using language in the framework of social interaction to help students reflect on their learning experience, identify inconsistencies and steer their own path." (Esch, 1996, p. 42). Advising in language learning takes dialogue as a key tool for promoting reflection in order to foster autonomous language learning. Through advising dialogues, learners can raise awareness of their own learning and of themselves as language learners. Advising can take many forms including but not limited to one-to-one advising, group advising (Wilkinson, 2013), written advising (Thornton & Mynard, 2012), peer advising (Kao, 2012), L1 advising, L2 advising, voluntary advising, and credit-bearing advising. However, what all of these types of advising in language learning have in common is that they involve the process and practice of helping students to direct their own paths so as to become more effective and more autonomous language learners (Mynard & Carson, 2012). Advising often tends to be somewhat non-directive (Mynard & Thornton, 2012) and takes on practices from humanistic counselling (Mozzon-McPherson; 2012). When talking about advising, researchers tend to draw upon sociocultural theoretical perspectives which emphasise the use of language and other tools to mediate interaction in order to stimulate refection and learning (Mynard, 2012; Wertsch, 2007). As Mozzon-McPherson (2012) notes: "it is the advisor's skilled use of language that extends and enhances the learner's thinking processes and helps him/her to gradually develop his/her way to self-manage learning….careful, skilled use of language, together with a balanced negotiation of roles, tasks and behaviours, is necessary to create a successful advising session" (Mozzon-McPherson, 2012, p. 46). Having given a brief summary of dialogue and advising, we now turn to the contributions to this special issue.

About the Contributions

The special issue contains contributions from France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The contributors explore ways in which cultural norms, gender, emotions of advisors and learners, learners' affective states, and institutional demands intricately influence and construct the dialogic interactions in advising and in peer-tutoring contexts.

By reading through the contributions, readers will become more aware of the various components that influence dialogic interactions. They provide us with opportunities to think more about our practice, our interactions with learners, and our research.

Moira Hobbs and **Kerstin Dofs** start with an overview of the history, theories and current practices of the advising in language learning (ALL) field. Their article touches on the differences between advising and teaching, and discusses why advising is necessary. They also provide examples of advising at two New Zealand institutions. Their piece will be especially helpful for those who are new to this field.

The three research articles in this volume look at advising dialogues, all from different perspectives. **Sophie Bailly**, **Guillaume Nassau** and **Anouchka Divoux** start by introducing us to the yet unexplored topic of the gendered dimension and the psychological support in ALL. The study examined a collected corpus and analyzed the ways in which female and male advisors working in different educational contexts verbally establish a relationship where a learner's autonomy can emerge. Specifically they looked at indirectness of the male and female advisors, psychological support strategies employed to diminish negative appraisals, and advisor-learner speech distribution. The preliminary results suggest that psychological support is provided by the learning advisors through a wide range of verbal strategies and that gender of the advisor seems less significant than age and work context to explain individual differences.

The next research article analyzes advising dialogue from yet another perspective – dynamics of emotional relationships. **Emmanuelle Carette**, **Eric Thiébaut**, and

Guillaume Nassau explore the dynamics of emotional relationships during counselling (advising) interviews in self-directed language learning. Counsellors' (advisors') and learners' emotional states were inferred from tone of voice following analysis of audio recordings of their exchanges. Emotions expressed in every turn are characterized on valence and activation scales, and emotional relationships were synthesized in a typology. The researchers found that most of the observed emotional fluctuations were learner-initiated, and that counsellors regulated emotions in order to maintain an emotional climate.

Although the above two studies are from particular learning contexts, the presence of psychological and emotional aspects in advising dialogues has wider applicability. Traditionally, learners' negative affect has been seen as something that impedes their learning process. In a previous issue of SiSAL Journal (Issue 4(4) edited by Carol J. Everhard), Maria Giovanna Tassinari and Maud Ciekanski (2013) emphasized the importance of the affective dimension in self-access language learning, and noted that many learning advisors "do not feel at ease dealing with the psychological aspects of learning" (p. 272). It causes us to think about the ways in which learning advisors can support learners' affective dimension.

In the third research article on advising dialogue, **Hisako Yamashita** provides a new perspective on how advisors can deal with learners' affect and how advisors can support learners to become autonomous in that process. She considers learners' affect, both positive and negative, as an "essential resource" that advisors and learners should make use of in developing metacognition and in helping learners become autonomous so that they can achieve their learning goals in a self-fulfilling way. The author shares a case study, and encourages advisors to help learners express their affect and engage in a cognitive-affective meaning-making process.

As noted by Rubin (2007) in her introduction to a special issue of *System* on language counselling, situations differ and this affects practices and challenges. The next article shows us ways in which advising caters for the needs of the learners within a given context. In an intensive program where learners are expected to study rigorously and on a tight schedule, the advising dialogue may need to be more structured. **Donald P. Harootian** and **Erin N. O'Reilly** share their ready-to-use 8-step interview protocol they developed in response to the unique needs of learners and advisors in an intensive language program. The protocol has been used by new advisors successfully for a period of over four years in an intensive language program's self-access centre.

Advising services usually exist alongside self-access centres in order to provide support to learners adjusting to self-access learning environments (Mozzon-McPherson, 2001). As programme coordinators, it is important that the advising service functions efficiently so that those who need the support services are provided the opportunity. In their report, **Yuuki Ogawa** and **Ryo Hase** describe their advising service at a private university in Japan and share the ways in which they have kept records about the utilization rate. They also share the measures they have taken to improve accessibility of the advising service and to promote their support services to a larger student body.

The next contribution once again looks at how practices are shaped by context. **Hinako Takeuchi** reflects on how cultural and systemic aspects of the Japanese education system may impact the approach to peer tutoring in Japanese universities. In the article, the author shares her findings of some preliminary research within a peer-tutoring context in a Japanese university. The author investigated whether abolishing the senior-junior (*sempai-kohai*) hierarchical relationship in a peer-tutoring context by not allowing tutees to use formal Japanese, *keigo,* would have any influence on their interactions or on academic success. Takeuchi noticed that learners who used *keigo* with their tutors achieved more academic success than those who did not. Her research reminds us that dialogue needs to take into consideration cultural aspects.

Jadzia Terlecka and **Carolin Schneider** describe the roles and work of the language learning adviser in the University of Leeds Language Zone, one of the largest self-access centres in the UK. The centre is used by postgraduates, undergraduates, language centre students, as well as students learning other languages, and hosts learning resources for over 40 languages. The language learning adviser provides individual advice sessions, monitors resources, compiles self-help guidance, and delivers workshops. The authors indicate the wide range of roles and responsibilities a learning adviser has. They also point to the important role of the adviser in providing necessary support so that students can make effective use of the increasing learning opportunities using technology.

In our regular column edited by Katherine Thornton, **Michael Allhouse** provides the concluding instalment of his three-part contribution giving an account of transforming an underused resource centre into 'Room 101', a social learning space at the University of Bradford in the UK. This instalment focuses on a survey of other SAC managers around the UK, which aimed to discover to what extent Room 101's journey was typical of the field.

Dialogue is not just about working with learners. We practitioners should also actively engage in dialogic interactions with each other to help us become better supporters of our learners. As advising in language learning is a rather new and growing field in language learning education, it is important that we learn from each other.

Judith Buendgens-Kosten reviews 'Exploring English: Language and culture', an example of a Massively Open Online Course (MOOC), i.e. an online course that can be taken by large numbers of learners without formal entrance requirements. In recent years, MOOCs have skyrocketed, but very few MOOCs cover language learning. The review explains the course and describes the specific challenges that language learning poses for MOOCs. This particular course provides learners with opportunities through a Facebook page and discussion threads to interact with other learners. This type of course format is something which has never been seen in MOOC format before and has set a new benchmark

Erin Okamoto reports on the annual forum held by the Japan Association of Self-Access Learning (JASAL) in November 2014 at the JALT Conference. She provides summaries of the four presentations which covered: the challenges of setting up a new self-access centre, tips for running a self-access centre smoothly, ways to attract users, and ways to evaluate self-access centres. JASAL is a growing organization with members from all over Japan and even from outside Japan. It provides members with opportunities to discuss, exchange ideas, and collaborate on initiatives to promote self-access learning in institutions in Japan.

Finally, **Carolin Schneider** describes the process she went through in refurbishing the library at her institution in the UK into 'The Language Zone'. The Language Zone became a very active and busy self-access centre with around 400-500 users per day, where learners have access to learning materials and support services. In the process of refurbishing the centre, the author joined several online groups on space design to help her plan out the details of the centre. She shares her strategies in working with the noise and in getting understanding from the learners during the refurbishment process, as well as in taking leadership.

Conclusions and Future Directions

We hope that you find the articles in this volume thought-provoking and enriching. Dialogue is something that we each engage in every day with learners. However, because dialogue is part of our daily lives, it is easy for us to forget the value of it, or the various components that contribute to meaningful dialogic interactions which can help in fostering autonomous and self-directed learners. For many years, the fields of self-access learning and advising have focused on the macro-aspects such as providing a physical space or setting up the infrastructure to provide opportunities for learners to get support. As these fundamentals are now established in many educational contexts, we can now turn to expanding our knowledge by looking into the micro-aspect of the dialogues and interactions that occur between people in self-access learning centres and at the processes of becoming self-directed learners. For example, we need to conduct more research in order to know *how* our advising dialogue is effective at helping learners to succeed. In order to do this, we can continue to gather evidence from our experiences of working closely with learners and observing their development, record and analyse our advising sessions, analyse learners' reflective journals, accumulate learners' responses to surveys and focus groups, and note learners' achievements such as passing exams. However, we can also draw upon research in related fields from institutions that have access to fMRI technology and are able to see from neuro-imaging actual changes in the brain. For example, research by Cesaro et al., (2010) and Jack, Boyatzis, Khawaja, Passarelli, & Leckie (2013) demonstrates that coaching which focused what they called a Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA) rather than a Negative Emotional Attractor (NEA) resulted in increased brain activity in the lateral occipital cortex, superior temporal cortex, medial parietal, subgenual cingulate, nucleus accumbens, and left lateral prefrontal cortex which are the areas of the brain that indicate visioning and positive affect. PEA coaching emphasises compassion and focuses on engaging people in thinking about positive future outcomes, for example, by asking them about their future dreams. NEA focuses on externally determined criteria and is more present in questions often asked by academic advisors, such as “How are you doing in your coursework?”, “What else do you have to do to keep up with the work?”. These kinds of questions stimulate different regions of the brain: the medial prefrontal regions and right lateral prefrontal cortex which are regions associated with defence mechanisms and negative affect.

A team at Case Western Reserve University, USA (Boyzatis, 2015) are currently researching differences in brain activity where one group of participants are asked to write written responses to PEA prompts by themselves, and brain images are compared with a group of participants who engage in a coaching dialogue with another person. Although both of these activities stimulate parts of the brain associated with positive affect and visioning, the researchers are finding through this kind of brain imaging work that it is the *dialogue* that makes the activity even more effective than simply writing responses. These kinds of scientific studies have great potential for the field of advising.

On a final note, it has been a great privilege for us to edit this special issue and learn from colleagues around the world. The editing processes have triggered our own reflective dialogues, enabling us to come away from the experience much enriched and with a deeper understanding of our own practice.

Notes on the editors of the special issue

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Essential Advising to Underpin Effective Language Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

This paper is aimed at managers, teachers and advisors who are involved with language learner advising. It will first give a historic background to autonomy and advising (Benson & Voller, 1997; Crabbe, 1993; Holec, 1981) , then discuss what advising means and what skill set is required for this. The paper will also look at how autonomy is linked to advising, strategies for effective language learning (Oxford,1990), and self-regulation while using these strategies (Oxford, 2011; Ranalli, 2012; Rose 2012). It will then touch on more recent ideas around processes for helping students become more effective and more autonomous through advising (Mynard & Carson, 2012). Some practical approaches for advising (Kelly, 1996; Mozzon-McPherson, 2002 2007; Riley, 1997) will be referred to, as will the all-important differences between teaching and counselling approaches. Finally, the article will briefly discuss reflection as a useful professional development tool.

Keywords: autonomy, advising, autonomous learning, self-access, language learning, self-access centre, independent learning

Literature Review

Background to autonomy in language learning

Late 1960's Europe was a time of political turmoil and enhanced expectations in life, stimulated by post World War 2 idealism and individualisation, and by Europe's reconstruction (Benson, 2011). Rather than material well-being and consumerism being a measure of progress, quality of life and respect for the individual became the new benchmarks. As a response to increasing optimism, growth, self-direction and empowerment, the Council of Europe was formed in 1949. It is separate from the European Union (EEC), and cannot make binding laws – it is simply an advisory body made up of 47 member states comprising about 820 million people. Its aim is to promote co-operation and understanding in terms of standards, charters and conventions in the areas of legal standards, human rights, democratic development, the rule of law and cultural co-operation. The Council employed Henri Holec, a man often credited with being the first person to use the phrase 'learner autonomy', to initiate a Modern Languages Project which offered adults lifelong learning opportunities, including self-directed learning. Individual freedom was fostered, so workers acquired the enabling skills and abilities for making informed and responsible decisions about their own lives and learning. Study 'after normal working hours' was required, so there was an increasing interest in, need for, and support of self-access study, which led to a growth in research about autonomy, the autonomous learner and advising. Thus the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL - Center for Research and Applications in Language Teaching Centre for Research and Applications in Language Teaching) was established in 1971. Holec (1981) famously stated that autonomy is "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3), and he later elaborated (Benson, 2001) that being autonomous is "to have and to hold responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning" (p. 48), in terms of determining the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting the methods and techniques to use, monitoring the acquisition process, and evaluating that acquisition. This implies that becoming an autonomous learner involves active learner engagement, so Holec's project led to the establishment of a self-access resource centre and the idea of learner training to maximise its benefits. This was an inspiration for other centres to be developed in many other parts of the world including the UK (Sheerin, 1989), Hong Kong (Gardner & Miller, 1999), and indeed in New Zealand, by the centres in the two institutions discussed later in this paper which were also established in the late 1990s and have used these publications mentioned above as valuable resources.

Researchers following on from Holec's seminal works focused on the transition of the locus of control (i.e. the extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them) from the teacher to the learner, and then moved their attention on how to advise learners. This involved identifying and classifying a list of strategies, both direct and indirect (Cohen, 1998; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Rubin, 1981; Stern, 1975;), which were later differentiated as cognitive and metacognitive (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzaneres, Kupper, & Russo, 1985). The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire was developed (Oxford, 1990), so students could assess their strategy use and then 'fill the gaps' with learned strategies and skills to become better autonomous learners. Research then moved from clarifying definitions to investigating the critical features involved (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Macaro, 2006). Others considered self-regulation rather than simply strategies (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003) i.e., they moved from thinking about a set of skills to thinking about self-selection of those skills. As Griffiths (2007) states "language learning strategies will be taken to mean 'activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning'" (p. 91), and she also draws a connection between strategy use and proficiency. Oxford (2011) proposed a revised model of strategy use which also embraces self-regulation, in her Strategic Self-regulation model (S^2R), and this concept of self-regulation has been gaining ground more recently (Ranalli, 2012).

In 1993 Crabbe was writing about autonomy in the classroom situation as desirable for three main reasons: ideological (the right to be free to exercise one's own choice), psychological (people learn better when they are in charge of their own learning) and economic (it is too resource-consuming to always teach to individual needs in the classroom). Benson and Voller (1997) later collated five definitions of autonomy:

1. for *situations* in which learners study entirely on their own
2. for a *set of skills* which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning
3. for an *inborn capacity* which is suppressed by institutional education
4. for the exercise of *learners' responsibility* for their own learning
5. for the *learners' rights* to determine the direction of their own learning

(pp. 1-2)

Hobbs and Dofs (2011) used these as the basis of showing that tertiary institutes can foster autonomy by using self-access centres (SACs) and/or developing classroom-based autonomous learning programmes:

> If institutions choose to encourage autonomous learning they can in fact adhere to all the above definitions by setting up self-access centres and/or incorporating self-study time into the curriculum. In so doing they can: (1) provide for self-study situations, (2) teach transferable skills for independent studies, (3) actively encourage learners to use their innate aptitude to learn, (4) create opportunities for learners to take accountability for their own learning and, (5) let learners take control of their own learning as much as possible (pp. 2-3).

Recently there have been two more reasons put forward for autonomy which lend broader support and rationale for learning centres around the world. These are, firstly, the pedagogical aspect, from Holec (2009) "As past experience has amply shown, the autonomous learner/self-directed learning pedagogical option provides more satisfactory answers to language learning challenges than independent learners/co-directed language teaching" (p. 44) and secondly, the social aspect, from Benson (2011) who claims that autonomy makes people more responsible and critical members of communities. In fact the place of learning centres and associated social spaces and places for language learners is a topic of much interest currently (Murray, 2014).

Hornby and Dofs (2006) state that "if we use autonomous learning environments to augment (or even replace) class learning in our schools, then we have a responsibility to support learners to use those environments to enhance their learning". Simply providing a self-access centre does not necessarily lead to autonomous learning (Benson, 2011) – it is the approach applied in the centre that leads to the development of autonomous learning and independence. Grabe (2014) discussed the need for people with ability to pass on the 'how' and the 'why' of language learning – and this is where workers in Independent Learning Centres (ILCs) can effectively foster autonomous learning.

Most institutions have a learning centre where academic learning and/or content experts (variously called advisors, knowers, consultants, academic development lecturers, motivators, clarifiers, etc.) meet with learners to discuss and enhance their learning, within the framework of advising (once again, variously referred to as counsellors, facilitators, helpers, mentors, tutors etc.). While these all appear to be synonyms for a similar role, the disciplines they come from and the associations around them vary considerably, which is why it might be difficult to establish a definitive word that all parties agree to use.

The nature of advising

Kelly (1996) advanced the notion of macro-skills and micro-skills for advising in language learning, both of which use a different discourse combining a more direct approach with an indirect one. She describes a learning conversation as "a form of therapeutic dialogue that enables an individual to manage a problem" (p. 94). This can be transformational and according to Mozzon-McPherson (2012) "… although learner-training programmes may directly or indirectly lead to this transformation, counselling provides the framework to develop new ways of interacting with learners" (p. 52). While learner advising is not 'counselling therapy', there are parallels that can usefully be drawn between the disciplines of personal counselling and language advising. Indeed, Ciekanski (2007) explored how advising sessions create and maintain educational relationships which can help foster student autonomy. This then encourages and promotes a learner-led culture. She suggested that advisors assume multiple pedagogical roles when assisting learners, ranging from advising, tutoring, teaching, and being a companion, to accompanying them on their journey. She claims that advisors switch between these roles frequently with the same learner and as part of their practice, advisors also use five basic emotional strategies: (1) negotiation about what information is needed, (2) preservation and creation of knowledge, (3) professional and personal exchange, (4) engagement and, (5) recognition of individual styles for both parties. These require 'reciprocity' i.e., mutual actions depend on what each interlocutor does for the sake of learning, and this in turn needs 'dialogue' and 'donation'. This aspect of advising was later extended to a consideration of four main areas - advisors, expertise, use of language and the communicative process (Gremmo, 2009).

Whatever name is given to the role of advisor, the central goal is to foster autonomy and support for the learner in the best way possible to enable them to reach their own goals and 'self' control. An advisor's self-assessment tool (Aoki, 2012) lists 14 'can do' statements under 3 broad headings: abilities, knowledge and attitudes, and this is reported to be particularly helpful for teachers planning to be advisors as they map out their own professional development.

Differences between advising and teaching

The nature of the learner-advisor interaction is quite different from the learner-teacher interaction (Riley, 1997). He lists the main differences between teaching and counselling as planning, sourcing learning materials, time management, and assessments (p. 122), all of which relate to responsibility for learning i.e., teachers are more in control of students' learning than advisors are. The two roles may tend to overlap as many teachers nowadays have moved away from total learner control, as e-learning increases and as language programmes often include outcomes of 'autonomy' in their descriptors. While the advising role can be described as a dynamic process of consultation (Voller, 1998), skills are also important (Mozzon-McPherson, 2001): "Whilst many good teachers may recognise themselves in using some of the macro skills (guiding, modelling, giving feedback, supporting, evaluating, etc.), it is the second set of skills (attending, restating, paraphrasing, questioning, confronting, reflecting feelings, empathising) which contributes to distinguishing advising from teaching and associates it with counselling therapy." (p. 12), and these have a unique discourse.

The discourse of advising

Pemberton, Toogood, Ho and Lamb (2001) also researched advising and devised a list of 26 advising discourse strategies divided into 4 major features: asking questions, clarifying, advising and motivating. Kelly's idea of a therapeutic dialogue to empower learners was furthered by Morrison & Navarro (2012) who suggested that an extra macro skill should be added – that of clarification, in terms of a negotiation of meaning between learner and advisor. They also noted that guiding was the most problematic macro skill for advisors because it was hard to maintain a 'correct' balance between advising and prescribing. Mynard (2011) pointed out that, in accordance with both constructivism and sociocultural theory, social interaction *and* conversation are both required for learning to take place: "dialogue in an advising session facilitates the collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation of ideas in an authentic context" (p. 32). This centrality of dialogue to advising is progressed by Mynard's (2012) 'tool model' (p. 35) in which dialogue is defined as a psychological tool based in sociocultural theory such that the learner is led to uncover their self through three stages – mediation, negotiation and transformation. The 'tools' can be described as having three parts: cognitive (for the learner) e.g., plans, journals, guides etc.; theoretical (for the advisor) e.g., theory and knowledge etc.; and practical (for the advising sessions) e.g., space, and the organisation required for the sessions. The tools are also situated within a specific context, underpinning the advising encounter, and can be either (1) personal i.e., the learner's view of advising, beliefs (e.g. attribution theory), motivation, and both cognitive and affective factors; (2) physical, i.e., the space available to have the session (in real time and place); or (3) contextual i.e., set within the history and systems of the discipline, and the academic development/learning support services at institutions.

Why practise advising?

There are several positive impacts of advising. Mozzon-McPherson (2012) shows that cognitive and meta-cognitive learning behaviour is associated with facets of autonomous learning development, while Mynard and Carson (2012) point out the importance of advisors who can encourage development of inner dialogue, and guide learners to make deeper connections: "Inner dialogue is very important … The learner is thinking through how he or she is learning. The learning advisor is processing this and planning how to best guide the learner to make deeper connections" (p. 33). Moreover, through advising, learners can become aware of the benefits of taking more control over their learning (Dofs, 2008; Hobbs & Jones-Perry, 2007). Mynard (2011) notes that just the initial step of arranging advising visits puts the locus of control firmly with the students:

> A learning advisor tends to work outside the classroom and outside class time (often in a self-access centre) and is available to work with individual learners on their needs ... (and should) be voluntary. This means that the learners take the responsibility for making the decisions, including the decision about seeking help in the first place (p. 2).

As mentioned above, there is a social aspect to autonomy and the notion that the capacity for learned self-control can be of great benefit to society in general (Benson, 2011; Murray, 2014). Indeed, this is a pertinent topic currently in the media in New Zealand. Woulfe (2014) describes the importance of self-control to our young folk. She discusses development psychologist Professor Laurence Steinberg's book *Age of Opportunity* in which she says he

> highlights an emerging wave of brain science that is revealing adolescence to be what he calls a second 'window of opportunity'... adolescence is a second

> make or break period of neuroplasticity (and) is ‘our last best chance to make a difference’... Steinberg thinks of plasticity as ‘the process through which the outside world gets inside us and changes us’. To him the plasticity peak in adolescence presents a second chance to influence how the brain – that is, the person – turns out as an adult (p. 14-16).

This chance is supported by educational establishments, for example through learning advisors and other student support services at universities, polytechnics and private training enterprises (PTEs) in New Zealand. This is particularly so during the student’s first year of study when effective study habits and study skills are being developed and formed, which should set them in good stead for successful completion of their courses. The above institutes enrol many adolescents (teenagers) aged 17 and above and there is a strong focus on success and retention of students. The benefits of this is indirectly also suggested by Woulfe “The capacity for self-regulation is probably the single most important contributor to achievement, mental health and social success. This makes developing self-regulation the central task of adolescence and the goal that we should be pursuing” (p. 18).

In some respects, the current political, financial, educational and technological climates are dictating increased technology-enhanced learning, and this could well necessitate a growth in learner awareness of autonomy and autonomous learning. However, as Benson (2011) points out, this depends on the technology chosen and how it is being used. There will most likely be a greater need for well-qualified, effective advisors who can apply their transformational expertise rather than simply transactional expertise to learner development, in both on-line and face-to-face learning contexts. In other words, there may be an increasing requirement for advisors who can advise and support learners make the changes they want to their learning behaviour from a deeper level within, rather than simply making surface level changes, or a simple imparting of knowledge. This could also involve intrinsic learning factors taking precedence over extrinsic motivators. While the virtual advisor role with distance learners in America has been discussed for some time (Steele, 2005), in New Zealand, online advising is still an emerging scenario with increased investigations into the use of various platforms e.g., Blackboard Collaborate, Google Drive, Moodle and Skype. Also, as in the United States (Nutt, 2003), there is an increasing imperative of showing that advising has the added benefit of increasing success and retention rates, in the new e-learning era.

There are also recent indications that face-to-face rather than all online advising should be encouraged in learning, especially with regards to speaking development. In a recent article, Dixon (2014), interviews the British scientist and writer Greenfield, who talks about “the new reality in a world where social media is, particularly for the so-called Digital Natives, making face-to-face interaction uncomfortable and online interaction preferable … that non-oral communication such as text messaging provided the same emotional support to people as not having bothered to speak to anyone at all" (p. 17). Dixon mentions that similar recent research in New Zealand "has shown primary schools around the country are witnessing a decline in the spoken-language abilities of new entrants. Experts suspect this could be the result of children using gadgets too often and parents not talking to them enough" (p. 17). Even if, as pointed out in the article, the notion that online communication affects young people's socialising ability and empathetic capacity in one-on-one conversations has not yet been empirically established, it is a trend that needs to be looked at more, as this might present a growing challenge for advisors. It is also a worrying aspect, particularly for language learners, as many institutions are moving towards more flipped classroom delivery methods. These typically have more online and virtual educational media, thereby reducing class contact hours and opportunities for face-to-face contact, and its resultant dialogic negotiation, with both teachers and peers.

Therefore it can be seen that advising is an important learning tool to help students become autonomous learners, as they become more cognitively and meta-cognitively aware of the learning process in general, their own learning in particular, thus enabling a deeper level of learning and self-control over their learning in an increasingly digitally-enhanced environment.

Examples of Advising at Two New Zealand Institutions

There are various and flexible contexts where advising takes place, depending on many variables concerning the learner, the advisor, the physical situation, and the tools available for use in that situation, so there is an equally wide array of forms of advising in different institutions. The following two examples of current practices illustrate the range of advising situations, methods and practical activities even within two very similar institutions which have comparable teaching and learning environments.

During the first semester of 2014, the Unitec Department of Language Studies opened their Language Learning Centre (LLC) to English Language Partners (ELP), a teaching organisation working primarily with refugees and migrants studying at low levels of English. The LLC is a well-established and very well-resourced Self-Access Centre for language users and learners whenever the Library is open (i.e., from, 8am-9pm Monday-Thursday, 8am-6pm Friday and 8am-4.30pm on weekends). Resources include study skills information and autonomy sheets as well as class materials and a wide range of self-access activities for further study, grouped according to level, language skill, topic and subject. To support ELP, who mainly offer free or subsidised classes, an

ELP teacher and her class has been using the LLC for free, nominally for 2 hours per week. Most of the learners are not used to (Western) academic study environments and may not yet have acquired the requisite academic literacy skills for further study in New Zealand. Danaher (2014) suggests:

> It is recommended that self-regulated learning skills be explicitly taught, using the embedded phases of forethought, performance and reflection. This model is easily adaptable to the context of adult refugees and migrants, whose lack of these skills compromises their success in learning. Teachers should support learners by scaffolding tasks carefully, and establishing a tight-knit class community, with a particularly strong teacher presence in initial stages. Adult refugees and migrants are a notably high-need group, so intensive teacher support should be planned for (p. 7).

To accommodate these (and other) students, the LLC advising sessions are scaffolded and supported in several ways. Firstly, the teacher focuses learners' attention on resources that support the current focus of study – e.g., on Friday of Week 8 (see Appendix 1), students were studying Listening and the NZ Education system, so they are guided by the 8 activities outlined on the left hand side of the schedule. They are given ideas to discuss with a librarian about education in NZ, thereby also practising speaking and listening). They are then encouraged to move out from the Centre into the Language Studies part of the campus which runs English courses, to enquire about courses, once again to practise more real-world authentic speaking and listening. Each LLC session also has a computing component, as e-learning is generally becoming increasingly important, as indeed is autonomous learning. The latter was addressed in Week 8 by directing learners to 'Ways to Learn' resources in the LLC. The activities on the advising/work sheet also encourage learners to study more English and become familiar with a wider educational environment. More detailed and focused Listening tasks are specified by the 'Readers/Talking books' (+CDs) box, which can have a dual purpose. The freer and/or more autonomous component comes under 'Listening' and 'YOUR choice', where learners are encouraged to seek out appropriate resources for themselves. As with all the tasks on this sheet, learners are asked to self-assess and evaluate their own learning, and to think about what they may want to do next time – all key aspects to becoming a successful autonomous learner (Little, 2003).

The second example is from Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) where all English language learning classes are scheduled for weekly self-study sessions in the Language Self-Access Centre (LSAC). Students are encouraged to take more responsibility over their own learning through autonomous language learning guides, (Dofs, 2011). These study guides aim to help foster autonomous language learning both in- and out-side the classroom, through learning facilitator-supported self-study time in the LSAC, in combination with teacher-led autonomous learning awareness activities in the classroom. The guides are published at three levels; (1) Pre-Intermediate (A2 in the European Language Portfolio), (2) Intermediate (B2) and (3) Upper-Intermediate (C1). Each level consists of separate guides, one for the student and one for the teacher. They include thought provoking quotes, learning advice, and teacher-led exercises (for self-knowledge, motivation, style and strategies), as well as suggestions for suitable resources to use during self-study time in the LSAC e.g., books adjusted for self-study, in-house study packs, audio materials, equipment for listening and speaking, and language computer programs. These resources and information about strategies and useful self-study activities aim to encourage students to take greater ownership of their own learning.

In the first two weeks of a term/semester, teachers start encouraging autonomous learning by assisting students as they undertake self and study awareness activities (i.e., metacognitive skills), where they consider their own needs analysis, and then use a planning sheet to help organise their self-studies. These remain in the LSAC to enable further interaction between the teacher, the Learning Facilitator (LF) and the students. The teachers and LFs also involve all students in a thorough introduction to working in the centre with the guides, which includes familiarisation with the English language resources and materials, computer programs, and equipment held in the LSAC.

In the following weeks, students and teachers continuously work through the exercises in the guides relating to style, motivation and strategies, as well as using additional resources to support on-going encouragement of autonomous learning in the classroom. Thereafter the advising is undertaken during weekly self-study sessions in the LSAC, by the LFs, who encourage and support students without taking over too much. The skill of maintaining an appropriate balance between support and encouragement on the one hand, and being overly directive on the other, is continually monitored and discussed at PD sessions, in order to develop and maintain awareness about the advising role.

Professionalism

The development of advising as a discipline led to discussions about the need for professional development (Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans, 2001) and indeed, the recognition of the new and (then) emerging profession of learner advising. Others advocate for advising to be recognised as a profession in its own right (Morrison & Navarro, 2012). For this to happen, advising needs to have high visibility within the institution, and there needs to be specific professional development and training offered. Mynard & Carson's (2012, p. 5) framework shows advising in language learning professions as the 'third space', the overlap between humanistic counselling on one side and language teaching on the other. Influences from discourses and practices from other fields are also exerted on this third space, from other areas such as counselling and social practice (e.g., being person-centred and not directive), business, and careers (in terms of personality styles). As advising in language learning is still emerging and still defining itself, this can be problematic as the practice, terminologies and methodologies can change within different contexts.

Other entities have made an invaluable impact in raising the profile of advising as a profession – Kanda University and the Studies in Self-Access Learning (SiSAL) Journal, the Independent Learning Association (ILA) with its conferences and proceedings publications, IATEFL Learner Autonomy Special Interest Group and its associated publications, and the Research Network Learner Autonomy (ReNLA) an arm of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA).

Universities themselves are also at the forefront of thinking about advising as a profession and considering relevant guidelines. In the June 2014 monthly newsletter of the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA), there was discussion about the ongoing development of a draft set of "Guidelines for Effective Practice in Orientation and Transition and Quality Standards for Student Advisors" which covers among other topics: the definition of advising; expectations around core competencies, key knowledge and skills and minimum qualifications; supervision and professional development and training standards that should be expected of employers; the writing of job descriptions and use of titles; and appropriate working spaces and conditions. The ANZSSA definition of advising is similar to that of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), i.e., it also includes holistic welfare services such as well-being, financial, housing, student advocacy and disability support. However, ANZSSA still views the role as providing a "transformational function as distinct to a transactional function", i.e., advice which "typically involves a greater depth in the relationship between the staff member and the student. The issues may be complex, and require on-going advice and support over a period of time."

Professional Development and Reflection

For many years CRAPEL has been involved in advisor research and training, and their work and publications have informed many advisors working and researching today. Besides 'in house' observations and training within tertiary institutes, advisors working within the profession can undertake external training for language learner advising e.g., at the University of Hull (2011). Of course this training never ends – as Gardner & Miller (1999) state "counselling is not a static technique that can be learned and then applied. Staff development in counselling needs to be an ongoing process" (p. 189). A wider, more generic advising course at Kansas State University (2014) is another means to establish a core body of knowledge, which has the added benefit of helping to further establish the discipline's professional credentials.

Reflection is already an important part of professional practice and informal PD for many counselling and teaching professions. Self-reflection or peer evaluation can also be very useful for learning advisors. This could be done through analysing and reflecting on the 'hard data' of audio and video recordings of sessions or on the 'soft data' of counselling skills. The reflection approach currently being used at CPIT is done on two levels, 'in action' and 'on action' (Westberg & Jason, 2001). In action requires reflection when involved with the learner in action; when eliciting information, observing, questioning and assessing the assistance the students would benefit from, and when adjusting the level of assistance to the situation continuously. After the session, there is reflection on action; i.e., the advisor remains reflective and writes down thoughts on the situation, such as surprises, troubling events, or unanswered questions. Reflecting in this way enables continuous learning from experience, and provides high quality support to students.

Audio visual recordings of sessions can offer further support when re-viewed by the learner and/or advisor, and can also be used to enable both parties to self-repair and self-reflect if necessary. Counselling expertise required during the advising sessions are generally active listening skills, where the tone of voice is used to elicit a response, pauses give time to reflect, learners may be asked to clarify, and listeners may rephrase and feedback what has been said. If these strategies are used appropriately, advisors can become highly skilled mediators – exemplars of the 'in-between-ness' of learning advisors, and the conversation can become a catalyst of change.

Kato (2012) has proposed a "Wheel of Learning Advising" (p. 82) to help advisors self-assess their changes in practice over several sessions using intentional reflective dialogue. The sectors suggested are Student talk, Advisor talk, Questioning skills, Active listening skills, Learner satisfaction, and Student progress in autonomous learning. Malthus (2012) has since developed a tool for advisor reflection, which is currently being tested by her colleagues at Unitec, whereby advisors reflect on 1-1 learning development sessions, using a checklist covering the three stages of the session – Before (Introductory), During, and After. This is an area also being pursued in Australia where researchers (Berry et al., 2012) have proposed a theoretical framework, which acts like a 360 degree review. It is composed of a set of triangulated considerations appropriate to academic language and learning centres, using three main sources of input data i.e., peer observations, self-reflection and student questionnaires.

Conclusion

It is widely accepted that students today need to become more autonomous in this ever changing and challenging world, so that they may not only benefit from becoming more involved in their own learning but they will also eventually be able to meet the expectations in the work force, as well as become better equipped for actively controlling their own lives and engaging with and participating in their societies. The educational systems in different countries mean that some students rely heavily on external motivators, such as the teachers or advisors. This is making advising a fine-tuned balancing act between the need for 'pushing them' on the one hand, and 'pulling ourselves back' on the other i.e., the necessity of enabling students to be in control.

Language advising is not yet widely recognised as an occupation with its own qualification and pre-set skills, and today's practising advisors have a rather broad range of backgrounds and skills that may be employed in advising situations. Relatively recently, with access to new technology, the needed skill-set has been extended to also include synchronous as well as asynchronous advising on-line, as students today often negotiate their way through diverse spaces e.g., at home, at institutions, and in public places, to create their own preferred places of study. This poses other interesting challenges to the already diversified advising occupation: advisors need to be technologically literate and they need to make use of their phatic and imaginative skills at a distance, as they might not even meet some of the students live. Students, on the other hand, have to clarify what they mean to the advisor and to themselves, and they may also need to negotiate their understanding of the advice given, without being able to use and interpret visual body language clues, which might make it even more challenging.

Time will show what environment future advisors find themselves in. If we judge from previous experience, they will probably skilfully negotiate their way through their future advising situations, as adept and interactive as ever.

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Appendix 1. Unitec Day (Friday, Week 8)

Name ______________________ **Partner(s)** ___________________________ **Date:** _____________

Place : Library and Language Learning Centre	**Activity** What I did	**Level**	**This helped me to learn…..**	**I enjoyed** 5= GREAT 4,3,2 1= Not at all	**Next Unitec Day I will** -Do it again….Why? -Do something different… Why?
Library (9.30 – 10) Ask librarian for websites and /or books or magazines about NZ education and schools. Find the book, magazine or go on-line					
LLC and Library (10 – 2.15) 'Ways to Learn' information … Find these laminated pages. Choose 2-3 that have useful ideas you want to try. Write them down or photocopy the pages	**Learning Information Page I read:**				
Listening Practice I did this week: Name of book or resource:					
Readers/Talking books Practise listening, reading, pronunciation, vocabulary & grammar					
YOUR choice Listening, reading , speaking, watching DVD, study vocabulary, grammar pronunciation …					
Computer Room Log into a computer. Find an English Learning website and do some exercises	**Website URL:**				
Other Unitec places I went to … Find Building 170 and the Department of Language studies. Find the reception office. Ask some questions about English courses that they offer. Ask for a brochure.					

The best activity I did today was ________________________________ **because** ____

Next time I want to… ____

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Analysing Advising Dialogue from a Feminist Perspective: Gendered Talk, Powerless Speech or Emotional Labour?

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Abstract

Adopting a feminist perspective, this exploratory and empirically based study of face-to-face advising dialogue will put into question two related aspects of advising that have seldom been discussed in the literature on advising: the gendered dimension and the psychological support. Based on the general and rarely discussed assumption that women's speech is more emotional and best suited for establishing and maintaining more equal relationships than men's speech, and on the fact that many language learning advisors in the world are women, this study examines the ways in which female and male advisors working in different educational contexts verbally establish a relationship where a learner's autonomy can emerge. The preliminary results suggest that psychological support is provided through a wide range of verbal strategies and that gender seems less significant than work context to explain individual differences.

Keywords: ALL, powerless speech, feminine and masculine talk, emotional labour

In France women seem to be over-represented in the profession of language learning advisor (LLA). As far as the researchers know, there are no official figures to back up this assertion and the researchers draw this conclusion from their direct knowledge and experience of the field. For instance, in Nancy, at the university of Lorraine, there are at the present time around 150 language teachers and only eight women and two men are identified as trained and in practice LLAs; in the private self-access language centre where the researchers collected a part of their data, five women and only one man have worked as advisors; as a final example, at an Engineer's school near Paris where the researchers are involved to train future advisors, the trainees are six women and one man[1]. This seems logical as most LLAs were primarily trained as language teachers, a profession where women predominate. In

[1] Previous research on another session of advisors' training has confirmed this tendency. See Bailly, Guély, E., and Ciekanski (2013).

France they represent more than 80% of language school and university teachers[2]. One possible implication of this reality is the stereotypification of the job of advising in language learning (ALL) as a feminine profession, leading to a possible gender wage gap, as it has been clearly established that feminine work is generally less paid than masculine work. ALL is also an occupation that stands between pedagogical work and service work, often implying a face-to-face relationship with the public, and requiring specific interactional skills and sometimes emotional management, especially in private language schools where learners are also customers. This could be a problem for LLAs as there is a possibility that these interactional skills and emotional work (Hochschild, 1983), like displaying positive emotions, smiling, being empathetic, might not be recognised as actual work by employers, emotional management and interaction skills being stereotyped as "natural" competences for women.

Based on some theoretical congruence between descriptions of advising talk and of what is known since Lakoff (1975) as "women's talk", this study aims at examining some verbal strategies of male and female LLAs to analyse to what extent they relate or not to some stereotyped features of woman's talk, such as emotionality, indirectness, support and listening.

Literature Review

Men and women's talk

Although there is wide empirical evidence that biological sexes have no direct influence on speech practices, and that sexed identities are rather co-constructed and re-constructed via verbal and non-verbal performances in ways that may vary under different circumstances (Bailly, 2009), a certain trend of research in language and gender has highlighted the existence of strong stereotypes about the ways men and women talk (see below: Holmes & Stubbe (2003), Table 1, and Talbot (2003), Table 2). Women's talk is usually perceived as more emotional, more supportive but also more hesitant, or more insecure than men's talk (Lakoff, 1975).

Table 1. "Widely-Cited Features of "Feminine" and "Masculine" Interactional Style" (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, p. 574):

[2] This information was found in the Personnel Report of the French Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2012-2013, p. 24.

Feminine	Masculine
Indirect	Direct
Conciliatory	Confrontational
Facilitative	Competitive
Collaborative	Autonomous
Minor contribution (in public)	Dominates (public) talking time
Supportive feedback	Aggressive interruptions
Person/process-oriented	Task/outcome-oriented
Affectively oriented	Referentially oriented

Table 2. The Binary Oppositions "Which are Supposed to Characterise Women's and Men's Different Styles of Talk (Talbot, 2003 p. 475):

Women	Men
Sympathy	Problem-solving
Rapport	Report
Listening	Lecturing
Private	Public
Connection	Status
Supportive	Oppositional
Intimacy	Independence"

Both these studies stress the fact that such simplifications do not account for the many possible sources of variability in discourse other than sex, such as age, class, sociological and ethnic back-ground and status. Nevertheless, many research studies on men and women in interaction have confirmed that such features are usually labelled as "feminine" or "masculine" by research participants, and that this pattern is particularly remarkable in work contexts (cf. Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). It also quite clearly appears that these so-called masculine and feminine speech features perfectly match traditional male (power and authority) and female (care and nurturance) roles.

The researchers' attention was attracted by the fact that some of these features have also been used to describe advisors' discourse (Gremmo, 1995), in particular: indirectness (so as not to impose one's view upon learners); listening (so that learners have time to think and speak about their learning experience) and supporting (in order to help learners to maintain their motivation).

Powerless speech

The features of perceived-as-female speech presented above, in particular those supposed to convey insecurity, have been re-conceptualised as powerless speech i.e. speech which conveys social insecurity and asymmetrical power (Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O'Barr, 1978). "Powerless talk (…) is tentative, uncertain speech which characterises speakers as powerless and submissive" (Johnson, 1987, p. 168). Johnson (1987, p. 169) mentions the use of hedges and qualifiers, hesitation forms, 'You knows', tag questions, deictic phrases and disclaimers, or forms that "indicate uncertainty and lack of commitment to a position". Powerless speech is used to display deference and shares features with face work (Goffman, 1955) and verbal politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Powerless speech is seen as less successful than powerful speech at establishing individual power in a relationship or an institution. As LLAs generally tend to avoid establishing their own power in the relationship, and, on the contrary, try to establish a symmetrical relationship with learners so that autonomy can emerge from the dialogue, there is a possibility that some of the linguistic markers of powerless speech mentioned above would be used by advisors in order to enhance learner's empowerment. In this case, powerless speech could reveal a successful tool employed to support other's power or empowerment, and if so could need to be renamed, as suggests Fragale (2006), or at least re-conceptualised.

Emotional labour

Hochschild (1983) addresses the question of emotion in service professions. She labels the emotional part of service professions 'emotional labour' and defines it as "induc[ing] or suppress[ing] feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (1983, p. 7). More recent research has linked the ability to impact others through emotional expression to 'emotional intelligence'. Mayer and Salovey (1997) conceptualise emotional intelligence by describing four different constitutive abilities, among which two seem particularly relevant as regards advising practice: 'perception, appraisal, and expression of emotion'; and 'reflective regulation of emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth'.

MacDonald and Sirianni (1996) describe the "emotional proletariat" as the service workers who perform face-to-face or voice-to-voice service work, but who have no control over the 'feeling rules' that guide their emotional labour. As these service positions (e.g. waiter, receptionist, shop assistant) are mostly occupied by women, emotional labour becomes a real issue for women more than for men.

To summarise, the concept of emotional labour explains how emotion can be both expected of individuals and integrated into their professional environment. In the particular case of advisors working in private centres where learners are also clients, it may be argued that advisors' work conveys a service dimension, and thus emotional competence. On an intrapersonal level, the competence in influencing emotional behaviours of others can be integrated in a more general competence to deal with emotion. These two approaches constitute a framework that enables to take into account both the expectations put on LLAs and the skills they need to meet these expectations. It is however important to note that these constructs do not by themselves do justice to the complexity of communication during advising sessions. Other variables of behaviour such as personality traits, cognitive capacity, or physical condition may also play their part. Therefore, emotional labour and emotional intelligence might be seen as two variables that may influence the advising process without necessarily defining it.

The Present Research

Research questions

The present research is mainly exploratory and aims at defining a methodology that proves robust enough to be applied to a large set of data. The researchers were interested in an analysis of the ways in which LLAs' talk draws on perceived-as-gendered verbal resources and strategies and/or powerless speech linguistic markers. As a result, the following research questions were created in reference to the theories of women's talk, powerless speech and emotional work presented above.

1. Is advisors' discourse indirect, is it supportive and do advisors listen to learners?

2. Are linguistic markers of powerless speech present in the advisors' speech and what are their functions?

3. What evidence could be found to support the hypothesis that doing advising is also doing emotional work?

Methodology

The research draws on a set of data of 94 face-to-face advising sessions collected over a long period of time (several years), containing 500 000 words. The corpus extracted from this database for this research consists of the digital recordings and transcripts of four series of individual advising sessions that were led in two different educational contexts. One is a private language centre in Paris and the other is the University of Lorraine.

The LLAs are three different women and one man, which is roughly representative of the distribution of sex in the complete data base (out of 94, 81 advising sessions are performed by a female advisors, and 13 by a male advisor). Two of the women are around thirty years old, one is around fifty years old, and the man is around sixty years old. Two of the women, the youngest ones, work at a private language centre where advising could be at least partly seen as service work, the learners being as well clients as argued before. The other woman and the man work at the university. Three sources of potential variation have thus been identified: firstly, the sex of advisors; secondly, the age of advisors (junior or senior); and thirdly, the difference in work settings (i.e. private versus public). As regards experience in advising practice, the junior advisors experienced an intense activity in a short period of time (around thirty advising sessions each week for one year) whereas the senior advisors had more years of practice (twenty to thirty years) but with less intensity (thirty advising sessions each year). The selected learners are all adult males, aged between forty-five and fifty, to avoid possible biases due to differences in age or sex of the learners. For this study, only LLAs' discourse has been examined. Interactional aspects of the advisor-learner dialogue will be studied in a second phase.

The analysed sample consists of four advising sessions of 30 to 60 minutes long. The first sessions of each serial were left out of the corpus because of their specific status in the series. These first sessions are mainly focused on the presentation of the self-study organisation, and consequently, advisors are less likely to use either supportive or indirect speech. Among the remaining sessions, one session per advisor was randomly selected.

To identify, in the corpus, the occurrences of linguistic features and markers that are most frequently associated, in the literature mentioned above, with feminine talk, powerless speech and emotionality, the researchers drawing on grounded theory (Paillé, 1994) combined a qualitative human approach (reading the transcripts and listening to recordings individually and collectively) and a quantitative computer based approach (using automatic search functions in Excel and Word). Finally, collectively again, those examples were analysed and discussed before validation.

Data Analysis and Results

Among the features of perceived-as-feminine talk presented earlier, the researchers selected three components that also relate to the Rogerian tradition of psychological counselling on which ALL practice is most frequently based (Mynard & Thornton, 2012): indirectness, support, and listening.

Indirectness

The researchers decided to look for two face-threatening acts (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987), orders and disagreements, to analyse whether these acts are softened (powerless or feminine speech) or not (powerful or masculine speech). Observing the indirect aspect of the LLAs verbal strategies is also interesting in respect of the non-directive principle present in the Rogerian person-centred approach. By avoiding giving a solution to learners' questions and rather striving to help them through their own decision process, the LLA is theoretically deprived of the possibility of producing direct speech. These observations were then an occasion to compare expected practice of advising with real practice of advising.

The classification of softeners that was kept for the study is based on Kerbrat-Orecchioni's work on conversation and talk-in-interaction analysis (1996). According to her, there are two types of softening strategies. The first one (*procédés substitutifs* or replacement means) consists of replacing a FTA by a less threatening act (for instance, a question instead of a criticism; an understatement instead of a blunt statement). The second softening strategy consists in accompanying the FTA with various types of hedges (cf. Powerless speech section above).

Example 1: softened order[3]

A: *et là on en a peut-être quelques-uns qu'on <pourra observer*

A: and here maybe we have some that we could observe

In this example, the softeners are underlined. They are mainly modals ('maybe', 'could') and depersonalisation ('we' instead of 'you'). They enable the advisor to enunciate a suggestion rather than a direct instruction and thus to minimise the potential threat of orders.

Example 2: softened direct disagreement

L: *je veux je veux améliorer mon vocabulaire je regarde les les deux sites qu'on a vu le restaurant des trucs comme ça*
L: I want I want to improve my vocabulary I look at the the two websites that we saw the restaurant things like that
A: *hum hum hum mais d'accord je regarde mais est-ce que tu mémorises est-ce que*
A: hm hm hm but all right I look but do you memorise do you
L: *ouais hum*
L: yeah hm
A: *est-ce que tu vois j'ai j'ai peur que ça reste encore un petit peu ben en surface en ce moment tu vois je regarde mais il y a des moments où il faut se dire j'apprends [rire]*
A: do you you know I'm I'm afraid that it still stays a little bit well on the surface at the moment you know I look but there are time when one should tell oneself I learn

In this example, 'but', - in double underscore, appears three times. 'But' is here an opposition marker that indicates some sort of disagreement from the part of advisor on the learner's choice of activity. To soften the potential threat of the disagreement, she uses various types of hedges, in simple underline in the excerpt: interrogative forms (''do you'), minimiser ('a little bit'), 'You knows', 'I'm afraid', depersonalisation ('one should tell oneself', instead of 'you should') and laughter.

In the corpus (made of four advising sessions) the researchers found a total of 50 softened orders and only four non-softened orders; they also found a total of 15 disagreements, of which 13 are softened. So, in LLA's discourse, orders and disagreements are present, but are generally expressed in a softened and non or less threatening way. Tables 3 and 4 below present the distribution of those speech acts for each advisor. F1 and F2 are the junior female advisors working at a private centre, and F3 and M1 are the female and male senior adviser working at the university.

[3] A stands for advisor, and L for learner. All examples from the data are provided in the original French with an English translation from the researchers.

Table 3. Proportion of Softeners Per Order Per Advisor

	F1	**F2**	**F3**	**M1**
Number of occurrences of orders	25	16	1	8
Number of occurrences of softeners	82	50	4	34
Average of softeners per occurrence of order	3.3	3.1	4	4.25

Table 4. Proportion of Softeners Per Disagreement Per Advisor

	F1	**F2**	**F3**	**M1**
Number of occurrences of disagreements	5	3	3	2
Number of occurrences of softeners	25	11	7	4
Average of softeners per occurrence of disagreement	5	3.6	2.3	2

On average, each order is softened by 3.6 softeners, and each disagreement is softened by 3.9 softeners. This result makes it clear that when the LLAs soften FTAs, they do so by using a high number of softeners for each FTA, in other words, they do a lot of face work (Goffman, 1955).

Comparing age and work setting, results in Table 3 indicate a tendency of F3 and M1 to use fewer orders but to soften them more than F1 and F2, and results in Table 4 indicate an opposite tendency for disagreements, which are less softened by F3 and M1. These results might suggest that in private work settings, advisors provide more suggestions (softened orders) during a session than in public settings. Regarding disagreements, the results show that F1 and F2 tend to soften more their disagreements than F3 and M1, which could be as well an effect of age (F1 and F2 are younger that their learners) or of work setting. This could mean that F3 and M1 are more assertive when they disagree, which might be a mark of confidence in their own expertise linked to their long time experience as senior advisors. Or it might mean that the advisors at the private centre are being more polite because their learners are older than them, and also because they are clients, whereas at the French university they are not considered this way.

Regarding gender, results show no significant difference in the use of FTAs and softened FTAs. It can be noted that M1 (male senior advisor in public work setting) is the one who uses the more softeners per order, which does not confirm the stereotype of masculine greater assertiveness. As for disagreements, M1 is the one who makes the least disagreements of all but the difference is not significant. Combining results about orders and disagreements, F3 appears as the advisor with the most direct style speech, again in contradiction with the women's talk stereotype of indirectness. So, at the moment and from this limited sample it cannot be affirmed that sex of the advisor can predict the level of indirectness in advising. To put it in other words, in the practice of advising, the advisor's identity seems to 'cover' the sexed identity.

Support

The presence of support strategies in LLAs' speech was expected by researchers, as it has been documented in the scientific literature. For instance, Gremmo (1995) and Bailly (1995) mentioned the occasional need for the learners to be reassured on their performance and on the advancement of their learning process. This psychological task can be linked with the notion of emotional labour mentioned earlier.

One problem with the notion of support in the women's talk theory is that it is not clearly illustrated by linguistic markers. So, one of the tasks the researchers had to undertake was to identity speech acts that could function as support markers. This was done by reading through the corpus and using the audio recordings in case of uncertainty or ambiguity. This work was undertaken first individually, then collectively in an attempt to reduce the risks of over-interpretation. The results of the analysis are presented in the table 5.

Table 5. Support Strategies Observed in the Corpus

Type of support strategies generated from the data	LLAs acts	Examples, (translated from French data by the researchers)
1. Valuing results and knowledge	Valuing learner's work by describing good results or by underlining a new competence acquired by the learner	"you did well now you can introduce yourself without any problem"

2. Minimising failure	Reducing the impact of a failure or reinterpreting the situation to the learner's advantage	"you did well in all the other activities and this one was not that important"
3. Generalisation (of a problem, a habit)	Replacing the activity in a more objective framework in order to prevent the learner from a negative psychological evaluation	"we have to set objectives for your first interview with a native speaker if you know what you are going to say, you won't be afraid to go anymore"
4. Emphasising the difficulty of a particular task	Pointing out the specific difficulty of a task in order to explain an actual or a possible trouble for the learner	"It was a very difficult text containing a rather specific and technical vocabulary"
5. Depersonalisation of failure or difficulty	Sharing responsibility for failure or difficulty, or generalising it to a group of people, seeking to ensure that the learner is not negatively evaluating her or his own performance	"that pronunciation issue can be found in most French speakers of English"
6. Giving incentives	Pushing the learner into engaging in an activity	"I am sure you can finish this activity"

The LLAs use various strategies in order to diminish negative appraisals of the context as well as to enhance motivation and positive assessments. The researchers identified 6 strategies used by advisors to convey support, and analysed the verbal acts for each of those strategies. Once these strategies were identified and agreed upon, the researchers quantified their occurrences in each advisor's discourse, as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6. Number and Type of Support Strategies Per Advisor.

	F1	F2	F3	M1	Total of strategies
Valuing results and knowledge	4	7	9	0	20

Minimising failure	3	1	3	0	7
Generalisation (of a problem, a habit)	2	3	0	0	5
Emphasising the difficulty of a particular task	4	1	0	0	5
Depersonalisation of failure or difficulty	2	0	0	0	2
Giving incentives	2	0	0	0	2
Total per advisor	17	12	12	0	41

The results are only indicative, as the need to provide support will strongly depend on the learners' demands, a variable which is not controlled here, as the sessions were selected at random. But they give some tendencies on the variation of support strategies in advising practice. 'Valuing results and knowledge' (20 occurrences) and 'minimising failure' (7 occurrences) are the preferred support strategies found in the data. They are present in F1, F2 and F3's discourse thus suggesting that age (in the sense of experience) and work setting do not seem to predict advisors' supporting behaviour. LLAs at the private centre seem to use a wider range of support strategies (6 strategies for F1 and 4 strategies for F2) than LLAs at the university (2 and 0). Regarding gender, support strategies are totally absent from the male LLA's speech, which confirms for the moment the feminine stereotype of support, but this point will need verification in a larger set of data. The three female LLAs use a fairly similar amount of support strategies (17, 12 and 12) and the variation in F1 could possibly be idiosyncratic.

Listening

The measure of listening in interaction is a not an easy task. The amount of speech could serve as an indicator of listening, although this is not totally satisfying. The amount of silence could also serve as an indicator of listening. Gremmo (1995, p. 50) has raised the question of silence in the practice of ALL:

> The advisor must do his or her best to keep the interaction at least symmetrical (…) the advisor tends to refuse to control the interaction by letting silence settle, by not systematically speaking first, by not initiating new topics, (…).[4]

Apart from the fact that measuring silence is methodologically far more difficult than measuring the speech amount, it must be taken into account that being silent does not necessarily equate with attentive listening: one can be thinking about other things while learner is talking. Likewise, producing active signs of listening does not necessarily mean that genuine listening is occurring. It may well mean that one is trying to get the floor. For these reasons the researchers decided to start with the measure of speech amount, based on the number of words of advisors and learners (cf. Figure 1), and to delay the analysis of silence time to another research phase.

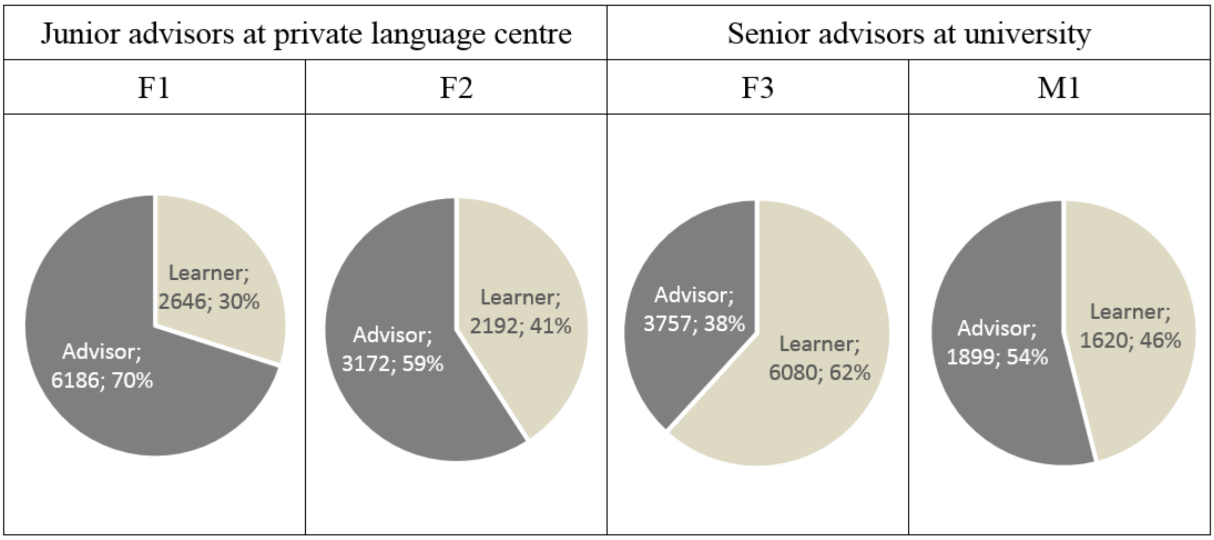

Figure 1. Distribution of Speech Measured by the Total Number of Words Pronounced and its Percentage for Each Speaker (advisors in dark grey, learners in light grey).

In three of these sessions, F1, F2 and M1 hold a majority of the speech. This majority varies from 54 to 70 percent of the words. F1 and F2, the junior female advisors at the private centre are the ones who talk most. Senior advisors talk less and, with F3, it is the learner who holds the majority of pronounced words (62%). Although this tendency needs confirmation from a larger sample, it confirms Ciekanski's results (2007) who found that LLAs

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[4] Translation in English by the researchers from the original version in French : « Le conseiller doit tout donc faire pour que l'interaction soit au minimum symétrique […] le conseiller va chercher à refuser de contrôler l'interaction en laissant le silence s'installer, en ne prenant pas systématiquement la parole en premier, en n'initiant pas de thème nouveau, (…). »

consistently hold the lead in advising sessions. To find out whether the variation found in this study is due to idiosyncratic features or the result of contextual variables, more investigation needs to be done. But, here again, sexed identity does not seem to predict the amount of speech of advisors. The age and the work setting of the LLAs seem more likely to affect their speech amount.

Discussion

These primary results indicate some congruence between advising talk, so-called feminine interactional style and powerless speech, regardless of the sex of LLAs, especially as regards the use of indirect speech and FTA's softeners. This could be related to the fact that some of the first historical empirical observations on ALL, like Gremmo's (1995) and Bailly's (1995), had female LLAs as subjects and were led by women researchers. There is a possibility that the women advisors whose speech was analysed, were 'doing advising in a feminine way', i.e. by integrating their sexed identity to their professional identity. Then, the descriptions of their speech style have possibly become over time a norm of reference for training or in-practice advisors, as Ciekanski (2005) suggested.

However, so-called masculine strategies (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Talbot, 2003), like direct orders or disagreements, are also present in the corpus of this study, both in male and female LLAs' speech. Thus masculine and feminine verbal strategies do not seem to conflict in the act of advising. These findings support those of other studies on gendered talk at work that show that professional men and women draw on a range of strategies either "male-powerful" and "female-powerless" to successfully accomplish their practical goals (Holmes, 2006).

Regarding the psychological support dimension, the wide range of support strategies found in the data suggest that LLAs might be aware of the fact that emotional management is also a part of the work of advising. By controlling both the formal and content aspects of their speech, they aim at creating and sustaining a relationship that is favourable to the learner's self-expression, thus demonstrating a form of emotional intelligence.

The results also show that face work is present in face-to-face advising, although it has not been clearly established yet to what extent, which relates LLAs speech to so-called powerless speech, and ALL work to emotional labour. It is quite striking that the following features: support strategies, softeners of FTAs and dominance of speech time, are much more present in the two youngest LLAs, both female and working in the private language school where the LLA-learner relationship is also a service worker-customer relationship. This finding could open new tracks for further research.

As regards the research questions:

1. Is advisors discourse indirect, supportive and do LLAs listen to learners?

It can be answered that advisors from the sample do use more indirect speech than direct speech with FTAs such as orders and disagreement; and that they use a wide range of verbal support strategies. However it cannot be said whether, and to what extent, they listen to the learners. Indeed, advisors tend to talk more than the learners, implying that the learners have to listen to more words than advisors, with one exception. However, measuring advisors' listening under this criteria does not seem sufficient.

2. Are linguistic markers of powerless speech present and with what functions?

Powerless speech markers such as hedges, modals, minimisers, depersonalisation, etc. are quite present in the corpus. In accordance with the politeness theory, they are used to do face work, maybe for psychological reasons, like not hurting the learners' feelings or providing gratification for their efforts. The researchers propose to interpret this behaviour not as a sign of insecurity and to re-conceptualise powerless speech in the context of advising as emotional management.

3. What evidence could be found to support the hypothesis that doing advising is doing emotional work?

In addition to the evidence of the rather high presence of face work in each advising session from the corpus, the distribution of face-work markers (like indirectness and support) according to work setting could support the view of advising as emotional work. Keeping the client satisfied might be part of the agenda of the two junior advisors at the private centre and could explain the higher rates of indirect speech and support strategies in their discourse.

Limitations and Conclusions

The researchers are aware of several limitations associated with this study. To begin, it is based on a very small sample, involving only four different LLAs during four advising sessions. Therefore, the possibility for generalisations is rather limited and this study's claims cannot be substantiated until the research framework is applied to a much larger data set.

A second limitation is that the study only examines the LLAs parts of the dialogue, except for the analysis on listening which compares both learners' and LLAs' number of words pronounced. As for any interaction, advising talk is the result of co-construction and further research will have to take this aspect into account. But so far, this study constitutes a useful methodological guideline for further and more extensive research inside the whole data base. It also provides new research questions for future investigation.

Despite these limitations, the data is a source of fresh information on what Gremmo (1995) has called "psychological support", a part of the advising practice that is currently not well documented. This study shows that so-called powerless speech and feminine interaction strategies are used to establish a helping, and possibly empowering relationship (although this aspect would need further research): they are not irreconcilable with establishing domain expertise and authority that learners are entitled to expect.

Notes on the contributors

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The Dynamics of Emotional Relationships in Self-Directed Language Learning Counselling

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Abstract

This study seeks to identify the dynamics of emotional relationships during counselling interviews in self-directed language learning. Counsellors' and learners' emotional states are inferred from tone of voice following analysis of audio recordings of their exchanges. Emotions expressed in every turn are characterized on valence and activation scales, and emotional relationships synthesized in a typology. Most of the observed emotional fluctuations are learner-initiated, and results suggest that counsellors regulate emotions in order to maintain an emotional climate, which is argued to favour self-directed learning tasks.

Keywords: dyadic interaction, emotion, self-directed language learning, counselling

Interviews

In language teaching situations, both learners and teachers engage in emotional experiences. Interactions between them seem to affect learning (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002), especially because emotions can impact motivation, which can explain commitment and perseverance in action (Frijda, 2003). Teaching characteristics and teachers' emotional expressions can affect learners through a mechanism called "emotional contagion" (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). The positive emotions and intrinsic motivation expressed by a teacher can be correlated with learners' testimonies of positive emotions and motivation to learn (Bieg, Backes, & Mittag, 2011; Meyer & Turner, 2006).

Emotions in language learning have long been of interest for researchers, who suggest they have an influence on the learning outcomes (Dewaele, 2010). Such studies commonly look at relationships with many psychological functions and personal characteristics, such as attention (Carretié, 2014), motivation and goal setting (Plemmons & Weiss, 2013), resource allocation (Frijda, 2004), personality (Ehrman, 2008), imagination (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012), or learning styles (Bailey, Daley, & Onwuegbuzie, 1999).

This study is situated in the specific context of EFL self-directed learning[1] in a private language resource centre. The learner training has two main goals: developing

[1] Following Holec's (1981) definition as the ability to take charge of one's own learning and assume responsibility for all decisions concerning all aspects of this learning.

proficiency in English and developing learning ability. This is part of a programme designed to empower learners (Carette, Guély, & Pereiro, 2011), with one of its main features consisting of counselling sessions. Lasting from thirty minutes to one hour, these one-to-one discussions are subject to social constraints such as politeness, and the social roles encourage counsellors to foster trust: they do so by making learners feel comfortable, motivating them, and avoiding anxiety-provoking situations. Studies on the emotions expressed in this kind of interview are rare, and the scope of emotional expression in this context is still ignored in foreign language teaching/learning research.

A great variety of emotions are involved during learner-counsellor interactions and change. During the first one-to-one discussion, emotions can be linked to the novelty of the learning paradigm, to the one-to-one situation, or to requests for personal involvement that can be experienced as anxiogenic, or exciting, by the learner.

The study follows a concept according to which emotional relations between learner and counsellor contribute both to the positive evaluation of events occurring during counselling interviews and to explaining in part the learner's commitment and perseverance. Events occurring in the course of these interviews can be imagined as problem-solving situations requiring a change of perspective, such that it can lead to the learner re-evaluating his or her own competence, to achieving a better understanding of the processes involved in learning, or to a better appropriation of learning practice. Emotions attached to such events can influence a learner's decision-making regarding language learning. This could partly be the result of the counsellor's regulating influence. With a view to shedding some light on the mechanisms and the processes that might explain the link between emotional relations in counselling interviews and the results of learning, an intermediate step is needed to describe the organization of emotional relations.

The study seeks to determine whether patterns of emotional relations can be found in learner-counsellor interaction, and if so, which? If such patterns exist, the results of the study might contribute to explaining how emotional regulation functions. Future research developments might aim at examining the links between patterns of emotional relations and the learning outcomes, and practical developments might aim at constructing material to be used in counsellor training to introduce them to this psychological aspect of their profession.

The study looks at "emotions", which are actually one aspect of several phenomena commonly included under this umbrella label. The literature generally considers emotion as an adaptive multi-component phenomenon covering expressive, physiologic, behavioural, evaluative and subjective experience components. According to appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, Shorr, & Johnstone, 2001), emotions stem from a cognitive appraisal of situations, which subsequently determine future action potentials. The expressive component provides a signal to the social environment about the person's subjective representation of the situation and intended action. Emotions may then be regarded as an action-planning system; Frijda (2003), for example, conceives of them as motivational states, which "push the individual to change his relationship with an object, a state of the world, or a state of self, or to maintain an existing relationship despite obstacles or interferences" (p. 16). This notion might help to make sense of the interplay between emotional relationships in learner-counsellor interactions, making it possible to look at the emotional relationships between the two actors other than as the result of emotional contagion.

Method

The primary data for this study derive from audio-recorded and transcribed counselling sessions. These sessions were recorded in a private language centre. Learners would come to the centre to work on a platform specifically designed for self-directed EFL learning. They would meet their counsellor for the first time before beginning to work on their English, and then twice a month to discuss their work, choices and progress. The sessions were all conducted in French, because the purpose was to think about their learning (Holec, 1990), not to practice speaking English. The data consist of two series of five interviews between adult counsellors and learners: the first series is composed of three interviews between a female 30-35 year-old counsellor (C1) and a male 45-50 year-old learner (A1), and two interviews between this male learner and another female 30-35 year-old counsellor (C2). The second series includes five interviews between C2 and a male 35-40 year-old learner (A2). The whole body of research is five hours ten minutes long and includes 6,200 turns.

Learners and counsellors agreed to be recorded. Two of the authors worked as counsellors in the resource centre, but did not participate in the sessions recorded here. In their experience, learners and counsellors rapidly forget about being recorded and act naturally.

In this study, emotional states of learners and counsellors were inferred from their vocal expression, since many empirical studies have demonstrated that people are most often capable of properly inferring affective states or attitudes from others on the basis of voice indices (Martin, 2014; for a review, see Scherer, 1989; Scherer, Banse, & Wallbott, 2001). Other types of measurements (as for instance, the Facial Action Coding System (Ekman &

Friesen, 1978)) were excluded because counsellors and learners were most often jointly looking at the computer screen. This layout led them to mainly communicate through the auditory canal.

On the practical level, every turn (learner, counsellor) is listened to and evaluated along two dimensions capable of representing any emotional state. These are based on Russell's (1980) initial model with its two dimensions of valence (pleasant vs. unpleasant aspects of emotion) and activation (intensity). Using a seven-point scale, two raters independently assessed the degree of activation of the perceived emotional tone for each turn, and the degree of valence. The position of a few emotional expressions on the seven-point scale is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

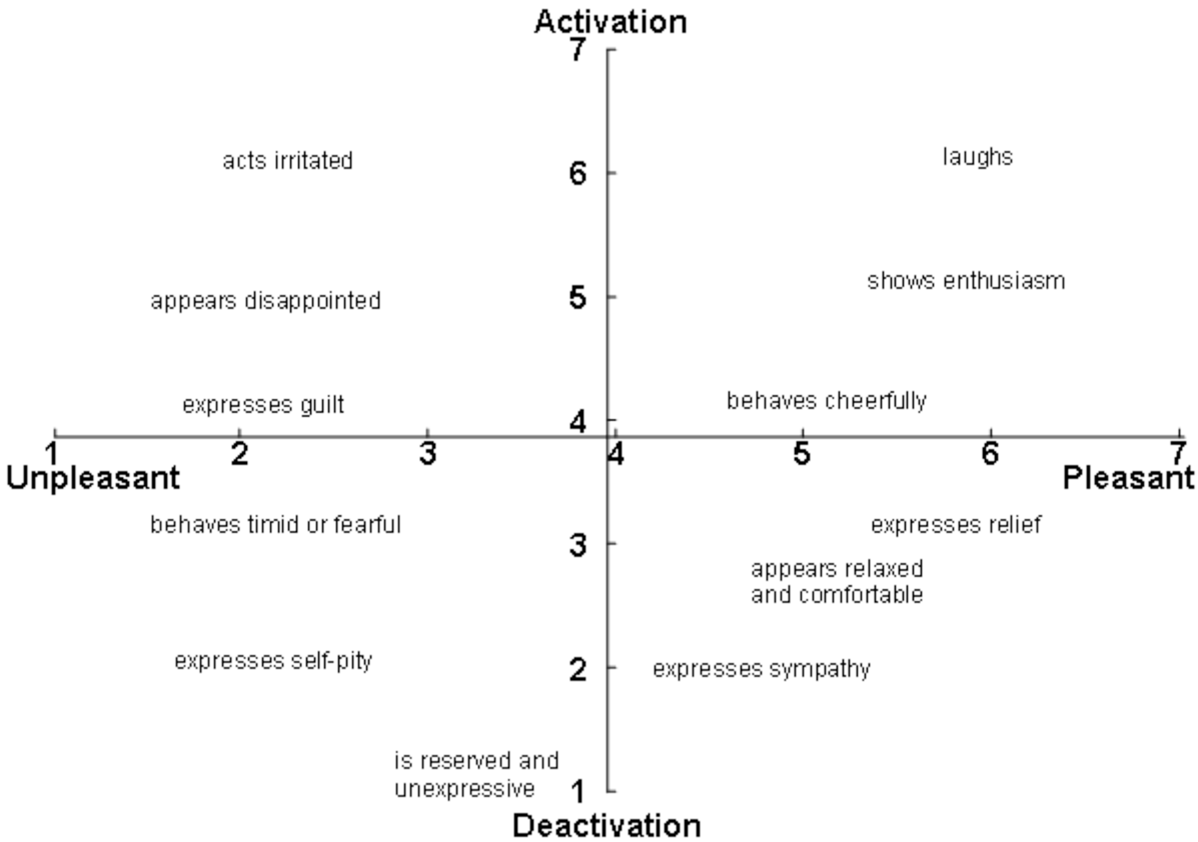

Figure 1. Seven-Point Scale of Valence and Activation: Positioning of Few Emotional Expressions

The raters familiarised themselves with the scale by working together several times. Once the scale was judged as convenient enough (i.e. precise enough, and allowing neutral emotions through an uneven number of points for valence), ratings were continued individually.

The reliability of the mean score on the valence and activation dimensions based on the two raters' evaluations was tested by internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951). The value of the coefficient is .81 for valence and .71 for activation, which appears to be satisfactory, given that emotions are weakly expressed in social face-to-face settings with people who do not know each other.

Preliminary examination of the data

When relationships between the learner's emotions and those of the counsellor were analysed in more than three thousand pairs of turns, positive correlations appeared, but were of low intensity (.22 for valence, .31 for activation). Emotion changes seem to be synchronous; this may be attributed to the influence of a learner's emotions on the counsellor's emotions, following a single pattern, which may be interpreted in terms of contagion. However, an in-depth examination of valence and activation in every pair of turns suggests substantial disparities. The general information expressed in terms of correlation does not seem to be representative of the various cases. Therefore, general data processing was inadequate to address the variety of cases found. An analysis of smaller units was necessary to investigate the nature of learner-counsellor emotional relationships.

Aims and principles of analysis

In order to obtain information that better represents an emotional relationship, the first step was to identify and classify similar pairs of turns. Ratings were used to create valence and activation scores for each pair of turns (learner at a moment in time t0, then counsellor at t1). The difference or similarity between the scores was used to define a relationship profile. More than 3,100 pairs of turns from the whole data set were classified according to the degree of parallelism between profiles. Similarity between profiles is represented by a correlation coefficient calculated from valence and activation. The structure of similarities between profiles was examined using hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward's method; see Everit, 1977). The automatic classification procedure was applied to pairs of turns (learner at t0, then counsellor at t1).

In the second step, the emotion expressed by the learner at t2 was linked to the first classification, in order to observe whether learners react differently according to the emotional profile clusters.

Results

Because the hierarchical cluster analysis is descriptive and exploratory, the number of clusters (learner t0 and counsellor t1) necessary and sufficient to describe the data was not based on theoretical preconceptions. A five-cluster solution was deemed sufficient to account for nearly all the cases present in the data. The level of granularity was calculated so that, on the one hand, it covered almost all the cases present in the data, but on the other was sufficiently fine-tuned that each category contained only similar items (convergence between the average profile in a class and the individual cases within that class). Inter-class differences were statistically significant, as shown by an analysis of variance of the emotional scores (valence: $F(4, 3040) = 359.99$, $p = < .001$; activation: $F(4, 3040) = 199.83$, $p = < .001$).), which means that every cluster reflects an emotional relationship which is clearly distinguishable from that of another cluster.

Once the initial t0-t1 paired classification had been determined, t2 was taken into consideration. This way, average valence and activation levels were determined for each cluster, for learner at t0, counsellor at t1 and learner at t2 (see figures 2 and 3 below).

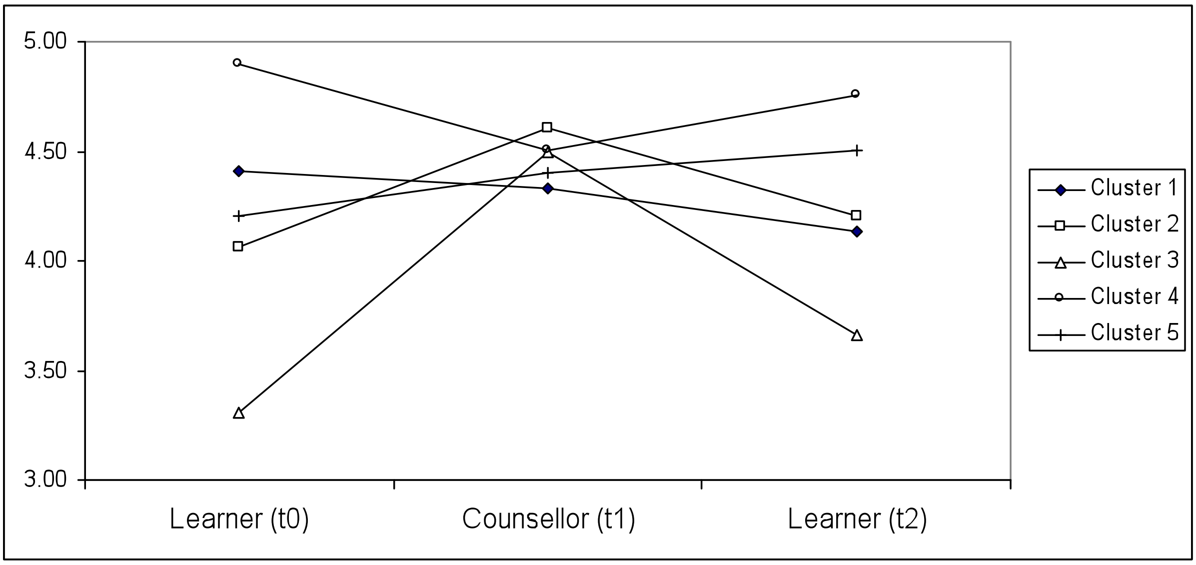

Figure 2. Variations of Learner Emotional Valence (t2) Depending on Profiles of Relations between Learner t0 and Counsellor t1

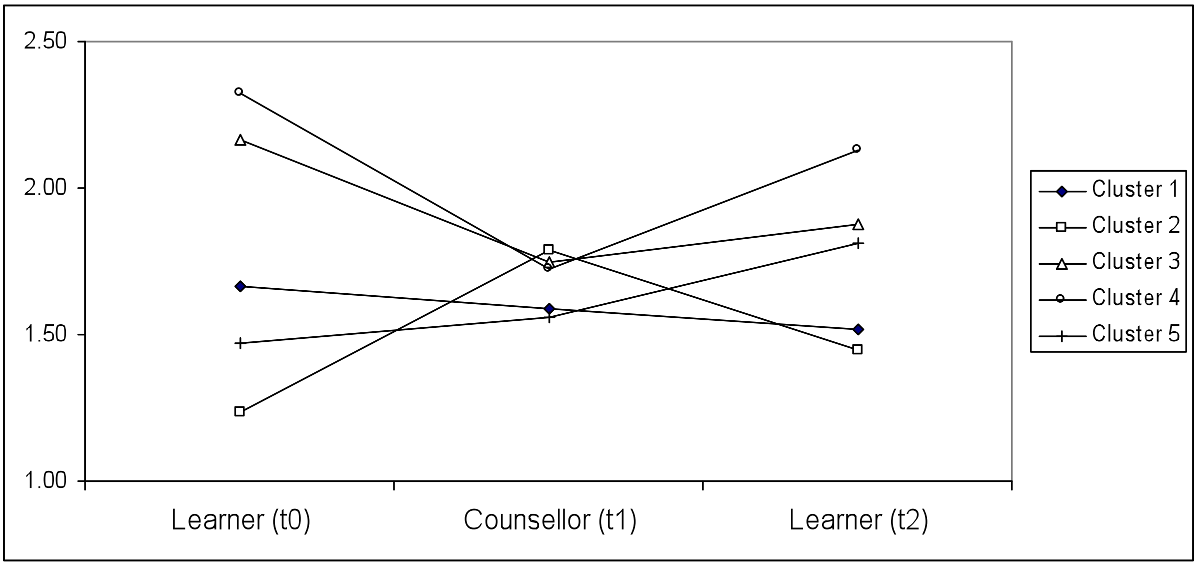

Figure 3. Variations of Learner Emotional Activation (t2) Depending on Profiles of Relations between Learner t0 and Counsellor t1

The data presented in figures 2 and 3 suggest several differences between the learner and the counsellor. First, there are differences in levels: counsellors' emotional expressions (M= 4.46) are on average slightly higher in valence than those of the learner (M=4.22); the same can be said of emotional activation with a smaller difference between participants (valence: $F(1, 3083) = 441.99$, $p = < .001$; activation: $F(1, 3083) = 14.19$, $p = < .001$). Secondly, there is a notable difference in the extent of emotional fluctuations, subject to both activation and valence: while the counsellor's emotions are stable, the learner's emotions vary significantly.

Differences in profiles (t0 and t1) can be represented as a negative correlation ($r = -0.19$). The higher the learner's valence at t0, the lower the counsellor's valence at t1 and vice versa. The same cannot be said with regards to the dimension of activation.

A comparison of average scores in activation and valence for the learner at t0 and t1 using a test of statistical inference (Student's t-test) indicates significant differences (see Table 1). Learner differences observed at t0 and t1 cannot be explained by chance.

Table 1. T-Test Comparing Learner at t0 and t2

Class	Variables	*t*	*df*	*P*
1	Activation 0 - Activation 2	8.31	1042	< .001
1	Valence 0 – Valence 2	18.63	1042	< .001
2	Activation 0 - Activation 2	-13.72	987	< .001
2	Valence 0 – Valence 2	-10.11	987	< .001
3	Activation 0 - Activation 2	8.96	307	< .001
3	Valence 0 – Valence 2	-9.67	307	< .001
4	Activation 0 - Activation 2	4.89	381	< .001
4	Valence 0 – Valence 2	4.50	381	< .001
5	Activation 0 - Activation 2	-9.48	323	< .001
5	Valence 0 – Valence 2	-8.90	323	< .001

If the valence increases from t0 to t1, it will also increase overall from t0 to t2. In other words, inter-individual differences between learner t0 and counsellor t1 can give rise to intra-individual differences within the learner (t0-t2).

The differences between the learner's activation at t0 and t2 rise at the same rate as the differences between the learner's activation at t0 and counsellor's activation at t1. The same applies to valence.

Discussion

The study aims to explain how emotional regulation may occur between a counsellor and a learner. When asked about the ambiance counsellors try to promote consciously in their interviews, they all think they try to be positive to motivate their learners. However, at an unconscious level (the level of emotional processes), they seem to 'act' differently.

Changes between average profiles characterising classes appear to be negatively correlated between learner (t0) and counsellor (t1). When the learner's valence and/or activation is low, the same variables for the counsellor tend to rise. Conversely, when the learner's valence and/or activation is high, the levels of both tend to be low for the counsellor. This negative correlation between the learner and the counsellor cannot be interpreted as contagion, since the direction of change differs according to levels, in particular for the learner's valence. There is no cumulative effect of increasing emotions. On the contrary, everything seems to happen as if the counsellor was trying to draw the fluctuating emotional state of the learner towards a more neutral position.

The results of this study suggest that the counsellor unconsciously tries to regulate the learner's emotions in an effort to construct a balanced emotional relationship (often qualified as homeostasis). This could be explained by the counsellor attempting to maintain the interaction with a neutral tone. It could be that the counsellor is influenced by the professional reserve expected of their social role. It can be assumed that these emotionally neutral periods are the most conducive for the completion of the tasks.

The assumption is that when the learner's emotional state deviates from a neutral zone, it prompts the counsellor to re-evaluate the interview and the learner's activity. Through this study, it is possible to argue that the counsellor exerts a significant emotional influence over the learner, which can be described in terms of regulation.

Limitations of this Study

Inevitably, the study has a number of possible limitations. First, the results may not apply to other types of counselling situations. The diversity of learners and counsellors suggests an influence of emotional differential variables, which can be accounted for by the concept of emotional intelligence (i.e. the ability to detect emotional states in others and to express one's own internal emotional state varies considerably between individuals). Other variables such as stress or personality also intervene in counselling sessions. More data needs to be investigated to check if these mechanisms can be commonly observed.

A second difficulty in this study was the choice of turns as the units to process our data. We opted for the turn for the sake of convenience, but above all for lack of any more satisfying unit. This was problematic because turns do not match what we call 'emotionemes' (a term we have coined to define single units of emotion, characterized by a homogeneity of content and time span). Most turns are short, but some can cover several speech acts or refer to several topics that are likely to provoke different emotions in the learner and subsequently in the counsellor. In some rare cases, raters perceive different emotions in the same turn. The coding of one emotional tone per turn means that some information is overlooked. Conversely, an emotional state is often maintained in successive turns. The choice of the appropriate unit remains subject to debate, and should be decided in accordance with the objectives.

Adopting the turn as the basic unit for a quantitative analysis is not entirely satisfactory since it does not distinguish overlapping and successive turns. A causal link may thus not apply to explain learner-counsellor relationships. Moreover, this type of analysis supposes that emotion has an impact as soon as it is perceptible from vocal expression, given that emotion can persist outside of any vocal trace and have a delayed impact.

Finally, the practical implications of the research are still to be developed. The next step will be to examine how this model can help to predict evaluation of interviews by the persons involved and to determine how this evaluation affects the way learners put their decisions into practice.

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Affect and the Development of Learner Autonomy through Advising

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Abstract

The inseparable relationship between affect and cognition has led us to view learners' affect as something that learners need to be able to 'manage' and 'control'. Positive affect is known to enhance learning, while negative affect can interfere with successful learning. Extensive research and theorizing led to the development of motivational and affective strategies (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Oxford, 1990, 2011). Many people hold the images of negative affect as something that is difficult to deal with, but also as something that learners should take care of by themselves. The roles of advisors in supporting learners' affective dimensions have not been discussed extensively, and some advisors are at a lost in dealing with feelings and emotional aspects of learning (Gremmo, 1995; Tassinari & Ciekanski, 2013). In this paper, instead of viewing negative affect as something that impedes learning, I view learners' affect, both positive and negative, as an 'essential resource' that advisors and learners should make use of in helping learners become autonomous and achieve their learning goals in a self-fulfilling way. Such processes are best carried out in socially-mediated dialogic interactions between the advisor and the learner. The advisor's role is to help learners express their day-to-day feelings and motivational experiences, reflect, and engage in the cognitive-affective meaning-making process of their learning experiences. I will illustrate the effectiveness of this approach in developing learner autonomy through a case study of an EFL learner in Japan.

Keywords: learner autonomy, motivation, metacognition, language advising, affect, dialogue, cognitive-affective, self-directed learning

Background

Affect consists of emotions, feelings, moods, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation, which play an integral role in conditioning one's behavior and learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Hurd, 2008; Oxford, 2011). Affect is considered to be one of the most influential factors in language learning (Dörnyei, 2001; MacIntyre & Noels, 1996; Scovel, 2000). Studies have shown that while positive affect can provide invaluable support for learning, negative affect can block processing and prevent learning from occurring altogether. For example, emotions such as fear or anxiety can interfere with the cognitive processing required to complete a task by consuming working memory resources, thereby influencing learners' cognition, learning, and performance (Mynard & McLoughlin, 2014; Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Thus, in the literature, negative affect has been considered as an issue that needs to be managed and controlled so as to minimize the potentially damaging effects on learning (Ushioda, 1997).

The interdependent relationship between affect and cognition has also been investigated in the field of neuroscience. Damasio (2000) states that emotions work together with cognition and that both affect and cognition are necessary for human brain functioning. Thus, learners are treated as whole persons as their emotions and cognition are inseparable (Arnold & Brown, 1999; van Lier, 1996).

For learners to be successful in their language learning, managing affect is a crucial issue. This understanding has led to extensive research and theorizing on strategies that learners can use to control their motivation and engage in successful learning experiences, including motivational strategies (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), affective strategies and meta-affective strategies (Oxford, 2011). Meta-affective strategies are one of the three metastrategies that self-regulated learners ideally possess according to Oxford's (2011) Strategic Self-Regulation Model (S^2R) of L2 learning.

Learner autonomy is defined as one's capacity for "detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" by Little (1991, p. 4). Learners' capacity to manage their affective states is on the list of characteristics possessed by autonomous learners, along with the ability to set goals, find resources, and monitor and evaluate their learning. In van Lier's (2004) ecological/dialogical view of autonomy, he mentions the importance of looking at the person as a whole. Autonomy "means having the authorship of one's actions, having the voice that speaks one's words, and being emotionally connected to one's actions and speech, within one's community of practice" (p. 8). van Lier suggests that learner autonomy develops when learners have the authentic environment to voice their feelings and become consciously aware of their affective states in relation to their learning experiences. Applying van Lier's (2004) definition of autonomy to our discussion, rather than treating affect as something that needs to be managed or controlled from outside, we should actively make use of learners' affective states where the learners themselves are the main agents in their development of autonomy.

In practical terms, it means that the very first step is to scaffold learners in an authentic socially-mediated environment so that learners become consciously aware of their affective states and notice the connection between their affect and cognition. Ushioda (2014) mentions that capacity for learners to self-regulate their motivation is achieved "not by progressive attempts to regulate their behavior from outside, but by supportive interpersonal processes which foster the development of autonomy and the growth and regulation of motivation from inside" (Ushioda, 2003, pp. 99-100). Dialogic interactions between a learner and an advisor are a suitable environment for such scaffolding. Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) *sociocultural theory* has at its core the belief that the social-interactive process of joint problem solving leads one to internalize the strategic process and metacognitive control to solve one's problem. The one-to-one dialogic interaction format also fosters a sense of personal agency in constructing thoughts in managing motivation and learning (McCombs, 1994; Ushioda, 2014). In this paper, I will look at on-going dialogic interactions between an advisor and a learner where the learner acts as the agent in becoming aware of her affective states and using this knowledge as a resource in making decisions about her learning, eventually leading her to succeed in learning and in developing learner autonomy.

Case Study of a Learner

In this paper, I will present data from a case study to show the importance of addressing learners' feelings and emotions in an advisor-learner dialogue and how it contributes to learners' development of learner autonomy. Research until now on learners' affective states and their relation to language learning/development of metacognitive awareness has mostly employed quantitative methods through the administration of questionnaires on strategy use or levels of anxiety related to language learning (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996; Vandergrift, 2005). While this data can provide us with general patterns on who uses what kinds of strategies, it does not provide sufficient data on how each individual processed those feelings or employed those strategies in their unique learning processes. Although a case study only provides data of one learner, it allows the researcher to probe into the one learner's learning experience and follow the ways in which affective states, metacognition, and autonomy relate to each other, and is an appropriate method in examining learners' thinking processes.

I would like to mention here that this study is not something that I planned to conduct in advance. Engaging in one-to-one dialogue with learners is part of my day-to-day job as a learning advisor, and as part of my professional development, I was recording sessions with permission from the learners. However, as I began to see the intricate relationship between affective states, metacognitive awareness and learner autonomy, I decided to compile the data and put my findings into a paper. Thus, the advisor in the study is the researcher herself.

Background of the advising service

This study took place at a two-year vocational college in Japan. The advising service is open to all students in the school, and students come to see the advisor of their choice in their free time. Students choose the language they would like to talk in, either English (practicing language) or Japanese (L1) and the session usually lasts around 45 minutes to one hour. Students fill out an information form and bring it to their first session. The form asks the learners to indicate their name, student number, major, English class number, test scores, and reason for coming, and how they learned about the advising service. In addition to the above information, the session date and length, the topics of the session, and a brief summary of the advising session are entered into the advisors' shared data base by the advisors. The advising process itself is a one-to-one dialogue where advisors employ advising skills (Kato & Yamashita, 2014, 2015; Yamashita & Kato, 2012) to help learners develop learner autonomy and reach their learning goals. In the academic year 2013-2014, 70% of learners came back for a second session, and within that, 20% of students came more than eight times.

Learner

Tomoko (pseudonym) was one of the 101 students I had sessions with in the 2009-2010 academic year. Tomoko was selected from students who came voluntarily and regularly to advising sessions. In selecting Tomoko, I chose a learner who had not started learning English from early childhood, before the age of 11. Tomoko had been studying English for 6 years. She first started studying English as one of her required subjects when she entered junior high school, which was, at the time, the starting year of English language instruction in the Japanese education system. Exceptionally Talented Language Learners, (ETLLs), learners who innately possess high language learning abilities, were also ruled out. For example, ETLLs possess exceptionally high language memory, being able to memorize large amount of vocabulary and sentences by rote in short period of time, when non-ETLL learners have tremendous difficulty in memorizing them even with their use of memory strategies (Novoa, Fein & Obler, 1988; and Obler, 1989 cited in Takeuchi, 2008). Past studies show that learners who start learning English in early childhood, as well as ETLLs, have characteristics which may skew the data when researching about learning strategies and good language learners (Oxford, 1999; Takeuchi, 2008). In addition, in order to observe the development of a learner across a period of time, I selected a learner who came regularly for a certain length of time and for whom the advisor had recordings.

Tomoko was a first year non-English major student. At the end of her two years, she hoped to work for an airline company as her dream was to become a cabin attendant, which required her to have a high TOEIC score. TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication, Educational Testing Service) is an English language test designed specifically to measure the everyday English skills of people working in an international environment. In Japan, TOEIC scores are commonly used in companies as well as vocational colleges and universities in measuring English proficiency level. For Tomoko, she needed to have certain TOEIC score to apply for her dream job, a score which was far above her current level. In her first session, Tomoko showed the characteristics of a learner with low metacognitive awareness (Sinclair, 1999), as represented by utterances such as “How much should I study?”, “How many minutes is the right amount?”, “I am using this book because my teacher said it is good,” showing dependence on others in making decisions about her learning. Tomoko came to advising sessions 29 times in her first year, and in total 50 times throughout her two years at the school. This paper explores the data of the first 24 sessions over a period of eight months. Tomoko met the same advisor (the author) throughout the two years. The individual sessions lasted about an hour, and all advising dialogues were carried out in Japanese, the L1 of both the advisor and the learner.

Method

The aim of the inquiry was to investigate the role of the learner’s affect in her development of learner autonomy. The study employed a mixed-methods approach where data was collected through multiple sources including recordings of the advising sessions, advising evaluation questionnaires, and study logs.

Advising dialogues were recorded by the researcher using a digital voice recorder with the learner’s consent. The recordings were then later transcribed and translated by the researcher. Relying solely on data from recordings of advising sessions has its limitations. First, there is a possibility that learner could not/was not able to express everything that she wanted to. Secondly, knowing that the sessions are being recorded could have influenced what the learner or the advisor contributed to the session. Thirdly, since the advisor in the study was the researcher herself, it may have influenced both learner’s and advisor’s utterances. To minimize these limitations, the recorder was placed where it could not be seen by the learner.

Considering the limitations of this study, including the voice recordings and the fact that the advisor is the researcher herself, the researcher triangulated the data by collecting additional data of the learner’s reflections through two types of written document; the *Advising Service Questionnaire* and *My Study Log*. The same *Advising Service Questionnaire* (see Appendix A) was given to the learner twice, initially after her 8th and again after her 17th session. The questionnaires included 10 Likert scale items asking about learners’ awareness on their learning and their interactions with their learning advisor. The questionnaires also contained two open-ended questions which the learner may choose to answer. The learner completed the questionnaires in an environment where the advisor was not present. The other written data, *My Study Log* (see Appendix B) is a form where learners record the date, duration, study content, reflection, and self-evaluation of his/her motivation, concentration, and enjoyment levels whenever the learner finished his/her self-study. The written reflections within the study logs were completed outside of the advising sessions by the learner and in an environment without the presence of the advisor. All of the study logs were collected after the learner's 24^{th} session, and Tomoko's written reflections were later translated by the researcher.

Sustaining the Desire to Learn

In starting the discussion, I would like to introduce an excerpt from van Lier (1996) when he talks about learning to learn in his principles on *Awareness, Autonomy, Authenticity* curriculum (van Lier, 1996). While van Lier respects and recognizes the importance of learner training in classrooms, he also presents another view of learning to learn which is worth quoting in full:

> Learning presupposes that one continues to improve. This is only possible when one is not yet perfect and when there are problems in one's engagement with the world. It is also useful, of course, that learner wishes to improve, though natural curiosity is also a powerful initiator of learning, as is the ordinary activity of getting through one's days as best one can. **In a sense, then, students do not really need to learn how to learn, rather, the desire to learn must be awakened or re-awakened, and sustained.** Once that condition obtains, there should not be a need to go through a predetermined regime of learner training; instead, learners **can be guided in the exploration of their own** and each other's ways of learning [emphasis added]. (van Lier, 1996, p. 91)

Here, van Lier draws our attention to look at learners' day-to-day motivational experiences of their actual learning (cognitive) as well as their interactions with their social learning environment, including relationships with their classmates, teachers, or parents, as these factors are the key to sustaining learning. Ushioda (2014) would agree on this point as she suggests that especially when cognitive and linguistic challenges of L2 learning increase, goal-focused macro-level motivational processes are unlikely to be enough to sustain engagement in learning, and that this micro-level motivational and metacognitive engagement is the key to sustaining the L2 learning process.

Focusing on the "Present"

"The desire to learn must be awakened or re-awakened, and sustained" (van Lier, 1996, p. 91) – This statement itself implies how learners' desire to learn is vulnerable and can fluctuate at any moment. Here, the discussion is on motivational aspects. When a learner says, "I am motivated to study English because I want to work for the United Nations, but I just don't feel motivated to get on with my task", it is not that learner's motivation for working at the United Nations that is decreased. This brings up the discussion on sources of motivation.

Gardner & Lambert's (1972) *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation has been a widely accepted classification of motivation. Integrative motivation refers to a learner's identification with the speakers of the target language, and potentially a desire to integrate with their group. Instrumental motivation refers to goals such as getting a job, promotion, or passing an exam. Since then, motivation has been often analyzed from a temporal perspective by Williams and Burden (1997), Ushioda (1998), and Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) *process model of L2 motivation*. Recently, there is more theorizing on the future temporal dimension of motivation such as represented by Dörnyei's *L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) and *Directed Motivational Current* (Dörnyei, Muir, & Ibrahim, 2014). While setting a future-oriented motivation is important, learners do encounter and go through a number of motivational experiences in their day-to-day learning that could influence their desire to sustain their studies. For many learners, motivation related to the present is a pertinent and pressing issue. Focusing on this aspect of learners' motivation, Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) *flow* experience refers to the feeling of wanting to engage in the current learning task, or the present feeling towards the task they have completed. He stated the importance of paying attention to present or emergent sources of motivation claiming that we should not ignore the present and emergent sources of motivation:innate curiosity as well as intrinsic enjoyment, both of them essential sources of motivation (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; van Lier, 1996). This concept is also referred to as 'executive motivation' in Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, including such factors as the quality of the learning experience, the sense of autonomy, social influences, and knowledge and use of self-regulatory strategies that influence a learner. What *present* sources of motivation and executive motivation imply is that when learners feel enjoyment in the task and feel they are being successful, that self-fulfilling feeling keeps learners doing what they are doing. To support this, a large body of research has shown that the way students feel about their past accomplishments, the amount of satisfaction they experience after successful task completion, and the reasons to which they attribute past successes and failures will significantly determine how they approach subsequent learning tasks (Dörnyei, 2001). Learners' feeling (affect), thinking (cognition), and willingness toward the tasks they have engaged in contribute greatly in sustaining their desire to learn.

Learning to Express One's Affective States

In order to sustain the desire to learn, learners need to focus on *present* sources of motivation as I described above. The first step is to become consciously aware of their present feeling towards their learning. Yet, this in itself is a big hurdle as below it shows how expressing feelings about their learning is not something that learners do habitually:

Advisor: How do you feel about your study this week?
Tomoko: Feel?... I couldn't do it. I did homework, but no self-study.
Advisor: You could do your homework, but not the self-study you planned. What feelings do you have now? Happy? Not so happy?
Tomoko: [silence] I feel left out [silence] and miserable.

Tomoko was able to continue expressing her feelings with the help of her advisor. Here is an excerpt from Tomoko's first session:

Tomoko: I feel terrible about myself. When I go home, I just sit on the sofa and do nothing. Then I feel hungry, so I go to the fridge and get a yogurt. Then I get a text message from my friend, and I reply…and it is that lazy self that I hate. Even if I decide to study, I lose concentration within 30 minutes.
Advisor: I see, so once you get home, it's difficult to bring yourself to study and you don't like that. How do you feel about your situation?

Tomoko: I feel [silence] so terrible because I used to be able to concentrate more when I was studying for the entrance exam. I don't know what to do.

Advisor: I see, you feel terrible about yourself.

After that, Tomoko was able to probe into the possible reasons for her negative feelings.

Advisor: Can you tell me more?

Tomoko: I am **perfectionist** and I cannot leave things unfinished. I cannot make compromises. I know I have to make compromises, but I **worry** that if I **cut corners** and don't complete my work, that part that I didn't work on might be on the next exam – and that is why I cannot **cut corners** and I have a habit to look around and try to do this and that. As a consequence, I end up not being able to finish everything. I wish I were able to make compromises with how much I do. I wonder how people who are good at it make compromises [emphasis added].

Advisor: What kind of feeling arose when you are cutting corners?

Tomoko: Hmm….. like a guilty feeling…

Tomoko is describing her inner struggles. It is interesting that Tomoko used the expression "to cut corners" several times to describe situations where she did not study "perfectly" up to her standard. The advisor helped Tomoko to describe her feelings in more detail. As a result, Tomoko was able to make the connection between her feelings (guilt) and her learning experiences (cutting corners). She has a strong belief that one should do something perfectly and complete everything.

In the series of sessions that followed, Tomoko mentioned guilty learning experiences: "Although I scheduled myself to do shadowing, I could not make myself get out the CD player which was only one meter away from me" (session 4). In session six, she again faced this guilty feeling, but this time, she was coming closer to finding the core cause of this issue.

Tomoko: I couldn't do what I said I would do this week. Recently I am bothered by my perfectionist character. Because I feel that I have to complete everything and do it perfectly, I cannot even start the task I planned to do. Losing my opportunity to study because I am afraid…and if I keep doing

> this, I won't be able to reach my goal or dream of becoming a cabin attendant. For next week, I promise myself that I will get on task no matter how little I am able to do.

Tomoko still has strong *future* sources of motivation to become a cabin attendant, but she has limited *present* sources of motivation, because the effort to start studying is immense and she cannot enjoy her learning process.

Attention to "Present" Motivation in Restructuring One's Beliefs about Learning

Through advising dialogues, Tomoko was able to clarify the situation she was in. The next step for her was to find a way to make that 'present' feeling less painful. It was a big challenge for her, but she said she would try and study "something" every day for the coming week. She came back and reported in session seven that she could keep the promise to do something even though she did not finish everything she planned. The biggest surprise for her was that she felt much happier about herself.

> Tomoko: I was able to keep my promise! I was able to study every day!
>
> Advisor: Wow! Congratulations on being able to keep your promise and study every day!
>
> Tomoko: Thank you.
>
> Advisor: How do you feel?
>
> Tomoko : Actually, until now, I thought that studying only 10 minutes wouldn't have any meaning and that I wouldn't feel I had achieved anything. But now, I feel that doing 10 minutes could actually be meaningful. I felt this time that the fact that I can engage in my self-study every day is more important for me than giving up on my study because I can only spend 10 minutes of time. I could do something every day, and this **made me happier than trying to do everything and at the end of the day feeling guilty and feeling less confident not being able to do** what I planned to do. So I began to think that this flexible way is a better fit for me. I also worried that I won't be able to do well on exams if I didn't complete my task perfectly, but I found out that that is not necessarily true. I was able to get the score [emphasis added].

This is a powerful moment where the learner is reflecting on the new approach, making a connection between her learning experience and her feelings, and realizing that she feels happier about herself in the new approach. Engaging in the cognitive-affective connection brought her to realize that the belief she held so strongly for a long time is no longer valid. Instead, her new belief about her role as a language learner emerged. Through this process, Tomoko was able to 're-awaken' her desire to engage in the daily tasks of studying. As Bruner (1996, p. 49) commented, once learners come to realize that they act not directly "on the world" but on beliefs they hold about the world, they can begin to "think about their thinking" and so take control of their learning.

Importance of Dialogue in Sustaining One's Desire to Learn

Once awakened or re-awakened, the desire to learn needs to be sustained. For Tomoko, holding onto that new belief was, at times, difficult because it involved Tomoko trusting her decision. Social learning environment is another factor that influences learners' L2 learning experience (Oxford, 2011; Vygotsky, 1986). As Stevick (1980) points out, the relationship with others can influence success in language learning. It could be more difficult at times for learners to trust their own beliefs when they receive pressure especially from peers, teachers, and parents. Tomoko mentions in her first session the existence of others in her social learning environment and how this relates to her anxiety:

> Tomoko: I am so nervous. I want to know what my classmates are doing. I feel lost.

By her eighth session, Tomoko established her own comfortable study system and was able to sustain her desire to learn. However, when she started receiving teacher and peer-pressure, she became less confident about her decision:

> Tomoko: Recently teachers tell us to study to death, and I sometimes wonder if I should do that. But I know (through these weeks of advising and self-study) that "studying to death" as teachers say is not effective for me. If I study for a long time, I might be able to bring up my scores. My friends will be studying long hours…but studying many hours is not what I want…For me, doing it at my own pace is a lot easier. I feel less pressure

towards studying and I can continue my study. I like what I'm doing now. Of course I can study long hours like I used to do, but….teachers tell us to study seriously, but what do teachers mean by "serious"? My image of it is sitting and studying long hours...and so recently, I became really worried and anxious when I was taking a break from studying about whether my friends were studying long hours…

Advisor: Right…As you said, trying not to put pressure on yourself is important for you. Remember to believe in yourself and what is good for you.

Here, dialogue with an advisor expressing her feeling towards peer- and teacher-pressure helped her clarify her situation and recover confidence in the decision she had made. Tomoko was able to "sustain" her desire to learn.

Development of Learner Autonomy

In this section, I would like to examine Tomoko's development of learner autonomy. Here is an excerpt from Tomoko's reflections in session eight on her experience since she started coming to see an advisor:

Advisor: What have the past two months been like?

Tomoko: …Before, I was studying so hard and intensely, but I was always burnt out at the end of the day. But now, I don't feel studying is a burden. Before, I felt satisfied, but I was also extremely tired. Now, I feel satisfied, but I don't have that exhausted feeling. Instead, I feel a strong sense of enjoyment.

Rather than talking about her improvement in an external assessment (her TOEIC score increased from 500 to 700[1]) and speaking skills, her comment is on how she "feels" about her learning process, engaging in internal assessment of her progress. From the dialogical view of autonomy presented by van Lier (2004), Tomoko was able to make a connection with her feelings as she now puts value on how she feels about her learning

[1] It does not mean that there is a direct relationship between coming to advising and her improvement in TOEIC score.

process and refers to her feelings in making decisions about her learning. Thus, Tomoko has started to possess the characteristics of autonomy in van Lier's sense.

Next, I will examine Tomoko's development in terms of Little's (1991) definition of autonomy: whether the learner has shown any changes in her capacity to make informed decisions about her learning. I used Sinclair's (1999) framework for levels of metacognitive awareness in examining Tomoko's development. Table 1 includes both spoken and written data of Tomoko's utterances. The spoken data was extracted from the advising dialogues and the written data was extracted from the *reflect* section of the study logs she kept as those are the medium in which the learner expressed her thoughts and feelings about her learning.

The data show the gradual development of Tomoko's metacognitive awareness as she engaged in more cognitive-affective meaning-making processing of her learning in advising sessions. The data from the study logs show that no reflection was written between sessions one and two although she was encouraged to write reflections by her advisor. For the following week, she kept the date and the things she worked on, but she only wrote one entry of reflection about her learning experience. Change occurred after her third advising session, around the time when she moved up the level of metacognitive awareness from Level 1 to Level 2. After that point, Tomoko began to write a reflection in her study log every time she studied.

Her development of metacognitive awareness is shown through her written reflections and the data also synchronizes with her utterances in advising dialogues. For example, in her reflection between session six and seven, she used the expression "I repeatedly said to myself, it is okay that I could not spend time as I hoped to and couldn't complete everything I wanted to do. That is acceptable," when reflecting about the day when her study did not go as planned. This particular comment on her study reflects what she was going through at that time. It was the week when Tomoko was starting an initiative to make a compromise with her perfectionist character. She decided to study something every day even if she could not complete the whole thing. In session seven, she dismantled her previous belief that spending little time does not have meaning through the cognitive-affective meaning-making process with her advisor (discussed in previous section of this paper). As a result, when Tomoko encountered a similar situation later on, she responded with a reflection different from before. She wrote, "It [only being able to do a little work] is much better than doing nothing, because it is still moving forward!" The written reflection shows that Tomoko could now self-reflect in a positive way. This is because thinking positively is a better way for her in terms of sustaining her desire to study, rather than being caught up with her perfectionist character which often led to decrease in her desire to study further.

Table 1. Changes in Tomoko's Metacognitive Awareness Level

Level of awareness	Language characterized by (defined in Sinclair, 1999, p. 104)	Tomoko's spoken utterances in advising sessions	Tomoko's written reflections in her study logs
Level 1: Largely unaware	• Description with little or no rationale • Formulaic or 'shallow' rationales • Broad statements with little or no support	• "Is this okay?" (sessions 1-4) • "I am using this book because my teacher said it's good." (session 1) • "How much should I do?"(sessions 1-3) • "Is it ineffective to do it this way?" (session 4)	*Tomoko didn't write any reflection in the study log (between sessions 1 and 2)* • Lots of words need to be pronounced and it was difficult. (between sessions 2 and 3)
Level 2: Becoming aware (transition stage)	Greater use of: • Anecdotal evidence • Introspection (expression of thoughts/feelings) • Metaphor • 'Epiphanies' • Questions • Metalanguage	• "Although the teacher told me to study without wasting a second, I think for me, studying long hours is not effective. I am confused what I should do." (session 5) • "I always said to myself I have to do this, but recently, I began to doubt that. Is this really necessary for me?"(session 7)	• I was able to use my time effectively today, and I enjoyed my study. (between sessions 5 and 6) • I was only able to study for a short period of time, but I said to myself "let me consider it okay." (between sessions 6 and 7)
Level 3 Largely aware	Confident and competent use of the above *plus*: • Descriptions of alternative strategies	• "When the material or the method doesn't suit me, I lose motivation or I slow down. Solving past problems and doing shadowing are the methods I enjoy and I really feel that it is useful study for me." (session 11) • "I finished my vocabulary book. Now I know what words I don't know, so I came up with an idea so that I can concentrate on studying what I am weak at." (session 12) • "The goal I set last week was good, but it wasn't an appropriate goal for the schedule I had this week. So in the middle of the week, I revised my plan and decided to do just this part." (session 15) • "I gained skills to analyze myself. I can now predict	• I feel that for shadowing, doing it at this pace works out better for me. (between sessions 11 and 12) • I could not spend much time on studying vocabulary today, but that is better than doing nothing! (between sessions 15 and 16)

		when my motivation will go down, and I can also control myself to overcome that period." (session 24)	

Figure 1 is a summary of Tomoko's metacognitive development and her attitudes and capacity as a language learner. To indicate the temporal perspective, I included approximate session numbers in which she stayed in each level of metacognitive awareness. "Approximate" because there is no clear-cut line in between. As indicated by the arrow, the learner-advisor relationship continues to develop throughout the advising period. Learners who periodically come to advising sessions tend to follow a similar timeline to that of Tomoko's, yet the number of sessions a learner needs to move up to the next awareness level varies with each individual. This is an area that could be solidified with analysis of data on more learners as a future study.

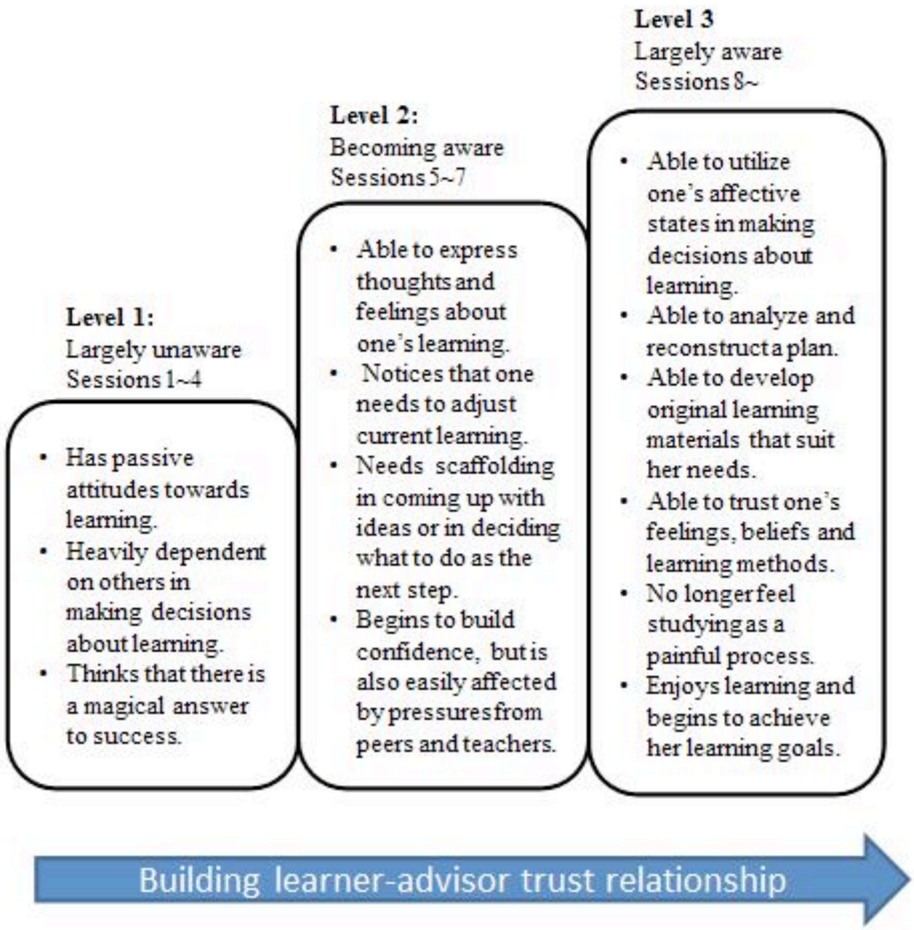

Figure 1. Tomoko's Development of Metacognitive Awareness.

Figure 1 explains changes in Tomoko's attitudes and capacity as a learner through periodic and continuous dialogic interactions with her learning advisor, categorized by the level of metacognitive awareness (Sinclair, 1999).

The results of the *Advising Service Questionnaire* after her 8th and 17th session (Appendix A) showed that Tomoko was satisfied with the advising service. She strongly agreed with the statements that she was able to develop a greater awareness towards her learning, found learning methods that suited her, and became more confident.

All of the above data and analysis suggest that Tomoko, who came to her first advising session as a passive, other-dependent learner (Level 1) became an active autonomous learner (Level 3). She could now reflect critically on her learning processes, trust her feelings and decisions, reach out for necessary support and resources, recognize, and utilize her negative feelings effectively to establish a continuous learning system. She became more active, taking more ownership towards her learning. She came to advising sessions in total fifty times until her graduation. It does not mean that because she kept coming to see the advisor that she was dependent on the advisor. She no longer came to see the advisor asking for an answer to solve her issues like she did in her first advising session. Eventually, she made the decision as an autonomous learner and 'chose' to come and see her advisor because she knew that the advising dialogue is a comfortable, authentic environment where she could further reflect on her learning with her advisor, who she has built a trusting relationship with.

In Tomoko's development of autonomy, having an authentic socially-mediated environment with an advisor where she could express her feelings, and reflect on, clarify and restructure her beliefs through a cognitive-affective meaning making process was crucial. The periodic and continuous dialogic interactions with an advisor helped Tomoko become consciously aware of her present feelings and use her affective states as a resource to help her find the learning methods that sustained her desire to learn. Tomoko's new idea for learning tasks and approaches towards her learning emerged from within her, and were not things that were imposed on her by others. She finds the cognitive-affective meaning making process to be meaningful to her, and now it is integrated into her way of being.

The Advisor's Role in Dealing with Learners' Affective States

As I have indicated in this paper, when finding the most effective and self-fulfilling ways to achieve their goals in an autonomous manner, it is important that learners learn to express both their positive and negative affective states, to connect their feelings with their learning experiences in an authentic dialogic interaction with an advisor. Since many learners are not familiar with paying attention to their own feelings and social relationships as part of the L2 learning process (Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993), advisors need to make an effort to establish a professional trusting relationship with a learner (Ciekanski, 2007) so that learners feel comfortable in genuinely expressing their feelings. It is important that advisors remember that learners carry with them their various affective states, and that affect and cognition are continually integrated into everything they do. It is important that an advisor does not attempt to formulate hypotheses about learners' internal dynamics or to try to change learners' behaviors. Advisors are not the ones who make those cognitive-affective connections, but advisors are there to provide necessary scaffolding to facilitate those cognitive-affective meaning-making processes by carefully structuring reflective questions that stimulate learners to reflect on themselves and develop their metacognitive awareness. The process of helping learners develop their metacognitive awareness is not a simple process. Ushioda (2014) explains that it involves scaffolding which is not simply helping learners to solve a problem but rather to develop their willingness and metacognitive ability to think through the problem for themselves (pp. 42-43). Indeed, advisors need to have certain attitudes, strategies and techniques (Kato & Mynard, forthcoming; Kato & Yamashita, 2014, 2015; Yamashita & Kato, 2012) to help learners in this respect.

The choice of language used in advising is important for a successful cognitive-affective meaning-making to occur. Language is part of one's identity, and language is the vehicle of expressing oneself (Wertsch, 2007). Whether it is their L1 or their target language, it is important that learners can express their feelings sufficiently. If language used in advising is inappropriate, it can limit the depth and quality of reflection that learners are able to engage in. According to Swain & Lapkin (2005), depriving learners of the opportunity to use their mother tongue is to deny them access to a powerful cognitive resource. The use of the L1 is considered to be a psychological tool which helps students handle more cognitively complex tasks (Brooks & Donato, 1994). Thus, although I respect a learner's choice in which language to use in advising sessions, I recommend that learners use their L1 because learners can describe their affective states in more detail.

Conclusions

Much of the literature on motivation uses words such as *interfere, stunt,* and *damage* to describe negative affect and *control, manage,* and *avoid* when talking about supporting learners with their affective issues. Negative affect can influence one's learning. Nevertheless, I view affect as not something that one needs to be afraid of or work with from a distance, but as an important resource that learners can use to develop a high level of metacognitive awareness and achieve their goals in a self-fulfilling way.

The present study looked at learners' ongoing motivational experiences during the day-to-day process of L2 learning. As the learner accumulated more dialogic interactions, the learner progressively became the central agent in utilizing her affective states, developing her motivational and metacognitive awareness. In the advising service questionnaire after her eighth session, Tomoko wrote, "It is my first experience being able to **continue studying without feeling pain**, and **I am really happy** about it [emphasis added]." This remark is the goal we are aiming at – to help learners attain the capacity to achieve their goals in a self-fulfilling autonomous way. For learning advisors to help learners reach this state, the first step is to help learners express their feelings, rather than avoiding dealing with them or simply introducing affective strategies and expecting the learners to manage on their own. Learners' affect, if utilized appropriately, becomes the essential resource for the learners in their process of developing metacognitive awareness and in becoming autonomous learners.

I hope that the findings and discussions I present here will contribute in furthering the discussions on firstly, viewing a learner's affect as a resource that both learners and advisors can utilize in their development of metacognitive awareness, and secondly, in using socially-mediated authentic dialogic interactions as one of the ways to support learners in their development of metacognitive awareness and to understand how learners think through their ongoing motivational experiences in their language learning process. While I find this approach effective for language learners at the Japanese college level, more studies with learners in different contexts are necessary to make any generalizations. As I continue with my data collection, I hope that these assertions will be increasingly investigated through case studies such as the one presented in this paper.

Notes on the contributor

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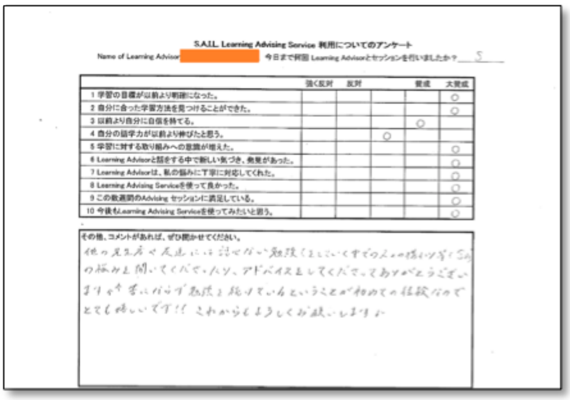
Appendices

Appendix A

Results of the Advising Service Questionnaire[2]



S.A.I.L. Learning Advising Service 利用についてのアンケート

Name of Learning Advisor [redacted] 今日まで何回 Learning Advisorとセッションを行いましたか？ 5

	強く反対	反対		賛成	大賛成
1 学習の目標が以前より明確になった。					○
2 自分に合った学習方法を見つけることができた。					○
3 以前より自分に自信を持てる。				○	
4 自分の語学力が以前より伸びたと思う。			○		
5 学習に対する取り組みへの意識が増えた。					○
6 Learning Advisorと話をする中で新しい気づき、発見があった。					○
7 Learning Advisorは、私の悩みに丁寧に対応してくれた。					○
8 Learning Advising Serviceを使って良かった。					○
9 この数週間のAdvising セッションに満足している。					○
10 今後もLearning Advising Serviceを使ってみたいと思う。					○

その他、コメントがあれば、ぜひ聞かせてください。

Questionnaire statements	Tomoko's response	
	Session 8	Session 17
1. Learning goals became clearer than before.	5	5
2. I was able to find a learning method(s) that I am comfortable with / matches me.	5	5
3. I feel more confident about myself.	4	5
4. I feel that my language skills improved compared to before.	3	4
5. I developed interest and awareness towards how I learn.	5	5
6. By talking with a Learning Advisor, I noticed / discovered new things about myself or my language learning.	5	5
7. Learning advisor was kind in dealing with my issues.	5	5
8. I am glad that I used the Learning Advising service.	5	5
9. I am very satisfied with my past several weeks/months of advising sessions.	5	5
10. I would like to continue using the Learning Advising service.	5	5

1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

[2] Tomoko's response to the open-ended question is shared in the paper.

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Appendix B

Study Logs for Days between Week 1 and 2 (Level 1)

My Study Log   Name________   No. 1

	Date	Duration	What I did（実行したこと）	Reflect（振り返る）	concentration	motivation	Enjoyment
Ex.	6/3	15分	Shadowing page 34 #3 聴いて、単語調べて、スクリプト見ながらシャドーイング	初めてやってみた。ついていくのが大変 でも、続けたらきっと上達する！	😐	☺	☹
1	5/27	35分	<PART3> P15				
2	5/28	0分					
3	5/29	0分					
4	5/30	30分	<PART3> P15 Review & P16				
5	5/31	45分	<PART3> P15・16 Review & P17				
6	6/1	30分	<PART3> P15・16・17 Review & 18				
7	6/2	20分	<PART3> P15・16・17・18 Review & P19				
8	6/3	0分					
9	6/4	0分					
10	6/5	30分	P15・16・17・18・19 Review & P20 聞くだけ。	本を見ないでやろうと試みたが、 出来ず、眠くなったので終了。	☹	☹	☹

Study Logs for Days between Weeks 15 and 16 (Level 3)

My Study Log   Name________   No. 14

	Date	Duration	What I did（実行したこと）	Reflect（振り返る）	concentration	motivation	Enjoyment
Ex.	6/3	15分	Shadowing page 34 #3 聴いて、単語調べて、スクリプト見ながらシャドーイング	初めてやってみた。ついていくのが大変 でも、続けたらきっと上達する！	😐	☺	☹
1	10/23	55	*シャドーイング<P115> *過去問答え合わせ(解答)＋PART5	今日は本当は過去問をやりたかったのだけど、VISTAに(>リスニングいる問)にできなかったので、来週がんばろう☆	☺	☺	☺
2	10/24	40	*単語本 *シャドーイング<P115>	シャドーイングが中途半端で終わってしまったので明日、もう一度やろう!!	☺	☺	☺
3	10/25	55	*シャドーイング<P115> *過去問(PART5問題＋解答)	シャドーイングがうまくいきませんでしたので明日は次にいきます。その後またやることにしよう。	☹	☹	☹
4	10/26	55	*シャドーイング<CD2 Review> *過去問<PART5＋解答>	またまたPART5の調子がくるってきました 気分をかえてリスニングをやりたい！	😐	😐	😐
5	10/27	40	*シャドーイング<CD1 Review> *単語本	今日は今までの過去問でわからなかったイディオムや単語をようやくかけました 少し(前にやった部分のReviewができてよかった!)	☺	☺	☺
6	10/28	60	*シャドーイング<CD2 Review>, *単語本 *先生からお借りした本→せつめい(PART1~4)	あまり試験時間がとれなかったので単語を少ししか見れなかったけど、ゼロよりマシだと	☺	☺	☺
7	10/29	75	*シャドーイング<P115> *単語本 *先生からお借りした本→模擬テスト(PART1)	今日はシャドーイングずっとダメだったページがようやくついていけるようになったり、リスニングを本格的に始めたりと満足でした！	☺	☺	☺
8	10/30	60	*シャドーイング<CD2 Review> *過去問 PART5 *単語本	今日は久しぶりに過去問(Reading)をやりました。明日はリスニングをやって流れをつくっていこう☺"	☺	☺	☺
9	10/31	65	*シャドーイング<CD1 Review> *過去問リスニング	過去問(PART2)は集中できず、新TOEICと感じが少し違って困惑。でもこれも練習と思って大事に！受験する時に役に立てる(くる)！	☺	😐	😐
10	11/1	40	*シャドーイング<CD2 PART4 Review ＋ P116> *単語本	シャドーイングがP115のおかげでかなりゆっくり短く感じました☺！この調子でがんばろう☺"	☺	☺	☺

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Supporting Learners and Advisors: An Advising Interview Protocol for Intensive Language Programs

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Abstract

In this paper, we present an 8-step interview process developed in response to the unique needs of learners and advisors in an intensive language program. Designed as a tool to provide additional support for new language advisors, this protocol has been used successfully for a period of over four years in an intensive language program's self-access center. The protocol reflects an established advising method and includes rationale and discussion to adapt the tool to other language advising contexts.

Keywords: advising in language learning, ALL, language advising, language advisors, intensive language program

Advising in language learning (ALL) (also called language counselling) can take on many forms, but is frequently co-located as an ancillary service in self-access language learning centers (Reinders, 2008). The existing literature on ALL emphasizes that the role of the language advisor is one of guide, or coach, helping the learner develop his or her self-regulation and autonomy outside of the language classroom. This typically happens through a negotiated dialogue between the learner and the advisor, with the learner responsible for developing a plan of action or deciding on appropriate next steps (Mynard & Carson, 2012; Reinders, 2008; Tassinari, 2012). Each learner's capacity to self-regulate varies, however, with action plans from more experienced or self-aware learners likely to differ greatly from newer learners. This discrepancy highlights the argument in the literature over the degree of direction or non-direction the advisor assumes (Mynard, 2012). For advisors working in intensive, high-stakes language programs, we argue that a direct approach is needed both for the learner and the advisor.

Intensive language programs differ from the typical foreign or second language program in that the course pace and demands often exceed the self-regulatory capacities of learners. In the current context, learners attend 30 hours of academic foreign language class per week and typically have two or more hours of homework nightly. While the goal remains to have the language learner think of his/her own strategies, the majority of learners in this program arrive at advising sessions feeling overwhelmed. Therefore, the focus on advising in the current context is on identifying each learner's area of critical need and providing strategies and resources to help the learner immediately in order to keep up with the pace of the course. Advisors must also be equipped to offer a sympathetic demeanor through active listening as well as concrete strategies and structured support during and after the advising session. This approach differs markedly from more traditional language advising programs (see Mynard & Carson, 2012), and highlights the need to adopt language advising practices to the specific language program.

Parallel to the advisor taking on greater responsibility in recommending learner-specific strategies, is the challenge in training newly hired language advisors to work effectively with the wide range of learner needs present in intensive language programs. Despite the advising program implementing a pre-advising student questionnaire to gather general information about learners' needs, new advisors are often unprepared to navigate a full advising session, frequently reporting the inability to lead the conversation, ask targeted questions to elicit more information, or discuss a range of strategies suitable to a specific learner's situation.

To this end, we offer an 8-step interview process developed in response to the need to assist new language advisors in a self-access center at an intensive foreign language program. As part of a broader and more formalized training process, the interview protocol serves as a scaffold for the new language advisor, helping him or her develop the skills needed to navigate an advising session. Advisors are encouraged to be sympathetic listeners throughout the session, and they are trained to provide referrals and contact information to community and healthcare resources for topics outside the scope of language learning. This 8-step process below, however, focuses on academic (language learning) issues.

Interview Process

In presenting the advising interview protocol, many of the steps will be familiar to current language advisors, such as building rapport, identifying difficulties, and building a plan. During the interview, advisors ask questions and practice active listening, so that they can confirm their understanding of the learners' problems (Mozzon-McPherson, 2012). The advisors then engage in an interactive dialogue with the learners to diagnose language learning problem(s) and offer appropriate strategies and/or advice to help advisees succeed. The 8-step advising protocol outlined below typically lasts 30-60 minutes and consists of the following:

1. Greeting and building rapport
2. Communicating the purpose
3. Gathering background information
4. Discussing learner's issues
5. Targeting questions
6. Forming a diagnosis
7. Offering strategies
8. Following up

Each of the steps is discussed further below, including a summary of what an advisor can expect during a particular step as well as guiding prompts to engage the learner.

Greeting and building rapport

While the first step may seem self-explanatory, advisors need to remember that students who come for advising in intensive language programs are almost always struggling in class and are often discouraged. Additionally, students may feel overwhelmed by the demands of their course. Many advisees seek help only once they have failed successive quizzes, exams, or other in-class assessments. In the current context, some learners are required to attend an advising session because of poor academic performance. These students are often less motivated to come and not as open to asking for advice. By offering a warm but professional greeting and by spending a few minutes building rapport with the student, the advisor is preparing for a productive and successful advising session.

Communicating the purpose

Clearly expressing the purpose of the advising session (Step 2) at the outset helps the learner understand the process as well as the expected outcomes (Cotterall, 2012). This includes telling the learner explicitly about the entire advising process, along with what happens following a session. Here are some possible ways to do that:

- I want to help you succeed in learning your foreign language.
- I will be asking some questions, listening, taking a few notes.
- I will try to give you some tips, strategies, advice, resources.
- I will send a formal advising report to you in the next three days and will send a copy to your teacher if you were referred. This report will describe what we discuss today and will include other practical strategies to help you in your language learning.

Gathering background information

Gathering background information (Step 3) serves a dual purpose. First, as an extension to building rapport, learners relax when talking about themselves and their learning processes. Second, learners are asked to share information and reflect on their learning more holistically. Interestingly, many learners in intensive programs will not have engaged in this type of reflective process up until this point because of rigorous course demands. This step should include asking relevant questions that will help the advisor learn about the learner's background. Here are some examples:

- Tell me about your high school/college experience.
- Did you study any other foreign languages in school? How did you do?
- What is your long-term language learning goal?
- Are you aware of your learning style(s)? What are the ways you learn most effectively and/or efficiently?
- How do you feel about your foreign language?
- How did the first few weeks of your course go?
- When did you first begin to struggle with vocabulary retention, listening, etc.?

Discussing learner's issues

In Step 4, the advisor asks the learner what s/he is struggling with. In this advising program, learners are required to provide a general description of problem areas prior to the advising session. At this point, the advisor can refer back to any information provided earlier and use it as a starting point for discussion. Learners are usually eager to share what their perceived language learning problems are, and are often accurate in their assessment. However, on occasion, advisees might see their problem in one area that has its roots in another. Learners who frequently list difficulties in listening, for example, may in reality be struggling with vocabulary retention (e.g., they may be hearing words and phrases that they never learned, or they may not be listening to the words when they study vocabulary).

Targeting questions

By probing with more specific or targeted questions (Step 5), the advisor, together with the learner, can discover the root problem or problems. As mentioned above, students in intensive programs may not have had the opportunity to thoughtfully reflect upon their language learning issues (i.e., why they are doing well in some areas and poorly in others). As a result, there is usually a need for these kinds of questions to pinpoint the underlying issues that need to be addressed. Some examples of probing questions are:

- Tell me how you practice listening at home.
- How exactly do you study vocabulary? Do you preview/review the words?
- Do you read a script when you practice listening?
- What do you do when you encounter a word or phrase you don’t know in reading or listening?
- Do you have a speaking partner? Is so, how do you structure your time? In other words, do you have open conversations or do you speak on certain topics?
- What part of your language learning is going well? What are you doing to succeed in that area?

Forming a diagnosis

In Step 6, the advisor tries to form a diagnosis. Depending on the learner's degree of self-awareness, this is certainly something the learner may volunteer through the negotiated dialogue. Our recommendation is for advisors to focus on the student's one or two most significant areas of difficulty. Any more than this can be overwhelming for the student at this point. Here are some ways the advisor might state a diagnosis:

- You are struggling to retain vocabulary because you are not reviewing and recycling the vocabulary you learn.
- You are struggling with listening because you are not retaining the vocabulary.
- You are struggling with listening because you continue to get stuck on unknown words or phrases and you miss the information that follows.
- You are struggling with grammar because it is not presented or explained in the methodical and organized way you prefer.
- You are struggling with speaking because you are afraid to make mistakes in grammar or vocabulary when talking.

The examples above are direct statements. In keeping with the role of active listener, the advisor might state a diagnosis in the following manner "Would you say/agree that your greatest difficulty at this time is retaining vocabulary, and this might be what is causing you to do poorly in listening?" Alternatively, the advisor may frame this as an insight, allowing the learner to negate the statement entirely, for example, "From what you're telling me, it seems like you are struggling with speaking because…" Note that after posing such a question, the advisor should allow the student time to respond by agreeing, disagreeing, and/or choosing to provide yet more information to be taken into consideration. This allows the learner to self-reflect and build awareness, but also to re-direct the dialogue if needed.

Offering strategies

In Step 7, the advisor offers specific learning strategies and resources that the advisee can use to overcome his or her language learning struggle(s) and/or compensate for his or her language learning weaknesses. Step 7 is a critical step in the advising process for learners in intensive language programs, as learners often seek tangible strategies or action plans they can implement immediately. While some learners will be capable of brainstorming strategies and action plans independently or with the help of strategy lists organized by skill/modality, our experience is that most learners will need significant guidance from the advisor in this process. Example strategies include the following:

- Learn vocabulary in chunks (contextualized phrases) and review these often (that same day while waiting in line for lunch, again that evening, two days later, one week later, etc.)
- Listen to the vocabulary on your iPod. Write words in sentences. Read the sentences aloud.
- Use lower level passages to practice listening while reading the script. Stop the recording at regular intervals. Say aloud what you heard. Rewind and repeat as necessary.
- Purchase a grammar book or grammar guide to supplement the materials you have in class.
- Ask your teacher to help you find a speaking partner/tutor who is studying the same language, but who is a couple months ahead of you in his/her course.

At this point, the advisor checks for buy-in from the learner by asking the learner explicitly if s/he has any questions or concerns about using the strategies discussed during the session. The presentation of the strategies tends to be directive, with the negotiated discussion occurring concurrently as the advisor asks the learner to consider which strategies s/he finds more or less appealing and if the learner has thought of additional strategies during the session that may help. Eliciting information from the learner at this point about strategy feasibility can raise both advisor and learner awareness to possible complications with the strategies discussed; for example, a student may express reluctance in working with a community tutor if s/he has limited access to transportation outside of school. Below are ways to ask for feedback:

- We've discussed several strategies. Which one(s) seems the best fit for you?
- Are there any strategies that will be difficult for you to use?

- Do you have any questions about the strategies we discussed? Do you understand why I recommend these strategies?
- Do you think you will try these strategies? Which one will you use first?

Following up

One of the challenges documented in ALL, is that programs often lack a follow up mechanism for advising sessions (Fu, 1999). This leads to two distinct administrative challenges. First, at the student and program level, there is the matter of gauging an advisor's effectiveness in his or her role. This creates issues with ongoing professional development and program development for both advisor and administrator. Concurrently, without follow up, documenting an advising program's overall efficacy and value for funding purposes is problematic.

Another challenge with regards to follow up is measuring a student's improvement after an advising session, as several confounding factors can coexist. Some of those factors include: student motivation and attitude, curricular changes, less (or more) homework, a new language tutor, and outside distractions (e.g., financial or personal relationship problems).

To help mitigate these issues, the last portion of the interview protocol (Step 8) is designed to prime the learner that the advisor will be following up with him or her. First, the advisor actively encourages the advisee to stay in touch and to update the advisor on progress, including inviting the learner to schedule a follow-up appointment. Second, the advisor tells the learner that s/he will receive a formal written report sent electronically within a certain timeframe, in this case within three business days. Based on our experience, many learners will take notes during the advising session and outline the strategies and resources discussed in what is essentially a learner plan. At this step, programs could formalize the learner-developed plan to facilitate the learner's growth and development towards self-regulation. In the current context, the formal written report from the advisor includes the following four elements:

1. Student Observations: A brief summary of how the student describes her/his language learning issue or problem;

2. Advisor's Observations: The advisor's summary of the student's reason for seeking advising, which may or may not be confirmed by what is discussed and discovered during the actual session;
3. Recommendations: Practical, achievable strategies listed in order of importance (or by skill area) so that the student can have a written guide detailing the steps or strategies to try; and
4. Additional Resources: A list of materials that may also help the student, such as Internet links, resource books, and audio or video clips.

Despite the challenges associated with follow-up, the anecdotal responses below provide evidence of the protocol's success:

> Student 1: I would like to thank you. The advice you gave me raised my grade exponentially. The night listening helped the most. I now do that every night. Going over dictations helped me remember past vocab. Unfortunately, I was not able to go [out] and do the role play.

> Student 2: I thought I would update you on my progress. Your suggestions for listening have been very helpful. At first it was definitely a challenge to stop translating as soon as a listening file started, but now it's a lot easier to simply listen to the whole passage. I listen to my homework sound files again as part of my morning routine. My teacher has noticed a difference in my listening. I also took your advice to find something I enjoy about the language. I read a fashion magazine at the library and checked out a poetry book.

> Student 3: I enjoyed our talk on Friday. I would like to sit together and talk some more in the future. I worked over the weekend on some of the suggestions you gave me. I began the top down listening approach, going through the audio two times; 1st for main idea, and 2nd for the [details]. I started making note cards again. I have found that previewing the lesson the day before is a great help.

Conclusion

The academic advising interview protocol described above reflects a typical advising session in an intensive foreign language program. The steps serve as a guide to help new advisors as they take on the task of advising. For most new advisors, once the steps are used in four or five sessions (with supervision and follow-up discussion) over several weeks, the advising session itself becomes a much more natural or comfortable process.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the focus on advising in the current context is on identifying each learner's area of critical need and providing strategies and resources to help the learner immediately in order to keep up with the pace of the course. The directive nature of this protocol arguably varies from non-directive approaches, where the learner may be expected to take on a greater level of responsibility with his/her autonomous learning in terms of identifying appropriate strategies, next steps, and learner plan development. In keeping with the argument that ALL should be context-specific, the interview process above provides a framework, rationale, and discussion which can be adapted to suit programmatic needs.

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Institutional Challenges for a Voluntary-Basis Language Learning Advising Program

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Abstract

This quantitative report was conducted to explore the potential factors which promoted the increased number of students who utilized the English Consultation Room (ECR) which is one of the self-access programs at the World Language Center (WLC), Soka University, Japan. In 2013, 63.5% of students used the English language learning advising service in total whereas the number of students increased to 70.2% in 2014. While self-access centers (SACs) are widely recognized as an effective means to promoting students' language learning, especially outside the classroom, just establishing the facilities does not guarantee frequent and active use by students. Increasing the number of users, in fact, may be an institutional challenge for program coordinators (Kodate, 2012). The results of the report may give the self-access program coordinators an insight into the students' frequent use of the program. In addition, it may provide an example of how usage figures relating to an advising program can be effectively collected and analyzed.

Keywords: advising, self-access center, data analysis

Self-Access Centers

Self-access centers (SACs) are widely recognized to be facilities which promote self-directed or autonomous learning and have gained popularity especially among higher education institutions (Dofs & Hobbs, 2011). A SAC is defined as "a room or areas consisting of a number of resources such as materials, activities and support, usually located in one place and is designed to accommodate learners of different levels, goals, styles and interests" (Barrs, 2010, p. 11).

While previous research indicates that a SAC is one of the contributing factors for encouraging learner autonomy, simply providing the facilities and a positive learning environment may not guarantee frequent and active use by students. In other words, attempts to make an SAC more accessible and attractive to students should be considered (Hughes, Krug, & Vye, 2012). In addition, Croker and Ashurova (2012) noted that using a SAC could be daunting especially for freshmen, first-year Japanese university students. Furthermore, students who are intrinsically motivated and have an advanced level of English proficiency may find an institution's SAC more appealing while learners that depend more on their teachers in the classroom may hesitate in using SACs (Hughes, Krug, & Vye, 2012). Attempts have been made to help university students use SACs actively at institutions in Japan. For example, colleagues at Soka University attempted to gain support from the teaching staff including part-time teachers. This was done by holding lunchtime information sessions to explain the value and efficacy of the self-access language program, a practice advocated by Shibata (2013). Staff at Tokyo Gakuen University developed a stamp card system with which students, especially freshmen, were required to visit the SAC initially in order to become familiar with the facilities, in the hope that they would start using them later independently (Kodate, 2012). At another institution, Thompson and Atkinson (2010) report on a curriculum which integrates classroom activities with a self-access learning center, resulting in encouraging learners' independent learning as well as a greater number of SAC users.

The Context

World Language Center and the self-access programs

Soka University is a private university in Tokyo, Japan. There are approximately 8,000 students and eight faculties including Law, Economics, Literature, Business, Education, Engineering, Nursing and International Liberal Arts (FILA). The World Language Center (WLC), which manages all language courses of the university, was founded in 1999 to promote global citizenship through the development of foreign language and intercultural competence. In addition to offering English courses across departments, the WLC also offers the self-access programs. As of December 2014, there are six programs The Chit Chat Club is where students practice basic English conversation; the English Forum is where they discuss current global issues; the Writing Center provides feedback on students' writing; the Global Village in which international students offer tutorials on various foreign languages other than English; and the TOEFL iBT Speaking

Center where students practice independent or integrated speaking tasks for TOEFL iBT test. In 2014, the *Nihongo Dojyo* was established where international students learn Japanese with Japanese university student-staff.

In 2013, all of the self-access programs listed above were relocated together in one place called the SPACe; the Student Performance Acceleration Center.

The English Consultation Room

The English Consultation Room (ECR) is an English language learning advising service and one of the self-access programs in addition to the other six programs. The ECR was founded in 2006 "to guide students in how to utilize the university facilities and resources on campus effectively" (Ishikawa, 2012, p. 96). Students use the ECR on a voluntary basis to seek advice regarding English language learning. One session lasts for 30 minutes. As of 2014, the ECR is open from 12:30 to 16:30 on weekdays and there are nine advisors. They consist of six assistant lecturers teaching English classes and three undergraduate students. Although the content of each consultation varies, most questions related to test preparation are the most frequently asked questions. For example, how to study English for the Test of English International Communication (TOEIC), or how to improve the score of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Given that at Soka University, the students are separated into levels for English classes based on their TOEIC scores, and their TOEFL scores are required to apply for the exchange programs which are available to all of the students except seniors, both of these test scores are intrinsically important to students. In addition to the TOEIC and TOEFL test, there are growing demands from the students who ask about how to study for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) since they need to take it to apply for a UK visa.

Research questions

The purpose of this report is to analyze the historical data based on session reports accumulated through language learning advising sessions and explore the potential factors which promoted the increased number of students who used the ECR in spring 2013 and spring 2014. This report focuses on the following research questions:

- What were the trends of ECR use in spring 2013 and spring 2014?
- What were some potential factors which contributed to an increase in the number of students?

Data Collection

This section provides an overview of the three instruments that were utilized for data collection related to students who visited the ECR. The instruments were: (1) 'regular shifts' for each semester, (2) the reservation lists for every session, and (3) the session reports for each session. Data were collected in the spring semesters in 2013 and 2014.

Regular shifts

Each semester, the ECR staff work the same shifts every week. For example, Teacher A always works Monday 4th period. The work shifts are called *regular shifts*. The regular shifts are used to count the number of available slots in the corresponding semester.

Reservation lists

The names and student numbers of students using the ECR are listed on *reservation lists*. The reservation lists can be utilized to count the number of reserved slots. The data from reservation lists was acquired from the online ECR reservation system. Students can access the reservation system, check available slots, and make a reservation for one of the available slots. Students can make a reservation for available slots up to two weeks in advance.

If a student makes a reservation, the student number and name will be registered onto the database system. Then, the reserving student information will appear on the reservation list for each day.

Although the reservation lists show the reserving student information, those lists cannot specify the number of students who actually visited the ECR. Some students did not visit the ECR though they made a reservation. Furthermore, there are students who visited the ECR without a reservation; the way to use the ECR without a reservation is explained in more detail in the 'Data Analysis' section.

Session reports

Students visiting the ECR write a *session report* about the session they participated in. There are two reasons for writing the session report: to enable the student to remember the content of the session, and to store information about the session. The session report includes following sections: (1) student name, (2) student number, (3) session date, (4) staff, (5) mid-term and long-term goals, (6) achievement in English learning so far, (7) work to be completed by the next session, (8) summary of the current session. Each student filled out a report of the session that they participated in. When a session finished, staff scanned the report that the student had filled out. Then, the staff sent the report data to an online data storage system that the ECR uses to check the report. These reports are used to determine the number of students who actually visited the ECR in data analysis.

Data Analysis

This section outlines the data analysis procedures for analysing data collected by the three instruments described in the previous section. The data used in the analysis were: the reservation rate, the utilization rate, the cancelation rate, the walk-in student numbers, the student's year of study, the student's major, and the number of returning students.

Reservation rate

The reservation rate is the number of reserved slots compared with the available number of slots in a semester expressed as a percentage. The number of students on the reservation list does not necessarily equal the number of ECR attendees due to the existence of walk-in students and cancelations. Hence, there is always a difference between utilization rate and reservation rate.

Counting student numbers on the reservation lists can show the reservation number. Hence, the reservation rate can be calculated as follows:

$$\text{Reservation Rate } [\%] = \frac{\text{Number of Reserved Slots}}{\text{Number of Available Slots}} \times 100$$

Utilization rate

The utilization rate is the rate of the number of slots in which students visited the ECR compared with the number of available slots in a semester. This rate indicates the percentage of used slots overall in a semester.

The number of slots students used in a semester is obtained by counting the number of session reports written in a semester. Moreover, the number of available slots in a semester can be acquired by simply counting slots open in the semester. Thus, the utilization rate in a semester can be calculated by using the following equation.

$$\text{Utilization Rate [\%]} = \frac{\text{Number of Slots Students Visited}}{\text{Number of Available Slots}} \times 100$$

Cancelation rate

Unfortunately, some students did not come to the ECR even though they made a reservation. If a student did not come, the formerly reserved slot would become a vacant slot. This type of slot is called a *canceled slot* or the purposes of this paper. Although some students canceled their reservations on the reservation system in advance, these slots are not counted as canceled slots in this paper.

If there was no session report for the slot filled in with a student number on a reservation list, it was considered to be a canceled slot. By counting the number of canceled slots, the cancelation rate can be calculated by using the following equation:

$$\text{Cancelation Rate [\%]} = \frac{\text{Number of Canceled Slots}}{\text{Number of Available Slots}} \times 100$$

Walk-in students

Students who come to the ECR without making reservations are called *walk-in students*. If there are some vacant slots in a day, students are able to occupy those vacant slots without a reservation by filling in their student number on the reservation list that is placed in front of the ECR. Or, if a student does not show up, a walk-in student can use the ECR slot instead. Walk-in students are welcome because vacant slots are effectively used up.

By examining the reservation lists and session reports, walk-in students can be identified. If the student number on a session report does not appear in the corresponding slot on the reservation list, the student is a walk-in student.

Years

We classified the year the students were in into five types: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and other. The student number can identify the year the Soka University student is in. Student numbers are written on session reports, so the student year classification was obtained from the session reports.

Majors

In terms of majors, the collected data were classified into the eight majors described in the previous section and "Others" including graduate students. The major of a student can also be obtained from the student number as well as the year. Hence, the session reports are used to collect data relating to majors.

Returning students

Some students visited the ECR two or more times in one semester, and these students are called *returning students* in this paper. The amount of duplicated student numbers appearing on the session reports indicates returning students.

Results and Discussions

The main findings obtained from the data analysis are presented in this section.

Reservation rate and utilization rate

In 2014, the reservation rate was higher than the previous year (see Table 1). The reservation rate increased by 14.9%. In other words, fewer than 10% of the available slots were unused in 2014. One of the possible reasons for this change is the new arrangement for the regular sessions in 2014. In 2013, only one student was able to use each slot because only one advisor was in the ECR in a slot. However, in 2014, the number of the ECR staff assigned to a slot was increased to two in the slots that were in high demand in 2013. Hence, two students were able to use the ECR in some slots in 2014.

In addition, ECR promotion is considered to be another reason for the increase. The ECR attempted the following new developments from 2013 to 2014 in terms of promotion. The ECR was advertised at the guidance meeting for freshmen and the orientation for students wishing to study abroad in April. Coupled with this promotion at orientation, the ECR advisors visited the Basic level English classes (for students who scored lower than 285 on the TOEIC test) to help the student become familiar with the support service available, including ECR.

Table 1. Reservation Rate

Semester	# of available slots	# of reserved slots	Reservation rate [%]
Spring 2013	504	388	77.0
Spring 2014	533	490	91.9

Table 2 shows the utilization rate of the ECR in the spring semester of both years. The utilization rate increased by approximately 7% in 2014. It may be inferred that the utilization rate increased because of the increase of the reservation rate.

Table 2. Utilization Rate

Semester	# of available slots	# of utilized slots	Utilization rate [%]
Spring 2013	504	320	63.5
Spring 2014	533	374	70.2

However, the increased percentage of utilization rate is relatively low compared with the reservation rate in 2014. In fact, only 70.2% of the available slots were used although 91.9% of the available slots were reserved. That means some students did not come to the ECR in spite of their reservation. This issue is explained in more detail in the next section.

Cancelation rate

Table 3 shows the comparison of the cancelation rates in Spring 2013 and 2014. In 2014, the cancelation rate increased from 23.5% to 30.2%, a difference of 6.7%. Hence, fewer of the reserved slots were not being utilized in 2014.

Table 3. Cancelation Rate

Semester	# of reserved slots	# of canceled reserved slots	Cancelation rate [%]
Spring 2013	388	91	23.5
Spring 2014	490	148	30.2

The causes of this increase are difficult to ascertain as the ECR staff cannot have immediate access to students who do not come to their appointments. However, one possible cause that can be inferred from the data may be that due to the limited number of slots, students may have reserved far ahead and then found that they could not attend on the actual day. Actually, in 2014, over 90% of the available slots were occupied by reserving students.

To reduce the cancelation rate, students who cancel the session cannot make reservations for the next two weeks by a ‘penalty’ system of the ECR. The cancelation rate, however, indicates that this system might not work effectively, and other measures to reduce the cancelation should be considered. Hence, measures to reduce the cancellation rate might be also be necessary in addition to the current penalty system, for example adding more long-term penalties or promoting walk-in students.

Walk-in students

Table 4 shows the number of slots for walk-in students and the percentage of walk-in students in all utilized slots. In 2014, the number of slots for walk-in students increased from 23 to 32, an increase of 9. Walk-in students used 10% of the utilized slots in 2014, and this percentage is larger than percentage of that in 2013 which was 7.2%.

Table 4. Walk-in Students

Semester	# of slots for walk-in students	Percentage of walk-in in utilized slots [%]
Spring 2013	23	7.2
Spring 2014	32	10.0

The location change of the ECR in 2014 is considered to be one reason for the increase in walk-in students. However, because around 30% of students who made a reservation did not come to the ECR, some slots were available for walk-in students. This situation probably explains the increase in walk-in students.

Years

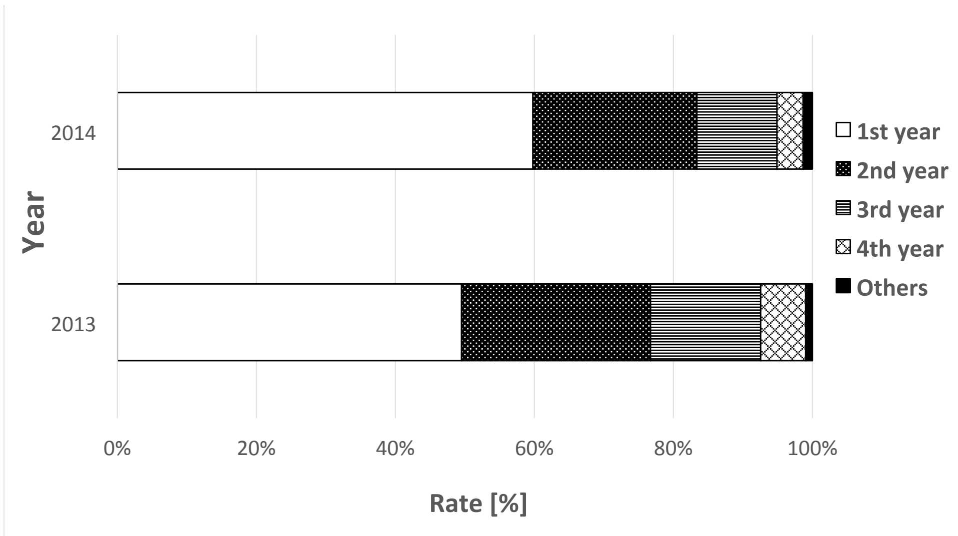

Figure 1. The Percentage of Students in Each Year who Visited the ECR

Figure 1 shows the percentage of students in each year that used the ECR in 2013 and 2014. The percentage of freshmen (1st year students) and sophomores (2nd year students) who used the ECR is greater than juniors (3rd year students) and seniors (4th year students) comparing the two semesters. Freshmen and sophomores are required to take a heavier load of English classes than juniors and seniors, and any study-abroad programs need to be finished before the junior year. These two factors are considered to be reasons for the large percentage of freshmen and sophomores using the service.

In 2014, the rate of freshmen users increased by 12%. It is assumed that the increased number of freshmen is due, in part, to the newly initiated ECR classroom promotion visits.

Majors

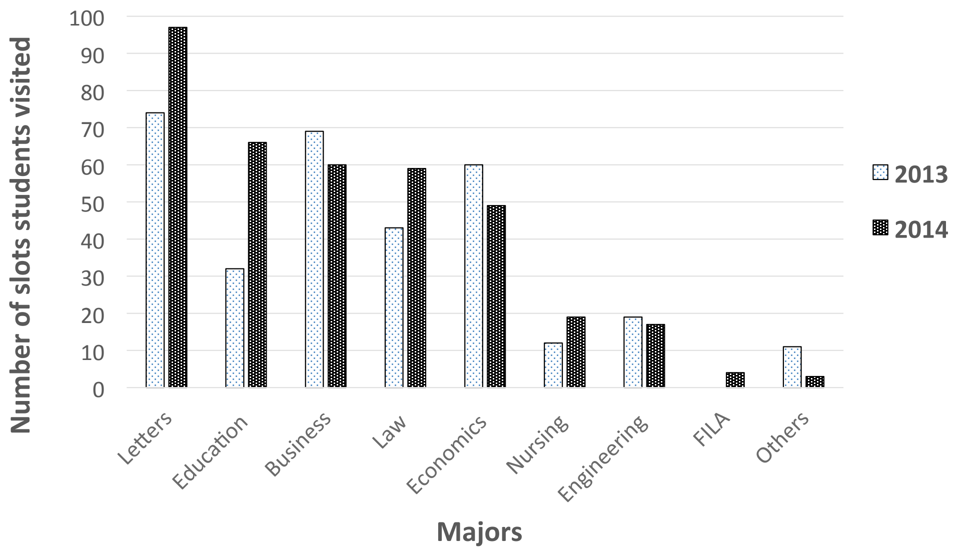

Figure 2. Number of Students Classified by Major

Figure 2 indicates the number of students classified by major. The faculty of Letters has the largest percentage of users, whereas Education, Business, Law and Economics have a fairly equal distribution. Nursing and Engineering students had the least recorded visits to the ECR in 2014. Within those majors, Education students showed the largest increase rate. In 2014, an English learning program for students majoring in Education was started. Hence, the larger usage rate could be associated with the opening of the program.

Students majoring in Engineering and Nursing are less likely to use the facilities than the other faculties. Possible reasons for this might be following two factors. First, the overall number of students majoring in Engineering and Nursing are fewer than the other faculties. Second, these two faculties have special classes for English, and the ECR staff did not promote the ECR in those classes.

Even though the Faculty of International Liberal Arts (FILA) started in 2014, the slots used for FILA were fewer than for other faculties. The ECR staff did not promote the ECR in those classes, so it is assumed that this might be the reason for the low usage figures.

Returning students

When each session finished, the ECR staff recommended that the students return. However, the recommendation did not have the desired effect. Table 5 indicates the number of returning students and the returning rate. In both 2013 and 2014, the percentage of returning students was less than 20%. In other words, more than 80% of the students did not return. Between 2013 and 2014, the number of returning students increased by 4. The percentage of returning students in 2014 was 17.7%; a slight decrease of 1% compared with 2013.

Table 5. Returning Student Rate

Semester	**Total # of visiting students**	**# of returning students**	**Returning rate [%]**
Spring 2013	251	47	18.7
Spring 2014	288	51	17.7

Table 6 shows the number of times that students returned. In 2014, the number of times students returned increased overall from 2013.

Table 6. Number of Times Students Returned

Semester	**# of slots for returning students**					
	2 times	**3 times**	**4 times**	**5 times**	**6 times**	**Total**
Spring 2013	32	9	5	1	0	47
Spring 2014	30	11	7	2	1	51

Future action

The results obtained from the data resulted in a possible course of action for next year in order to achieve more active use of the program. First, it may be necessary to get support from the university faculties of Engineering and Nursing to help their students to be familiar with this language learning advising service. Although the total number of students majoring in these two faculties are much smaller than that of students majoring other faculties such as Law or Education, (a) specialized English courses for Engineering and Nursing students and (b) a greater physical distance to the ECR are the two major issues to be solved. The ECR advisors did not advertise to these students by visiting classes in 2014 and therefore they might not know that the ECR advising service is available to them. Researching these students' needs in studying English and explaining the value and efficacy of the advising service to the faculty teachers may be effective for getting support from the faculty instructors. In addition, it could be also helpful for the ECR advisors to visit the orientation meetings for English training programs for Nursing and Engineering students. Those who are motivated to study English to participate this English program may be more likely to find the language advising service more valuable and use the ECR even though it is located far from the building where their classes are mainly held.

Second, it would be helpful for the ECR to collaborate with the student-oriented organizations which help students' job hunting and therefore have frequently contact with juniors and seniors. This data indicated that the utilization rate decreased with student year. One possible cause is that, as previously mentioned, English classes are usually taken mainly in the freshman and sophomore years. Also, juniors and seniors have fewer opportunities to apply for the university exchange program which is available for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Considering that one of the most frequent questions at the ECR regarding how to improve TOEFL scores in order for student to get the required score for study abroad programs, it is unsurprising that juniors and seniors (who are no longer eligible for these programs) visit the ECR less often than freshmen and sophomores do.

Conclusions

This report has summarized the statistical data related to ECR use. One finding was that the reservation rate increased from 77% in 2013 to 91.9% in 2014. Approximately 60% of students who used the ECR were freshman students who might not have been familiar with this program before and this may indicate the effectiveness of the publicity activities conducted from 2013.

This research has limitations in that it does not show the reasons why the students who booked the session did not show up. While the reservation rate increased by approximately 15% from 2013 to 2014, 30% of the sessions still remained unused in 2014. Further investigation needs to be carried out in order to understand the reasons students canceled the sessions.

The results obtained from the data analysis also resulted in a possible course of action for the coming year in order to promote a more active use of the program. First, it may be necessary to get more support from the university teachers belonging to the faculty of Engineering and Nursing to help their students to be familiar with this language learning advising service. Second, it would be helpful for the ECR to collaborate with the organizations which provide juniors and seniors with support for job hunting.

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Peer Tutoring in Japan: A New Approach for a Unique Educational System

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Abstract

Peer tutoring was first introduced in the Western world, where education systems are quite different from the East. While peer tutoring has brought much success as an alternative to educational instruction in the West, it is still in the process of being introduced in the East. As Japanese universities begin to use peer tutoring, we must search for methods that fit the unique Japanese education system, in which social hierarchy plays an important role. This essay will share some preliminary observations on how cultural and systemic aspects of the Japanese education system may impact peer tutoring in Japanese universities. It will first explore multiple definitions on peer tutoring, before analyzing the Japanese education system and social hierarchies. Finally, the essay will provide a case study on a writing center in a Westernized prefectural university in Japan and discuss further research options.

Keywords: writing center, Japanese university, peer tutoring

Literature Review

In Western higher-education institutions, peer tutoring has been playing an active role in helping students achieve academic success. The unique role of students teaching and learning from other students is widely seen as beneficial. Lassegard (2008) writes, "There has been growing interest in this variety of student-centered education, along with the view that such education is beneficial not only to those being tutored but also for the tutors themselves" (p. 357). Ishikawa (2012) sums up other benefits of peer tutoring; "Peer advisors are potentially friendlier, more sensitive to the cultural background of learners, and better able to create a supportive and collaborative learning atmosphere than teachers taking an advisor's role" (p. 94). Therefore, peer tutoring, as a form of collaborative learning, seems to have a positive impact on two parties at the same social level.

It is important to note that peer tutoring is different from peer review in terms of definition, setting, and conductors. Firstly, in terms of definition, Hu (2005) defines peer review as "a collaborative activity involving students reading, critiquing and providing feedback on each other's writing, both to secure immediate textual improvement and to develop, over time, stronger writing competence via mutual scaffolding" (pp. 321-322). Secondly, in terms of setting, peer review is used as an instructional method by educators inside the classroom, while peer tutoring is a type of service often offered in self-access centers. As Lassegard (2008) writes, peer tutoring "takes place at autonomous learning centres within universities" (p. 358). Thirdly, in terms of participants, peer tutoring "involves those of the same societal group or social standing educating one another when one peer has more expertise or knowledge" (Colvin, 2007, p. 166), while peer review usually occurs among students who have the same level of knowledge helping each other through discussion. Therefore, peer tutoring is distinct from peer review in terms of taking place in different settings and involving different educational participants and agents.

The above information, however, is based on research done in Western countries, where education is quite different from the Eastern world. In the East, students are likely to display a passive learning style, due to the belief that their teachers are correct, which is based on respect for elders and teachers. Roberts and Tuleja (2008) compare the two styles as follows, "A more individualistic and independent (Western) concept of identity tends to encourage students to give feedback and to readily participate in classroom discussion; a more interdependent (Eastern) concept of identity encourages students to listen and to not offer feedback. Furthermore, collectivist cultures place a high value on harmony in order to save face and promote peace and balance within society" (p. 477). They also find that "within hierarchical relationships, both parties know their specific role and adapt to it as expected by societal norms" (p. 478). Therefore, learning styles are different for Western and Eastern students, in that Western students would tend to think critically and state their opinions, while Eastern students would more likely listen out of respect and trust that the feedback they receive is correct.

In regards to feedback, it has been found that Eastern students prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback. Nelson and Murphy (1993) found that L2 students "may mistrust other [L2] learners' responses to their writing and, therefore, may not incorporate peer suggestions while revising" (p. 136). Sengupta (1998) writes that students may put more importance in their knowledge than in their peers', therefore, disregard peer feedback (p.18). Additionally, in her research done in a secondary school in Hong Kong, Sengupta found that peer feedback was not received well by the students as "the teacher, with her knowledge of 'correct English', gives the grades, is thus the only 'real' reader, and is responsible for teaching accurate writing" (p. 25). In such ways, in both the classroom and in the peer-tutoring environment, Eastern students tend to shy away from peer feedback, and will prefer teacher feedback instead.

With the peer tutoring system created and developed in a Western world, where students are used to thinking critically about their own work and are willing to discuss their work with others, to what extent is it possible in an Eastern institution, where learners are so dependent on the instructor? Are peer tutoring and collaborative learning possible in an environment that puts so much importance on social hierarchy? Should peer-tutoring methods be adapted to such a culture to achieve the same success that it has shown in Western educational settings? While Japanese institutional writing centers originated from Western tutoring methodology, this essay will use a case study of a writing center in a Japanese university to discuss how tutees tend to rely on a power structure that is prevalent throughout the Japanese education system.

Background of Akita International University

Akita International University (AIU) is small prefectural university located in Akita, Japan. Built in 2004, its Liberal Arts Program is specially created to "foster individuals who will contribute significantly to the international and local communities" (Akita International University, 2014) by offering a wide range of courses, all of which are in English. The system at AIU requires its students to spend at least a semester in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program before allowing them to progress to Basic Education (BE), and finally Global Business (GB) or Global Studies (GS) programs. AIU is also widely known for its mandatory study abroad program, in which students must spend one year studying at one of the university's 171 partner institutions. Students are required to attain a TOEFL iTP score of 550, or an equivalent score in TOEFL iBT (80), or IELTS (6.5) or above to meet the requirements for study abroad.

The small student body is made up of a diverse mix of nationalities and cultures. Of the 870 degree-seeking students in April 2014, there were both Japanese and international students from different backgrounds that can be loosely divided into two groups. Firstly, there are Japanese students with an English-speaking background, including returnees (those who have lived abroad for a long period before returning to Japan), students from international schools in Japan or with experience studying abroad, and of mixed ancestry. Secondly, there are Japanese students who were born and raised in Japan, with experience only in the Japanese educational system[1]. Therefore, the environment at AIU is quite unique, with opportunities to meet and get to know students from all over the world and with different backgrounds.

Because of AIU's challenging curriculum, which is held in a second language for most students, the Academic Achievement Center (AAC) provides a tutoring service for all undergraduate students. The AAC offers peer tutoring for Japanese students in Academic Writing, Academic Reading, Presentation skills, TOEFL, IELTS, and Mathematics. Peer tutors consist of not only undergraduate students, but graduate and international students as well, all of whom meet the necessary requirements to tutor their subjects. Peer tutors are also required to undergo tutor training, which is based on Western tutoring methods, before they begin tutoring at the AAC. The students who visit the AAC usually require assistance or advice in their coursework or with standardized tests. The tutor's main goal is to guide students towards autonomous, or independent learning.

The Japanese Power Structure and Its Effects on Peer Tutoring

Japan shares a similar social and educational hierarchy system to other Eastern countries, such as China. Teachers are given utmost respect, and in interactions between the teacher and the student, the student will use *keigo*, the honorific form of the Japanese language. Even outside of the classroom, students (*kohai*) tend to use *keigo* and speak with respect to older students (*sempai*), who are seen to have more knowledge and experience in not only the school system, but also in life (Ishikawa, 2012, p. 103). Such cases of *sempai-kohai* relationships can most likely be seen during club activities, in which the *sempai* are expected to not only teach, but also mentor the *kohai*. Deep respect is shown for such *sempai*, who are seen to have power and wisdom. "*Sempai* concerns the *sempai's* responsibility to help a *kohai* in learning his/her job and supporting him/her at work. The *kohai*, in return, is expected to show respect and obedience to the *sempai*" (Johnston & Ochitani, 2008, p. 6). This *sempai-kohai* relationship is deeply embedded in the Japanese educational system, and cannot be easily abolished.

This hierarchy may influence tutoring in ways that are positive, but more likely in negative ways. As Hays (2009, p. 591) explains in his analysis of writing centers and tutor-tutee relational differences in North America and Japan. He writes that North American writing tutors

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[1] AIU's international student body was made up of 167 students from 26 different countries in the 2014 Spring Semester.

focus on collaborative learning, in which tutors "help explain and share ideas, but never *tell* tutees what to do" (Hays, 2009, p. 591) On the other hand, because a Japanese tutor would be used to passive learning, for reasons mentioned above, they would more likely *tell* students what to do instead of maintaining an environment of collaborative learning. Additionally, Johnston & Ochitani (2008) write that a *sempai-kohai* relationship can lead to "students refraining from visiting a writing center, students nodding their heads in agreement during a session when they do not understand a tutor's comments, or students not asking for elaboration even when they do not understand" (p. 7). While peer tutoring, as mentioned above, happens between peers of the same social level, it will be more difficult in this case for tutors to maintain an atmosphere of collaborative learning.

Analysis of the Power Structure at the AAC

The Academic Achievement Center at AIU has a unique integration of the Japanese hierarchy structure in a Western-style institution. Due to the small number of tutors, who range from undergraduate to graduate students, many will experience tutoring not only peers, but also *kohai* and *sempai* tutees. Tutors are, in fact, encouraged to hold sessions in English instead of Japanese in an attempt to lessen the impact of the hierarchical structure. As English does not have an honorific system of *keigo*, it is easier for tutors to maintain the same social standing as their tutees by speaking in English.

However, faced with the problem of students refusing to speak up if the sessions were done in English, the system underwent changes in 2013 to conduct sessions in Japanese if the tutee requested it. With that clause in place, most tutees requested the sessions to be held in Japanese, even if it were for an Academic Writing or Reading course. Based on experience and informal conversations with other tutors, tutees tended to use *keigo* if they were younger than their tutors. Additionally, when tutoring *sempais*, or interacting with older tutees, both parties used *keigo*, making the session seem like a formal educational setting instead of a writing center. It was only when tutors worked with peers of the same year that both parties used informal language, although there were some cases in which even peers of the same year would use *keigo*.

As a tutor at the AAC myself, I was able to apply my own experiences of social hierarchy in peer tutoring to this preliminary observation. I assume that when students are encouraged to use a learning style that they are used to, the tutoring session will go smoothly and they will succeed. Of the 11 tutees that I had during the spring semester of 2014, 100% requested assistance in Japanese[2]. Eight were *kohai* to me, while three were in the same year that I was in. Therefore, all eight of my *kohais* spoke to me in formal Japanese, while two of my peers spoke to me in both formal and informal Japanese. One peer student spoke to me in informal Japanese, which was probably due to the friendship that we had had before. In the beginning of the semester, I encouraged all my tutees to speak informally to keep the collaborative learning environment, however, many tutees showed an aversion by becoming less vocal and interactive. Because of this, I changed my tutoring style by encouraging them to speak, but did not comment on what language style they should use. The change in the tutoring session was evident, as most of my tutees began to be more active and the sessions went smoothly with the balance of speaking time kept.

Discussion and Implications for Further Research

According to the observations above, when students were free to learn in a style that they were comfortable in, in which they could use *keigo* with the tutor, they tended to be more active and vocal. On the other hand, the students who felt as though they had to treat tutors as equals may have felt anxiety or stress from a setting they were not used to. While I was familiar with the Japanese educational structure and the *sempai-kohai* relationship, it was difficult for me to keep the mutual and collaborative learning style in my sessions. Different factors such as personality and length of acquaintance may have played a role, yet it seems that abolishing the Western style of tutoring led to a more successful tutoring session based on this preliminary observation.

Because the above hypothesis is only based on preliminary observations, there are limitations to the evidence I was able to provide, in terms of lack of adequate data and statistics on success of the tutees. The next steps may be to conduct research with a greater number of participants to see whether more successful sessions are achieved with the initial Western style of peer tutoring, or not. Also, gathering opinions from both tutors and tutees may be a method to see in which situations they find themselves most comfortable. Finally, comparing the AAC

[2] This information is from the feedback forms that the author filled out. Although I am aware that this is not the best evidence, it can be argued that it is unbiased information, as I had not planned this project when filling out the forms.

tutoring center and other Japanese university peer tutoring centers may show which methods work best for students of pure Japanese background. Therefore, much research is still needed to find the best methods for peer tutoring in Japan and the rest of the Eastern world.

Notes on the contributor

Hinako Takeuchi is a third-year undergraduate student at Akita International University. She has been working at the Academic Achievement Center as a peer tutor in IELTS, TOEFL, and Academic Reading/Writing. Her interests are in Applied Linguistics and TESOL.

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Language Learning Advice at the University of Leeds

Jadzia Terlecka and Carolin Schneider, University of Leeds, UK

This article introduces the role and work of the Language Learning Adviser based in the University of Leeds Language Zone, one of the largest self-access centres in the UK. The Language Zone houses language learning resources for over 40 languages, including English. The Language Learning Adviser's office is located in this area. The article will present an overview of the facilities available in the Language Zone (LZ), followed by a detailed description of the Adviser's role. The role consists of three principal elements: providing individual consultations with students, developing and monitoring materials, and offering workshops on aspects of language learning. The increasing role of technology in language learning is also discussed and mention made of activities and events organised for language students by the Language Zone and the Language Learning Adviser.

Overview of the Space

The Language Zone offers learning materials and resources to language learners at the University of Leeds, UK. It supports English and foreign language students taking courses in the Language Centre and the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, as well as independent learners, who might be learning a new language for work, study or leisure.

The space underwent a major refurbishment during the summer of 2014, making it a physical focus for internationalisation, a meeting place for international and EU students with an interest in outward mobility and/or the learning of languages in Leeds. The space provides a mixture of formal and informal learning areas, physical and virtual learning resources.

Overview of the Role

The post of Language Learning Adviser was established in 2005 and has grown and developed into a successful and varied service. The service has three main aims: firstly, to support language learners by working with them individually to identify their obstacles to learning and to find ways of resolving these in accordance with their individual learning styles; secondly, to create and collate language learning resources in response to perceived and articulated student and staff needs and make these freely available on the Language Centre's Virtual Learning Environment. Thirdly, the Language Learning Adviser delivers workshops.

Individual advice sessions

It is important to distinguish the Language Learning Adviser's role from other university support services such as personal tutoring, student counselling and library skills sessions. The distinctive feature of this role is that it focusses on specific language related skills and on developing diverse strategies, techniques and resources for students (and staff) to work with in their language learning. The adviser is guided initially by learners' perceptions of their difficulties and needs. The next step is to assess these perceptions and work with the learner to develop a suitable learning strategy. As advice sessions are conducted within the Language Zone, learners can be shown available physical and virtual resources and how to use them.

The users of the Language Learning Advice service range from clearly identifiable groups of students such as those registered on English Language programmes, whose use of independent language learning resources may be monitored, to a large number of miscellaneous students who have no formal relationship with the Language Centre. Statistically, Language Centre students are the main users of the service, followed by international graduates and postgraduates, with fewer users studying other languages (see Table 1).

Table 1. User Details: Academic Year 2014 – 15, Semester 1

Postgraduates	10
Undergraduates	18
Language Centre students	52
Students learning other languages	8

Monitoring resources and compiling self help guidance

An important feature of the Language Learning Adviser's role is to monitor and analyse available language learning resources, documenting what is available in a user friendly format (e.g. an *Independent Learning Guide* for students of English, which is widely distributed to new students). They review new off- and online publications and resources, deciding whether to recommend their use to students order them for the Language Zone. The Language Zone Manager and Deputy Supervisors also share responsibility for this.

In addition, the Language Learning Adviser produces bespoke materials giving general guidance on language learning techniques and resources, often at the request of teachers and students.

Delivering workshops

The Language Learning Adviser delivers an average of two EAP workshops per week on different aspects of language connecting independent study and topics covered in the classroom. This involves close cooperation with teachers. The aim of the workshops is to provide extra support; those who attend are often encouraged to come and talk through their language learning issues with the adviser.

Independent Language Learning and New Technology

As technology becomes ubiquitous and increasingly mobile, students are keen to use its applications to enhance their learning, but often need guidance on how best to do this. Online resources for independent use are currently being further developed in the Language Centre. These include: a project on accents in English, websites for student cultural projects, flipped classroom grammar, video guides. Increased emphasis on independent learning throughout the university means that students need to develop their own learning styles and creativity, while making use of freely available materials.

The Future

In the early 2000s, Marina Mozzon-McPherson, based at the University of Hull and fellow academics from other UK universities were instrumental in promoting the idea of 'language advising' (Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans, 2001). Various academics predicted that this was the way forward for language learning and announced the demise of traditional classroom approach to languages. Although classroom reaching still flourishes, the increasingly available technology is gradually making independent learning easier. Advice and guidance from Language Learning Advisers, group activities led by students as well as advisers, will be essential ingredients in the future development and diversification of independent language learning.

Notes on the contributors

Jadzia Terlecka, an experienced teacher of languages including English, both in the community (ESOL) and for academic purposes (EAP), took up this role in 2005. She has since developed the function of Language Learning Adviser to include running workshops, small group sessions, advising staff and producing resources for learning.

Carolin Schneider, a chartered librarian, manages the University of Leeds self-access centre, the Language Zone, where the Language Learning Adviser is based.

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Get in Touch

Find the Language Centre online:

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Room 101: A Movement towards Social Learning Spaces? A Survey of SAC Managers in UK Higher Education

Introduction

Katherine Thornton (Column Editor), Otemon Gakuin University, Osaka, Japan

As more and more self-access facilities face up to the challenge of shrinking budgets and responding to the ubiquity of mobile devices for learning, Michael Allhouse's column examining the movement towards social learning that has taken place at the University of Bradford reminds us that such centres have a valuable role beyond providing access to physical resources.

In this final instalment of his three-part series, Allhouse examines the provision of self-access in UK Higher Education, in order to determine to what extent Room 101's journey towards becoming a social learning space is reflected in other centres around the country. By widening the scope of his research to examine not only the attitudes of learners at his own centre, but also wider trends across the UK, he reveals a diverse picture of self-access, and one in which social learning plays a vital and growing role.

Room 101: A Movement towards Social Learning Spaces? A Survey of SAC Managers in UK Higher Education

Michael Allhouse, University of Bradford, UK

Room 101 is the self-access centre (SAC) at the University of Bradford (UoB). Room 101 was originally a place to access learning materials in physical form but over the last ten years it has adapted its approach, moving away from materials-based resources (such as books, software, CDs, and photocopied resources and exercises) towards becoming a social learning space: a space where students learn from each other in person, through interaction-based activities (such as discussion clubs, tandem learning, student-led language groups, and informal social interaction).

The previous instalments of this column have outlined Room 101's movement towards social learning, and examined students' reactions to the new social learning focus, which have been very positive.

This final instalment will attempt to discover to what extent Room 101's journey is typical of other UK Higher Education (HE) SACs through a survey of UK HE SAC managers, examining whether social learning methods are employed in other SACs to the same degree as in Room 101. Where this is not the case, the instalment will look at what other SAC models exist in UK HE and how the services the SACs offer affect their popularity with students.

Research Methodology

The research in this instalment examines the extent to which other SACs are adopting social learning / interaction-based activities and whether this has affected usage. It also asks whether other SAC models, such as those focusing on materials-based resources, are successful in attracting users. In order to do this the research focuses on answering the following two questions:

1. What different SAC models are there in UK HE and how does the provision of different types of services affect the usage of these models?
2. To what extent is Room 101's social learning approach used in other UK HE SACs?

In order to find out the answers to these questions a short online survey was devised. The survey focused on the different services available in SACs and attempted to get some measure of how these different services affect usage. The research was conducted through a questionnaire created using the webpage SurveyMonkey. The survey link was distributed electronically via email lists of HE SAC staff with the request that SAC managers fill it out.

Due to time constraints there was no pilot. The survey yielded 33 responses over a two week period. All responses were anonymous, under the assumption that this would allow respondents to speak more candidly.

The survey consisted of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative questions intended to answer the research questions. Questions asked how many users used each centre per day, the kind of activities and services that were available, whether demand for some services was decreasing, and about the link between SAC provision and the curriculum.

Survey Results

SAC usage numbers

The first question was open-ended, and asked; 'Roughly how many students use your SAC each day?' Responses varied considerably; from 4 up to 250, but with most answers being quite low. Some respondents did not answer this question. Table 1 shows the respondents' responses, grouped into different ranges.

Table 1. Answers to the question, 'Roughly how many students use your SAC each day?'

Estimated number of users each day	Number of respondents in this range
Under 20	12
20 – 50	6
50 +	7

Many of the centres were catering to less than 20 users. Room 101 at the time of the survey was attracting well over 200 students per day (Allhouse, 2014), a healthy figure in comparison to many of the responses. There were only two other SACs in our survey that reported over 200 users.

It was possible to piece together a picture of the institutions the SACs existed in by examining the full individual response (which SurveyMonkey allows) and it was found that usage figures varied dramatically depending on two factors:

1. whether the HE institution had a large foreign language provision
2. the number of international students at the institution.

Of the services provided by your SAC, how often do you think students use each one?

This question used a list of possible SAC services. To devise a comprehensive list of SAC services the author included activities from Room 101 as well as from an examination of literature detailing SAC activities. The list was populated using examples from the works of Little (1989), Gardner (2000), McMurry, Tanner, & Anderson (2010), Morrison (2005), and Del Rocío Domínguez Gaona (2007), which could be seen as primarily materials-based SAC activities. The list also included activities detailed in the research of Croker and Ashurova (2012) and Murray (2014) which could be seen as interaction-based. Respondees could answer the question by selecting from possible responses such as 'something they don't provide', or on a rating scale from 'something students never use', to 'something used every day by many students'.

The results are shown in Table 2, below:

Table 2. Results of the question 'Of the following services provided by Room 101, please state how much you use each one'.

Materials – Based Activities

Frequency	This is used by many students every day	A few students use every day	A few students use once a week	A few students use once a month	Students never use this	We don't do this
Using internet resources to learn English	9	7	9	6	0	2
Doing language homework	7	10	6	5	3	2
Using English language learning books and CDs	6	10	7	5	3	2
Using foreign language books and CDs	6	5	6	3	2	10
Reading newspapers / magazines	6	5	11	7	1	3
Using materials a tutor asked them to use	5	10	7	6	2	1
Using computer software for language learning	4	7	9	5	2	3
Doing workbook tasks	4	7	6	6	2	8
Using graded readers	3	8	3	7	5	6
Using language centre created resources	3	7	6	9	3	4
Using tape recorders to practice language	1	1	2	7	6	16

Interaction – Based Activities

Frequency	This is used by many students every day	A few students use every day	A few students use once a week	A few students use once a month	Students never use this	We don't do this
Going to the SAC just to relax	7	13	5	1	1	4
Socialising with other students / SAC staff	7	12	7	2	1	3
Meeting another student for a language exchange	3	2	12	5	1	9
Attending organised English speaking sessions like debating club or IELTS speaking practice	2	4	4	4	0	19
Attending organized clubs like Reading Club / Art Club / Film Club	2	1	8	3	2	16
Attending special events like parties, art events, cultural celebrations like Chinese New	1	2	4	9	1	14

Year, etc.						
Attending foreign language classes taught by students	0	1	2	1	0	27

Other Activities

Frequency	This is used by many students every day	A few students use every day	A few students use once a week	A few students use once a month	Students never use this	We don't do this
Using computers for pleasure	13	12	5	0	0	3
Doing work connected to their degree course	13	8	7	1	0	4
Attending an English language class with a tutor	8	4	6	3	1	11
Attending staff one-to-one writing help sessions	6	3	6	7	0	11
Attending language counselling / learner training	3	6	4	8	2	8

It seems that some of the SACs have relatively high rates of students using materials-based resources for language learning (books, CDs, newspapers). From looking at the full individual responses it appeared that the SACs with high materials-based resource usage were where the SAC is part of a foreign language department, although there was not always sufficient information given to draw such conclusions for every respondent.

When examining what seems to be most attractive to students the most popular activities are using computers for pleasure, using the internet to learn English, using the SAC for other university work / homework, attending a class, and using the centre for relaxing and socializing. Relaxing and socializing was mentioned many times in the survey and several respondents mentioned that they employed student assistants or had student volunteers running the centre, trying to make the centre more student-friendly.

Some consideration needs to be taken of the different nature of activities, i.e. materials-based resources such as books can be used by many people all day, as opposed to English clubs which cannot happen with such frequency because of organizational issues, in most cases only happening once or twice a week. Bearing this in mind social learning activities, like English clubs and other social clubs, can be said to be comparatively popular. Many of the SACs in the survey did not offer social learning activities like student-led language classes, discussion clubs, or cultural parties, and yet students were using the centre to socialize with each other in unstructured settings.

What else do students do in your SAC?

The most common response to this question was tandem learning (language exchange) from 10 respondents. This is evidence that social learning is happening in at least 10 centres, slightly under a third of the sample size, although one respondent did mention that "most students prefer to meet in cafes, pubs and other social learning spaces."

In Room 101 we have striven to keep tandem learning based in the centre by providing materials, facilities, and an attractive setting.

Is your SAC provision linked to classroom teaching?

Many respondents explained that their SAC operates independently of classroom teaching, with one respondent even commenting that teachers "ignore the SAC most of the time". Indeed, this kind of answer was quite common, with 15 respondents giving some variation on this theme as a response. Generally there was the sense that teachers tell the students to use the SAC and occasionally they use SAC computers for a class.

Are there any services you provide which you would say are becoming less well used?

The answers to this question were often similar and could be grouped into a number of themes, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Question 5 'Are there any services you provide which you would say are becoming less well used?'

Theme	Examples from survey respondents	Frequency mentioned
The impact of new technologies and the Web on traditional audio-visual resources and written material	"Students can now find lots of language tests and grammar activities with keys online so books with CDs are becoming less popular." "Web resources have dramatically impacted on the use of our centre." "Most of the book related SAC services are becoming less well used as students have access to online resources and a well-stocked library on campus."	19
A move away from language software	"EFL software"	6
Services being scaled back/ integrated with other services such as the library	"University is looking to scale us back / close us down / integrate us into the library" "We have just removed all our SAC resources to the University library where	5

	they can be accessed more efficiently and where students feel more part of the University"	
Students not wanting to do activities in the physical space provided	"I think the fixed place for self-access is less popular as students want to work during their own time and in the environment of their own accommodation."	2

Some of the answers given overlapped, with some respondents saying, for example, that they were likely to be integrated into the library because of the availability of material on the web. This answer would be acknowledged in the themes 'Impact of new technologies' and 'Services being scaled back'.

In response to this question almost two thirds of the respondents gave an account of materials-based resource use in decline; CDs, English language learning software, books, and audio-visual language resources, were all acknowledged as being used less. Respondents asserted that this is due to the availability of resources on the Internet and the affordability of electronic devices.

Another major theme that emerged from this question was the scaling back of SAC services. Several of the managers acknowledged that their SAC is likely to be closed or integrated into the library. The main reasons given were that students want to study at home, and that tutors are making follow on material available outside of class on the internal Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).

One of the limitations of this research was that there was no direct question about the nature of the institution and the courses on offer, so it was not possible to know the relative sizes of the institutions, the extent of taught language provision, or the number of international students. Because the survey was anonymous it was not possible to trace this information retrospectively.

Discussion

This research's main aims were to answer the questions:

1. What different SAC models are there in UK HE and how does the provision of different types of services affect the usage of these models?
2. To what extent is Room 101's social learning approach used in other UK HE SACs?

1. Different SAC models in UK HE

Navarro (2014), when looking at different SACs, found that “there exists an array of mission statements, principles, descriptions of services, and outlines of goals and objectives. I was left with a highly eclectic picture of SACs.” (p. 9). The research in this column has supported this finding and has attempted to examine the range of these different services and objectives.

It was possible to identify differences in SAC services provided, usage numbers and institutional provision, as well as the environments the SACs function in. Two different environments were identified from the survey:

A) SACs in institutions with large numbers of students on foreign language courses and English courses
B) SACs in institutions where English is the only taught language

A) SACs in institutions with large numbers of students on language courses. One environment SACs exist in is in an institution with a thriving foreign language department which has large numbers of students on undergraduate courses and with high numbers of international students on English courses. There was a small number of these amongst our respondents and they all reported very high daily usage figures (in excess of 50) and high usage of foreign language materials-based resources and foreign TV/listening materials, as well as high usage of the space to write essays and relax/socialize. One respondent gave these details:

> “The main use of our SAC is by students of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and English Language Centre programmes/degrees accessing materials, usually listening or TV recordings. A typical first year MFL student might be doing two languages with two one-hour listening lessons per week. So, their homework for these classes might include listening practice on resources held in the centre. It depends on how teachers have structured their course and how much use they make of online materials.”

The SACs in this environment tended to have strong links with language teaching. However, even SACs in this situation reported some issues around use of the provided materials-based resources;

> "General drop in usage, possibly as students have their own laptops/phones to find online learning materials on their own".

Some of the SACs with this model are running interaction-based activities;

> "In our SAC students learn a lot of other languages besides English. For instance we have discussion sessions, film clubs etc. for other languages than English. There is also a lot of collaborative learning going on (e.g. students learning Chinese together.)"

The most frequently used SAC in our survey reported around 300 daily users, and was in a university with large numbers of foreign language undergraduates and full-time English learners. This SAC reported healthy usage of materials-based resources, but more popular were tandem learning, film viewing, and group work, and their most popular activities were socializing/relaxing and using computers to do coursework and for pleasure.

B) SACs in institutions where English is the only taught language. Another identifiable SAC environment is in an institution with only English taught, usually as in-sessional and taught full-time courses. SACs in this environment have varying usage and tend to report decreasing use of materials-based resources such as newspapers and books/CDs, often because;

> "Students can now find lots of language tests and grammar activities with keys online so books with CDs are becoming less popular"

and

> "There is the 'false' perception among some that 'you can do it all online'".

This phenomenon has also been observed by researchers such as Reinders (2012), who has suggested that so many new ways of connecting with resources and learners online have emerged that the need for a physical space for materials-based self-access has to be questioned.

Navarro (2014) in his study of SAC managers found that "one of the most significant challenges faced by SAC educators is finding (or creating) material that motivates learners to take more control over the actual learning process" (p. 22). This has been the experience of Room 101 which found that even physical authentic texts developed with Language Centre staff did not appeal to users, getting very little usage. The survey also found that SACs and Language Centre staff are not always working together as much as they could. There is perhaps a need for further research on language tutors' attitudes to SACs and material provision.

SACs in environments where only English is taught seem to vary between two models:

1. SACs which focus on materials-based provision
2. SACs with a social learning / interaction-based focus.

1. SACs which focus on materials-based provision. Where materials-based resources were the main provision on offer, SACs often reported low attendance figures. Many respondents answered the question about declining service usage by reporting that materials-based resources are less well used:

> "A lot of the language learning software on the SAC PCs do not seem to be used that much."
>
> "Almost everything is less used - web resources have dramatically impacted on the use of our centre. University is looking to scale us back / close us down / integrate us into the library."
>
> "Apart from DVDs and some IELTS books we no longer offer physical resources."

This is very similar to what was happening in Room 101 around ten years ago, which was what led Room 101 to become a social learning space.

2. SACs with a social learning / interaction-based focus. SACs in this environment which had embraced social learning were often thriving, mostly through the inclusion of facilitated interaction-based activities and a more informal approach.

In Navarro's (2014) survey examining SAC managers' beliefs about what SACs should provide he found the following:

Table 4. Excerpt from Research by Navarro into SAC Manager Beliefs.

SACs should…	Essential	Preferable	Not Necessary
1. Provide access to expert educator support (e.g. learning advisors, counsellors, tutors, etc.)	79% (30)	21% (8)	0% (0)
2. Provide access to learning opportunities independent of classroom work	84% (32)	16% (6)	0% (0)
3. Provide access to target culture contact (e.g. through materials, staff, décor)	71% (27)	26% (10)	3% (1)
4. Provide access to successful language users	39% (15)	61% (23)	0% (0)
5. Provide access to up to date technology	24% (9)	68% (26)	8% (3)

Source: Navarro (2014, p. 17)

Navarro's finding that the SAC managers confirmed the importance of providing access to 'target culture contact' and 'successful language users' is particularly interesting in relation to this study; these are things which Room 101 and other social learning SACs do through interaction-based activities.

Whilst one respondent to our survey said that "I think the fixed place for self-access is less popular as students want to work during their own time and in the environment of their own accommodation", this research has shown that where SACs are using social learning / interaction-based activities they are thriving and relevant.

To what extent is Room 101's social learning approach used in other UK HE SACs?

The last section has shown that social learning methods are clearly used in some SACs. Indeed some of the SACs in the survey seemed remarkably similar to Room 101, reporting that students use the centre for socializing/relaxing and for student-led clubs, such as speaking practice sessions run by volunteers or staff. One such centre seemed to be thriving and when asked what was declining, said "Nothing - tandem learning and speaking practice are as popular as ever".

Semi-structured social learning. Many SACs in the survey did not offer social learning activities (like student-led language classes, discussion clubs, or cultural parties), and yet students were still using the centres to socialize with each other. This is interesting as in Room 101 and in the work of Croker and Ashurova (2012) and Murray and Fujishima (2013) the semi-structured social learning activities were some of the most popular activities. It can be suggested that some sort of facilitated social learning involving speaking and listening practice might be a good addition for some SACs. This is a finding supported by Croker and Ashurova (2012), Murray and Fujishima (2013) and many of the respondents in the research. Murray and Fujishima (2013) ran a social learning space for language at an institution in Japan and had success with non-formal settings and semi-structured social learning activities. Also in Japan, Doyle and Parrish (2012) found that students mostly wanted opportunities to practice speaking in-person, and Navarro (2014) also emphasized the importance of this. This reflects Room 101's experience which found that students mostly want opportunities to speak in English in informal and semi-structured settings.

Student Assistants. Several respondents in our survey mentioned that they employed student assistants or had student volunteers running the centre, trying to make the centre student-led and student-friendly. Room 101 has been hiring student assistants, and encouraging student volunteers for several years, and at the point of writing we have around 30 student workers helping to ensure the centre is student-focused. Heigham (2011) found that the use of student workers increased attendance at her SAC, which was also promoted as a place where students could talk to and learn from their peers. Murray and Fujishima (2013), giving advice on how to start a social learning SAC, emphasized how by employing student assistants and creating semi-structured opportunities to practice language, a community can form around a centre. Room 101's student helpers, and social learning initiatives like discussion club, have created exactly this environment.

These other studies and examples from the survey echo Room 101's own findings as it moved towards becoming a social learning space. This demonstrates that, with concerns around the declining popularity of materials-based resources, one possible element of provision which could help SACs remain relevant in future is more interaction-based activities.

Conclusion

This instalment has looked at whether Room 101 is typical of UK HE SACs. It seems that there are some, even many, SACs which have a similar provision and perhaps a similar story to tell, one of a movement towards becoming social learning spaces.

The research identified two main environments which SACs operate in; one where high numbers of students are taking foreign languages and English courses recruit many students, and one where English only is taught. SACs operating in the first of these environments were often well used and usage of materials-based resources was healthy. There was however a detectable movement away from materials-based resources and towards social learning in many of the survey respondents' accounts.

Where foreign language courses had ceased and materials-based resources were still the focus SACs were being used by relatively small numbers of students. The reasons given for this were a declining interest in materials-based resources due to the availability of resources online. This echoes Reinders' (2012) theory that there is a decline in the need for physical spaces for language learning. Our survey indicated a scaling back trend in the sector, with 'merging materials-based resources into the library' being mentioned by several respondents. This suggests that the time of materials-based language resources in a physical centre may be coming to an end, (at least in some institutional environments), prompting the question: 'are there other functions of SACs that are still valuable?'

Croker and Ashurova (2012), Murray and Fujishima (2013), Heigham (2011) and Room 101 all seem to be suggesting that social learning could be such a function. All of these writers and those SACs in our survey which were using social learning / interaction-based activities reported healthy learner usage. Whilst different SAC models exist, with differing levels of usage, successful models show a movement towards social learning. This research and examples like those given above can all provide examples of interaction-based activities which would benefit any SAC.

Notes on the contributor

Michael Allhouse has worked in Room 101 for almost 18 years, longer than Winston Smith, Paul Merton, Frank Skinner and O'Brien put together. He was awarded International Student Advisor of the Year 2014 by UKCISA / NUS. He works for the Student's Union at the University of Bradford where he is running and designing other social learning spaces for specific groups of students.

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Review of 'Exploring English: Language and Culture'

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The popularity of MOOCs - massive open online courses, i.e. online courses that can be used by large numbers of learners without formal entrance requirements – has skyrocketed in recent years, with a broad range of courses made available by major MOOC platforms such as Coursera, Udacity or EdX, but also by smaller providers.

At the same time, very few MOOCs cover language learning. This review will discuss one MOOC – 'Exploring English: language and culture' - that attempted to close this gap, and will describe the specific challenges that language learning poses for MOOCs.

'Exploring English: Language and culture' was a free 6-week MOOC by the British Council (lead educator: Chris Cavey) that ran on the FutureLearn platform (https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-language-culture) from September 1st till October 12th 2014, and which is scheduled to be repeated in February 2015.

More than 70,000 users from all over the world had registered for the free course (British Council, 2014), though total participation can be expected to be lower, and to be characterized by the pattern typical for MOOCs, i.e. high initial registration but very low completion rates (Prentis, 2014).

The course focused on learning English as a foreign language at B1 level (Council of Europe, 2001), but also included content learning about a wide range of cultural topics as well as opportunities for intercultural learning, primarily through interactions between learners.

The course consisted of six week-long units, with an estimated workload of 2 hours each, delivered entirely online, focusing on six topics related to the overall theme of language and culture: 'English: The global language', 'Music: Making a difference', 'Countryside: A green and pleasant land', 'Literature: Books and identity', 'The environment: Saving the planet', 'Entrepreneurship: Building a business'.

All units followed the same basic structure:

- Introduction: A video introduces the topic, and is followed by a discussion question about that topic.
- Listening: An interview with an expert on the topic, taken from the 'English is Great' British Council video series (https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/britain-great-episodes/english-great), is used for listening comprehension exercises. Short texts and discussion questions complement this section.

- Language focus: Explicit grammar teaching and grammar practice are the focus of this section, tied in with the video material from the listening section. Specialized vocabulary for the unit may also be introduced here.
- Wrap-up: The wrap-up primarily consists of discussion questions.

Figure 1. Screenshot of 'Exploring English' MOOC (Topic Introduction for Week 1) (Used with Permission)

All writing (discussion questions) was submitted to a simplified online forum, where participants could post their texts, reply to each other's contributions, and 'like' relevant contributions by other learners.

Quizzes were used throughout the course to test listening comprehension, content knowledge, and linguistic skills. They served as formative assessment only, not impacting course outcomes. Overall success of the course was determined by percentage of tasks self-marked by learners as 'completed', with a 50% completion rate (including attempts at all quizzes) required for purchasing a 'Statement of Participation', which was available for £24 plus shipping. Accordingly, the 'Statement of Participation' does not function as certification in the sense of providing evidence that specific learning goals have been met.

As mentioned above, up to now very few MOOCs for language learning have been developed[1]. MOOCs can efficiently make instruction available to large numbers of learners, e.g. via lecture videos. Yet, explicit instruction is only a small part of contemporary language learning. The 'massiveness' of MOOCs though means that direct interactions with teachers and course tutors is not feasible as a key didactic component. At the same time, multiple-choice tests, which are acceptable choices for testing content knowledge/explicit knowledge, cannot reflect the whole breadth of learning in FLA.

Automated grading/feedback of work, a good option e.g. for programming assignments, is being developed for different writing contexts, but may suffer from limited reliability, high costs, and low learner acceptance. Peer feedback, an option unpopular among learners in other courses, may bear even more potential for conflict in language-learning settings.

Other courses have tried to focus on drills (e.g. SpanishMOOC (http://spanishmooc.com/)), or limited themselves mostly to explicit instruction with limited practice options (e.g. Coursera's Chinese for beginners (https://www.coursera.org/learn/chineseforbeginners))[2]. Exploring English, on the other hand, uses a combination of (formative) multiple choice tests and interactions between learners that do not serve assessment purposes.

To make interactions between these large numbers of learners possible, and to reduce a feeling of being overwhelmed by the large scale of user contributions, learners were instructed in adaptive strategies, such as how to check for responses on one's texts by other learners, how to follow other learners' posts or only have posts by a smaller number of learners displayed. These strategies, of course, can also be used by offline-course participants who wish to participate in such a MOOC together. At least in the cMOOC (connectivist MOOCs) tradition, though, forming sub-groups of learners is viewed critically, as it may mean trade-offs regarding autonomy, openness and diversity in exchange for increased structure (Mackness, Mak, & Williams, 2010).

Course-related interactions were not limited to the FutureLearn platform. Learners were encouraged to interact on course topics outside of the platform using the hashtag #Fllearnenglish. A 'language clinic' discussion thread was established on the British Council's Facebook page to assist with specific grammar questions that arose from course material (https://www.facebook.com/LearnEnglish.BritishCouncil/posts/923379744357197). This way, learners were encouraged to interact with course material and topics across their personal learning networks (PLNs).

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1 Of course non-language learning MOOCs can be used for language learning purposes, as discussed in Manning, Morrison, & McIlroy, 2014.

2 At the time this review is being written, a MOOC using another format, based on language tandems (tandem MOOC (http://mooc.speakapps.org/)), has just started.

A six week, 2 hour per week course is unlikely to lead to massive language learning gains, but by using the power of learner interactions (which could, for motivated learners, easily surpass the recommend 2 hours per week), course designers gave plenty of practice opportunities to learners of different skill levels. Even though the sheer volume of contributions could be overwhelming at times, the majority of student voices were positive, even enthusiastic. In that regard, especially when compared to drill-focused or instruction-focused language learning MOOCs, Exploring English set a new benchmark. It could not, though, escape the limitations of the cMOOC format more generally, that is 'one size fits all' content, limited options for assessment, and dramatic attrition numbers.

Notes on the contributor

Dr. Judith Buendgens-Kosten is a postdoctoral researcher at Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Germany. Her research focus is computer-assisted language learning, especially in multilingual settings.

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JASAL 2014 Forum.
Self-Access Conversations: Beyond Classroom Borders

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Abstract

This article reports on the JASAL Forum held at the JALT Conference in Tsukuba, Ibaraki on Sunday November 23, 2014. Founded in 2005 by Lucy Cooker and Garold Murray, JASAL (the Japan Association of Self Access Learning) organizes an annual Forum devoted to self-access, language advising and learner autonomy at the national JALT conference, and members are invited to present their research and practices through presentations, posters and discussion. This year's forum consisted of four presentations and a group discussion based on the theme of 'Self-Access Conversations: Beyond Classroom Borders'. Presentations were made on the challenges of setting up a new self-access centre, tips for running a self-access centre smoothly, ways to attract users, and ways to evaluate self-access centres.

Keywords: self-access, establishing self-access, attracting users, evaluating a SAC

"…It is in the process of crossing borders and engaging in dialogue across borders that we really understand who we are and who we can become." – Claire Kramsch, 2014

In keeping with this year's JALT theme 'Conversations Across Borders', JASAL held the annual forum to offer both members and non-members an opportunity to engage in dialog that extended beyond the borders of our own SACs and institutional contexts to share professional experiences, observations and research into current practice. As SACs themselves offer seemingly endless opportunities to extend language learning beyond the confines of the classroom, institutions are that are realizing, or continue to realize, the value of self-access facilities are becoming more widespread in Japan. This year's forum took the format of several short presentations and a whole-group discussion. All presenters either run or work in self-access centres as directors, teachers or learning advisors. The following sections begin with sharing and learning from the challenges of setting up a new SAC, followed by advice and tips from those experienced in the field, an initiative to start ‘movements’ and create ‘culture’ in SACs, and the importance of evaluating SACs.

Establishing a new English Lounge: Hopes and Challenges

Vick L. Ssali & Greg L. Rohe, Aichi Gakuin University, Nagoya

Both newcomers to self-access, Greg Rohe and Vick Ssali of Aichi Gakuin University's Global English/Global Studies Department started the forum off with a discussion of some of the issues they encountered when establishing the Aichi Gakuin (AGU) English Lounge last year. Determining what kind of center was needed, what kind of space would be appropriate to maintain, obtaining and managing funding, and staffing were discussed in detail in their presentation, as well as their plans going forward.

Physical and Conceptual Space

According to Gardner and Miller (1999), becoming well-informed about a number of issues is necessary before planning a SAC – such as reading the literature, having discussions on planning and set-up, determining which sort of system to adopt, and visiting as many SACs as possible (among others). After it was decided that the AGU English Lounge was to become an institutional entity, one of the first issues Rohe and Ssali had to contend with was finding an appropriate physical space with the size, accessibility and visibility they had in mind. Limited to non-classroom spaces, they were faced with choices that had limited or indirect foot traffic, which defeated the purpose of visibility (a key variable for them in attracting students to the new center). Another seemingly trivial, but critical factor that was discussed was defining the space by name. How learners imagine a space to be, perceive it, define it and articulate their understandings transforms a space into a place (Murray, Fujishima, & Uzuka, 2014). And, in Rohe’s estimation, can also help stakeholders develop a clear image of the space, which, in turn, helps understanding as to how the center benefits the institution at large. Also the collaborative efforts of both Japanese and foreign staff, who have significant insight into what resonates with students in both languages, had a significant role in the creation of the English Lounge’s 'conceptual space' – which conceived of the space as an informal, social, learner-centered one; essentially a place 'by the students and for the students'. In accordance with that idea, student staffing was determined to be the most appropriate, and most budget-conscious option for the centre.

Staffing and Funding

Ssali discussed the challenges of budget constraints on staffing options, particularly when full-time staffing is not possible. This issue was resolved by employing student staff through AGU's Learning Assistant program on a part-time basis. Ssali also touched upon the challenges of coordinating student schedules with opening times and establishing criteria for finding staff members that were able to function successfully in a strictly English-speaking environment. As it was decided that the English Lounge would function on developing learners' speaking skills, student staff members would have to fit a certain criteria. Students would likely be learning through dialogue and interaction, supporting staff would first and foremost need to be proficient speakers, and have some knowledge and experience of studying abroad. According to Vygotsky (1978), getting explanations and support from a more knowledgeable other is a way of learning. It was also mentioned that the influence of budgetary constraints would also require that staff members be willing to approach the program with motivation and contribute creative ideas toward the promotion of the English Lounge.

Going Forward

As a structured training program was not initially established at the time of opening, Rohe and Ssali were pleased to announce that going forward this year, a student staff training system has been put in place. Also, greater foreign faculty participation has been established (staff members are available in the centre on a featured monthly basis), and promotion and advertising efforts are also under further consideration to generate more interest in the lounge. As Gardner and Miller (1999) pointed out, one of the criteria for becoming and staying well informed in SAC management is visiting established SACs in order to gather insights into the issues and challenges encountered by others. Following a recent JASAL-organized SAC visit, both Ssali and Rohe mentioned their ongoing efforts to visit other SACs to consider new ideas, and engage in further dialog to get advice and inspiration from other institutions.

20 Tips for Running a Self-access Centre

Jo Mynard & Satoko Watkins, Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba

As self-access is a practical field involving the management of various types of learning spaces, those working in such spaces would benefit from investigating how other centres are functioning in order to learn from their best practices and experiences (Thornton, 2014). Addressing both newcomers to self-access and seasoned veterans in the field, SALC Director Jo Mynard and Learning Advisor Satoko Watkins of Kanda University of International Studies shared a range of ideas, or practical 'tips' for implementation that have worked well in their context, and also some ideas that they have noticed working well elsewhere. The presenters also shared a self-evaluation tool that all participants can use and adapt in order to help them to plan the next steps in setting up, or improving any sort of self-access facility.

In order to illustrate the diversity of roles for those involved in self-access, Mynard and Watkins noted that the following 20 tips could have easily been 120, in that there are as many things to do as there are ways to improve. Tips can be applied to a range of individual SAC environments and are organized in this paper according to the following corresponding areas of concern: SAC space, staffing, materials/curriculum/services, administration, and community building. The following tips are presented list-style for ease of reading and reference.

SAC Space Tips

Provide an attractive and comfortable space

- Make your self-access center an inviting and comfortable space for students by filling the space with multi-purpose furnishings, and make sure there is plenty of natural light, for positive effects on mood and productivity.

- Use eye-catching posters and signs (designed and/or handmade) and make them highly visible to attract learners to the space.

Conduct regular/semi-regular orientations and tours

- Even if you don't have much to show off, still invite students in to have a look around and see what's available.
- As many students don't have the experience of using materials freely outside of the classroom, tours and orientations help them to know what's available so that they can fully embrace the space and feel comfortable using it.

Provide free wifi and appropriate technologies

- Offer high-speed internet access to boost user/staff productivity.

Staffing Tips

Hire full-time Learning Advisors

- Full-time learning advisors are key members of SACs – but they do require sufficient budgetary resources and institutional support to operate.
- Advisors have a specialized supporting role outside of the classroom to help students work on their learning objectives, and as such require ample professional development opportunities and support.

Make sure advisors are accessible and approachable

- Situate advisors in visible areas where they can have direct contact with students, such as at a Helpdesk, or other drop-in service areas during regular operational hours.
- Establish a reservation system for individual advisors (online or off).

Hire and train student staff

- Establishing a comprehensive training system for administrative work (with at least two training workshops per year, a training manual written by senior students), plus mandatory mentoring and support from more experienced staff is essential for student staff members who work at self-access centers.
- Create personalized training portfolios that are transparent and accessible to student hires and administrative staff. Portfolios should contain detailed information about the training process, such as how they have been trained,

by whom, when, and comments from mentors and supervisors. Materials should also cover data entry and materials processing procedures as well as equipment maintenance, and how to assist other students in the SAC.

Hire and train peer mentors

- Peer mentors can offer access learning tips, emotional support, etc.
- Peer support, in addition to learning advising, can enhance learning opportunities and can be accessed in a variety of ways.

Encourage volunteerism

- Volunteering opportunities can be achieved within any budget, and can be an ideal way for students to become more involved in university life.
- Activities can be student-initiated, or staff recruited.

Materials and Curriculum/Services Tips

Provide a range of learning materials

- Offer a wide range of choice of learning materials to accommodate different learning preferences, goals, and interests.

Materials diversity

- Authentic and challenging materials stimulate learning, so be sure to provide them in addition to level-appropriate materials.

Establish materials selection criteria

- Applies to both budgeted and non-budgeted, or low budget SACs.
- With a budget: Consider what the most important materials to have are; Without a budget: If receiving donated materials, establish and make known policies and guidelines for receiving appropriate and useful materials.

Offer materials recommendations

- Students should learn how to choose appropriate self-study materials on their own, but often need support in doing so. Staff recommendations situated in designated resource sections and high-visibility areas can help.

Establish a curriculum designed to foster learner autonomy

- Offer a series of systematic courses and modules, handouts and leaflets (including online resources) supporting self-directed learning.
- Promote learner autonomy through engaging learning materials.

Offer different types of support services in relative proximity

- Situate and establish support services from teachers in designated spaces (conversation lounge, writing center) in close proximity for easy access.
- Offering designated workspaces for individuals and groups afford learners further options and flexibility.

Administrative Tips

Keep detailed records of SAC usage

- Detailed records of SAC usage can be kept in a database for at-at-glance reference to area usage and other statistics, allowing resources to be adjusted accordingly.

Develop an awareness of copyright limitations and restrictions

- Administrators need to continuously educate themselves and build awareness of the rules for usage of copyrighted materials (which differ for classrooms and SACs).

Community-building Tips

Plan social events and activities

- Organized social events and activities are fun, and a great promotional tool.
- Social opportunities in the SAC can help learners develop a sense of ownership.
- Learners can also find materials and resources that are interested in through incidental learning opportunities.

Create and foster 'learning communities'

- Assist in the organization, staffing, and operation of student-run community groups such as conversation clubs or independent study groups.

Conduct and promote workshops

- Conduct student and teacher-lead workshops (paid and volunteer) that are relative to the SAC experience, featuring such topics such as knowing how to use movies for language learning, time management, study abroad, etc.

Utilize social networking to promote a sense of community

- Social media/networking channels can be used to engage both SAC users and staff like in publicizing of events and posting notices.

- Involving students in social media affords them a greater sense of ownership and participation in the SAC space, and strengthens its status as a communal entity.

Starting a Movement: Let's Go to SALC!

Satomi Shibata, Tokoha University, Shizuoka

Director of Foreign Language Study Support Center and lecturer at Tokoha Gakuen University, Satomi Shibata has been involved with self-access centers for over a decade. In her presentation, Shibata asserts that how and why students decide to use a self-access center (SAC) depends on a number of influential factors, and questions whether or not it is possible to create an environment that will help learners choose to make the best use of SACs. Using Granovetter's Threshold model (1978) of collective action as a springboard (defined, in short, as a situation in which in order for a movement (or action) to happen, those who decide to take action is dependent on how many other people are already acting), Shibata proposes the idea of 'starting a SAC movement', in which learners working toward the same purposes could support each other and foster a 'culture' that helps other learners recognize the value of, and make the best use of self-access learning spaces. As issues with attracting students and underuse can often plague SAC operations, Shibata believes that getting as many students to use the center as possible (particularly in a small center) is a key factor. In a small, but active SAC environment such as Shibata's, which is run by one full-time staff member and two assistants with participating staff facilitators, budget and resources are limited, and as such, the focus of the center is mainly on developing learners' conversation skills and offering learning advising services in English, as well as promoting Extensive Reading (ER).

The center averages approximately 100 users per day, with about 150 materials on average checked out per day. Three types of learners were profiled in her SAC context of mostly first and second year students: Those who are actively autonomous (they don't hesitate to ask questions, use the SAC whenever they need it, try to understand their own needs in relation to developing their skills), those who are passively autonomous (they want to improve their skills but have trouble entering the center or asking for help), and reluctant learners (those who are not all that interested in developing their language skills, may have other interests, and just need to graduate), Shibata assert that if SACs focus on making passive learners active learners, than hopefully reluctant learners will follow suit and become passive, and passive learners could become more active. Furthermore, in order to ensure that all learners continue to be engaged and active, Shibata also noted that arranging choices for learners is also important issue because learners often require assistance in choosing materials (particularly if ER is a popular focus area).

A significant concept in Shibata's presentation was developing a 'culture' of self-access – that is, creating and developing coherent policies and communicating it widely not only helps to cultivate a culture that students can identify with and then share with other students, but also serves to develop a greater understanding of the value of SACs among faculty and other stakeholders. With respect to this idea Shibata asserts that autonomous 'leaders' (those who are actively autonomous) are important influencers in the 'movement', and that the influencers, or leaders, are important to encourage. However she emphasized that the follower is perhaps more important in this case, as without them collective action, or cultural development cannot take place. Further to that idea, common interest has a key role in cultural development as learners can make social connections related to language learning, which then lead to sharing of experiences based on common interests, prompting other learners to experience and communicate what learning is like in a SAC.

Arranging choices also plays a role in fostering and maintaining 'SAC' culture. As learners face so many options and choices in self-access – such as whether first-time users choose to enter the SAC or not, how long to stay, whether they interact with others in the space or not, whether they return or not (alone or with others), what materials to use or not, learners can be faced with 'choice overload'. Shibata discussed approaching the mitigation of the materials problem by culling unnecessary materials, encouraging the proper categorization of materials, and being conscious of timing with regard to materials promotion and support. By encouraging students to use the SAC and certain materials before fixing their schedule at the start of the academic year, for example, and timing orientations and support efforts after holidays, school festivals and during breaks, students can be encouraged to use SACs more, and to use them with more awareness and efficiency. Shibata concluded her discussion by imparting the notions of having learners work from common objectives to create a 'movement' or culture in SACs, that it is critical to help learners make choices (especially when resources are limited), and that both learners and administrators maintain an awareness of timing when using and promoting activities and resources.

Evaluating a Self-access Centre – Options and Challenges

Katherine Thornton, Otemon Gakuin University, Osaka

Measuring whether or not SACs are effective and efficient in achieving their goals is a critical issue, and the undertaking of such a task is a particular challenge because of the uniqueness and complexity of self-access systems (Star, 1994). Also, as enhancing the effectiveness of learning rather than teaching is paramount, issues related to the efficiency of management of resources and people must also be carefully considered (Gardner and Miller, 1999). As there are a seemingly endless number of variables to consider within that scope, Katherine Thornton, Director of the English Cafe (E-CO), a self-access center at *Otemon Gakuin* University, discussed confronting some these issues in relation to her own context (a self-access centre opened in 2013). She also discussed how the contributions a centre is making could be effectively evaluated to meet both institutional and user needs.

Specifically, the Whys, Whats, Hows and Challenges of SAC evaluation were individually addressed. As to Why evaluating a self-access centre is of importance, Thornton touched upon several areas that need to be contended with. Initially, whether or not a centre is meeting learner needs and identifying what those needs are is paramount, and then evaluating them in relation to what areas can be improved (which involves assessing not only how things are going, but how they can get better). Next, staff needs should be evaluated and feedback given in order to ensure job satisfaction (for instance, if teachers are staffed, they want to know if students are really learning). This is also connected to evaluating whether or not the SAC is meeting institutional goals (does it fit in with the various goals of the university?) and to account for existing funding and secure extra funding in the future. Finally, sharing evaluation results helps to increase understanding and support from stakeholders, hereby increasing the buy-in from skeptical staff, administrators and management. What to evaluate, according to Thornton, would involve assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of systems such as looking at the quality of management – specifically what is involved in the decision-making process such as determining the speed at which ideas and decisions come to fruition, and how your system is configured (or not) with regard to getting things done. In Thornton's context, evaluating value for the money in terms of staffing, equipment and resources is key in looking at issues such as determining the number of student hours facilitated per staff hour versus student hours facilitated with no staff present, and examining the frequency of use in relation to their cost (for example, new technologies such as iPads are in the SAC, but how much are they being used?). The effectiveness of Learner Gain – whether or not, and to what extent the SAC facilitates language learning is central. And, as most SACs aren't solely interested in language learning, the development of learner autonomy also needs to be addressed. In determining How to evaluate, Thornton noted that there is much quantitative and qualitative research that can be done and both should probably be used. It was recommended that narrowing the evaluation focus based on stakeholder requests (What do other people want to know?) and the SAC Mission Statement (establishing what you want to achieve, and evaluating the outcome of that achievement) was most effective in achieving this aim in her context.

As far as the challenges that evaluation presents specifically in SAC environments, Thornton advocated making comparisons between course evaluations and SAC evaluations. For instance, whereas a course is likely to focus on linguistic gains, a SAC is more likely to focus on usage rates and development/promotion of autonomy; learner groups are fluid in a SAC, which is not the case for a course; users in a SAC aren't as easily accessed as they are in a course – making finding out how users are using SACs difficult; SACs don't have a control group to compare students who do use the centre to those who don't; learning tasks are controlled in a classroom setting and teachers can assess how activities have an impact on learning, whereas SAC learners are carrying out a variety of different tasks which presents a problem in finding out whether what learners are doing is effective or not; talking care with imposing on learners' autonomy in a SAC is different from a classroom setting in which students are told what to do and produce results. Finally, the challenges that encompass having little control over a wide range of variables presents a unique set of problems that classrooms/courses might not be facing.

Thornton rounded out her presentation by addressing some thoughts and ideas toward sharing and presenting the results of evaluation, such as widening the shared audience (e.g. reporting to management and staff who are not ordinarily reported to, and sharing what other students are thinking with learners directly). Vehicles in which this information could be shared might include not only conventional means such as reports and presentations, but could be extended to online noticeboards and newsletters. Evaluation criteria is also a part of information shared, and in Thornton's context included such key areas as of interest as usage pattern and statistics (it was suggested that there are two ways of recording how users are using the centre by: 1) headcount per class period and 2) counting by how many users are in different spaces per day), and including information on how students are using the center in relation to the aims of the centre's mission statement. As some problematic issues were encountered in this process, one way that Thornton's centre as dealt with this is by using student perception of the impact of the SAC as a springboard for evaluation. That is, taking a critical look at what is happening in the SAC, such as examining users' language use (whether learners are using the target language or their native language), what the purpose of use is (if learners are using the space for social reasons, language study or something else), and what resources are being used and when, is not just producing a description of what is happening - but assessing it in terms of the centre's impact. This is where elements of the mission statement define not only what is done on a daily basis, but whether or not those actions are aligned with the SAC's mission. Thornton also suggests thinking about using case studies to show changes in learner behavior as an evaluative tool to that end.

In conclusion, Thornton suggested that building accountability into recording systems, having a clear focus for evaluation that narrows the scope by determining needs, a variety of means of testing effectiveness of action, and creative and comprehensive means for information sharing are all factors that have proven useful in the evaluation process.

Conclusion

Having the annual opportunity to engage in professional conversations through JASAL Forum has not only allowed for participation in an ongoing 'reflective conversation' about shared experiences in self-access, but has also afforded the chance to be part of a valuable exchange network for sharing our findings. Whether we are veteran practitioners or just starting out, by thinking about and reflecting upon what we do by looking at our own experiences as self-access practitioners and exploring and sharing ideas collectively, we are able to develop and refine a better understanding of our field.

Notes on the contributor

Erin Okamoto is a Learning Advisor at Kanda University of International Studies. New to self-access in tertiary education, she has a more extensive background in the field of Adult Self-access learning.

Acknowledgment

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The Self-Access Area becomes the Language Zone

Carolin Schneider, University of Leeds, UK

This article gives a brief overview of a recent library refurbishment project I have managed, hopefully encouraging others to think about how they can improve their own self-access spaces. My experience will illustrate that a major refurbishment project does not need to be daunting, and can have a big impact on student and staff experience, whether it is a new or established self-access centre.

The Language Zone provides learning materials and resources to language learners at the University of Leeds. It supports students enrolled on modules in the Language Centre and the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, as well as independent learners, who might be learning a new language for work, study or leisure.

The library space underwent a major refurbishment from July to October 2014, changing its premises from a closed access to an open access library, which enables students to browse the available materials and use the space, a mixture of formal and informal learning areas, in more flexible ways. I started the planning process in late 2012 by visiting other Language Centre libraries to see how their layouts worked and what kind of services they offered. The university's Estate Services department got involved in the planning process in November 2012, offering suggestions for different-sized options for the refurbishment. A major part of the project was the business case that was put together to get funding, which was finally approved in November 2013. To be able to successfully contribute to the project, I joined several online groups and discussions about library and learning space design, library furniture, and related topics. For example, Jisc's learning space design resources proved to be very helpful (http://www.jiscrsc.ac.uk/support-for/learning-space-design.aspx), as did talking to colleagues who worked in or had recently visited newly refurbished spaces. In addition to this, I started talking to interior and library design companies about ideas and suggestions, gathering a wider portfolio of ideas and possibilities.

The Language Centre runs a range of English language courses throughout the summer, preparing students for further study, making it the busiest time of the year. This made the smooth running of the refurbishment absolutely essential.

Figure 1. The Language Zone at the University of Leeds

During the refurbishment I was able to take responsibility for liaison with the University's Estate Services and the building site management team as well as contractors and designers to guarantee that the service's needs were met throughout and after the refurbishment process. I also ensured that the service operated efficiently during this period, when the facilities were located in temporary premises near the building site, to guarantee access to resources and materials during the summer. This included dealing with complaints about noise, and as well as working closely with the building site manager to ensure minimal disruption to students and staff. I also worked closely with the marketing team to inform existing and potential users about changes. All this contributed to customer service being consistent and improved students' experience during the refurbishment phase.

To prepare the members of the Language Zone team for their new work environment and ways of working I devised a comprehensive staff training programme, which, apart from showing staff the new space and familiarising them with new technology, included reminder sessions about customer service and enquiry handling skills.

As part of the refurbishment project I introduced a new, more intuitive, library classification system, making it easier for students to find materials in the Language Zone. The main sections are now divided into topic areas, such as Grammar and Listening, rather than items simply being shelved in chronological order within each language. In my mind, the collection of approximately 10,000 items is too small to justify the use of an official library classification, as the main purpose of this change was to enable users to find materials more easily.

I further made a case for, and oversaw, the installation of a Radio-frequency identification (RFID) security system, therefore actively working on loss prevention. Again, talking to colleagues and consultants within the library and information sector was essential to make an informed decision about which system and supplier to choose.

During the project, especially when I felt overwhelmed by the size of the undertaking and found it difficult to keep track of all developments and time scales, I was able to build on leadership, advocacy and strategic skills developed as part of an Open University management course I studied during 2013/2014. Further, I was able to utilise planning and project management skills acquired during my previous post as Information Librarian, where I had been involved in the early planning stages of a refurbishment for the Business and Research department in Leeds Central Library. Both for dealing with practical tasks and my reaction to potential problems I made an effort to ask for help, both in real life and on social media, and learning from other people's experiences, rather than struggling by myself.

The newly refurbished Language Zone has been open since 6 October 2014 and the refurbished facilities are busy continuously throughout the day, currently totalling between 400 and 500 visits per day. The new space has already enabled the team to expand the range of activities, accessibility and advice through increased visibility of materials and staff. This is partly due to the new layout where the information counter and staff desks are located within the open areas of the Language Zone. This allows students to approach any member of staff for personal, individualised guidance, giving them better, more immediate access to information and services.

The achievements of this project are paving the way for further developments and closer working relationships with the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, in which the Language Centre and Language Zone are located strategically. These will be based on how students and staff use the space, and enable us to plan future developments and activities accordingly. As a result of the refurbishment I am also taking overall responsibility for all activities taking place within the space, which includes a closer integration of the Language Advice Service into the Language Zone. Since the refurbishment, the activities and responsibilities of Language Zone and Language Advice are more closely aligned, offering more opportunities for sharing resources and making any future developments more viable.

The refurbishment also offered the opportunity to re-brand, changing the library's name from 'Self-Access Area' to 'Language Zone', which allows us to promote the space and services as more welcoming and accessible.

Notes on the contributor

Carolin has managed the Language Zone at the University of Leeds since September 2012, after working in academic and public libraries for several years. She is a charted librarian and currently studies towards a Master's degree in Technology, Education and Learning, alongside her professional role.

Find the Language Centre online

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Some photos of the refurbishment process can be seen at http://www.slideshare.net/bumsonseats/language-zone-refurbishment